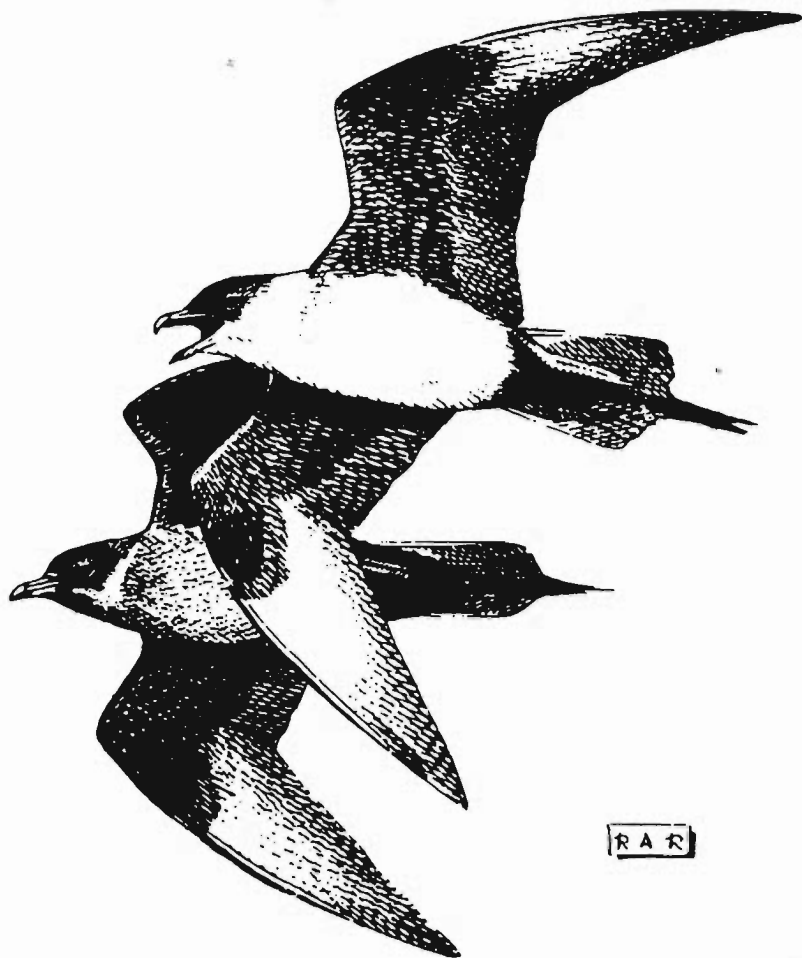
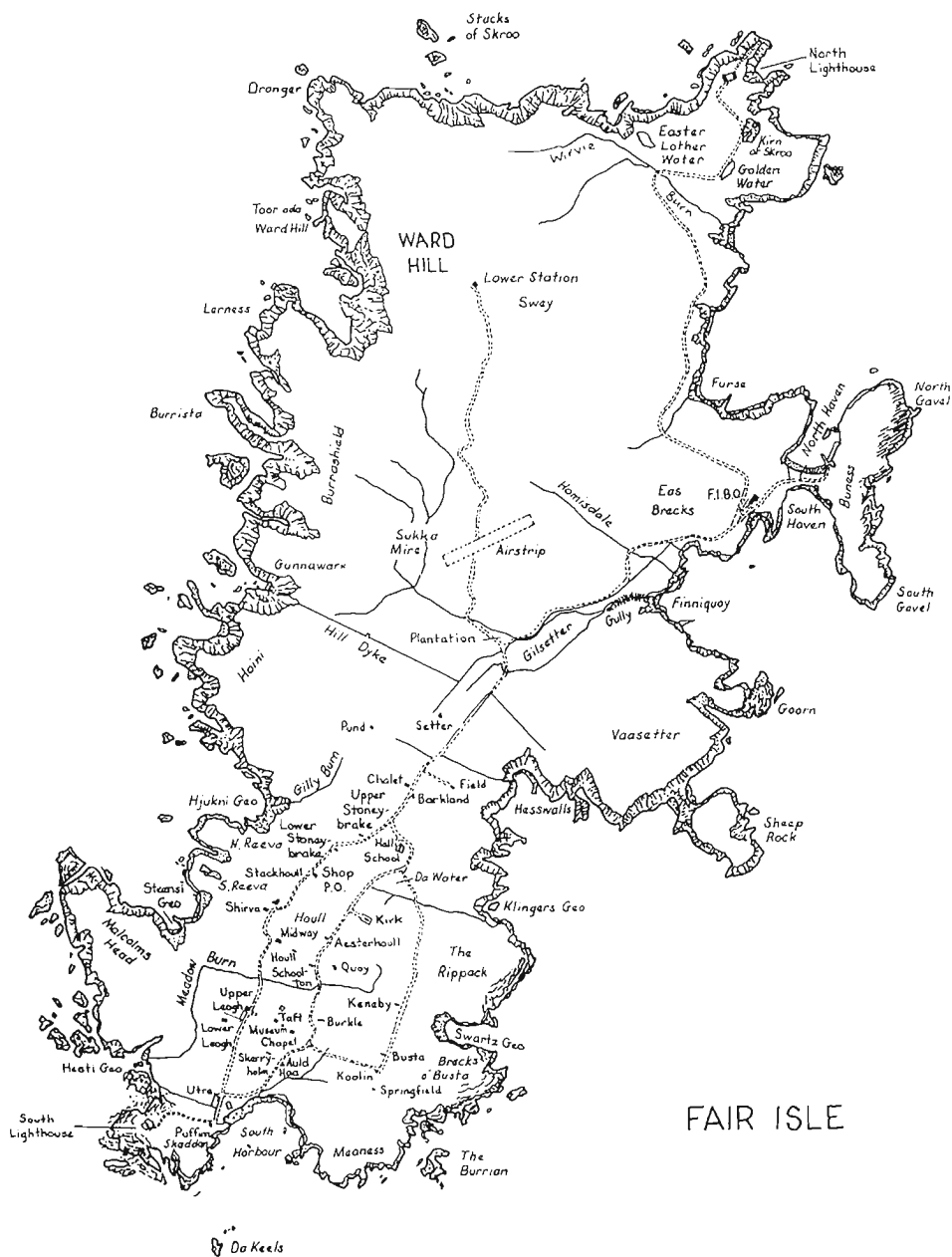


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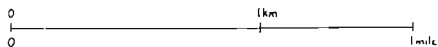
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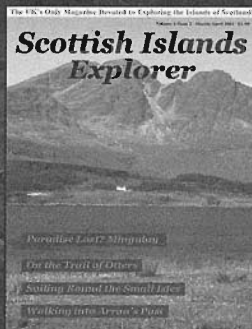
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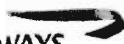
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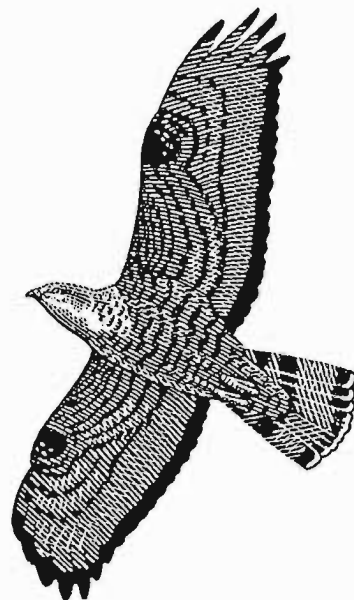
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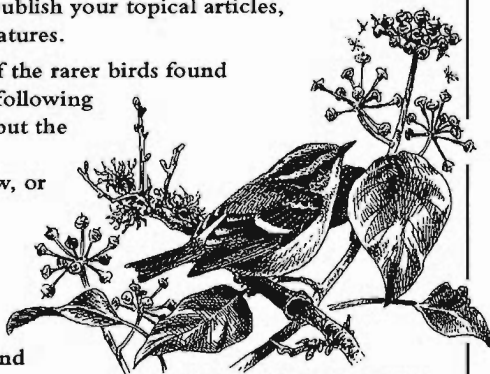
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Blackburnian Warbler, Fair Isle, 7th October 1988. J. Willmott. *BS* 6(1): 1-2.

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# Fair Isle Bird Observatory

Report no. 55

2002

*Edited by Deryk and Hollie Shaw*

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## Chairman's Report

*Roy Dennis*

It is a pleasure to report another successful year for the Bird Observatory on Fair Isle. As Directors, we are very fortunate to have such an excellent team led by Hollie and Deryk. The happy and enthusiastic atmosphere helps our visitors to have really enjoyable holidays on the island and this is important. Visitor numbers were encouragingly good but the early signs for 2003 are not quite as promising, so please come again to Fair Isle if you have not been for a while – and do encourage others to come for the first time. A telephone call to Hollie can often find a bargain break, especially at quiet times.

2002 was also another excellent year for birds; in fact it ended with a superb total of 210 different species, second only (in 54 years) to the 214 in 1992. It is getting very difficult to add new migrant species to the island list and therefore, despite the impressive total, no new ones were found in 2002. Although a Chestnut Bunting trapped in September may one day be added to the list, it must currently remain “of suspect origin”. Of course, the coming year could be different – who knows what new species our bird-watchers may identify. There were good numbers of very rare migrants with no less than eight Two-barred crossbills, four Lanceolated Warblers and three Pechora Pipits, as well as our second ever Montagu's Harrier.

Seabirds had another mixed year due to another shortage of Sandeels – but it was not as bad as 2001. Against the general trend, Gannets continued to prosper and there were ten pairs breeding on Sheep Rock. I remember seeing an adult Gannet sitting there in the 1960s and wishing they would nest. It's taken a long time, but this small colony could turn into a marvellous spectacle to be seen from the windows of the Observatory. On the other hand, Skuas, Arctic Terns and Kittiwakes were all in trouble.

Looking to this year, we hope to start a new project with the Fair Isle crofters and other partners to increase the amount of growing crops for migratory and resident birds. The economics of crofting have changed drastically and the crops of yesteryear, oats, turnips and potatoes, are no longer grown as in the past. Their gradual disappearance from croft after croft has meant a loss of valuable wildlife habitat. The project is aimed at increasing the traditional crops as a biodiversity measure to provide cover and food for tired migrants and resident birds, and to improve the bird-watching. As ever this will cost money to carry on year after year and we hope our birding visitors will help us with funding.

In conclusion, I hope you enjoy the annual report and thank you all for the support you give to Fair Isle Bird Observatory.

## Warden's Report

*Deryk Shaw*

My fourth season in charge and the most enjoyable yet with some superb birding, but dampened by a below average breeding season. A total of 210 species recorded is an impressive tally, second only to the 214 of 1992. An adult female Chestnut Bunting was the only potential addition to the island list but it is resigned to Category D (of unproven origin). Apart from this, were our second ever Montagu's Harrier, fourth White Stork, our first (live) Nightjar for ten years, sixth Black-throated Diver, seventh records of Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Alpine Swift and White's Thrush (the last two species within a day of each other), five Citrine Wagtails, four Lanceolated Warblers, (possibly) three Thrush Nightingales, at least three Pechora Pipits, two each of Subalpine, Greenish and Arctic Warblers, and single Red-throated Pipit, Olive-backed Pipit and River Warbler. Good numbers of Common Crossbills also included eight Two-barred Crossbills whilst record numbers of both Greenfinch and Goldfinch were observed.

Seabirds had, despite some glorious weather, a mixed but on the whole below average season. However it was nowhere near as disastrous as the previous year. Once again a lack of Sandeels was seemingly the cause. However, this year there was a shortage during the early part of the season which resulted in a lot of birds not nesting at all. This meant that there wasn't such a mass of starved chicks – as was the case in 2001 (and other years). It would appear that Sandeels did become available later in the season and as a result those species with chicks still in the nest in July did okay. Gannets are apparently the only species still expanding (1,585 AON is a 12.7% rise from 2001) and ten pairs nested on Sheep Rock. Shags recorded the lowest number of nests at monitoring plots, but the highest productivity (1.98 chicks fledged per nest). Auks again seemed to do well but fledging weights of chicks were low. For the first time, Sprats rather than Sandeels made up the majority of Puffin food samples collected. Both species of skua had a very poor breeding season. Only 74 'bonxie' chicks were ringed and a productivity of 0.16 is by far the lowest ever. Arctic Terns failed completely whilst the Kittiwake population continues to plummet and productivity (0.42) was less than half the 10yr average.

Partly due to the poor breeding season and partly a poor passage of common migrants, only 4,381 birds were ringed. However this included Short-eared Owl, Black-bellied Dipper, Thrush Nightingale, River, Subalpine, Melodious and two Lanceolated Warblers, Chestnut Bunting, 41 Crossbills and an incredible 119 Greenfinches – almost 50% of the previous total!

Paul French returned for a second year as Assistant Warden and Simon Pinder joined us as Seabird Monitoring Officer. Both performed their duties well and

enjoyed their time here and a season (or two) working at FIBO has undoubtedly enhanced their future job prospects as both have already secured further contracts in the ornithological field. Becki Rosser, who was a domestic volunteer for half the season and paid for the remainder, was also a keen ringer/birder and helped out on her days off and will return (for the fourth time) in 2003. Alan Bull was invaluable not only as the Ranger but as a knowledgeable birder and ringer who could slot in whenever he was called upon to ensure that things continued to run smoothly whenever the going got tough.

The ornithological team was enhanced by several additions for various parts of the year: Paul Jeffrey (Trainee ringer and also a qualified electrician) came in June/July to gain some seabird ringing experience and thoroughly enjoyed his stay here. Stuart Piner and Robert Pocklington returned as volunteers for the second time and were very competent – possible Assistant Wardens of the near future. Simon Mitchell was the other JHMF recipient and can't wait to return in the future. Ex-warden and newest Director, Roger Riddington also came in for four days in late June to help out, during which time we blitzed all the main seabird colonies! His help was very much appreciated. He enjoyed the nostalgia trip so much that he immediately booked a few days in late June 2003 to do it all over again! Lastly (but by no means least!!) my wife, Hollie, also joined us on several trips down the cliffs and her excellent 'fukling' skills were a tremendous asset to the ringing team.

On top of the normal research carried out by the Observatory staff, we also had a couple of visiting researchers staying for parts of the year. Julia Delingat, one of Franz Berlein's students from the Institute of Avian Research in Helgoland, was here for three weeks in May researching stop-over behaviour and weight gains of migrating Wheatears, as part of a European-wide study. She colour-ringed over 100 birds and hopefully some of these may be re-sighted in later years. The results of her time on Fair Isle can be read within the pages of this report. Sarah Davis from Glasgow University was also here for two weeks in the summer, complementing her study on Arctic Skuas on Foula. She was trapping and colour-ringing breeding adults to try and investigate movements of birds between colonies in Shetland.

As every year, the winter weather takes its toll on the Heligoland Traps and some extensive repairs were required this year. Part of the Gully Trap roof was replaced – no easy feat – whilst the whole of the Plantation trap was taken down and rebuilt. Difficulties in obtaining new telegraph poles meant that the original supports were used again. The trap is slightly smaller – missing the east wing – but still proved very effective in the autumn. The removal of most of the dead trees should allow for rapid growth of new material next spring. The dead trees were placed along the

sides of the Vaadal stream and have proved very effective in guiding birds into this trap. An extension to the Vaadal trap is planned next spring, which should make this even more effective.

With the demise of large (medium) scale crop growing on the isle, providing habitat for migrating birds has become a priority issue for FIBO and work to reverse this began in 2002. Small areas at South Raeva, Meadow Burn and near the Chapel have all been fenced off, rabbit-proofed and wind barriers added and some planting has taken place. The Chapel area especially is thriving well and we hope to plant a lot more shrubs and bushes in them all during spring 2003. The New Plantation outside the Observatory meanwhile is looking very good and has started to attract birds to it, rather than just holding birds released from the Ringing room – the Nightjar in July was one such bird. Plans are also afoot to encourage more crops to be grown on the isle as shelter and food for the large numbers of migrants that pass through the isle. This is an exciting new project involving FIBO, the Fair Islanders, the Crofters Commission, NTS, RSPB and others to ensure that visiting birds (and those that come to watch them) have as pleasant and beneficial stay on the isle as possible.

Thankfully, on the building and maintenance side, there were no major catastrophes this year. The roof continues to cause minor problems from time to time and a leak into the warden's flat bathroom cannot be traced. One bath was replaced, as was one toilet. The generators continued their usual habit of periodically breaking down but thankfully not both at the same time. The design means that the radiators are exposed to considerable vibration and both engines had to have theirs replaced. Additionally, the alternator of Engine 2 had to be shipped out and repaired. The Observatory van, after four years of exposure to the Fair Isle weather is now showing signs of wear and we may be lucky to get another season out of it as a people carrier. It covered an astonishing 3,636 miles this season but required (at least) a new starter, a new exhaust and a full service by the end of the season. A new vehicle may soon be required. The Zodiac, despite being sent out for repair, still had an annoying slow puncture which meant it had to be re-inflated each time we went out on it – frustrating when we are working against time and tide!

Although it is recognised that the Fair Isle Bird Observatory is vital to the island community, its existence also depends on the support and assistance that the islanders give. Whilst everyone on the isle helps in some small way, a number deserve special mention for services to the Observatory. Kenny Stout must be thanked for the countless times he was called upon to repair plumbing and vehicles (his mother, Margaret, must be proud of his loyalty and eagerness to help us, at any time – usually at very short notice!) and his (well-earned) presence at the Obs bar is always very welcome. Robert and Fiona Mitchell at Stackhoull Stores are not

only excellent suppliers for the Observatory kitchen but also very good caring friends. The crew of *Good Shepherd IV* must be thanked for looking after our guests on the journey to and from Fair Isle and safe delivery of all manner of goods. Dave Wheeler is a constant source of weather and plane advice and his management of our (ever more popular) website is much appreciated. Glen Tyler must be thanked for his computer wizardry, regular contributions to the bird log, moth records and his extraordinary dancing skills!! The Northmen fitted several new windows and were a source of materials at short notice during those (too many) little emergencies!

As well as these islanders who contribute to the welfare of the Observatory, several 'off-islanders' must also be thanked for their contributions. Dave Okill is a constant source of cuttings for our planting programme and, although it may take several years to come to fruition, the isle should be a leafier place because of it. Malcolm Adamson, as every year, took it upon himself to look in on the generators whenever he was on the isle and carry out any necessary maintenance. Several visitors (in particular Mark Prestwood, Steve Rock and Toby Green) gave up many hours of valuable birding time to lend their carpentry skills during the rebuilding of the Plantation trap and my thanks goes to them all. I must also thank those organisations that have helped us financially; Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Scottish Natural Heritage, Shetland Oil Terminal Environmental Advisory Group and the British Trust for Ornithology. Of course, it is impossible to individually thank all those who support the Observatory but every little piece of assistance and encouragement we receive is very much appreciated.

Finally, I thank all those who have contributed articles, photos and vignettes for this report and to Alan Bull for help with proofreading. I hope you (the reader!) like it and it encourages you to come and see this beautiful island, it's birds and it's people for yourself.

## **Administrator's Report**

*Hollie Shaw*

The completion of our fourth season here on Fair Isle, although very enjoyable, also presented it's fair share of problems to challenge us. As ever we relied heavily on various members of the Observatory staff to ensure that, despite these set backs, our visitors were still able to enjoy their holidays without inconvenience. It is appropriate therefore to thank these staff members from the outset. Lois Smallwood returned as Cook for the season and her sunny personality and wicked sense of humour set the tone for the friendly atmosphere within the Lodge. She was joined by Gillian Newman from New Zealand as the second Cook, who's boundless energy ensured there were always plenty of homebakes and biscuits to go round. Becki Rosser returned once again as our much needed volunteer General Assistant and she was joined by Sheila McKeever as the second General Assistant. For the first time we had a childminder for the whole season with Rebekah Warner and Ruth Cleeves covering the six months between them. They were both excellent and enabled us to balance the load of parenting and running the Observatory with less stress than in previous years. Alan Bull returned once again, this time as Ranger, and rose to the many diverse challenges that this post brings with it. He was also invaluable in a multitude of other areas such as maintenance, washing up and even childminding when we were short staffed. This encouraging start with staff continued successfully for half the season until bad luck dealt a major blow with Sheila breaking her leg whilst out walking very early one morning. It is testament to Sheila's stern determination that she was able to get herself to a croft house to raise the alarm. After the excitement of an ambulance flight, which eventually took her to Aberdeen, the realisation dawned that we would now be short staffed for ten weeks. It seemed unjust therefore, when just a few weeks later, Gillian was informed by the Doctor that she could no longer work. Sadly Gillian left us to convalesce and only Lois and Becki remained to carry out the cooking and cleaning side of the work. As is always the case in these situations, everyone came up trumps and helped out, taking on extra duties to try and spread the load. A washing up rota including all staff was rapidly drawn up and I stepped in as Assistant Cook/General Assistant to cover for Becki and Lois' days off. Even Sheila, with her leg in plaster, helped out more than we could ever have expected. This co-operative effort managed to see us through an extremely busy August. However, in mid September a staff reshuffle (involving Becki being taken on as a fully paid staff member, the return to work of Sheila, Lois becoming Assistant Cook and the welcome arrival of Ann Prior as Cook for three weeks) heralded the return to normality just in time for peak season. In fact we had the luxury of an extra pair of hands in the form of Ken Passfield who could turn his hand to virtually anything required. Ann and Ken left us early in October so that Ann could start her new job at the Weisdale Mill café in

Shetland. We are very grateful to them both for coming over to Fair Isle to help us out at this point in the season. Thanks are also due to Joe Burrell for all his help towards the end of the season.

Despite the staffing problems the season was certainly successful with bednights reaching 2321, only slightly lower than in 2001 when they were 2365. However we had substantially less workmen bednights this year than in 2001, which would indicate, therefore, an increase in holidaymaker bednights. The special August half-price offer was again extremely successful, with 405 bednights in this month alone, compared with just 149 in August 2000. The first ever October half-price offer was also advertised and although there was less of a take-up, it helped boost bednight numbers in the last month of the season. Hopefully, with careful marketing and by providing a good service, we can continue to maintain this bednight figure for some years.

The annual FIBOT AGM was held on the island in May 2002, for the second year in a row, after several years of being held elsewhere. As always, many of our Directors/Trustees took the time off work and made the effort to travel to Fair Isle for this meeting. John Wood, Mike Wood, Dave Okill, Roy Dennis, Roger Riddington, Louise Batchelor and Chris Cox all ventured north to Fair Isle for varying lengths of time over the AGM weekend, whilst Peter Evans once again visited for a longer period to continue his Starling studies. Having the meeting on Fair Isle provides a vital link between the day to day running and work of the Observatory and the Directors. We are fortunate that so many are willing to give up their time to support the work of the Observatory and hope that these meetings continue to be held here in future years.

The bar in the Lodge lounge again proved to be a great success, with sales reaching £12,578. We stocked a wider range of beers and spirits, as well as wine and the bar provided an informal focus to the relaxed atmosphere within the Lodge. Shop sales remained constant with the last two years and an increased range of goods for sale will hopefully maintain this trend.

The Ranger Service continued to provide visitors with extras such as guided walks, slideshows and leaflets. It also enabled maintenance of the many stiles around the isle and the provision of a few new ones. Additionally, Alan Bull and myself visited the school on a dozen occasions to work on a Fair Isle booklet with the school children. This booklet (which will be available to buy in 2003) describes the wildlife and natural history of Fair Isle through the eyes of the isle children. It is illustrated with their pictures and some photographs and also acts as an informal guide book. A two-day 'Autumn Camp' was held during the October school break, with all the children visiting the Observatory and taking part in fun activities,

including a treasure hunt, environmental games, nature race and beach-combing. This very enjoyable event will hopefully be repeated in future years.

Shetland Wildlife again joined forces with the Observatory to host two extremely successful 'Island Insights' weeks. With 16 participants in total this year, these weeks seem to be going from strength to strength and help maintain bednights during non-peak periods. Other groups were very few and far between, with just Ann Smith and her group in August additional to the other two Shetland Wildlife groups. Marketing Fair Isle to the masses is not always easy and a number of groups cancelled due to low numbers. This highlights the importance of maintaining the strong relationship that exists between the Observatory and the tourism companies that do manage to continue to visit Fair Isle each year. We were also visited by a group of Dutch journalists in 2002, who stayed for three days, and subsequently wrote articles about various aspects of life on Fair Isle, from crafts to wildlife.

Life is always busy on Fair Isle, particularly in the summer months and 2002 was certainly no exception. With 12 visiting cruiseships, carrying a total of more than 600 visitors, we had our work cut out meeting them all, providing guided walks and attending the FIBO stall at the Community Hall. Cruiseships have become a vital source of income for islanders involved with crafts and the Observatory also benefits from shop sales and publicity. Approximately ten cruiseships are booked in for next season and I am sure that Fair Isle's co-operative approach to meeting, greeting, transporting and entertaining these visitors goes a long way to ensuring that the ships will continue to visit in future years.

Fair Isle did its bit for the Queen's Jubilee celebration on 3rd June by erecting and lighting a massive beacon on Vaasetter. This beacon was one of a chain of bonfires that lined the length of Britain that night. The idea was that it would be able to be seen from both Shetland and Orkney, but unfortunately the dreadful weather that evening resulted in limited visibility even on the isle itself!

Fair Isle has a long and talented musical tradition so it was appropriate that a new venture to provide entertainment at the Observatory on a regular basis, should be based on a musical theme. Islanders have over the centuries performed free of charge, not only for their own entertainment but also for visitors to the isle. This season however, this was put on a more structured but still very relaxed and informal footing, with the introduction of 'Fair Isle Thursdays'. Once a fortnight during May, June, July and August, the Observatory hosted an evening of entertainment. For a small entrance fee (which was divided out between the performers at the end of the season), visitors and islanders could enjoy an evening which started at 8pm with a slideshow by an Islander, followed by live music and/or



singing by one of the Fair Isle bands. The success of this event was plain to see, with an average of 50 people at each session and over 90 people on one occasion! In fact 'Fair Isle Thursdays' were so popular we have already planned to host them again next season.

Music continued to play a major role in the activities of the season, when in early July a three day Folk Festival was hosted on the isle. Visiting musicians joined local performers, such as Lowri's String and Friderrey, for three days and nights of talented and inspiring entertainment. Traditional music from home grown violinists, accordionists and singers was alternated with operatic vocals from Irish singer Cliona Cassidy, country singing by Dean Owens from Edinburgh and an electrifying performance from the Shetland fiddle group, Fiddler's Bid. Story Telling in the Museum, an afternoon concert in the kirk and even an impromptu outdoor concert on Sunday afternoon all contributed to a fantastic and memorable weekend.

A fitting end to a beautiful and sunny musical season was the culmination of two year's work, with the performance of 'Classic Fair Isle', a piece of music commissioned by the island community and written by Alastair Stout, which took place on the isle on 23rd August. The island choir and other island singers were joined by singers from Shetland to perform this classical but modern piece of music, to a full house at the Community Hall.

As with all small communities, Fair Isle depends on the local residents for it's success. It is always difficult therefore, when popular families or individuals leave for pastures new. In the four years we have lived here we have seen the departure and arrival of several families but it was with a great personal sadness that we said goodbye to Emma Perring, Ewen Thomson and their two delightful children, Martha and Harry this August. However, they have only moved across the water to mainland Shetland and we will no doubt be seeing a great deal of them when they return to the island to visit family and friends. Fair Isle thankfully is a dynamic island and so as one family prepared to leave a new family arrived. Gina Scanlon, Glen Tyler and their children, Max and Kate moved into Barkland, which had stood empty for some time. Gina is the sister of Pat Thompson at Lower Stoneybrek and she and Glen met when they both worked at the Bird Observatory 20 years ago! We also welcomed David Royle, who had been a regular visitor to the island over many years and moved here to await the completion of his new house 'Breks' situated between Kenaby and Busta. The house has now been completed and David has settled in well as an island resident. With the departure of Emma and Ewen, new tenants were needed for Nedertaft. Ewen's brother Ian and his partner Lisa moved in for a short while and have since been followed by Patrick Ross-Smith's parents, June and Stanley Ross-Smith who have moved there temporarily while they await

permanent housing on the isle. All these new arrivals has indicated a need for extra housing on the isle and so it is encouraging to hear that the upper floor of the South Lighthouse building will be converted into two three-bedroomed flats early in 2003. Brian Skinner also left the island later in the year, to move to mainland Shetland and Kenny Stout has taken up residence in the Chalet while he awaits the upgrading of Upper Stoneybrek, which will commence once the Lighthouse flats are completed.

The Fair isle community is anything but stagnant and it is the constant activity and change combined with the loyalty and determination of the residents, that keep the island vibrant and successful. The same could be said of the Bird Observatory, which has certainly seen some changes over the years and who's continued success is a testament to the hard working teams of seasonal staff that have worked here over the years. Now that our fourth season has ended and as we look with anticipation towards the fifth, it is with the hope that we will continue to see the return of some staff members as well as enjoy meeting new ones and that we can maintain the encouraging trend of a high level of bednights and therefore the financial security of the Bird Observatory.



*Crossbill – Richard Kemp*

# National Trust for Scotland Report

*Alexander Bennett*

*Conservation Manager, Highlands & Islands*

A quiet year for the Trust on Fair Isle, not because of any lack of commitment by us, but more that priorities do move between properties and Fair Isle just happens to be at a fairly quiet moment. That said, Fair Isle is no less important and still proves to be the exception to the rule.

The Trust has recently faced its greatest financial crises in its history and as a consequence has had to make some fairly drastic changes to its operation. This inevitably means change, which is always uncomfortable and never easy. The Operational Review has therefore had to divert recent emphasis away from property management to more of getting the overall structure right. The Trust has moved to take management closer to its properties and, as such, has closed its Oban Office, rationalised that part of the operation and moved staff into Area Management with the appointment of Area Managers for the Inner Hebrides & the Western Isles. Fair Isle, along with our interests in Unst & Yell, will continue to be managed directly from the Regional Office in Balnain House, Inverness. However, things are settling down now and a much stronger support is now available from a wider group of specialist staff for the properties. All in all, a bright future is beckoning and if the visitor numbers at our mainland properties can hold up, or even increase, then we will be in a much stronger position in the years ahead. Fair Isle will inevitably benefit from this and we are looking forward to working much more closely with FIBOT in the years to come.

However, life did continue and there were a number of things happening on the isle worthy of note. The house renovation programme continues with the upgrading of Shirva for Stewart & Annie Thomson. The renovation of the South Lighthouse building continued with work in hand to upgrade the first floor accommodation to provide two flats for Fair Isle's ever increasing housing needs. Work started to build a new house on The Brecks by David Royle where he now wishes to settle permanently. The house, like the recent house on the Houll for Brian & Mary Wilson, is timber built and designed to the highest environment standards available. Maybe two houses in this style will set a trend for the future of housing on the isle. Only time and money will tell. A new family, Glen Tyler & Gina Scanlon and their two children, Max and Kate, have arrived in Barkland and we wish them well for the future. Sadly, Brian Skinner left to expand his horizons on Shetland and further afield and we also wish him well.

One of the most significant events for some time has been the delivery of the new emergency fire tender for the isle. Fair Isle has scored yet another first and has

developed a joint fire service with the island and the aerodrome coming together into one. Highlands & Islands Fire Brigade were very keen to assist us and bring the two services together with the consequent saving in running costs and operations. The down side is that the new machine is huge and will need specialised accommodation to house it, that is, a new fire station to be built at the village hall and school. The Trust is grateful to Shetlands Islands Council, Shetland Enterprise and, of course, Highlands & Islands Fire Brigade for all their financial support and help. Just don't be surprised when you have to make way for a "mainland" sized fire engine as it travels round the isle!



*Sheep Rock – Richard Kemp*

# Update on survey of diseases and causes of death in wild birds on Fair Isle

*Jason Waine*

Research into causes of bird deaths on Fair Isle is now in its eighth year. Any birds found dead on Fair Isle are collected and stored frozen prior to having a full post-mortem examination performed. The carcass has standard biometric measurements taken including weight, total body length, maximum chordal length, tail length, head length, beak (culmen) length, maximum beak depth and flexed tibial length. Its plumage is assessed and it is examined for external signs of injury or disease. It is then examined internally and findings are recorded as a written report as well as summarised on a database. Samples of tissue may be taken for further tests or to help other research workers in allied fields. Samples from target species have traditionally been sent to ITE for background poison analysis and parasites have been sent to The Natural History Museum, London for identification. More recently, brain tissue from these autopsies has been sent to the avian virology unit at Weybridge to be checked for the presence of West Nile Fever Virus – a tropical disease, spread by biting flies and capable of infecting humans as well as causing die-offs in birds and which has been reported from similar latitudes in America. As a result, the government has undertaken monitoring of birds in the UK in order to check for its presence here (so far with negative results). Finally, samples may be stored for anatomical research.

In 2002, forty-six specimens were sent from Fair Isle made up of twenty-nine species from fourteen families and seven orders:

Ciconiiformes	Ardeidae	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1 specimen
Anseriformes	Anatidae	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	1 specimen
		Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	1 specimen
Accipitriformes	Falconidae	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1 specimen
Gruiformes	Rallidae	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	1 specimen
Charadriiformes	Scolopacidae	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	2 specimens
		Jack Snipe	<i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>	1 specimen
	Stercorariidae	Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	1 specimen
	Laridae	Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	1 specimen
		Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	1 specimen
		Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	2 specimens
		Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	1 specimen
		Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	1 specimen
Piciformes	Picidae	Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	1 specimen
Passeriformes	Prunellidae	Duncock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	1 specimen
	Turdidae	Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	3 specimens
		Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	1 specimen
		Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	1 specimen
		Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	4 specimens
		Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	2 specimens
		Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	3 specimens

	Sylviidae	Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	5 specimens
		Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	1 specimen
	Sturnidae	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	1 specimen
	Fringillidae	Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	1 specimen
		Mealy Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammca</i>	1 specimen
		Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>	2 specimens
		Common Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	3 specimens
	Emberizidae	Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	1 specimen

The most common species represented are Blackcap (five specimens), Song Thrush (four specimens) and Fieldfare, Wheatear, and Common Crossbill (three specimens each). Of particular note were the three Crossbills, the two Hawfinches, the Snow Bunting and the Jack Snipe. The latter species seems to suffer regular casualties in this area with one or two specimens nearly every year.

The autumn sees the peak numbers of casualties and, although autumn migration is obviously a major factor, this may also reflect the number of observers present and consequently the coverage that the island gets during this period. However, October casualties numbered 25 in two years, September had four in 2002 and November had two in 2002. August recorded six casualties possibly as a result of breeding stress and the presence of young birds.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	1	2	1	2	1	6	4	25	2	0

An analysis of the causes of death and the disease states of these birds shows that starvation, either primary (sheer lack of food) or secondary (starving as a result of being unable to feed due to other injuries or diseases), is the commonest result with 25 birds (54%) affected. Of these three had gapeworm, two had other significant parasitic infestations, six had signs of migration stress, four had injuries, one had aspergillosis (a fungal infection of the respiratory system) and foreign body damage to the proventriculus (true stomach), one had chronic constipation (yes, birds can suffer from this as well), one had a severe intestinal infection and one had drowned. In addition to these, eight birds had suffered collision injuries, three had suffered predation injuries (two by cats and one by a raptor), two had handling shock (one of which also had avian tuberculosis) one had air sacculitis (an infection of the air sacs), one had kidney failure, one had verminous peritonitis (terminal inflammation of the lining of the abdomen caused by migrating parasitic worms) and no diagnosis was achieved in three cases.

Interesting autopsy findings included a Great Spotted Woodpecker with an abnormal facial joint (the joint between the upper beak and the cranium), the Wheatear with verminous peritonitis where a large number of roundworms in the intestines had bored through the intestinal wall effectively causing a ruptured intestine and the Glaucous Gull with aspergillosis.

**Table 1: All Findings, Listed by Species**

<i>Species</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Date found</i>	<i>Cause of death</i>
Barnacle Goose	imm	F	09/10/01	starvation secondary to chronic constipation
Blackbird	adult	M	17/10/01	handling shock, circulatory failure
Blackcap	1st W	F	09/10/01	predation - cat
Blackcap	1st W	F	22/10/01	handling shock - hypoglycaemic
Blackcap	1st W	M	23/10/01	no diagnosis
Blackcap	adult	F	27/10/01	starvation primary (?migratory)
Blackcap	adult	M	08/10/02	migration stress
Black-legged Kittiwake	adult	M	06/08/02	starvation; secondary collision injuries
Brambling	3	M	17/10/02	starvation; migration stress
Common Crossbill		M	23/08/02	predation - cat
Common Crossbill	adult	M	24/08/02	collision injuries
Common Crossbill	adult	M	27/08/02	collision injury
Common Kestrel	J	F	12/09/02	no diagnosis
Common Snipe	pullus	F	17/07/02	no diagnosis
Common Snipe	adult	F	11/08/02	collision injuries: rta
Common Starling	adult	M	28/10/01	renal failure
Duncock	3	F	24/09/02	collision injuries: window
Fieldfare	1st W	F	15/10/01	collision injuries - rta
Fieldfare	1st W	M	29/10/01	starvation primary (?migratory)
Fieldfare	3	F	25/10/02	starvation, gapeworm
Glaucous Gull	sub-ad	M	12/03/02	starvation secondary to aspergillosis; proventricular foreign body
Golderest	3	?	25/10/01	starvation primary
Gt Black-backed Gull	3	M	31/10/01	starvation primary; injured foot
Gt Black-backed Gull	adult	F	06/06/02	starvation primary
Great Skua	adult	M	12/08/02	starvation primary
Gt Spotted Woodpecker	3	M	23/10/01	starvation primary; abnormal cranio-facial hinge
Grey Heron	J	F	21/10/02	starvation primary; injury to head; canthocephalans
Hawfinch	adult	F	21/04/02	starvation?
Hawfinch	5	F	05/05/02	predation: raptor
Herring Gull	adult	M	n/k	starvation primary
Jack Snipe	5	F	11/10/02	starvation; tapeworms
Lr Black-backed Gull	3rd S		08/06/02	trauma
Long-tailed Duck	adult	F	21/10/02	starvation; secondary drowning
Mealy Redpoll	3	M	26/10/01	collision injuries
Mistle Thrush	adult	M	25/11/02	starvation, gapeworm
Northern Wheatear	3	F	24/09/02	starvation (migration); secondary haemorrhagic enteritis
Northern Wheatear	1st W	M	15/10/02	verminous peritonitis
Northern Wheatear	3	F	24/09/02	starvation
Redwing	1st W	F	27/10/01	air sacculitis
Redwing	adult	F	01/04/02	collision injuries
Snow Bunting	adult	F	08/11/02	collision injuries; avian tuberculosis
Song Thrush	1st W	M	26/10/01	starvation primary (?migratory)
Song Thrush	3	M	14/10/02	starvation; migration stress
Song Thrush	3	M	24/10/02	starvation
Song Thrush	3	F	24/10/02	starvation, gapeworm
Water Rail	adult	F	08/10/01	starvation primary

This study is ongoing and over the years has built up a valuable database of information. It relies totally on staff, residents and visitors to Fair Isle collecting any bodies found, handing them in at the Bird Observatory together with information of where and when they were found and any particulars of the bird's death or the circumstances in which it was found. I am very grateful to all those, especially the Observatory staff, who have helped me in the past.

*A number of guests visit Fair Isle year after year; be it for the relaxed but excellent birding, the peace and quiet, friendly atmosphere, the superb home cooking or a combination of them all. Mark Prestwood and Steve Rock completed ten autumn visits in a row in 2002. Here is a diary of some of Mark's highlights in those ten years . . .*

## **Fair Isle: Food and Birds**

*Mark Prestwood*

- 07:00            Trap-Rounds Every Morning  
Wednesday, 22nd September 1999  
**PADDYFIELD WARBLER** trapped in the Gully, processed at the Observatory, then photographed afterwards. Nice way to start the day!
- 08:00            Wednesday, 21st September 1994  
**PALLAS'S GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** at Upper Leogh. Good views in the field but the bird later trapped itself in a shed giving us excellent views in the hand.
- 08:30            Traditional breakfast, although on a Sunday you just get a boiled egg, porridge and fruit juice.  
Sausage, bacon, black pudding, scrambled egg, tomato, hash browns, mushrooms, toast and marmalade with a cup of tea to finish! Just enough to keep you going until lunch time!
- 09:30            Thursday, 15th September 1994  
**PECHORA PIPIT** trapped in the plantation and processed at the Observatory. Photographed afterwards.
- 10:30            Friday 20th September 1996  
**GREAT SNIPE** at Springfield. My third bird of the day – the first bird died the day before, but they all count!
- 11:30            Thursday 24th September 1998  
**RUSTIC BUNTING** at Skerryholm. Three birds in one field, but I could only see two – what bad luck!
- 12:30            Friday 26th September 1997  
**LANCEOLATED WARBLER** in the Wirvie Burn. Finally, after five years of visiting Fair Isle I got to see this very special *Locustella*. I'll celebrate later!



- 13:00 Sunday 24th September 2000  
Traditional Sunday lunch.  
Roast beef, yorkshire pudding, boiled potato, baked potato, peas, carrots, gravy – two helpings!  
Pavlova for pudding – seven helpings, a Fair Isle world record!
- 14:00 Saturday 7th September 2002  
**CHESTNUT BUNTING** at Quoy – it's on my list!
- 15:00 Friday 26th September 1997  
**OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT** at Schoolton. The only reason I did not see this bird at Quoy (my favourite croft for birds) was that Angus Murray dislocated his knee climbing over a stile and it took ten men to carry him across the road to Schoolton!
- 16:00 Sunday 8th September 2002  
**CITRINE WAGTAIL** in South Harbour. Watched with two other people. One month later (8th October 2002) on St. Martins, Isle of Scilly I would watch another Citrine Wagtail with 200 people!
- 17:00 Saturday 20th September 1997  
**YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING** at Springfield. One of the Fair Isle 'specials'. Some other specials – Paddyfield Warbler, Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, Lanceolated Warbler, Pechora Pipit and Olive-backed Pipit would also be seen in September 1997. Best year ever?
- 18:00 Tuesday 24th September 1996  
**BLYTH'S REED WARBLER** trapped in Homisdale. Trapped to confirm the identification and to prevent the bird from being chased, so it could feed in peace before dark.
- 19:00 Evening meal.  
Friday 26th September 1997  
Fish pie, boiled potato, peas – two helpings! Pears and cream to follow. One glass of white wine, two glasses of red wine. I did tick 'Lancy' on this day and saw Pechora Pipit and Olive-backed Pipit. Just another day on Fair Isle!
- 19:30 Sunday 20th September 1998  
**ISABELLINE WHEATEAR** on Malcolm's Head. This bird was only just seen in day-light! It was the first record for Fair Isle.

20:00 – 21:30 Drink in the bar!

21:30 Bird log is called every night.  
Tuesday 17th September 2002  
No birds but it was Fyntan Merlin Shaw's third birthday. Lots of birthday cake left until I ate the last piece!

22:00 Carry on drinking in the bar! Sometimes Storm Petrels are trapped (depending on the weather!).

23:00 – 07:00 Sleep – tomorrow's another day!

You may not see all the above-mentioned birds in one visit to Fair Isle, but you will gain a stone in weight and hopefully have a great time anyway.



*Wheatear – Rebecca Nason ➤*

## **Fair Isle, one of the last restaurants for Northern Wheatears (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) heading towards Iceland and Greenland**

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### **Abstract:**

Fair Isle provides one of the last opportunities of north-bound Northern Wheatears to refuel before embarking on the hazardous sea crossing to their breeding grounds. To investigate and compare preparation for the sea crossing of the two subspecies *O. o. leucorhoa* and *O. o. oenanthe* I visited Fair Isle for one month during spring migration 2002. This visit was part of an ongoing project about migration strategies of different populations of Northern Wheatears, including observations at different stopover sites throughout Europe. With means of colour rings and remote weighing with baited scales, I estimated stopover length, departure fuel loads and daily fuel deposition rates of resting Wheatears. The subspecies *O. o. leucorhoa* which has to cross the Atlantic ocean towards their breeding grounds in Iceland, Greenland and even Canada showed significant higher departure fuel loads (31.3 %, n = 30) than the nominate subspecies which is already close to their northernmost breeding range (14.1 %, n = 10). Mean fuel deposition rates of 5.3 % of lean body mass per day and high feeding success on the moorland of Fair Isle show that we find feeding conditions allowing even lean Wheatears to prepare for the Atlantic crossing within a few days.

### **Introduction**

Many long distance migrants have to cross ecological barriers such as deserts, mountains or open seas and need to prepare for these crossings by accumulating fat reserves (e.g. Berthold 1975). *O. o. leucorhoa* is one of the few passerines to cover non-stop flights over sea of several hundred kilometres on their way from their African winter quarters towards their breeding grounds in Iceland, Greenland and east Canada. In contrast to other species and other Wheatear populations with migration routes over land, these birds have no chance neither to refuel nor to rest when crossing the Atlantic. To settle the nearctic breeding grounds this species had to develop special migration strategies to meet the demands of that hazardous migration route.

During spring migration, Fair Isle is one of the last places where Northern Wheatears have the opportunity to refuel before crossing the Atlantic ocean. Moreover, it is a stopover site where we are lucky to find two well distinguishable subspecies of the Northern Wheatear. For the subspecies *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorhoa* which breeds in East Canada, Greenland and Iceland (Cramp 1988), northern Scotland, including Fair Isle, provides important stopover habitats. To

cover the distance of approximately 1,000 kilometres between Fair Isle and Iceland, the Wheatears have to adjust their body mass, including all fat and protein reserves, for this flight. The nominate subspecies *Oenanthe oenanthe oenanthe*, does not breed further north than the Shetland and Faroe Islands and Norway. Consequently, they do not need to prepare for such a long non-stop flight over sea. To investigate Wheatears stopping over and preparing for the Atlantic crossing I visited the Fair Isle Bird Observatory in May 2002. We expected that Northern Wheatears should not leave the island without reasonable fat reserves, especially if they are flying towards Iceland and Greenland. Compared with migrating Wheatears on the German coast, we expected higher departure fuel loads as they will have no further chance to refuel except on the Faroe or Shetland Islands. One of our questions was how much fat they deposit for the barrier crossing and how quickly they can reach their departure weight at that particular stop over site.

## Methods

During my one month visit at Fair Isle I trapped 56 Wheatears around the North Lighthouse by using clap-nets. All birds were marked with a BTO ring and an individual combination of three colour rings. Besides various morphometric data I estimated the fat and muscle score (Bairlein 1995) and weighed all birds. Males with wing length longer than 102 mm and females with a wing length exceeding 97 mm were considered to belong to subspecies *O. o. leucorhoa*, whereas females with wings shorter than 96 mm and males below 99 mm were assigned to subspecies *O. o. oenanthe* (Svensson 1992).

The study site around the North Lighthouse was searched daily for colour-ringed individuals and the minimum stopover length of each bird was estimated as the number of days between ringing and last sighting, although the day of ringing may not have been the day of arrival.

As there were several pairs of breeding Wheatears at Fair Isle, I excluded from the analyses all colour-ringed Wheatears that were still seen after seven days *and* showing breeding behaviour. To estimate habitat quality, individuals were observed for two minutes and the number of hops, pecks, flights and, if possible, successful and unsuccessful pecks were counted (methods see Dierschke and Delingat 2001). Wheatears were also attracted to five bowls baited with mealworms and placed on electric scales, which allowed me to read their body weight using binoculars or a telescope from a distance of 10-20 m. The amount of mealworms offered depended on weather conditions and only in good weather were the bowls filled for a maximum of seven hours daily. On average I kept the bowls filled for four hours daily from 7th until 24th May. As the Wheatears were feeding intensively on *Tipulidae* larvae, which were available at all times on the moorland at Fair Isle, I consider that the offered mealworms did not influence the departure fuel load (DFL)

and fat deposition rates (FDR). Although mass changes during stopovers may not only reflect the change of accumulated fat reserves but also to a small degree that of proteins (Piersma 1990), the term fat deposition rate (FDR) was used.

To calculate FDR, the change in body mass from first trap to last retrap or last registration on a scale was divided by the hours between the two measurements (only measurements with at least 24 hours between first and last measurement were taken into account). This body mass change per hour was multiplied by 24 hours to gain a more reasonable scale of body mass change per day. As there was no clear diurnal pattern in body mass of 65 first traps from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. (including Wheatears trapped at the observatory), there was no need to correct body mass for the time of day, when calculating FDR. In the following, FDR will be expressed as proportion of lean body mass.

The departure fuel load (DFL) is the amount of fat and protein reserves that migrating birds possess until the moment of departure from a stopover site. It is calculated by subtracting lean body mass from body mass at last retrap or last registration on a scale. It is also expressed as proportion of lean body mass.

Lean body mass (LBM) for every wing length was calculated by a linear regression ( $LBM = 0.405 \cdot \text{wing length} - 17.32$ ;  $R^2 = 0.35$ ). This equation was formulated from 507 Wheatears with fat score one, trapped at different stopover sites throughout Europe.

## Results

From 56 trapped Wheatears 41 were considered as migrating birds (see methods). Thirty of these birds belonged to subspecies *O. o. leucorhoa*, ten birds were ascribed to subspecies *O. o. oenanthe* and only one bird could not be grouped by wing length. Nine of these *O. o. leucorhoa* and one *O. o. oenanthe* were recorded at the study site (around North Lighthouse) on subsequent days to that of capture.

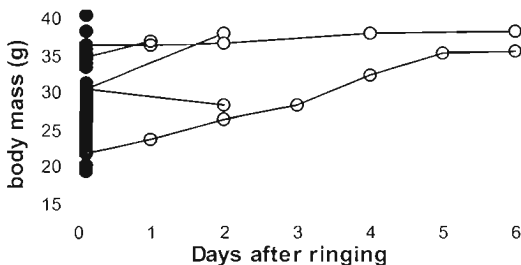
Stopover length of the resting birds varied from one to six days (mean:  $2.9 \pm 1.9$  days).

DFL for all departing *O. o. leucorhoa* was 31.3 % and differed significantly when compared to fuel loads of *O. o. oenanthe* (14.1%) (Mann-Whitney U-Test:  $P = 0.034$ ).

In five individuals of *O. o. leucorhoa* I could investigate fat deposition rates either by re-trapping or remote weighing (Fig 1). These birds gained on average 5.3 % of lean body mass per day. However, fat deposition rates varied from -4.3 % (one bird lost body mass within two days) and 13.7 % in a bird that stayed for two days after

ringing. Fig. 1 also shows that lean birds tend to deposit fat at higher rates than birds with higher body mass.

Birds at Fair Isle showed a relatively high success rate in pecking, when feeding mainly on *Tipulidae* larvae. A minimum of 64 % of 201 observed pecks were successful and the high quality of the moorland habitat for foraging Wheatears was also suggested by an average of four pecks per minute, with an average effort of just 6.3 hops per peck (n = 22 observation).



**Fig.1: Body mass of first traps (filled circles) and re-trapped (or remotely weighed) Wheatears (open circles).**

## Discussion

The relatively high departure fat loads of *O. o. leucorhoa* show that the birds are well aware of the approaching demand of crossing the North Atlantic. For *O. o. oenanthe*, which are probably heading towards the Shetland Islands or Norway, the breeding sites are much closer than for *O. o. leucorhoa* and, therefore, they can avoid energetically costly fuel reserves and time-consuming stopover duration. Although they experience the same good feeding conditions they depart with lower fuel loads. This strategy is advantageous in terms of saving energy and time (e.g. Alerstam & Lindström 1990, Alerstam & Hedenström 1998) and additionally reduces depredation risk due to an increased manoeuvrability (Kullberg et al. 1996, Cimprich & Moore 1999, Lind et al. 1999). The differing fat loads of the two subspecies confirm similar observations on the German island of Helgoland (Dierschke & Delingat 2001). The difference is even more evident on Fair Isle than on the more southern stopover site. Departure fuel loads of *O. o. leucorhoa* and *O. o. oenanthe* on spring migration in 1998 at Helgoland were 24.4 % (n = 29) and 12.3 % (n = 100) respectively (J. Delingat & V. Dierschke unpubl.). This observation implies that Greenland/Icelandic Wheatears leaving the German coast stopover in Britain and refuel again before finally crossing the North Atlantic. It also supports the theory that migrating *O. o. oenanthe* avoid accumu-

lating large fuel reserves. For *O. o. leucorhoa* there are two possible strategies: either they also initially migrate with minimal reserves but adjust their stopover decisions as soon as their migration route requires higher departure fuel loads (eg to cross the Atlantic) or they may prefer to migrate in larger steps (with fewer stopovers) and thus carry larger fuel stores throughout their journey.

Which strategy *O. o. leucorhoa* follows has to be tested at stopover sites where it does not face any ecological barrier. As the visit to Fair Isle was part of a project to study migration strategies of different populations of the Northern Wheatear and was carried out at various stopover sites throughout Europe, these questions can hopefully be answered in the near future.

The observed fat deposition rates of 5.3 % are similar to data gained from Wheatears fed ad libitum during autumn migration at Helgoland ( $6 \% \pm 0.02$ ,  $n = 13$ , Schmaljohann & Dierschke unpubl.).

Compared to a mean FDR of 2.4 % of 31 different migrating passerine species or populations published by Alerstam and Lindström (1990) the observed value is relatively high. This daily gain in body mass is probably due to relatively good feeding conditions on Fair Isle. The amount of pecks per minute is similar to those observed on *O. o. leucorhoa* at beach habitats at Helgoland (4.35 pecks per minute;  $n = 77$ , Dierschke & Delingat 2001), where they seem to reach their metabolical limits when refuelling (Dierschke et. al 2003). Although they show a higher effort on locomotion per peck at Fair Isle, the success rate is higher compared to beach habitat on Helgoland (2.8 hops/peck  $n = 77$ , successful pecks: 61.4 %) where the Wheatears feed on (sometimes superabundant) small kelp fly Larvae (*Coelopidae*). The higher effort in foraging at Fair Isle, expressed as more hops per peck, is probably compensated for by the larger prey reward ie *Tipulidae* larvae.

The feeding success and the average FDR of 5.3 % shows that stopover sites such as the Fair Isle moorland allow even lean birds to reach the average DFL for crossing the Atlantic (31 %) within one week. One could assume that lean birds would reach their departure fuel loads even faster, because they probably deposit fat at higher rates than the observed mean of 5.3 % of lean body mass (Fig 1). However, it has to be taken into account that arriving birds might be in a physiological state that does not allow them to gain body mass immediately and an initial search and settling time can actually result in mass loss – as observed in one bird in this study (e.g. Alerstam & Hedenström 1998).

The observed flexibility in migration strategies of different populations of Northern Wheatears might have been essential to settle such remote breeding areas as Iceland, Greenland and Canada.

More data about fat deposition rates, stopover length and departure fuel loads gained with the simple method of baited scales would be helpful to confirm these observations and answer further questions about stopover decisions and the development of migration strategies for different migration routes.

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# ORNITHOLOGY

## MONTHLY SUMMARY

*Paul French and Deryk Shaw*

The monthly totals of species recorded were:

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
No. species	34	50	78	107	135	106	78	94	137	143	89	52

### January–February

The highlight of the opening months was the over-wintering Great Tit at North Light, first seen in October 2001, which remained until 7th February. One or two Cormorants were regularly found sheltering in North Haven or South Harbour and these were occasionally joined by Goldeneye, Common Scoter and Long-tailed Duck. Raptors were represented by a male Peregrine and female Merlin, but more unusual was a wandering Kestrel for a few days in January whilst a female Sparrowhawk in late February may have been an early spring migrant. Common Snipe, Redshank and Turnstone over-wintered in reasonable numbers (peak counts of 80, 67 and 160 respectively) whilst a few Water Rails and occasional Jack Snipe and Woodcock were also noted. Gulls were represented by small numbers of Common Gulls with occasional Black-headed and Glaucous Gulls whilst strong winds on 11th February resulted in 1,500 Herring Gulls seeking shelter. Over-wintering passerines included a few Robins and Chaffinches and good numbers of thrushes (around 60 Fieldfare, 30 Blackbird, 20 Redwing and a couple of Song Thrushes). The Snow Bunting flock peaked at just 45 on 12th February. Small numbers of Oystercatchers and Lapwings began to move through from early February, with larger numbers from the third week, along with a few Curlew and Skylarks. Guillemots and Razorbills began to gather offshore from 25th February – the same day as the first returning Ringed Plovers.

### March

A month dominated by wader passage as Oystercatchers, Ringed Plovers, Lapwings and Curlews continued to pass through, joined (from 19th) by Golden Plovers. Apart from the wader passage, the first half of the month was fairly quiet with just regular Goldeneye and occasional sightings of Long-tailed Duck, Water Rail, Dunlin, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and Merlin. Redshank and Turnstone were present throughout, with peaks of 60 (4th) and 190 (5th) respectively. Fine weather on 13th induced some display from Lapwings, Ringed Plovers and Curlew as the first Pied Wagtail of the year flew over the Gully. A Black Swan flew north at breakfast the following morning, startling many islanders and resulting in several frantic calls to the Observatory! The first Stonechats (2) were seen, Skylarks began to increase (185 counted) and the first Kittiwakes were also noted back on ledges.

Seven Common Scoter, a Kestrel and Mistle Thrush were the highlights of the 15th. The 17th saw several year ticks as Meadow Pipit, Rook and Yellowhammer all put in an appearance, but pride of place went to the Black-bellied Dipper in South Raeva. A quiet few days ensued as wet and windy weather from the west arrived, but Grey Wagtail (18th), Red-breasted Merganser and Goldcrest (20th) were all added to the year list and the Black-bellied Dipper was seen again on 19th. Fine weather once again on 23rd saw the first Black Redstarts (2) of the year, a Great Tit in the Observatory garden, a Woodcock and a good count of Purple Sandpipers (50). The following day saw a fine adult Glaucous Gull grace the Parks whilst a Dunnock in the Gully was new for the year. The final week of the month saw a trickle of early spring migrants as small numbers of Pied Wagtails, Robins, Chiffchaffs, Goldcrests, Chaffinches and Brambling passed through, with increased numbers of Meadow Pipit and large numbers of Skylark. But that was not all . . . an early Manx Shearwater was seen from *The Good Shepherd IV* on 26th when Lesser Black-backed Gull, Chiffchaff and Greenfinch were also added to the year list. The 27th saw a first-summer Glaucous Gull pass overhead, but the date was more significant for marking the return of the first Bonxie of the year. Five Puffins in Finniky Bay on 28th vied for importance with the first two Northern Wheatears seen, whilst a male Reed Bunting had to settle for third place on the day's year list podium. A count of nine Bonxies contributed to a good day on 29th when ten Teal, a female Peregrine, a first-summer Glaucous Gull and two Linnets were also noted. The 30th was notable for the highest counts of the month for both Oystercatcher (141) and Skylark (510) whilst the month ended with a Collared Dove and our earliest ever Swallow.

## April

A quiet start to the month saw the spring's highest count of Purple Sandpipers (90) on 1st and the first Ring Ouzel the following day. Thrushes continued to move in reasonable numbers with 160 Fieldfare and 67 Redwing counted on 3rd, along with the year's first Wigeon – a pair off South Light. A small fall on 4th saw a Whooper Swan pass through and counts of 18 Northern Wheatears (including the first females) and 11 Linnets, with single Black Redstart, Stonechat and the first Blackcaps (3) also seen. A quiet 5th was followed by two more additions to the year list on 6th – Pink-footed Goose (7) and Jackdaw, but we were not prepared for what happened the following day . . . light south-easterly winds and fine weather on 7th resulted in some good visible migration and no less than *five* additions to the year list. Four Grey Herons, three Red-breasted Mergansers, three Shelduck, 237 Oystercatchers, 124 Lapwings, 29 Ringed Plovers, 84 Curlew, 488 Common Gulls and 250 Meadow Pipits were accompanied by our (and Scotland's) earliest ever Grasshopper Warbler in Charlie's Trees, a Long-eared Owl soaring over Vaasetter, Mistle Thrush, 13 Pied & six White Wagtails, 11 Chiffchaffs, 18 Goldcrests, 14 Chaffinches, five Greenfinches, five Siskin, six Linnets, four Yellowhammers and

a Common Redpoll! With winds in the south-west, the following four days were fairly quiet. A Jackdaw flew through on the 8th, along with a count of 435 Skylark and the years first two Willow Warblers. With the wind moving into the south-east for a week from the 14th, birds began to trickle through once again. Greenshank and Sand Martin were the first two year ticks of this period, but the first scarcer migrant was the Waxwing that paused briefly at Neder Taft on the 16th. Also noted on this day were both Long and Short-eared Owls, 34 Brambling and a sadly oiled Great Northern Diver in Hjukni Geo. With no thrush falls up to this period, the 170 Fieldfare on the 17th were noteworthy. A Mistle Thrush, Knot and Shelduck were the highlights of the 18th, while the 19th quickly turned into one of April's best days. A Hawfinch at the Haa was eclipsed by the capture of a second bird at the Observatory. A female Bluethroat was (this early) probably of the white-spotted race and a female Marsh Harrier was flushed from the Rippack. This bird continued to put in regular appearances over Gilsetter for the following four days.

A change to south-westerly wind didn't harm migration, as a summer-plumaged male Lapland Bunting was found on the Wirvie Brecks on the 21st. Five Ring Ouzels and a Short-eared Owl were also seen that day. A fall of 98 Northern Wheatears on the 24th was mainly confined to the northern half of the island, while all of the ten Sand Martins were in the south. A good count of 68 Redshank on the 25th was centred around the South Light area. The 26th saw the arrival of the first real Fair Isle rarity, in the fine shape of a White Stork. This particular bird had been tracked from mainland Scotland to North Ronaldsay (Orkney), before heading out towards Fair Isle on the 25th. Discovered at Easter Lothar Water, it spent the morning in the Skroo and Wirvie Brecks area. It arrived a few hours ahead of gale force north-westerly winds and, not surprisingly, was never seen again. The next two days were quiet, with only Common Sandpiper, 11 Whimbrel, Knot and Short-eared Owl being found. A swing to north-easterlies on the 29th brought the month to a close with some much anticipated common migrants. Two Sedge Warblers, Grasshopper Warbler, ten Willow Warblers, 54 Golden Plover, 101 Northern Wheatears, Whinchat and Arctic Tern were all seen, but less expected was the discovery of a smart Little Bunting on the Field dung heap on the 30th. The first spring record for six years, the warm weather even induced short bursts of sub-song from it!

## May

The opening four days witnessed light north-westerly winds and little in the way of migration, although two Grasshopper Warblers and a Wood Warbler on the 3rd provided interest. A good day count of 32 Carrion Crows was recorded on the 4th, along with the first Cuckoo of the year. The 5th dawned clear and sunny with a light easterly blowing. The first good birds of the day were soon found on Vaasetter, a trip of three Dotterel which allowed close inspection. Soon after, a Short-toed Lark was discovered commuting between the rigs at Shirva and Quoy. An influx of

*leucorhoa* Wheatears reached a total of 87, while a Goldfinch at Stackhoull rounded off the day nicely. The following day saw yet more year ticks arriving, along with the first major influx of Arctic Terns (200). However, birds of the day were the Osprey that soared over Vaasetter and the Quail flushed in Da Water. Nine Common Terns on the 7th was evidence of passage, but a Wryneck and Bluethroat were more appreciated, as were three more classic migrants new in: Whinchat, Redstart and Pied Flycatcher.

A switch to a light north, north-easterly wind on the 8th brought more new birds to the isle. Two Greenshank were the highlights of the morning census, but a busy evening followed, with the last trap round of the day producing a Bluethroat and, more unexpectedly, the spring's second Little Bunting. This one chose to feed in the roadside heather at single dyke trap. A sub-adult male Hen Harrier was then found in the south and put in erratic appearances over the next two days. A Red-backed Shrike on the 9th paved the way for a good arrival of migrants over the following week. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was a good spring find at the peat cuttings on the 10th, while Red-backed Shrikes increased to seven and ten Bluethroats were found. A Wryneck, Wood Warbler, nine Redstarts and ten Pied Flycatchers added to a good day's birding. Not to be outdone, the 11th produced some good birds, with Bluethroats increasing to 12 and counts of 29 Sedge and 22 Willow Warblers. A flighty and elusive large pipit at Quoy was finally identified as a Richard's after a morning of flight views and atypical calls. Late in the day, the discovery of two Oortolan Buntings added a splash of the continent to the Boini Mire. A slight shift in the wind to the south-west produced a fall of 250 *leucorhoa* Wheatears and the first two 'official' rarities of the year. A female Subalpine Warbler was discovered on the cliffs at Furse, closely followed by an elusive Thrush Nightingale in the Kiln o' Skroo at North Light. The 'Subalp' put in erratic appearances until the 15th, but the 'Sprosser' was only a one day bird.

A stream of depressions over the country for the remainder of the month resulted in almost constant easterly quarter winds. However, they were mainly of local origin and consequently, migrants were often in short supply. Nonetheless, the scarcer migrants continued to be found. A Wryneck and Bar-tailed Godwit on the 13th were followed by an unusual male Common Rosefinch on the 15th. All of the usual red pigment had been replaced with orange and it caused quite a stir amongst both staff and islanders alike. Also new in on the 15th was the month's fourth Dotterel, this one putting in a brief and elusive stay on Ward Hill. Two Wood Warblers and 32 Carrion Crows rounded off an eventful day by recent standards. A Corncrake was first heard singing in the Boini Mire on the 16th, while an Osprey apparently did a good impression of a collie dog, sitting on North Raeva! Bird of the day however, was the Red-throated Pipit found late on in the Wirvie Brecks.

The following few days produced little of note with a summer-plumaged *islandica* Black-tailed Godwit on the 17th, a new Bluethroat and Black Redstart on the 18th and a Shelduck on the 19th being the highlights. Mist, rain and east/south-east winds were the forecast for the next couple of days. Five new Bluethroats were found, as were a Cuckoo and *thunbergi* Yellow Wagtail. However, bird of the month was the ringtail Montagu's/Pallid Harrier discovered flying around the Field and Setter area. It chose to land in Bulls Park, where its relatively short legs suggested the former. On taking flight, the barred axillaries confirmed the identification as Fair Isle's second Montagu's Harrier. It then spent the next four days hunting over the island, giving good views to those present. Unfortunately, the bird was seen to be Fulmar oiled on the 24th and was found dead on the 25th. An elusive Spotted Crake was a good spring find on the 22nd, as was a brief Mistle Thrush. More typical of an autumn sighting was the Eurasian White-fronted Goose that arrived in North Park with two Greylags on the 23rd. Also on the 23rd, three Reed Warblers provided useful identification practice and a Quail was flushed. The Crossbill trapped on the 25th brought back memories of last summer's invasion and it spent the remainder of the month giving good views around the trapping area. A good selection of migrants on the 27th included a Hawfinch, two Red-backed Shrikes and three Common Rosefinches – one of which was a stunning male that was seen to be ringed. Unfortunately it eluded capture, mainly because our best efforts were being directed at the Lower Stoneybrek garden and its current inhabitant: an elusive Nightingale species. Initially thought to be a Common Nightingale, this subtly marked bird was eventually identified as the spring's second Thrush Nightingale after good views were obtained. This too managed to avoid our efforts at trapping it. The 28th was shaping up to be a much quieter day, until a Honey Buzzard was seen flying in off the sea over Bunness. The final three days produced birds typical of this time. Two Marsh Warblers on the 28th were followed by a Wood Sandpiper and Icterine Warbler on the 30th. A male Hen Harrier over Lerness was a more unexpected late May bird on the 30th, but the addition of a ringtail the following day took our 'harrier year list' to new and dizzy heights! A Turtle Dove was the only year tick of the 31st, but the month's theme of multiple occurrences kept going with the trapping of a female Subalpine Warbler in the Gully, two Quail in Da Water and an Osprey over the south.

## June

June proved to be a frustrating month. The weather systems continued to be conducive to migration and a steady stream of common and scarce migrants were found. The much hoped for rarity however, remained absent. The by now familiar sight of Bluethroats and Red-backed Shrikes was repeated throughout much of the opening fortnight. The female Subalpine Warbler continued to put in erratic appearances until the 7th and three Crossbills were seen. A good *hirundine* movement saw 60 House Martins pass through on the 2nd, followed by 22 the

following day accompanied by 20 Swallows. An Icterine Warbler proved elusive at Lower Leogh on the 4th, as did yet another Quail. The identification of 'unstreaked *acros*' became the subject of some debate over the next few days, as two Marsh Warblers on the 5th were followed by a Reed Warbler the following day. Confidence was restored on the 7th with the identification of no less than six Marsh Warblers around the isle. Also new in were a Dotterel on Busta Brecks, four Red-backed Shrikes, a Common Rosefinch, 12 Lesser Whitethroats and a Bar-tailed Godwit. An arrival of Spotted Flycatchers overnight resulted in 50 being logged on the 8th. Also notable on the 8th were a Quail, 12 Garden Warblers, 7 Redstarts and a late Blackbird. The second week produced much the same in the way of scarcities, but lacked the numbers of common migrants to go with it. The final Bluethroat of the spring was found on the 10th at Leogh, bringing the spring's total to an impressive minimum of 32.

An adult Rosy Starling was a good find on the early morning trap round on the 14th. It proved to be extremely elusive during its three day stay. Surprisingly less hard to pin down were the two Marsh Warblers and Long-eared Owl also new in on the 14th. A Hobby graced the north on the 15th and a Spotted Redshank was bird of the day on the 16th, despite the discovery of two more Quail. The sea-watching season got off to a decent start with the first Manx Shearwater on the 18th. A male Marsh Harrier put in a brief, but welcome appearance on the 19th. A small movement of birds on the 20th involved 23 Black-headed Gulls, two Sandwich Terns, seven Swifts, a Turtle Dove and Grey Wagtail. Bird of the day however was a female Goosander in Hesti Geo. The second Rosy Starling of the month put in a brief appearance at Barkland for one lucky observer. The closing week opened well, with an Icterine Warbler and female Red-backed Shrike on the 25th. The half-hearted Crossbill movement continued unabated, with one bird seen on the 26th. A late Sand Martin and a good count of 90 Oystercatchers were the highlights of the 27th. A disappointing month ended with another Turtle Dove and a Rook.

## July

If June was a frustrating and ultimately disappointing month, then the surprises that July threw at us compensated admirably. The opening fortnight produced some good sightings, but nothing too outrageous. A most unusual record was of a juvenile Cuckoo on the 1st. A Turtle Dove on the 3rd was followed by a Sandwich Tern on the 4th. A good run of mid-summer warblers then came, with Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat and Blackcap all on the 4th and an Icterine Warbler and Garden Warbler on the 5th. Southbound waders then became a feature of the month, with five Whimbrel on the 7th and 100 Oystercatchers and 18 Curlew on the 8th leading the way. The first Leach's Petrel of the year was trapped on the 10th during a Storm Petrel ringing session. Numbers of waders continued to grow, with 44 Redshank, Knot and Bar-tailed Godwit on the 12th, 151 Oystercatchers on the

13th and three Bar-tailed Godwits, four Dunlin and a Sanderling on the 14th. Gulls were also passing through at this point, with counts of 32 Black-headed Gulls and 103 Common Gulls on the 13th and 14th respectively. A first-summer Hobby seen briefly on the 14th rounded off an interesting fortnight. A Black Redstart, two Red-throated Divers, eight Common Terns and 18 Lapwings on the 16th opened the third week with promise, but the discovery of a Nightjar on the 18th was completely unexpected. Flushed out of the New Plantation, it then chose to sit in full view for the rest of the day, delighting staff, visitors and islanders alike. There was no let up the following day, when news reached us of an Arctic Warbler at Barkland. It proved to be a very mobile, but particularly straightforward individual.

The final week was not to prove disappointing, as a Black-throated Diver was seen from the Good Shepherd IV a short way north of the island early on the 25th. A second Leach's Petrel was trapped that evening and a Wood Warbler was a surprise find in the Meadow Burn on the 28th. Incredibly, a second Arctic Warbler was discovered at Barkland late on the 30th, coming at the end of a day that had seen two Sandwich Terns, 175 Common Gulls and a Green Sandpiper pass through. This second Arctic Warbler was a much more 'Greenish-like' individual than the mid-month bird. A good count of 54 Twite rounded off an unexpectedly exciting month.

## **August**

The opening fortnight was characterised by movements of waders and gulls, but the first passerines also appeared on the back of light easterly winds and there were a couple of surprises as well. Fifteen Curlews and a Greenshank on the 1st preceded what was shaping up to be a quiet 2nd, before the discovery of a male Two-barred Crossbill in the Wirvie that evening. Unfortunately, it could not be relocated, but later events were destined to overshadow this early disappointment. An early Lesser Whitethroat on the 5th was followed by a fall of 128 Wheatears the next day. Crossbills began arriving on the 7th, with six birds seen. The first small arrival of passerines landed on the 9th, with Whinchat, Pied Flycatcher, Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat, two Wood and one Willow Warbler being logged. This increased to two Lesser Whitethroats, four Garden Warblers and a Reed Warbler on the 10th. Bird of the day was Fair Isle's earliest and, typically, highly mobile and elusive Citrine Wagtail. Initially flushed from Barkland sewage, it put in brief and erratic appearances during its stay, mainly around the Setter area. The autumn's first Robin was found on the 11th, while the Crossbill movement gained pace, with 50 on the 12th. The regular influx of Barred Warblers also began on the 12th, with three birds seen. The early morning trap round on the 14th produced one of the birds of the month, in the guise of a Melodious Warbler. After release, it showed well in the havens for the rest of the day. Four Greenshank and 27 White Wagtails headed the cast of a quiet 15th, but rarity fever took hold again on the 16th, with the discovery of four Two-barred Crossbills on Dronger. This amazing flock consorted with

around 50 Crossbills for four days. Meanwhile, the Citrine Wagtail saga continued to keep us on our toes, as what was considered to be a new bird was found at South Light. This mid-month period also produced a mixture of passerine and wader arrivals, with 72 Ringed Plovers on the 16th, 400 Common Gulls, three Pied Flycatchers and an Ortolan on the 17th and Wood Sandpiper, Wood Warbler and 257 Wheatears on the 18th.

As the easterly winds continued on the 19th, the first two Wrynecks and Red-backed Shrike were found. A Corncrake proved much more elusive after being flushed from the Meadow Burn and an especially dark juvenile Marsh Harrier quartering Gilsetter brought this year's tally to three. Continuing the year's theme of multiple occurrences, a Thrush Nightingale gave good views all day on the 20th at Utra. Surprisingly more elusive was a fly-over Grey Plover. Migrants were now arriving thick and fast and one Black-tailed Godwit on the 21st increased to two the following day, as Barred Warblers increased to seven. Mirroring events in Scandinavia, another two Two-barred Crossbills arrived on the 22nd. This pair forsook the cliffs for the thistles of Gilsetter, but were only present for half an hour. The 23rd was to prove even better, as it became apparent that a small fall had occurred. Five Wrynecks and two Common Rosefinches headed the scarce migrant list, while 79 White Wagtails and 50 Willow Warblers were also logged. Birds of the day however were the two Greenish Warblers found within 100 metres of each other. A first-year bird was discovered at Midway and, while searching for this, an adult was identified at Quoy. The young bird decided to hang around for three days giving excellent views, but the adult had other ideas and was not seen again. A Marsh Warbler showed well on the 24th, an unusual autumn record for this predominantly late spring migrant. An Ortolan on the 25th was perhaps different to the bird of the 17th, while three Common Rosefinches were seen and 19 Grey Herons were a good count. New arrivals continued on the 26th, when an Icterine Warbler began an extended stay in the Chalet garden. Nine Reed Warblers was a good count, as was the 96 White Wagtails seen. A Black Redstart at Stoneybrek was slightly early, but not as unexpected as the Thrush Nightingale flushed and subsequently trapped in Barkland. Whether this was the same bird as the one at Utra a week previously is debatable, but it proved a crowd pleaser none the less. The final few days of the month proved quieter, but a Common Rosefinch was new in on the 29th. The first two Lapland Buntings of the autumn were on Vaasetter on the 31st, as an Ortolan was either found or relocated at Quoy, but two Citrine Wagtails discovered almost simultaneously at opposite ends of the island were the big event of the day and provided plenty of debate.

## **September**

The majority of the month was dominated by an anticyclone over the Atlantic, resulting in mainly westerly quarter winds. Consequently, common migrants and in



particular thrushes, were in short supply. Nevertheless, some top draw rarities were found to enliven the log call. The month kicked off with the discovery of a fine Buff-breasted Sandpiper on Da Nizz and the two Citrine Wagtails showed intermittently. The Sandpiper proved to be very obliging over its two day stay, as it fed around the North Light. The sea produced 11 Sooty and six Manx Shearwaters on the 2nd and the 3rd was notable for the first of only three Wrynecks, a Black-tailed Godwit and a Pintail. The 4th had something special in the air and a small arrival included six Barred and one Marsh Warbler, three Pied Flycatchers and a Common Rosefinch. A 'ticking' bunting that flew over the havens was suspected of being a Yellow-breasted, until events at Quoy changed our minds. A strong head pattern and strongly rufous rump identified it as a Chestnut Bunting. The following morning dawned and the bunting was soon in the hand after accidentally becoming ensnared in the protective netting over the oat stooks. It was identified as an adult female and the slight damage to its tail did not help its case to be accepted as of truly wild origin by the Rarities Committee! However, as anyone familiar with migrants will know, they often exhibit feather damage. Indeed, a Reed Warbler, Greenfinch and Richard's Pipit all showed very similar amounts of damage. The bunting stayed around until the 7th, when the autumn's first Lanceolated Warbler was trapped in the Plantation. Altogether rarer were the two Common Cranes that drifted in from the south and settled on Hoini. The Cranes stayed until the following day when they were seen leaving to the south again. Rounding off the early autumn invasion nicely, a male Two-barred Crossbill was found at Barkland. Perhaps due to its condition more than anything else, it became very confiding during its four day stay, allowing approach to within centimetres!

A small arrival on the 10th comprised a Cuckoo, seven Tree Pipits, five Barred Warblers, a Grasshopper Warbler, Bluethroat, two Red-backed Shrikes, 42 Crossbills and 23 Lapland Buntings. The best bird was found on Lerness in the pale rumped shape of a Siberian Stonechat. The 11th was another decent day with two Turtle Doves, 10 Reed Warblers, 22 Pied Flycatchers and a Common Rosefinch. A quiet few days followed with little of note, until the discovery of a Red-breasted Flycatcher in Troili Geo on the 14th. Either this or another was at Quoy on the 15th, but excitement was restored, amongst the Scottish birders at least, with a fine Nightingale in Busta Geo. Another Red-breasted Flycatcher on the 19th in Furse displayed a nice orange wash to its throat, but we had to wait until the 21st before the first much anticipated rarity of the quiet spell dropped in. A wet *Locustella* in the Vaadal caused a bit of a stir until it was trapped and proved to be a superb River Warbler. After release in the Observatory garden, it gave good views as it crept around the tattie patch planted for just such an occasion. Two Red-breasted Flycatchers were also new in, with a well marked male in Gunnawark and the Furse bird seen near the Observatory. A hint of north-easterly induced renewed vigour in the visiting birders on the 23rd and they were duly rewarded with a fine Citrine

Wagtail. Initially found flying over Field, it was pinned down after lunch in Mavers Geo. It showed well for fifteen minutes before flying off towards Bunness, never to be seen again! Twenty Lapland Buntings and a Spotted Redshank may have provided some compensation for the wagtail dippers, but better was to follow.

The closing week opened with an amazingly confiding juvenile Rosy Starling delighting the photographers on the Aesterhoull lawn. A return to westerly winds put a halt on what little migration had been taking place as attention turned to the sea. Two 'blue' Fulmars and 40 Guillemots on the 25th were followed by two Velvet Scoter and two Great Northern Divers on the morning of the 26th. The sombre mood was quickly dispelled when news erupted of a Pechora Pipit at Skerryholm. Good views were eventually had at the Haa of this tundra humbug. Elation then turned to confusion, as several people became aware (at the same time) that there had to be two birds present. The proof came when one bird was flushed out of the Walli Burn as the other was still on view nearby. Many observers then had the almost unique experience of watching two Pechora Pipits within twenty five metres of each other – in Britain! Over the next three days the Haa and Skerryholm became the focus of attention, as the duller of the two Pechoras performed down to eight feet. The brighter bird was more mobile, but also gave stunning views. Events took a further twist on the 27th when a bright Pechora was found at Setter just before lunch. Proof that Fair Isle is far from just a 'south-easterly' island. The wind then moved into the south and new arrivals included around 600 Pink-footed Geese, 13 Whooper Swans and a mobile Common Rosefinch on the 28th. The 29th dawned with that 'probably nothing around' feeling. How wrong can you be?! A simply stunning White's Thrush was soon found in Klingers Geo and performed like no other for the amazed crowd. Not content with short sweeping flights and foraging in the geo, it chose to fly around the adjacent area and perch in full view for the best part of an hour. The sight of a White's Thrush flying out over Wick 'o Hesswalls with Sheep Rock in the background is surely one of the great Fair Isle images. Further views of the thrush started the following day well, but as the month started, so it finished: with a rarity at North Light. This time it was a very showy Alpine Swift that delighted the assembled crowd by flying within feet of them whilst displaying its raptor-like mastery of the air. Not many British sites offer the opportunity to study Alpine Swifts up close and personal and from every angle, but its perhaps one that the local Twite flock could have done without, as they followed the swift around in a vain attempt to mob it. It's easy to forget that a supporting cast of four Barred Warblers and a Hawfinch were also on offer. Even with less than favourable winds for the majority of the month, birds still made it to the isle, proving that you can never relax on Fair Isle.

## **October**

Skins of geese continued to arrive at the start of the month with at least 250 Pink-

footed and 50 Greylags recorded on the 1st. However, the best of the bunch was a Bean Goose (of the Taiga race) which arrived at the base of Malcolm's Head with three Pink-footed Geese. South-easterly winds on the 2nd produced a Yellow-browed Warbler at Guidicum and counts of 100 Skylarks, 200 Meadow Pipits, 80 Redwing and 16 Jack Snipe. The latter species increased to an impressive 35 birds the following day as Redwings increased to 700 and a Corncrake was flushed at Midway. Attention switched briefly to the sea as a Sooty Shearwater flew past South Light, although this was the only noteworthy bird. Things were generally quiet by 4th as most birds had moved on ahead of an increasing south-easterly wind but a Red-breasted Flycatcher brightened up the day. The 5th was, as expected, cold and windy. A Whooper Swan, 10 Pink-footed Geese and 105 Greylags added to the wintry theme. However, things soon warmed up shortly before lunch when the third Pechora Pipit of the autumn was found at Barkland. The following day was much quieter with little wind and few birds! The Pechora Pipit was seen at the school before a Lanceolated Warbler was found at the Haa. Two Fair Isle 'specials' found in two days – classic Fair Isle! Another small fall on the 7th included eight Yellow-browed Warblers scattered around the island, 35 Blackbirds, ten Song Thrushes, 250 Redwings and five Lapland Buntings whilst September's Rosy Starling was seen again (its final day) and two Brent Geese flew over the Observatory. Two Common Cranes touched down at Setter on the 8th and a larger arrival of migrants which included 11 Woodcock, 25 Robins, 6 Ring Ouzels, 250 Blackbirds, 200 Song Thrushes, 1500 Redwing, 90 Brambling, 70 Greenfinches and a record count of 20 Goldfinches made for an interesting log call that evening. The latter species increased to 27 on 9th but most other birds had moved on. However, a Hen Harrier, two Yellow-browed Warblers and a Great Grey Shrike kept people interested and looking, but unfortunately the hoped for rarity could not be found!

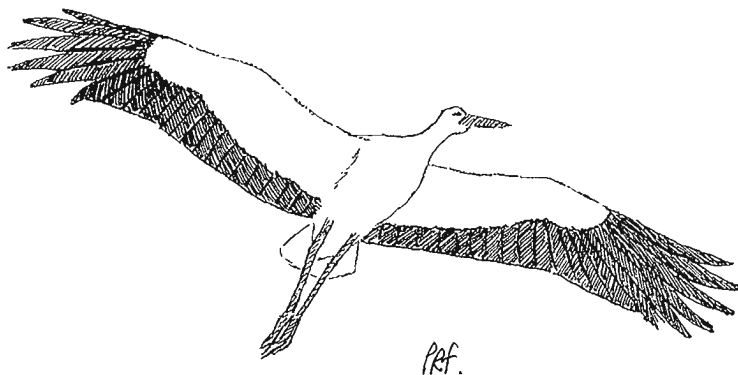
Strong south-easterlies again on the 10th produced the autumn's third Lanceolated Warbler at Pund, a late Arctic Tern in the Havens, two Shoveler and counts of 13 Short-eared Owls, 430 Blackbirds, 340 Song Thrushes, ten Yellowhammers and 27 Reed Buntings. The wind continued on the 11th and although it was quiet on the common migrant front, a few scarce migrants managed to struggle in. A Stock Dove in the north was a welcome year-tick while Glaucous Gull, the two Common Cranes, Yellow-browed Warbler, Little Bunting and the month's only Richard's Pipit were in the south. The Pechora Pipit was seen again at Barkland after a short absence, but a new rarity arrived in the form of a rather bright Olive-backed Pipit around Midway. The wind increased further on the 12th, but keen staff and visitors struggled out in the hope for more birds. Those that decided to look for the Olive-backed Pipit were rewarded with a Corncrake (as well as the Pipit), but a different Common Crane seen battling along the west cliffs was a much rarer autumn sight. The wind finally died enough on the 14th to encourage birds to come out of their shelters and the daily census revealed 80 Robins, six Redstarts, 340 Song Thrushes,

800 Redwings, 40 Chaffinches, 125 Bramblings and 25 Reed Buntings. A Common Buzzard at Troili Geo that afternoon was seen in the company of a Hen Harrier the following day heading out to Orkney! A Spotted Crake at Taft and two Shorelarks in the north were by far the best birds of the 16th, but the strangest sight was of the Great Grey Shrike (from 9th) attempting to land on a Whooper Swan's head in Sukka Mire! A switch to light northerly winds on 17th encouraged both a brief sea-watch from South Light (producing 14 Great Skuas and a Velvet Scoter) and a flock of 19 Mealy Redpolls to land on the isle. A Spotted Redshank on 18th was another sea-watching find as Mealy Redpolls increased to 25 birds and a small 'fall' included 340 Song Thrushes and 111 Snow Buntings. With the increase in Mealy Redpolls, expectation was high for the 'snow-ball' amongst the flock – we were not disappointed! Amongst the flock of Redpolls at Guidicum on 19th was a smart Arctic Redpoll, looking very pale compared to its buffy-coloured cousins. The Shore Larks were also seen as three Whooper Swans and 90 Greylag Geese flew over. The 20th was again windy, but coming from the north-west. Sea-watching was again the order of the day and a Little Auk which flew past South Light was an expected sight. An unexpected fall included 120 Skylarks, 60 Robins, 280 Song Thrushes, 104 Twite, a flock of four Goldfinches at Utra and a Slavonian Grebe in the Havens. A quiet couple of days followed, but a late Swallow on the 21st and a new Great Grey Shrike on the 22nd were things to talk about during log. The wind increased to a force seven westerly by the 23rd, but this was not enough to stop a Black-bellied Dipper from making an emergency landing at Wirvie! A Grey Phalarope in South Harbour the following day (remaining until 28th) was not the final scarce migrant of the month and common migrants were also still trickling through. Small falls included 11 Blackcaps, three Chiffchaffs, ten Siskins and 43 Snow Buntings on 25th with 88 Skylarks, 130 Redwings and three Lapland Buntings on 27th. A second Black-bellied Dipper was found (and trapped) in the Gully on 30th. An excellent month finished just as it started, with a Bean Goose and three Pink-footed Geese.

### **November–December**

The final months of the year are usually quiet due to the end of migration combined with reduced coverage and unfavourable weather. Small numbers of ducks and waders were recorded throughout these months with occasional Long-eared Owl, Merlin, Water Rail and Peregrine. The opening week of November however saw gale force south-easterlies batter the island resulting in a number of falls of tired migrants. A Grey Wagtail, four Blackcaps, 25 Greenfinches and the Black-bellied Dipper (still) in the Wirvie Burn on 1st made for a good start, but stronger winds on the 2nd forced a large number of migrants to seek shelter, including 200 Woodcock, 57 Black-headed Gulls, 4000 Herring Gulls, 3000 Fieldfares (the month's peak count), 2000 Redwing and 23 Mallard. The best birds were two Velvet Scoter which flew past South Light, a female Bullfinch at Pund (remaining

until 18th) and a very late Barred Warbler. The following day was just too windy for any census to be carried out, but a calmer 4th produced six Grey Herons, 15 Teal, 160 Woodcock, 1000 Blackbirds (a peak count), 190 Song Thrushes, two Stock Doves, a Black Redstart and a Lapland Bunting. A late Northern Wheatear at North Light and three Mistle Thrushes on 5th were good, but not good enough to compare with the four Little Gulls in North Haven. This count could have been higher although it is difficult to prove the two Little Gulls in South Harbour a short while later as different. These represented the first multiple records for Fair Isle. The 6th produced a late Greenshank and the re-appearance of the ringed Black-bellied Dipper back in the Gully. Another Little Gull which paused briefly in South Harbour on 7th and four 'Siberian' Chiffchaffs on 9th were the only good birds in an otherwise quiet period. Little Auks were seen off South Light on 12th and 13th with a Great Northern Diver off the same site on 14th. Another wave of migrants on 17th produced two Moorhen, four Water Rails and a Coot in Meadow Burn (almost all together!) with Black Redstart, Jackdaw and the month's peak count of 125 Snow Buntings. Little of note was then recorded until December 4th when a Red-throated Diver and a ring-tail Hen Harrier were seen – both unusual migrants for this time of year. Two Little Auks and a Waxwing the following day were more typical. Another (late) small fall on 10th included seven Teal, five Woodcock, 60 Fieldfares, 45 Song Thrushes, 80 Redwings, single Brambling and Siskin, 91 Snow Buntings, a late Hawfinch (unfortunately found dead on 11th) and the year's final year-tick in the form of two Canada Geese on Easter Lothar Water, bringing the total to an impressive 210 species! A fantastic end to another excellent year.



*White Stork – Paul French*

## Earliest and Latest Arrival Dates of Migrants

*Alan Bull*

The species in the table below occur as both spring and autumn migrants to Fair Isle. Where available, the year of the particular sighting has also been included.

	Earliest ever	Earliest in 2002	Latest ever	Latest in 2002
Osprey	25.04.66	06.05	04.11.35	–
Quail	30.04.61	06.05	13.10.89	–
Corncrake	10.04.66	16.05	03.11.77	12.10
Dottrel	25.04.73	05.05	06.11.76	–
Whimbrel	15.04.72	19.04	12.12. pre FIBO	26.09
Green Sandpiper	08.04.79	14.05	12.11.70	19.08
Common Sandpiper	05.04.83	27.04	02.11. pre FIBO	01.10
Arctic Skua	04.04.88	12.04	25.10.	15.09
Great Skua	17.03. pre 80	27.03	16.11.	31.10
LBB Gull	06.03.85	26.03	12.12.57	13.10
Sandwich Tern	30.04.01	20.06	18.09.77	30.07
Common Tern	25.04.83	01.05	18.10.75	17.08
Arctic Tern	No data	30.04	30.10.	10.10
Turtle Dove	23.04.71	31.05	01.11.82	16.10
Cuckoo	17.04.87	04.05	08.10.77	10.09
Swift	29.04.01	15.05	26.10.75	05.09
Wryneck	18.04.81	07.05	17.10.74	16.09
Sand Martin	02.04.89	15.04	19.10.78	06.09
Swallow	31.03.02	31.03	02.11.84	21.10
House Martin	19.04.	14.05	14.11.	01.10
Tree Pipit	14.04. pre 63	25.04	02.11. pre 63	18.10
Red-throated Pipit	08.05.36	16.05	01.11. pre FIBO	–
Yellow Wagtail	25.03.54	17.05	20.11.57	21.10
Pied Wagtail	Late February	13.03	17.11.	23.10
Bluethroat	22.03. pre 63	19.04	13.11.83	10.09
Black Redstart	01.03.	23.03	22.12.86	17.11
Redstart	09.04. pre 63	07.05	11.11.81	13.10
Whinchat	14.04.81	30.04	26.11.90	17.10
Northern Wheatear	13.03. pre 59	28.03	19.11.59	06.11
Ring Ouzel	16.03.88	02.04	19.12. pre FIBO	02.11
Grasshopper Warbler	07.04.02	07.04	23.10.00	24.09
Sedge Warbler	19.04.87	29.04	11.11.75	03.10
Marsh Warbler	22.05.84	29.05	06.10. pre 63	04.09
Reed Warbler	28.04.01	22.05	31.10.80	11.10
Icterine Warbler	13.05.99	30.05	13.10.76	07.09
Subalpine Warbler	20.04.00	12.05	04.10.79	–
Lesser Whitethroat	20.04.	06.05	08.11.	08.10
Whitethroat	11.04. pre 59	30.04	21.10.78	02.10
Garden Warbler	21.04.68	14.05	20.11.76	21.10
Blackcap	07.04.	04.04	20.12.	13.11
Wood Warbler	14.04.81	03.05	06.10.73	20.09
Chiffchaff	12.03.	26.03	No data	14.11
Willow Warbler	03.04.81	08.04	23.11.27	09.10
Spotted Flycatcher	20.04.49	10.05	26.10.85	07.10
Pied Flycatcher	21.04.83	07.05	29.10.85	02.10
Red-backed Shrike	04.05.84	09.05	08.11.93	03.10
Common Rosefinch	08.05.77	15.05	30.11.91	28.09
Ortolan Bunting	26.04.64	11.05	01.11.00	31.08
Rustic Bunting	25.04.80	–	08.11.75	–
Little Bunting	04.04.58	30.04	19.11.75	12.10

## **SYSTEMATIC LIST 2002**

*Deryk Shaw*

A total of 210 species, plus one of unknown origin (Chestnut Bunting) and one escape (Black Swan), were recorded in 2002 – the second highest total ever. However, there were no additions to the Fair Isle list, which remains at 359 species.

The Systematic List has again been changed so that species names comply with those of the British Ornithologists Union (BOU). Most changes are obvious, but wherever confusion may be possible, the previous name is included in parentheses.

### Notes

#### **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 spring and autumn migrant; occasional in midsummer and winter***

In spring, single flyovers were seen on nine dates between 9th May–8th June. July sightings were of a pair flying over on 16th and a single on 20th. In autumn, 1–3 birds were seen from South Light on six dates between 13th September–2nd October. Finally, one was in North Haven on 4th–5th December – the first ever record for this month.

#### **BLACK-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia arctica*

##### ***Vagrant; five previous records***

A summer-plumaged bird flew close past *The Good Shepherd IV* near North Light on the morning of 25th July. Only the second breeding season record – the first was on 19th May 1983.

#### **GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer*

##### ***Scarce autumn migrant, occasional at other times of year***

An oiled individual in summer plumage seen in Hjukni Geo from 16th April, evaded capture attempts and was eventually picked up dead there on 26th. Further

summer-plumaged (but healthy) individuals were seen in the Havens on 16th May and 25th June. In autumn, there were singles on 21st & 25th September and two on 26th. Finally, there was a bird still in summer plumage reported from South Light on 14th November.

**SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus*

*Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring and winter*

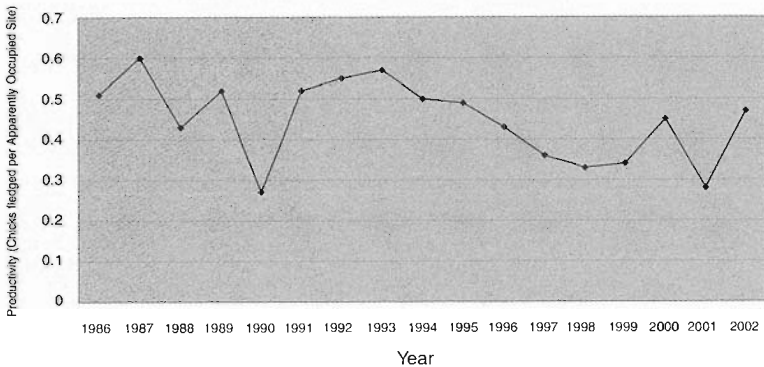
Only recorded in autumn with singles on 20th, 21st & 25th October.

**NORTHERN FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis*

*Resident; breeds in large numbers*

Numbers at monitoring plots showed a slight decrease overall (-1.6%) from 2001 but there was much variation between plots, from -36.6% at North Haven to +33.9% at Heilli Stack/Linni Geo. Breeding productivity was much improved from the poor season the previous year. Being a later nesting species, Fulmars were not so affected by the shortage of Sandeels earlier in the year. A figure of 0.47 chicks fledged per occupied site is the best since 1995 (0.49) and slightly above the ten-year average (0.43).

**Fig. 1: Northern Fulmar productivity**



It was a good autumn for dark morph 'blue' individuals with sightings on 19th, 21st(2), 25th(2), & 30th September, 17th & 20th October and 17th November.

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** *Puffinus griseus*

*Frequent autumn migrant*

One on 17th August was the only sighting until five on the last day of the month. Regular counts were received during September, mainly of 1-4 but for a maximum of 11 on 2nd. A single on 3rd October was the last of the year.



### **MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus*

#### ***Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring***

One seen from *The Good Shepherd IV* on 26th March equals the earliest ever record. Another was seen from the same vessel on 18th June. In autumn, the only sightings were three seen from land on 31st August and six on 2nd September – a good count.

### **EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

As usual the first birds were seen from *The Good Shepherd IV* in June and sightings were regular throughout the summer, although numbers were fairly small with a maximum count reported of just 30. Although most visitors still had the chance to see or handle one of these delightful little ocean wanderers in July/August, less effort was put into trapping this year, hence a maximum night count of only 50 on 25th August. Birds were seen regularly from *The Good Shepherd IV* throughout September (max 14 on 17th) and one was seen from South Light on 22nd. The last was a recently fledged juvenile found near Raevas on 1st October.

### **LEACH'S STORM-PETREL** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

#### ***Scarce migrant, summer and early autumn***

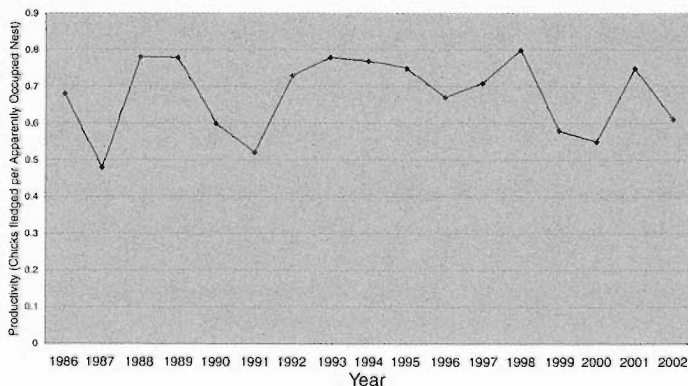
Singles trapped during 'Stormie sessions' on 10th & 25th July were, typically, the only records.

### **NORTHERN GANNET** *Morus bassanus*

#### ***Breeds in large numbers, seen offshore all year***

Birds were first noted back on the Stacks O' Skroo on 25th February. The breeding population continues to rise with a 12.7% increase in 2002, to 1,585 AON, including ten nests on Sheep Rock. A record number of occupied nests was also noted on the monitoring plots – 224 nests fledged 137 young giving a productivity of 0.61, an average figure.

**Fig. 2: Northern Gannet productivity**



## **GREAT CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

### ***Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring***

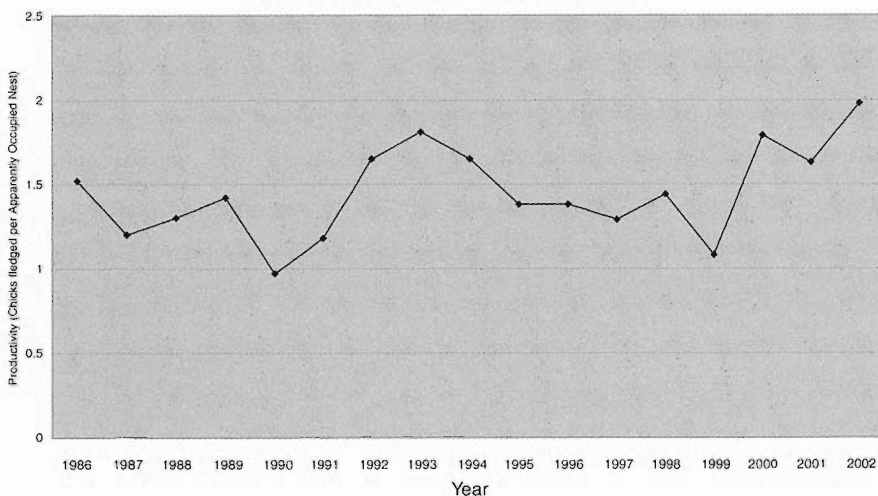
Recorded in every month except June. Ones or twos were seen regularly in the first three months and very slightly more in April. Five on 14th May and two on 30th were the only other spring sightings. An adult on 28th July is a typical mid-summer record. Autumn passage began with four on 25th August. Birds were noted on a further six dates until mid-September when passage became almost daily to the month's end. Small numbers (1-6) were the norm but 11 were seen on 16th and 18 on 18th. Further passage was noted daily from 8th-27th October and regularly throughout November and into December, again involving small numbers (1-6) with a maximum of eight on 21st October.

## **EUROPEAN SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

### ***Resident, breeds in moderate numbers***

Following last year's whole isle census showing an apparent increase in the number of breeding pairs since 1998 (from 567 to 663 AON) and a reversal of the long-term decline, it was disheartening to find that the number of AONs on the productivity plot in 2002 was the lowest since monitoring began in 1986. However, these 53 nests had the most successful year on record, fledging 105 chicks – a productivity of 1.98 chicks per nest. It may be that a shortage of Sandeels in the early part of the season (April/May) prompted many birds to choose not to nest but an abundance of food in July resulted in those chicks which did hatch being very well fed.

**Fig. 3: European Shag productivity**





*Two-barred Crossbill, Dronger, 17th August.*

*Deryk Shaw*



*Two-barred Crossbill, Barkland, 10th September.*

*Max Tyler*





*Pechora Pipit, Auld Haa, 27th September.*

*John Towell*



*Pechora Pipit, Auld Haa, 27th September.*

*John Towell*



*Male (orange variant) Common Rosefinch, Observatory, 15th May. Paul French*



*Melodious Warbler, 14th August.*

*Paul French*





*Rosy Starling & Common Starling, Aesterhoull, late September. Simon Stirrup*



*Common Cranes, Setter, 7th September.*

*Deryk Shaw*



*Alpine Swift, North Light, 30th September.*

*Hugh Harrop*



*Male European Nightjar, Observatory Plantation, 18th July.*

*Deryk Shaw*





*Thrush Nightingale, 27th August.*



*Deryk Shaw/Paul French*



*River Warbler, 21st September.*  
*Paul French*



*Male Common Redstart, 9th June.*  
*Deryk Shaw*



**GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*

***Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter/spring***

One on 12th February was the only mid-winter sighting. In spring, singles were seen on three dates in March then a peak count of four on 7th April was followed by daily counts of 1-2 from 17th April-10th May and occasional stragglers in June. Birds were then recorded daily from 29th June right through to 13th November. Counts were of 1-4 throughout July, increasing to 3-10 in August/September/early October but for peaks of 14 on 10th & 19 on 25th August, 16 on 9th, 25 on 14th and an incredible maximum of 40 on 23rd September (an island record count). Numbers tailed off to 1-3 in the latter part of October and became less frequent in November but for six on 4th November. The last bird was seen on 25th November.

**WHITE STORK** *Ciconia ciconia*

***Vagrant; three previous records (April & May)***

One reported flying in our direction from North Ronaldsay on 25th April was found at Easter Lother on 26th. It flew around the area battling against the ferocious south-westerly wind and had departed by the next morning. Only the fourth isle record (previous records; 28th April 1995, 25th May 1975, 4th-6th April 1930).

**WHOOPEE SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus*

***Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring***

A single on 4th April was the sole spring record. Autumn too was poor with 13 on 28th September, singles on 5th, 7th-25th and three on 19th October and an adult on 10th-11th November.

**BEAN GOOSE** *Anser fabalis*

***Vagrant; approximately 29 previous records involving 72 individuals (late autumn & winter)***

The first since 1998. An individual of the race *A. a. fabalis* (Taiga Bean Goose) arrived on 1st October with three Pink-footed Geese and remained into 2003.

**PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

***Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring***

A party of seven on 6th April was the only spring sighting. In autumn, a lone bird from 1st-11th September was the first, followed by six on 17th-19th, 11 on 22nd, 110 on 23rd, 81 on 26th then 600 on 28th-29th, falling to 39 next day but rising again to 250 on 1st October. Seven remained on 2nd, rising to ten from 5th-6th and falling to three by the 9th October. These three stayed (with the Bean Goose) into December when one went missing (around 10th) and the remaining two saw the rest of the year out.

**GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons*

*Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring and mid-winter*

One of the nominate north Eurasian race *A. a. albifrons* spent the afternoon of 23rd May in North Park – only the sixth confirmed record of this race and only the second May record of this species.

**GREYLAG GOOSE** *Anser anser*

*Common spring and autumn migrant*

A flock of 12 spent the first five weeks of the year on the isle alone before numbers started to fluctuate, almost daily, as small parties began to pass through. Counts ranged from 5-41 in February, 9-35 in March and 1-17 in April, before becoming less frequent in May and stragglers into June. In autumn, one on 8th September was followed by four on 17th then daily counts from 26th September-1st November, peaking at just 105 on 5th October. Small numbers passed through irregularly during November and December.

**CANADA GOOSE** *Branta canadensis*

*Rare spring visitor, vagrant in autumn/winter; seventeen previous records (31 individuals)*

Recorded in nine out of the last twelve years. Two, of the large nominate race, frequented Golden Water from 10th-14th December – only the second winter record.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*

*Frequent autumn migrant, occasional in spring*

No spring records. Autumn was fairly lean too with birds recorded irregularly from 29th September-7th October and daily from 9th-17th October with a peak of just 25 on 15th. One on 20th October was the last of the year.

**BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla*

*Rare autumn migrant, occasional in spring and winter*

Two seen flying past the Observatory on the morning of 7th October were unfortunately not assigned to race.

**COMMON SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna*

*Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn*

A party of three on 7th April was followed by singles on 18th April and 19th May.

**EURASIAN WIGEON** *Anas penelope*

*Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter*

Spring sightings were typically scarce; a pair from 3rd-8th April were briefly joined by another female on 7th with a further two females on 26th and a male on 29th.

In May, 1-2 were seen daily from 9th-15th whilst June saw single males on 4th & 30th. There was another male on 4th-5th July and a party of five on 8th. As usual, autumn numbers were much higher with almost daily sightings from 23rd August-end of November. Mainly single figures or low double figures were involved, with peaks of just 21 on 15th September and 24 on 10th October, rising to 26 on 12th. Finally, two were seen on 10th December.

#### **EURASIAN TEAL** *Anas crecca*

##### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter***

The first were not until 27th March and intermittent counts of 2-6 birds were made throughout April and again in the latter half of May but for peaks of ten on 29th March and 20 on 7th April. June records comprised a female on 21st and a male the following day. In July, there was a single on 14th-16th whilst two on 30th were probably the first birds of the autumn. There were daily records from 7th August until the end of November and intermittently in December. Most were of single figure counts with peaks of 20 on 19th August and 15 on 23rd September & 4th November.

#### **MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*

##### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred***

A small number of feral birds resident on the isle means that the distinction between genuine migrants and resident birds is difficult but irregular counts of 1-5 birds in the spring (except for a count of 23 on 7th April) suggests that passage was very light. Similarly in autumn, counts were only very slightly higher but for a very obvious peak of 57 on 7th October, 16 on 19th October and 23 on 2nd November.

#### **NORTHERN PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

##### ***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

No spring records. In autumn, there was a single on 3rd September and two on 15th whilst October produced a single from 1st-4th, with two on 2nd and another on 28th – a typical showing.

#### **NORTHERN SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata*

##### ***Scarce and irregular spring and autumn migrant***

No spring records. In autumn, there was one on 9th August and two on 10th-12th October, with a single the following day.

#### **TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula*

##### ***Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn***

In spring, there was a female on 17th April, followed by a good count of six on 16th May, with two the following day. Autumn records comprised two on 13th September, a male from 15th-19th and another on 30th.

**GREATER SCAUP** *Aythya marila*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

A female in Furse on 23rd September was the only sighting.

**COMMON EIDER** *Somateria mollissima*

***Resident, breeds in small numbers***

Present offshore all year. Post-breeding counts in August placed the population at some 350 birds.

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Clangula hyemalis*

***Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring***

A male frequented the Havens on 20th February. A light spring passage involved a pair on 1st March and singles on 13th & 31st with further singles on 29th April and 10th & 11th May. In autumn, there was a male on 29th September before regular counts from 5th-29th October, including peaks of seven on 13th and 12 on 21st. Finally, there was one on 9th November.

**BLACK (COMMON) SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra*

***Scarce spring, autumn and winter migrant***

In February, there were two in the Havens on 20th and four off South Light on 26th. Spring records comprised a party of seven on 15th March and a single on 26th, then none until two males from 6th-10th May and a further single on 5th-6th June. Autumn sightings were scarce with just singles on 16th & 22nd November.

**VELVET SCOTER** *Melanitta fusca*

***Scarce and irregular autumn migrant, rare at other times of year***

In autumn, a pair flew past Bunes on 26th September, a female past South Light on 17th October and two more past South Light on 4th November – a good autumn in a fairly lean year for ducks in general.

**COMMON GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*

***Regular winter, spring and autumn migrant***

One on 25th January was followed by irregular sightings of 1-2 birds on seven dates in February and five dates in the first half of March. A long-staying female in Furse from 29th March-21st April was the last of the spring. Autumn passage commenced with a single from 17th-27th October followed by further singles on six dates in November plus a peak count of ten on 4th and two on 25th. In December, singles were noted on 10th, 12th & 14th.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** *Mergus serrator*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

Spring records comprised a male on 20th March, three on 7th and singles on 21st & 29th April, followed by 1-2 on 11 dates in May and five dates in June. In July, two on 14th, three on 19th and singles on 20th & 21st are typical mid-summer

records. In autumn, the first on 10th September was followed by 1-2 on a further four dates in the month and regular sightings of 1-3 in October. Finally, one was seen on 20th November and another on 14th December.

**GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser*

***Scarce migrant in winter, spring and late autumn***

A female frequented Muckle Uri Geo from 20th-26th June and another flew over the isle on 18th December – a typical showing for recent years.

**EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD** *Pernis apivorus*

***Rare late spring, summer and early autumn migrant (41 previous records – 42 individuals)***

Recorded for the fifth year in succession. One flew south over Bunes on 28th May.

**EURASIAN MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus*

***Rare spring migrant, vagrant in autumn. (28 previous records)***

A good year with a female from 19th-24th April, a male from 19th-20th June and a dark morph juvenile from 19th-23rd August – only the fifth autumn record.

**HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

Spring records were all in May and comprised males on 8th-9th & 30th and a female on 31st. In autumn, a young female was seen on 9th-13th October and possibly the same on 15th whilst another juvenile reported on 4th December was found dead in Hjukni Geo on 15th.

**MONTAGU'S HARRIER** *Circus pygargus*

***Vagrant; one previous record***

A first-summer male, discovered in Bulls Park on 21st May, was seen occasionally floating around the south end of the isle but became Fulmar-oiled and was, sadly, picked up dead in Hjukni Geo on 24th (now at National Museums of Scotland). This, only the second Fair Isle and third Shetland record, was *the* bird of the spring. (The previous record was a juvenile on 31st August-1st September 1992).

**EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant***

A female was seen on 27th February. A light spring passage started with a female on 13th March and birds were seen regularly until the end of April, on just three dates in May and a straggler on 11th June – an estimated total of 13 birds, although birds usually spend a few days on the isle before moving on. Autumn passage commenced with a female on 7th September and on another three dates until the 14th. There were no further sightings until a spate of records from 9th-23rd October, involving 5-10 birds, with further singles on 9th and 25th November.

**COMMON BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

One was seen along the west cliffs on 14th October and was spotted drifting south, in the company of a Hen Harrier, the following morning. Another passed through on 18th October.

**OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*

***Scarce spring migrant, vagrant in autumn (70 previous records; 55 in spring, 15 in autumn)***

Three records – all in May. One was seen soaring over Sheep Rock on 6th before drifting south. Another spent most of the day sitting on a rock above Raevass on 16th whilst the last passed through barely noticed on 31st.

**COMMON KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant***

One arrived on the isle on 24th January and remained until 28th. Spring passage was somewhat disjointed with singles on 8th, 15th & 27th March, one on 20th April then daily sightings of 1-2 birds from 13th-30th May and further singles from 7th-22nd June – an approximate total of 14 birds. Autumn passage was, as usual, slightly heavier with almost daily sightings from 9th August-11th November. Counts of 1-2 birds were the norm, but for three on three dates in September and four on 10th-11th September. Finally, one was seen on 15th December.

**MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant; occasionally overwinters***

A female was seen on 12th February. A light spring passage saw singles on three dates in March, five in April and six in May involving an approximate total of nine birds. In autumn, singles were reported almost daily from 8th September-17th November but for counts of two on 11 dates.

**HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo*

***Rare spring and autumn migrant (42 or 43 previous records)***

An adult on 15th-16th June and a first-summer on 15th July. This species has now been recorded in five out of the past six years.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** *Falco peregrinus*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred***

A male on 23rd January and 6th & 10th February may have been the same bird. Spring sightings were regular from 29th March-1st May. All were of singles except for two on 18th April – an estimated 11 birds in total. In autumn, counts of 1-2 were regularly received from 7th September-24th October (but for three on 21st & 23rd September) and singles on four dates in November. Finally, a male was seen on 15th December.

### **COMMON QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix*

***Scarce spring and summer visitor, vagrant in autumn; has bred***

In May, singles were flushed from Da Water on 6th, at North Light on 21st, Hesti Geo on 23rd & Walli Burn on 31st with another heard singing near Midway on the latter date. In June, singles were heard singing at Meadow Burn on 4th & 8th with further sightings of a female at Quoy on 11th and two (at Hill Dyke and Neder Taft) on 16th. Breeding was not thought to have occurred.

### **WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant, occasionally over-winters***

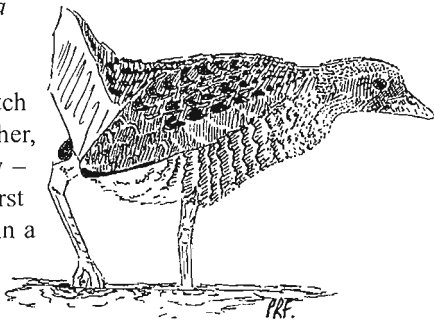
Occasional singles recorded in the early part of the year with four on 12th February perhaps indicating some mid-winter movement. In spring, there were two on 1st & 2nd March and further singles on 14th, 21st & 30th whilst April saw birds on the 1st & 18th. A very late bird was seen on 9th June. In autumn, there were singles on four dates between 5th & 26th September, on eight dates in October up to 21st (but for two on 11th) and later singles on 12th & 16th November and four on 17th. In December, two were seen on 12th.

### **SPOTTED CRAKE** *Porzana porzana*

***Rare migrant, mostly autumn***

***(36 previous records)***

In spring, one was flushed from a ditch near Quoy on 22nd May and it, or another, was in Meadow Burn the following day – only the eighth spring record and first since 1995. In autumn, one was found in a roadside ditch near Upper Leogh on 15th October.



*Spotted Crake – Paul French*

### **CORN CRAKE** *Crex crex*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred***

A male was heard singing in Boini Mire from 16th May and was seen with a mate in the area on 11th June. From 14th June it moved between Boini Mire, Da Water and Taing and was heard singing at one or other of these sites until 29th July. Breeding was strongly suspected, but never proven. In autumn, birds were flushed from Meadow Burn on 19th August, from the Ringing Hut mire on 9th September, below Shirva on 3rd October, near Utra on 4th October and Shirva again on 12th.

### **COMMON MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, birds were recorded on 8th, 19th (2), 26th & 29th April. Autumn records

comprised almost daily sightings from 10th-23rd October (involving 3-4 birds), then none until a single on 16th November and two the following day. Finally, there was one on 12th December.

**COMMON COOT** *Fulica atra*

***Rare migrant in late autumn, winter and spring (77 previous records)***

One in Meadow Burn on 17th November was only the ninth autumn record.

**COMMON CRANE** *Grus grus*

***Vagrant; twelve previous records (seventeen individuals)***

A good year. A pair flew in from the south on 7th September and settled at Setter until 8th. Another pair came in from the north on 8th October and landed on Mire o' Vatnagaard until 11th. Finally, another individual was seen struggling along the west coast on 12th October and rested on Sukka Mire until the following day. Only the 2nd- 4th autumn records (the first was 19th July-28th August 1962).

**EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*

***Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers***

Two on 31st January were probably the first spring migrants and birds were seen daily from 6th February. Single figures were recorded until 20th February, when 43 were counted. Numbers fluctuated between 11 and 141 in March, with a marked peak of 205 on 5th, were slightly higher in April (peak of 237 on 7th) and were consistently above 100 in May once all the local breeders had returned. A breeding population of around 40 pairs was estimated – consistent with the past few years but only half that of the 1970s-'80s. Non-breeding birds were present throughout the summer and numbers fluctuated between 16 and 113 in June (two counts over 100), between 20 and 151 in July (ten counts over 100 – probably boosted by fledged juveniles) before tailing off from mid-August to single figures by September. Small numbers in October were reduced to two birds by November, which stayed into December and possibly into 2003.

**RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers***

The first returning birds were two on 25th February which increased to seven the following day. Birds were daily from 1st March and most had passed through by mid-April, leaving just the local breeders. An exceptional count of 76 on 5th March was over twice that of any other date in spring. The first displaying birds were seen on 14th March and eleven pairs bred. Autumn passage was mainly concentrated in the second half of August with daily counts in the region of 15-40 and peaks of 72 (on 16th) and 67 (on 18th). Numbers had dwindled to single figures by mid-September and passage was complete by 5th October but for late birds on 1st, 4th (2) & 5th November.



**EURASIAN DOTTEREL** *Charadrius morinellus*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

Three (two females, one male) were on Vaasetter on 5th May and singles were on Ward Hill on 15th May and Rippack on 7th June.

**EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis apricaria*

***Common spring and autumn migrant; has bred***

One was present on 12th February. Spring migration got underway with ten on 19th March and birds were daily until 10th April, with a maximum of 38 on 4th. Further passage from 16th April-17th May saw regular counts over 20 and a peak of 50 on 11th May. Numbers then dropped to single figures until 4th June. Singles or small parties were noted on five further dates in June (including a displaying bird on Burrashield) and five in early July. Autumn passage proper commenced in the last week of July, built up through August (max 73 on 15th) and peaked in early September (max 158 on 5th). Small numbers continued to pass through in October until the last on 5th November.

**GREY PLOVER** *Pluvialis squatarola*

***Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring***

For the third year in a row, just a single record; one flying over on 20th August.

**NORTHERN LAPWING** *Vanellus vanellus*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers***

One on 17th January was the first and small numbers were noted throughout February until 122 on 27th signalled the start of spring migration. Birds were almost daily throughout March and April with main passage from mid-March-mid-April with peaks of 97 on 14th March, 139 on 4th and 124 on 7th April. The first displaying birds were in Johnny Arcus' Park on 13th March and four pairs bred there and two near Pund. Small parties seen in June and July were probably the first returning failed breeders, but main autumn passage was not until August through to mid-September. Counts were fairly low with a maximum of 39 on 11th August. Single figures predominated in October until further heavier passage in early November saw a peak of 45 on 5th. Small numbers lingered into December with still ten on 10th.

**RED KNOT** *Calidris canutus*

***Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring***

In spring, singles on 18th and 28th-29th April were the only records. The first returning bird was on 12th July then none until two on 30th July saw the start of regular passage. Small numbers (1-5) were seen throughout August with peaks of ten on 18th and six on 25th. Lesser numbers (1-3) were recorded almost daily through September until the last on 7th October.

**SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*

***Regular autumn migrant, less common in spring***

As usual, spring records were few with birds on five dates (involving five birds) between 6th-25th May and two on 25th June and a single on 28th. Autumn passage began on 14th July with birds on eight dates to the month's end – mostly singles but for six on 29th. Further passage from 8th August-4th September saw almost daily counts of 1-7 and a peak of eight on 17th. Singles on 7th, 14th, 16th-18th and 22nd-23rd September were the last.

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*

***Scarce autumn migrant, vagrant in spring***

A single at South Light on 3rd August was the only record.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris ferruginea*

***Scarce autumn migrant, vagrant in spring***

A juvenile on Easter Lothar Water on 19th August was the only record.

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** *Calidris maritima*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant, also over-winters***

A difficult species to census due to its rocky shore-loving habits. Occasional birds were seen in February and early March. Spring passage commenced with 50 on 23rd March and counts fluctuated widely until the last on 15th May. A flock of 90 on 1st April was the peak count. In summer, six were seen on 30th June. Three on 22nd July were the first returning autumn migrants and sightings were regular from 1st August well into November. A light passage was heaviest in August, with counts of 15(6th), 22(11th) & 12(18th). All other counts were below eight, except for 11 on 17th November.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred***

There were two on 27th February and sporadic ones or twos on six dates in March and two dates in April. Main spring passage commenced on 5th May and continued into early June, with stragglers up to 20th. The vast majority passed through in the period 11th-21st May with daily counts of 9-19 except for a peak of 36 on 14th. All other counts were of less than five. Autumn migration started on 14th July and birds were seen daily up until 29th September, but passage was mainly concentrated in the period 14th August-7th September when counts of 15-30 were made daily and peaks of 46, 39 & 63 (28th) were received. Small numbers (1-4) were seen regularly throughout October until 9th November. Finally, two were present on 12th December.

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** *Tryngites subruficollis*

*Vagrant; seven previous records*

The eighth record. A juvenile at North Light from 1st-2nd September was the first since 1991 – an identical length of time (11 years) had elapsed between the 6th & 7th records. All previous records have also been of September birds.

**RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax*

*Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring*

Passage was entirely within the period 11th August-13th September but for two late singles on 6th & 9th October. Daily counts of 1-4 were made, but for six on 23rd August and seven on 2nd September.

**JACK SNIBE** *Lymnocyrtes minimus*

*Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring*

Two on 12th February may have been cold weather immigrants. Typically, spring sightings were scarce with singles on 30th March, 2nd & 18th April the only records. Autumn migration, from 9th September, saw daily single figure counts until 1st October (but for 14 on 21st September) then 16 on 2nd October rose to 35 on 3rd falling to zero by 7th. Further passage from 8th saw counts of 15-28 received daily until 15th, when numbers fell to below ten and tailed off to the months end. Singles were seen regularly in November and occasionally in December – possibly overwintering birds.

**COMMON SNIBE** *Gallinago gallinago*

*Common spring and autumn migrant, some over-winter; breeds in small numbers*

A total of 80 on 12th February was the highest mid-winter count and possibly indicated some cold weather movement. Spring passage in March and April saw widely fluctuating counts and peaks of 50 (1st), 60 (27th) & 82 (31st) March and 70 (1st) & 45 (11th) April. No census of the breeding population was attempted but casual observations suggest that it is fairly healthy. In autumn, numbers built up from late August, were regularly above 50 in September and October (maximum counts of 85 & 83 respectively) and peaked in November when numbers were above 50 every day and exceeded 100 on several dates (maximum 110 on 17th). Good numbers remained into December (and probably overwintered) with 90 on 10th the highest count.

**EURASIAN WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola*

*Frequent spring and late autumn migrant, occasionally over-winters*

One on 25th January was the only winter sighting reported. Spring passage was very scant with singles on 23rd March, on six dates in April (but for two on 8th) and 3rd May. Autumn passage commenced on 7th October with daily counts of 11-19 until 15th, when numbers dropped to single figures to the month's end.

Storm force easterly winds in early November caused good numbers to shelter on the isle. Although exact numbers were hard to gauge due to a combination of the shortage of man-power, the severe weather conditions and the nature of the species, it was clear that it was “the best fall for many, many years” (to quote one islander). An estimated 200 birds were on the hill area alone on 2nd November and a census on 4th produced a total of 160 birds. Virtually all had departed by 6th but small numbers continued to arrive with 20 on 13th the highest count during the remainder of the year. A few are thought to have remained to the year’s end.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

In spring there were singles on 17th-19th & 29th May. Autumn produced a single on 21st August, two the following day and another on 3rd September.

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica*

***Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring***

Spring records were comprised of singles on 13th & 16th-22nd May and another on 7th June. In July, there were birds on 12th, 13th, 14th (3), 15th & 16th (2). August saw daily counts of 1-2 birds from 17th-31st, but for three on 25th, with further singles on 9th & 15th September and 17th October.

**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, one on 19th April preceded daily sightings from 22nd April-22nd June. Eleven on 27th April was the maximum count whilst peak passage was from 9th-19th May when numbers were above five each day and reached ten on 19th. Counts in June were never of more than 1-3. As usual, barely had spring migration finished when the first returning birds started to appear. Five on 7th July preceded regular sightings from 13th July-20th September and the last on 26th September. Often, just singles were seen but there were several multiple counts whilst six on 22nd July and eight on 30th August were the maxima.

**EURASIAN CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant, occasionally over-winters; breeds in small numbers***

Three were present on 17th January and occasional ones or twos were seen in February whilst nine on 26th February signalled the start of spring migration. Birds were seen almost daily from 4th March until early May, when only the breeding birds remained. Peak March counts were 28 (14th) & 20 (28th) whilst April saw counts of 28 (3rd), 84 (7th), 26 (19th) & 22 (21st). Six pairs held territory but little information of breeding success was found. A party of 16 on 29th June were the

first returning migrants and counts of mainly single figures were daily from 4th July. Eighteen on 8th July was the highest for that month whilst slightly heavier passage in August saw counts reach double figures on ten dates with peaks of 19 (11th), 21 (18th) & 34 (23rd). Single figures were recorded throughout September whilst counts of just 1-4 were daily in October and erratically in November (but for seven on 17th). Two on 10th December were the last.

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** *Tringa erythropus*

***Scarce autumn migrant, vagrant in spring***

The eleventh spring record concerned one in summer plumage which flew north over the school on 16th June. Singles on 23rd September and 18th October (a late date) were a typical autumn total.

**COMMON REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*

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

Recorded in every month. Numbers fluctuated in the early part of the year and 67 on 12th February was the highest winter count. Main spring passage during March and the first half of April saw counts vary widely from day to day with maximums of 60 (4th) & 50 (27th) March. Numbers were then consistently below 25 to the end of April but for a later influx of 68 (peak count) on 25th. Single figures were recorded until mid-May and occasional stragglers into June. Return passage started on 22nd June and single figures were recorded until 8th July when heavier passage commenced – continuing until mid-October. Peak monthly counts were; 57 on 27th July, 88 on 31st August, 87 on 6th September and 82 on 5th October. Around 30-40 remained in November/December but were occasionally augmented by small arrivals throughout.

**COMMON GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

***Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring***

In spring there were singles on 14th, 15th & 21st April followed by birds on 1st, 8th (2) & 22nd-28th May and further singles on 2nd, 6th & 7th June. One on 10th July may have been a straggling spring migrant. As usual, autumn passage was almost entirely within the month of August with regular sightings of single birds, two on two dates, three on one and a peak of four on 15th. Finally, there was a very late migrant on 6th November.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant***

In spring there were singles on 14th-15th May and 4th & 16th June. A light autumn passage from 30th July saw birds recorded on eight dates up to 19th August with a peak of three on 9th.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola*

**Scarce spring and autumn migrant**

One on 30th May was the sole spring record and similarly a single on 18th August was the only bird of the autumn.

**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleuca*

**Frequent spring and autumn migrant**

A light spring passage from 27th April-4th June saw 1-2 birds recorded on most days and peaks of four on 6th and six on 15th May. Numbers in autumn were less than in spring with birds on eight dates from 3rd August-10th September and a peak of three on 25th. Finally, there was a straggler on 1st October.

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres*

**Common winter, spring and autumn migrant**

Recorded in every month. Peak monthly counts as follows;

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
85	160	190	79	48	27	43	70	99	150	163	25

**GREY PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

**Vagrant; fifteen previous records, involving nineteen individuals**

The first since 1991. A juvenile was present in South Harbour from 24th-27th October.

**ARCTIC SKUA** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

**Frequent passage migrant; breeds in small numbers**

A single on 12th April was the first. Birds were present in small numbers from 14th but 27 on 24th signalled the first main arrival of the local breeding birds. The number of AOT decreased by 23.1%, from 78 in 2001, to just 60 – the lowest level since 1957! Another poor breeding season saw just 17 chicks reach fledging age – a productivity of 0.28 is only half the recent ten year average. Occasional immature birds were seen loafing on the airstrip during the summer and the majority of birds had departed by mid-August. Later singles on 2nd & 11th September and three at sea on 15th September were the last.

**GREAT SKUA** *Stercorarius skua*

**Frequent passage migrant; breeds in moderate numbers**

One on 27th March was the first and birds were ever-present from 29th March-19th October with stragglers until 31st October. A total of 133 AOT is a decline of 7% from 2001, however many did not nest resulting in just 21 fledged (or near-fledged) chicks counted, a productivity of 0.16. This disappointing figure is by far the lowest since recording began in 1989 (the previous lowest was 0.5-0.8 recorded in 1992) and a long way short of the most recent ten-year average.

### **LITTLE GULL** *Larus minutus*

#### ***Vagrant; twelve previous records – all of single birds***

A record year. Four (two adults, two 1st Winters) were in the Havens on the morning of 5th November whilst two in South Harbour later that morning may have been part of the same. Additionally, an adult was seen on 7th November. The first since 1999 and the first multiple sighting.

### **BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Larus ridibundus*

#### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

There was one on 23rd January and occasional singles were seen in February (perhaps all relating to the same individual). Small numbers were seen sporadically in March (max. six) and regularly throughout April (max. 15), May (max. 18) and June (max. 23). The first juvenile was on 9th July and 95 birds the following day was easily the peak count of the autumn. Counts of 18-34 were received between 13th-17th July but outside of this period, single figure counts were the norm. Light passage continued through August, became less regular in September and October until the last on 5th November. There were influxes of 40 on 13th October and 57 on 2nd November – a late date for such a number.

### **MEW (COMMON) GULL** *Larus canus*

#### ***Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers***

There was one on 23rd January and small numbers were occasionally seen in February and regularly in March until main passage began at the end of March. Counts fluctuated between 13-45 up to mid-June with a few exceptions; a large influx on 7th April saw 488 on the isle – virtually all of which had moved on by the next morning and smaller peaks on 16th (133), 24th (70) & 27th (55) April. Nine pairs nested but (as in 2001) none are thought to have been successful. A count of 103 on 14th July was a sign that autumn passage had started in earnest, but few were seen until a further influx on 30th brought in 175. Daily counts in August also fluctuated widely, with four counts in excess of 100, two over 200 and a peak of 400 on 17th. Numbers dwindled from mid-September but further (small) influxes in October and November saw counts of 48 (2nd) & 60 (13th) October and 81 on 2nd November. Small numbers lingered into December.

### **LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus*

#### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers***

One on 26th March was the first but only irregular single figure counts were received until 28th April when 13 were counted. Passage peaked in mid-May (28 on 14th the maximum count) and continued into early June. Just seven pairs (four on Buness, three on Goorn) bred but few chicks were found. A very light autumn passage from end July saw irregular counts of 1-8 and peaks of 12

(29th July), ten (15th), 28 (30th) & 17 (31st) August. Stragglers (1-5) were seen on seven dates in September and four in October – the last on 13th. Individuals resembling the nominate race *L. f. fuscus* were seen on 4th June, 12th (2) & 13th October.

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*

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

Present throughout the year. Numbers were swelled when stormy weather caused birds to seek shelter on the isle. Peak counts were 1,500 (11th Feb), 2,000 (23rd Oct) and 4,000 (2nd Nov).

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus*

***Regular migrant in spring, late autumn and winter***

Birds were seen occasionally in Jan/Feb with two on 22nd February the maximum day count. At least five birds were involved. In March, an adult was found on 9th (freshly dead), another on 24th and a first-summer from 27th-29th. A white-winged gull (either a Glaucous or an Iceland) was reported on 1st May. In autumn, first-winters were seen on 11th, 13th, 17th & 23rd (3) October and a second-winter on 25th October with further birds on 7th (first-winter) and 14th (adult) December.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus*

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

Present all year. As with Herring Gull stormy weather brought influxes of birds seeking shelter onto the isle with peak counts of 500 on 8th October and 600 on 2nd November.

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla*

***Common autumn passage migrant; breeds in large numbers***

Occasional birds were seen offshore in Jan/Feb and the first birds were seen back on ledges on 14th March. Numbers of AON at monitoring plots fell by a massive 36.5%, compared to 2001, to their lowest levels since monitoring began in 1986. However it should be noted that (presumably due to the shortage of Sandeels this early in the season) many pairs, although selecting sites, made no attempt to nest which thus depresses the total. Breeding success was below average at 0.42 chicks fledged per AON but a huge improvement on the 0.06 recorded in 2001. Perhaps due to the near total breeding failure last year, none of the eight colour-ringed birds identified at the Goorn colony in 2001 returned in 2002 – an overwinter survival estimate of 0% for the first time.



### **SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis*

#### ***Scarce summer migrant***

Records comprised two on 20th June, one on 4th and two on 30th July – an average year.

### **COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo*

#### ***Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers***

First arrivals were on 1st May, although two terns seen from *The Good Shepherd IV* on 25th April may have been this species. Numbers peaked at nine on 7th May and small numbers of passage birds were seen irregularly to the end of July and the last on 17th August. One pair nested in the Arctic Tern colony on Buness but the eggs failed to hatch.

### **ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*

#### ***Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers***

Two ‘commic’ terns were seen from *The Good Shepherd IV* on 25th April. The first confirmed record was a single on 30th April, then a ‘commic’ tern on 3rd May was thought to probably be of this species, especially when 20 arrived the next day. The first main arrival was on 6th May, when 200 were counted, but numbers peaked at just 500 on 11th at the (usually) largest colony, on Tarryfield. A dearth of Sandeels in Fair Isle waters meant that this was almost deserted again by the end of May, with most of the remaining 200 or so birds relocating to Buness. A total of just 115 AIA was counted – a massive (95.9%) decrease compared to the record number in 2001(2,836 AIA). Almost all were on Buness (100 nests) with a small number (14) at Dumlins Sink and a single pair on Meoness. The vast majority of these were deserted at the egg stage and no chicks fledged. It remains to be seen if two consecutive breeding disasters will cause the isle to be deserted altogether next season. Occasional first-summer birds were seen in June/July. Almost all birds had left by mid-July and the isle was deserted by 5th August. Later migrants were seen from *The Good Shepherd IV* on 31st August, from South Light on 19th September and a late juvenile was in the Havens on 10th October.

### **COMMON GUILLEMOT** *Uria aalge*

#### ***Common autumn passage migrant; breeds in large numbers***

Occasional birds were seen in Jan/early Feb and the first few ashore were noted on 25th February. Numbers at monitoring sites showed a slight overall increase compared to 2001 although results varied between sites. Breeding productivity was about average – 0.72 chicks fledged per AIA. Almost all had left by late July with small numbers occasionally seen offshore in August and more regularly in September (including a count of 40 on 25th). 1-4 were seen regularly in October and occasionally until the years end.

**RAZORBILL** *Alca torda*

***Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers***

As with Guillemot, birds were seen ashore on calm days from 25th February. Counts at the Lericum monitoring plot showed a small increase compared to 2001. Breeding success at Easter Lothar was estimated at 0.63 chicks fledged per egg laid – similar to the 0.65 of the previous season. Observations and analysis of food samples collected suggested that chicks were being fed on smaller than average Sandeels. Most birds had departed by late July and small numbers were reported offshore in September.

**BLACK GUILLEMOT** *Cepphus grylle*

***Resident, breeds in moderate numbers***

The annual census along the entire east coast of the isle revealed a disappointing total of just 124 adults in breeding plumage – a 10.8% decline since 2001 to the lowest number since counting began in 1986.

**LITTLE AUK** *Alle alle*

***Frequent late autumn/winter visitor***

Singles were seen offshore on 20th October, 12th & 13th November and there were two in the Havens on 7th December.

**ATLANTIC PUFFIN** *Fratercula arctica*

***Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers***

A party of five were in Finnikoy Bay from 28th March and c100 were ashore on 7th April but had departed again the following day. There were many ashore on 1st May. Breeding success was particularly high. A productivity of 0.74 chicks fledged per occupied burrow is the best since 1997, however this may be an overestimate as delayed access to the Greenholm monitoring site meant that some early failures may have been missed. Re-sightings of colour-ringed birds at Roskilie suggested an overwinter survival rate of just 50% – the lowest on record and perhaps a consequence of the difficulties adult Puffins (and other seabirds) had in obtaining sufficient food for their young in 2001.

**ROCK PIGEON (DOVE)** *Columba livia*

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

Few counts attempted, however some passage was noted in spring and autumn. Peak counts of 40 and 50 were noted in May and October respectively.

**STOCK PIGEON (DOVE)** *Columba oenas*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

Singles were seen on 11th-12th & 16th October and further birds on 4th (2) & 10th November.

### **COMMON WOOD PIGEON** *Columba palumbus*

#### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, one on 10th March was the only record until almost daily sightings from 29th March-5th May, with further regular passage from 12th May-25th June. Counts were mainly of 1-5 with a peak of eight on 29th April. There was one on 13th July. In autumn, there were singles on four dates from 5th-23rd September then none until a period of daily passage from 7th-27th October saw counts regularly above ten and a peak of 19 on 14th. Small numbers were seen irregularly until 25th November.

### **EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*

#### ***Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn***

Spring passage commenced on 31st March and small numbers were seen almost daily in April (max 6 on 22nd), daily in May (max 10 on 20th) until 11th June (max 13 on 1st). Sightings then became less regular but small numbers were recorded up to 24th July. Autumn sightings were less frequent with two from 29th-31st August, singles on four dates in September (with two on 27th) and further singles on 1st & 15th-26th October

### **EUROPEAN TURTLE DOVE** *Streptopelia turtur*

#### ***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, there were singles on 31st May, 6th, 20th & 30th June and another on 3rd July. Autumn saw singles on 19th-20th & 23rd-24th August, 4th-5th, 11th (2), 20th & 23rd September and finally 13th-16th October.

### **COMMON CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*

#### ***Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn***

A male at the mast on 4th May was followed by singles on 15th, 20th & 22nd. A recently fledged juvenile trapped on 1st July, was later seen being fed by a Meadow Pipit – unconditional proof of a rare breeding record. The only autumn record was of a single on 10th September.

### **LONG-EARED OWL** *Asio otus*

#### ***Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring***

Spring sightings comprised singles on 7th & 16th April and 14th June. As usual, autumn was better with irregular sightings of 1-3 birds from 9th October-9th November and further singles on 25th November, 2nd & 10th December.

### **SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus*

#### ***Regular spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, singles were seen on six dates between 16th-29th April, involving three individuals, with further lone birds on 5th, 17th & 23rd-26th May and 1st June.



Finally one trapped in the Gully on 25th June was found to be Fulmar-oiled and sent to the SSPCA on Mainland Shetland. Autumn records comprised daily sightings from 27th September-20th October. Main passage was from 10th-19th October with two peaks of 13 individuals on 10th & 16th. Later singles on 5th & 8th November were the last.

**EUROPEAN NIGHTJAR** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

***Vagrant; 22 previous records***

A male flushed from the New Plantation on the morning of 18th July spent the rest of the day sitting in full view on top of one of the pallets before departing that evening. The first record since one was found dead in July 1996.

Short-eared Owl –  
Paul French

**COMMON SWIFT** *Apus apus*

***Frequent spring, summer and autumn migrant***

There were irregular sightings of 1-3 birds from 15th May-14th July with peaks of seven on 20th June and six on 9th July. Another on 11th August preceded almost daily counts from 19th August-5th September, peaking at seven on 26th August.

**ALPINE SWIFT** *Apus melba*

***Vagrant; six previous records, all in spring***

Seventh record, the first for twenty years and first autumn record. One patrolled the cliffs at North Light for the whole day on 30th September giving fantastic views to all those present. It was seen on Foula (40 km to the north) the following day.

*Accepted by BBRC*

**EURASIAN WRYNECK** *Jynx torquilla*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, 1-2 on six dates from 7th-17th May were the only sightings – a total of six or seven birds. In autumn, 1-2 birds were seen almost daily from 19th August 16th September except for three on two dates and a peak of five on 23rd August. At least 13 birds were involved.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major*

***Scarce (and irruptive) autumn migrant, vagrant in spring***

One at the Peat Cuttings on 10th May and at Barkland the following day was only the seventh spring occurrence.

**GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK** *Calandrella brachydactyla*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

One on the rig below Shirva on 5th May was the sole record.

**SKY LARK** *Alauda arvensis*

***Common spring and autumn migrant, small numbers over-winter; breeds in small numbers***

The first was a party of seven on 12th February and small parties were seen regularly until 115 on 9th March signalled the start of proper spring passage. Counts then regularly exceeded 100 until 510 (peak count) on 30th March started a period of heavier passage, which saw daily counts in excess of 200 and over 400 on three dates, until 11th April. Counts then dropped to between 50-125 and continued until early May, by which time just stragglers remained to boost the breeding population. Counts of singing males revealed approximately 32 territories – a relatively stable population (since 1998 at least) but much reduced from the counts of 100+ in the 1960s. Main autumn passage commenced from mid-September with counts in excess of 100 on the vast majority of dates until 21st October with a peak of 200 on 29th September. Counts of 40-100 were regular until the end of November and small numbers remained in December (max 17 on 10th).

**HORNED (SHORE) LARK** *Eremophila alpestris*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

Singles at North light and Guidicum on 16th October both remained until 19th with one staying until 25th.

**SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia*

***Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn***

One on 15th April was the first followed by ten on 24th and singles on 2nd & 4th May and two on 23rd. There were further singles on four dates in June and 1-2 on eight dates in July up to 17th. Typically, singles on 15th August and 6th September were the only autumn records.

**BARN SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*

***Common spring and autumn migrant; occasionally breeds***

Our earliest ever bird passed through on 31st March but there were no others until three on 19th April. Sightings then became more frequent and were daily throughout May up until 27th June. Counts were variable, from 2-49, with heaviest passage in the latter half of May. A pair were seen prospecting at Shirva but did not nest. Low single figures were seen regularly throughout July and August with peaks of eight (13th) and twelve (20th-21st). Irregular counts of 1-5 were received in September (but for ten on 1st) and October – the last on 21st.

**HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbica*

**Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred**

Spring passage was daily from 14th May-11th June and again from 16th-24th June. Mainly single figures were involved but also peaks of 20 on 30th May and 60 on 2nd June. Singles were seen on four dates in July whilst typically the only autumn records were on 6th September and 29th September-1st October.

**RICHARD'S PIPIT** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

**Scarce autumn migrant, vagrant in spring**

The third ever spring record (since singles in May 1964 & May 1998) concerned one in the Quoy area from 11th-17th May. In autumn, there was one from 10th-14th September and another from 11th-13th October, which was picked up dead on the last date – a poor autumn by recent standards.

**OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT** *Anthus hodgsoni*

**Rare autumn migrant, vagrant in spring**

Just one bird this year. One at Midway from 11th-14th October may have been heard initially on 10th.

*Accepted by BBRC*

**TREE PIPIT** *Anthus trivialis*

**Frequent spring and autumn migrant**

The first spring migrants were singles on 25th and 27th-28th April. Three on 30th April signalled the start of daily passage until 19th May with single figures on most days, ten on three dates and a peak of 14 on 10th. Counts of 1-3 were seen on most days from 22nd May until 1st June (but for six on 29th May) and two late stragglers on 8th June. In autumn, 1-2 were seen on most days from 14th-31st August then just a single on 4th September before further passage from 9th-27th saw almost daily counts of 1-2 and a peak of seven on 10th with six the following day. In October, two on 6th were followed by singles on a further five dates until the last on 18th.

**PECHORA PIPIT** *Anthus gustavi*

**Rare autumn migrant**

A good but confusing year. Two birds found in close proximity in the Haa/Taft area on the afternoon of 26th September had elated birders not knowing which way to turn. One was particularly confiding and therefore captured most peoples attention. It allowed a very close approach and hundreds of photographs to be taken. It remained faithful to the track next to Auld Haa until it departed on 28th. The second bird was more elusive but was still present at Taft on the morning of 27th. One stunning individual, seen for a short while at Setter prior to lunch on 27th (but not afterwards), may have been this latter bird. Finally, another was found at

Barkland on 5th October and remained until 7th but one heard and seen briefly on 11th may have been this bird.

*Two September birds accepted by BBRC. October bird awaiting decision.*

**MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*

***Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers***

The first arrivals were on 17th March but main passage did not get underway until 23rd and there were daily counts in excess of 40 birds from 26th. Two waves of heavier passage saw daily counts exceed 100 from 4th-8th April (peak of 250 on 7th) and on most days from 21st April-4th May (max 164 on 3rd). Just the breeding birds remained by mid-May. Autumn passage commenced in mid-August and peak passage from 23rd August-18th September saw daily counts in excess of 200 birds and over 300 on seven dates (peak 320 on 30th August). Counts remained above 100 (and over 200 on three dates) until 6th October before tailing off towards the end of the month with small numbers into November and stragglers in December.

**RED-THROATED PIPIT** *Anthus cervinus*

***Rare spring and autumn migrant***

A mobile but vocal individual was found near Easter Lothar on 16th May and remained in the area until 17th.

*Accepted by BBRC*

**ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus*

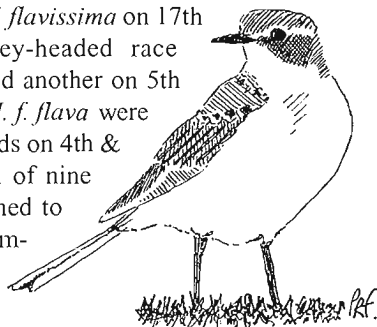
***Resident, breeds in small numbers. Also frequent spring and autumn migrant***

Present all year. Individuals of the Scandinavian race *A. p. littoralis* were seen from 27th-31st March (with 2 on 30th), on 7th (2), 13th, 27th, 28th & 30th April and 14th May.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant; has bred***

A quiet spring saw one of the British race *M. f. flavissima* on 17th May followed by individuals of the Grey-headed race *M. f. thunbergi* on 20th-22nd, two on 23rd and another on 5th June whilst males of the Blue-headed race *M. f. flava* were present on 27th May and 6th June. Flyover birds on 4th & 11th June were not assigned to race. A total of nine birds. In autumn, there were singles unassigned to race on 4th, 6th, 11th-22nd, 15th, 30th September, 12th & 17th October and a grey and white individual of one of the eastern races from 17th-21st October. A total of eight birds.



*Blue-headed Wagtail –Paul French*

**CITRINE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla citreola*

***Rare autumn migrant, vagrant in spring***

Following a complete blank year in 2001 there were a record five individuals this year. Singles were present from 10th-13th August (earliest autumn record by six days), 16th-17th August, two (first multiple record) from 31st August-6th September with one remaining until 9th and another on 22nd September. All were first-winter birds and subtle differences in plumage proved them all to be different. *All accepted by BBRC*

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant; has bred***

In spring, an early bird on 18th-19th March (second earliest ever) was not followed until others on 26th-27th & 29th-30th April, then another on 31st May and finally one on 20th June. A good autumn saw two on 1st-2nd October followed by a run of sightings with birds on all but two dates from 8th-25th. Most counts were of 1-2 but there were record counts of four on 8th-9th, six on 11th and still five on 12th. Finally, there was one on 1st November.

**WHITE/PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant; occasional breeder***

As usual, early passage was of Pied Wagtails *M. a. yarrelli*; one on 13th March was followed by four on 17th then occasional singles until daily sightings from 26th March. Passage was fairly light with double figure counts on four dates up to mid-May and a peak of 13 on 7th April. Passage of White Wagtails *M. a. alba* also commenced on this latter date with small numbers recorded until 2nd June, with a peak of 12 on 2nd May. Three pairs of Pied Wagtails remained to breed and the first juveniles fledged on 20th June. Autumn passage commenced suddenly on 15th August with a count of 43 birds. Similar numbers were seen daily until heavier passage from 23rd-28th August saw counts approaching 100 and a peak of 105 on 26th. Numbers then dropped to below 30 and to single figures daily from mid-September until the last on 23rd October. As every year the vast majority were White Wagtails with the peak count of Pied Wagtails being just ten on 18th August.

**BOHEMIAN WAXWING** *Bombycilla garrulax*

***Scarce/irruptive autumn migrant, rare in spring***

Singles on 16th April and 6th December were the only records.

**WHITE-THROATED DIPPER** *Cinclus cinclus*

***Vagrant; 27 previous records (16 spring, 11 autumn)***

A good year. In spring, one was found in South Raeva on 17th March and remained until 19th. In autumn, one frequented the Wirvie Burn from 23rd October-1st



November whilst another was trapped in the Gully on 30th October and remained in the area until 6th November. All were considered to be of the nominate Black-bellied race *C. c. cinclus* from northern Europe.

**WINTER WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

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

Present all year. The annual survey of singing males noted that after several years of stability (26-30 territories mapped) the population declined in 2002 to an estimated 21 territories. Migrants of the nominate race *T. t. troglodytes* were noted in autumn with singles on 1st & 3rd October then daily sightings of 3-11 from 12th-29th with a peak of 16 on 19th and further birds on 8th (5) & 9th (7) November.

**HEDGE ACCENTOR (DUNNOCK)** *Prunella modularis*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred***

A very light spring passage, from 24th March-5th May, saw singles on fifteen dates, two on two dates, three on two dates and a peak of four on 19th April. Autumn passage was in two shallow waves from 10th September-2nd October (max. 8 on 15th) and 8th-25th October (peak of 10 on 16th) with stragglers into November – last on 18th.

**EUROPEAN ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*

***Common spring and autumn migrant***

Two in January were probably over-wintering birds whilst four in February may have been cold weather immigrants. One on 2nd March may have been the first spring migrant but there were no others until almost daily sightings from 14th March-15th June. Counts were rarely above six and peaks of just nine on 19th & 15 on 30th April. Autumn passage commenced with one from 11th-16th August before irregular sightings of 1-5 from 23rd August-7th October. A period of much heavier passage from 8th-25th October saw counts fluctuate between 25 & 82 with a peak of 90 on 15th. Smaller numbers continued through November (max 30 on 9th) and single figures lingered into December.

**THRUSH NIGHTINGALE** *Luscinia luscinia*

***Rare spring migrant (40 records), vagrant in autumn (three records)***

A good year. A classic individual was found in the Kiln O' Skroo on 12th May whilst a much trickier bird was present at Lower Stoneybrek on 27th May. A third bird was found in Kirky Geo on 20th August and what may have been the same was trapped at Barkland a week later – only the fourth autumn record.

*12th May and 20th-27th August accepted by BBRC. 27th May bird pending.*

**COMMON NIGHTINGALE** *Luscinia megarhynchos*

***Rare spring migrant (c35 records), vagrant in autumn (six records)***

One record. An unusually vocal individual found in Busta Geo on 17th September had moved round to Swarzie Geo the following day – the seventh autumn record.

**BLUETHROAT** *Luscinia svecica*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant***

A female on 19th-20th April appeared from measurements to be of the Red-spotted race *L. s. svecica*, however differences are slight and it could well have been (given the date) a White-spotted bird *L. s. cyanecula*. Spring passage of the nominate race began with a male trapped in Double Dyke on 7th May. A fall on 10th May produced ten birds which had risen to 12 by the next day, several of which lingered until 16th. A steady turnover of birds ensured counts of 1-5 daily until 28th May. Further passage in early June saw 1-2 birds on most days until 10th. An estimated total of some 35 birds. By contrast there was just one autumn record, that of a male at Leogh on 10th September.

**BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochurus*

***Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn***

In an erratic spring passage, two on 23rd March were followed by one from 26th-28th then 1-3 from 4th-15th April, singles on eight dates from 10th-31st May and finally one from 6th-10th June. A total of at least 13 birds. There was a mid-summer bird on 16th July. One on 26th August was probably the first of the autumn but there were no others until regular singles from 11th-30th September, another on 7th October and 1-2 from 14th-26th October. Finally, singles were present on 4th-5th and 17th November. An estimated 13 birds is a good autumn total.

**COMMON REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

A light spring passage from 7th May-11th June saw sporadic counts of 1-2 birds but for definite peaks of eight on 9th May, rising to nine the following day and seven on 8th June, with five the next day. In autumn, one on 6th September was followed by daily sightings from 10th-21st (peak of just nine on 11th) and further counts of 1-6 from 7th-19th October.

**WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, a male on 30th April was not followed until daily sightings of 1-4 from 7th-24th May, another on 31st and 1-2 from 4th-11th June. Autumn passage commenced with 1-2 from 9th-12th August then daily sightings from 18th August until the last on 17th October. Counts were of mainly single figures but for a period of slightly heavier passage from 10th-16th September peaking at 17 on 11th.

**STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata***Scarce spring and autumn migrant**

A light spring passage saw 1-2 recorded on seven dates from 14th March-16th April. In autumn, singles of the western races *S. t. hibernans/rubicola* were seen on 5th, 28th & 30th September with the latter bird remaining until 11th October. Additionally, an individual of one of the eastern races *S. t. maura/stejnegeri* was seen on 10th September – earliest autumn record of ‘Siberian Stonechat’.

*Accepted by BBRC*

**NORTHERN WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe***Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers**

The first were two males on 28th March and similar numbers were seen until a fall of 18 (including the first female) on 4th April. Counts in the region of 20-40 were daily until heavier passage from 24th April saw counts approaching 100. Numbers were swelled further in May when passage of the large Greenland race *O. o. leucorhoa* was noted (from 30th April). Counts exceeded 100 daily until 19th and were over 200 on three dates. The peak count of 260 migrants on 17th May was considered to be nearly all *O. o. leucorhoa*. By late May only the breeding birds remained and a very young bird hand-caught on 10th June was the first sign of fledging. Autumn passage commenced in early August and counts over 100 were almost daily from 3rd and a large fall on the 18th saw numbers peak at 260, with 200 the following day. Numbers then rapidly dropped to 60 on 22nd August and were rarely above 45 to the end of September and down to single figures by 6th October. All had departed by 27th October but for a late straggler on 5th-6th November.

**WHITE'S THRUSH** *Zoothera dauma***Vagrant; six previous records**

Seventh record and first since 1973. One (a first-winter) was flushed from Da Water into Klingers Geo on 29th September. It showed well to the assembled crowd of thirty or so admirers for two hours before flying along the coast towards Hesswalls. It was seen again that afternoon and remained in the area until the following day.

*Accepted by BBRC*

**RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus***Frequent spring and autumn migrant**

In spring, there were regular counts of 1-3 birds from the first on 2nd April until the last on 30th May but for five on three dates and a peak of six on 7th May. A light autumn passage, confined to the period 8th-22nd October, but for two later birds on 2nd November, saw a peak of six on four dates and an estimated total of just 16 birds.

## **COMMON BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*

### ***Common spring and autumn migrant, small numbers over-winter; has bred***

Small numbers (up to 30) were counted in the first two months of the year as the few overwintering birds were boosted by occasional cold-weather migrants. Spring migration commenced around mid-March but numbers were very low. Influxes of 92 on 19th & 90 on 23rd March were by far the highest and migration had finished by 22nd April but for a few stragglers throughout May and the last on 8th June. Mid-summer records of singles from 15th-30th July and 6th-20th August were not unusual. Autumn passage commenced on 2nd October and a fall of 250 on 8th was the first large influx. Hundreds were seen daily (max 430 on 10th) until 25th then dropped below 100 until further passage in early November saw several hundred from 2nd-8th with a peak of 1,000 on 4th. Numbers gradually dwindled but were boosted by small arrivals in November and December – maximum counts of 140 on 25th November and 160 on 10th December. Around 30-40 remained into the new year.

## **FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris*

### ***Common spring and autumn migrant, often over-winters***

Small numbers in early January were swelled by cold-weather movements later in the month and into February, resulting in regular counts of 60+ birds. Counts of 30-80 were recorded throughout March and erratic passage in April saw counts above 100 on just seven dates (peak of 170 on 17th) with just a few stragglers by late April and occasionally in May – last on 30th. One from 14th-15th July was unusual – a Blackbird and a Song Thrush also arrived around the same time. In autumn, 1-2 from 11th-23rd September preceded daily passage from 6th October. Only small numbers (max 31) were recorded until 240 arrived on 22nd, with 100 the following day, but all had departed by 28th. Severe gale force south-easterly winds on 2nd November caused a large fall of birds which included an estimated 3,000 Fieldfares with still 1,000 present on 4th. Numbers then rapidly tailed off to double figures but were boosted by small arrivals later in November and December (max 120) with some (20-30) staying into the new year.

## **SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos*

### ***Common spring and autumn migrant, sometimes over-winters; has bred***

Two on 5th February remained until at least 12th. A barely noticeable spring passage saw small numbers begin to trickle through from 14th March but only reached double figures in the third week of April, when numbers peaked at just 38 on 19th. Counts of 1-3 were received occasionally throughout May, until the last on 19th June. In summer, one was present from 13th-15th July and another on 27th. Autumn passage commenced on 4th September and was daily from 9th. Only single figures were recorded until a fall of 200 on 8th October saw daily counts in excess of this number until 21st – including peaks of 340 on three dates. Numbers tailed off to double figures by 26th but rose again in early November (but not to the

same extent as other thrushes), resulting in a maximum of 190 on 4th. Counts of 30-50 were regular throughout the rest of November and early December with a small number seeing the year out.

**REDWING** *Turdus iliacus*

***Common spring and autumn migrant, sometimes over-winters; has bred***

Counts of 10-20 over-wintering birds were regular in January/February. Spring passage commenced in late March and continued until 21st April, with occasional stragglers in May and the last on 7th June. Counts in the region of 25-40 were common but peaked at just 67 on 3rd April. In autumn, 1-2 were recorded occasionally from 9th September, although passage did not get underway until October. Eighty on 2nd rose to 700 on 3rd but only 23 remained the next day. Heavy passage from 6th-27th October saw daily counts over 100 and included 800 on three dates, 900 on one and 1500 on 8th. Counts well below 100 at the end of the month preceded the largest fall of the autumn on 2nd November – an estimated 2,000 birds. A count of 520 (still) on 4th may in fact have been largely new arrivals and counts of 60-100 were regular throughout the rest of the month and well into December. A small number saw the year out.

**MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, there were singles on 15th & 18th March, with two on 17th, followed by singles on 7th & 18th-19th April and 22nd May. A record autumn saw daily sightings from 7th-25th October with high counts of five on two dates and a peak of six (equal highest autumn count) on 23rd. Additionally, there were 1-2 from 29th-30th October, three on 5th November and one on 18th-19th November. An absolute minimum autumn total of 17 birds (previous best was 12 in 1979).

**LANCEOLATED WARBLER** *Locustella lanceolata*

***Rare autumn migrant (63 previous records)***

An early bird was trapped in the Plantation on 7th September. Another was found in Walli Burn on 6th October and a third at Pund on 10th. A possible was seen briefly in Meadow Burn on 19th October.

*First three accepted by BBRC*

**COMMON GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, the earliest ever Scottish record was found at Charlie's Trees on 7th April. Another was trapped on 29th April and remained until 4th May with a second bird on 3rd. Finally, one was in Field Ditch from 13th-15th May. In autumn, one at North Light on 9th September was followed by another next day and yet another on 11th-14th, with two on 12th. Finally, one in Meadow Burn on 24th September was the last.

**RIVER WARBLER** *Locustella fluviatilis*

***Vagrant; nine previous records (four spring, five autumn)***

One located in the Vaadal stream, near to the airstrip, on 21st September was trapped and released into the Observatory garden, where it remained until 25th. The tenth record and first since 1995.

*Accepted by BBRC*

**SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

***Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn***

In spring, two on 29th April were followed by singles on 1st, 5th & 7th May before daily passage from 10th May-11th June. All counts were below seven but for a good total of 20 on 11th May. There was an unusual mid-summer record on 4th July. Autumn passage spanned 9th August-3rd October but there were just sporadic ones or twos and a peak of three on 4th September.

**MARSH WARBLER** *Acrocephalus palustris*

***Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn***

A good spring saw birds on most days from the first on 29th May until the last on 15th June. Mostly ones or twos were seen but five on 6th June peaked at a record day count of six the following day. A total of at least eleven birds. More typically, autumn records comprised just singles on 24th-26th August and 4th September.

**EURASIAN REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

***Scarce spring migrant, regular in autumn***

In spring, 1-3 were recorded daily from 22nd-26th May and again from 6th-15th June – an approximate total of seven birds. A good autumn passage commenced on 10th August, was daily from 17th August-25th September, with later singles on 28th September, 8th & 11th October. Single figure counts were the norm, but for a peak of ten on 11th September.

**ICTERINE WARBLER** *Hippolais icterina*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, there were singles on 30th May, 4th & 25th June and 5th July. The only autumn bird was one which frequented the Chalet garden from 26th August-7th September.

**MELODIOUS WARBLER** *Hippolais polyglotta*

***Vagrant; fourteen previous records***

A first-winter was trapped on 14th August and spent the rest of the day in the Havens area – the first since 1998.

### **SUBALPINE WARBLER** *Sylvia cantillans*

#### ***Rare spring migrant (61 records), vagrant in autumn (two records)***

A female in Furse from 12th-15th May was followed by another (female) trapped in the Gully on 31st May, remaining until 7th June. This latter bird was identified as a first-summer belonging to the nominate race *S. c. cantillans* ('western' Sub-alpine Warbler).

*Both accepted by BBRC*

### **BARRED WARBLER** *Sylvia nisoria*

#### ***Regular autumn migrant, vagrant in spring (four records)***

The first were three on 12th August and birds were daily until 19th September and again from 23rd September-3rd October. Counts of 2-7 were frequent with a peak of eight on 28th August. Additionally, there was one on 8th October and an extremely late bird on 2nd November (latest ever record).

### **LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca*

#### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

Spring passage commenced on 6th May and continued daily until 13th June. Counts were all of single figures but for 18 on 10th May and 12 on 7th June. Autumn passage from 5th August saw just three birds up to 17th, when sightings became daily until the last on 8th October. As in spring, counts were of single figures but for ten on 26th August and 12 on 10th September.

### **COMMON WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*

#### ***Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn***

In spring, the first was on 30th April and birds were daily from 4th May-2nd June with further light passage from 7th-14th June. Counts were mainly of 2-5 but for a marked peak of 15 on 11th May. Late stragglers were seen on 22nd, 30th June and 4th July. Autumn passage, from 9th August-2nd October, saw regular counts of 1-3 birds apart from a period of slightly heavier movement in mid-September which saw numbers peak at seven on 11th.

### **GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*

#### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

Spring passage was of sporadic singles from 14th May until daily sightings from 27th May-13th June saw counts of 2-8 and a peak of 12 on 8th June with stragglers until 26th and a later bird on 5th July. In autumn, birds were seen almost daily from 10th August-11th October with later singles on 16th & 21st. Counts were mainly of single figures but three heavier falls produced 23 on 19th, 22 on 24th August and 25 on 10th & 11th September.

**BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

***Common spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, three on 4th April were the earliest ever (by three days) and were not followed until two on 19th, another two on 20th and one on 22nd. Sightings were almost daily from 1st May, with counts of 1-6 until 20th June. In July, females were seen on 2nd, 4th & 9th and a male on 21st. In autumn, 1-2 from 22nd-25th August preceded regular passage from 4th September. Single figures were seen (apart from a count of 18 on 10th, with 11 next day) until heavier passage in October. Most birds passed through in the period 8th-12th when numbers peaked at 30 on 8th and 50 on 9th. Small numbers were seen daily up to 22nd with stragglers and small influxes (max 12 on 5th) until 13th November.

**GREENISH WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

***Rare autumn migrant (25 records), vagrant in spring (11 records)***

A first-winter was found at Midway amidst a large fall of Willow Warblers on the afternoon of 23rd August and, later the same day, an adult was discovered at Quoy. The former remained on the isle until 25th.

*Both accepted by BBRC*

**ARCTIC WARBLER** *Phylloscopus borealis*

***Rare autumn migrant (67 records), vagrant in spring (two records)***

An adult was discovered at Barkland on 19th July and amazingly a second adult was discovered there on 30th July – second and third July records.

*Both accepted by BBRC*

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

***Regular autumn migrant***

The first did not arrive until 2nd October and was followed by a fall of eight on 7th, two more on 9th and the last on 11th – a brief passage.

**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

***Regular spring and autumn migrant***

In spring there were singles on 3rd, 10th, 11th-13th, 14th & 15th (2) May. In autumn, one on 28th-29th July (earliest ever) was followed by sporadic singles or doubles on 14 dates from 8th August-20th September. An estimated total of around 13 birds.

**COMMON CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

Spring passage involved almost daily counts of 1-4 from 26th March-7th June, with stragglers until 25th, apart from peak counts of 11 on 7th & ten on 18th April. Autumn migration commenced on 18th September but there were only occasional



singles until 7th October. Daily passage until 22nd October saw counts of 1-8 and a peak of just ten on 10th, several of which were thought to be of the Scandinavian race *P. c. abietinus*. Later passage in November saw singles on 1st, 11th & 14th with two on 13th and four on 9th. All of these were considered to belong to the Siberian race *P. c. tristis*.

### **WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

#### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, two on 8th April were followed by singles on five dates until ten on 29th signalled the start of main passage. Sightings were almost daily until 30th May and again from 4th-16th June, with stragglers on 22nd & 24th. Single figure counts were the norm but for peaks of 11 on 10th May, rising to 22 on 11th and 14 on 7th June rising to 17 on 8th. Autumn passage commenced with small numbers from 9th August until a fall of 50 (peak count) on 23rd saw counts in excess of 20 until 28th. Numbers then dropped to mainly single figures (max 15 on 8th September) and tailed off to very low counts at the end of September with three stragglers in October – the last on 9th.

### **GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

#### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

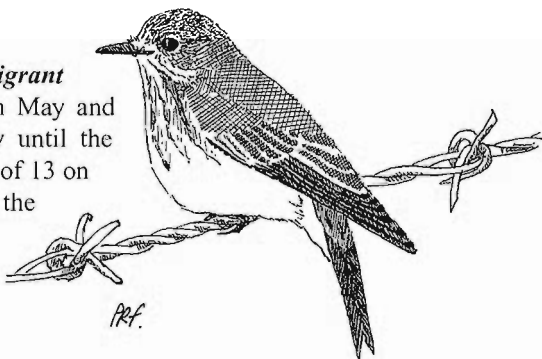
Spring passage saw singles on 20th & 24th March precede daily single figure counts from 26th March-16th April, but for an obvious peak of 18 on 7th April. Singles on four dates 10th-16th May perhaps related to the same late-migrating individual. Autumn passage started on the relatively early date of 14th August with an occasional 1-2 until the end of the month (apart from six on 28th). Daily sightings from 3rd September were of just single figures up to 7th October, but was followed by a period of heavier passage which saw counts fluctuate from 5-41 until 17th. The last were five on 22nd October.

### **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER**

#### *Muscicapa striata*

#### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, the first was on 10th May and 1-4 were recorded almost daily until the last on 16th June but for a count of 13 on 7th June and a good fall of 50 the following day. In autumn, one on 29th August was not followed until 1-4 daily from 8th-22nd September then 1-2 from 29th September-7th October.



*Spotted Flycatcher – Paul French*

**RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula parva*

**Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring**

Five birds – all in autumn. In September, singles were found in Troili Geo on 14th, Schoolton on 15th, Furse on 19th-22nd with another in Gunnawark on 22nd. Finally, one in Field Ditch on 4th October had moved to Klingers Geo by the next day.

**PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

**Frequent spring and autumn migrant**

The first was a male on 7th May. Another on 9th was followed next day by a fall of ten and 1-4 were recorded daily until 16th. There were a further four singles near the end of the month and a straggling female on 11th June. In autumn, singles on 9th-10th & 11th August were the only records until regular passage from 17th August-2nd October. The majority of birds passed through in the period 10th-15th September when daily counts of 6-8 were received and a large peak of 22 on 11th. Counts outside this period were mainly of 1-3 but for seven on 24th August.

**GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

**Rare late autumn/early spring migrant; 29 previous records**

Two records. The bird discovered at North Light in October 2001 remained until 7th February at least. In spring, a female frequented the Observatory garden from 23rd-25th March.

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE** *Lanius collurio*

**Regular spring and autumn migrant**

In spring, a male on 9th May had increased to seven individuals (peak count) the following day with some birds remaining until 19th.

Counts of 1-4 were then received almost daily from 24th May-12th June and the last was a late female on 25th-26th June. An estimated spring total of around 21 birds. In autumn, a female on 19th-20th August was not followed until 1-2 were seen daily from 10th-20th September, with one staying until 3rd October – a total of just four or five birds.



Great Grey Shrike –  
Paul French

**GREAT GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius excubitor*

**Scarce spring and autumn migrant**

In October, one present from 9th-17th ranged as far as from Utra, in the south, to the mast at Lower Station, in the north. Another was found dismantling a Robin in the mouth of the Double Dyke trap on 22nd.

**EURASIAN JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, singles on 6th & 8th April may have been the same. One on 17th November was the only autumn record.

**ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*

***Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn***

In spring, three on 17th March were followed by irregular counts of 1-3 from 28th March-28th May, with one bird staying throughout the summer until 28th July at least. One seen daily from 6th August-10th September may also have been this individual. There were four on 15th October, two on 1st November and one from 11th-13th November was the last.

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*

***Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn***

In spring, one on 17th March preceded almost daily sightings from 29th March-22nd June. Mainly single figures (occasionally slightly more) were recorded but also peaks of 20 on 14th April, 31 on 4th, 21 on 7th & 32 on 15th May with 25 the following day. One was reported occasionally from 28th July and 1-3 were recorded regularly from 25th August-27th October and occasionally in November. Peak counts were eight on 27th August, five on 13th & six on 27th October. Small numbers (1-3) of hybrid Carrion x Hooded Crows were also seen occasionally.

**HOODED CROW** *Corvus cornix*

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

Passage is clouded by resident birds, but peak counts of nine on 4th & 14th April and 12 on 4th May was indicative of a small number passing through. Three pairs are thought to have bred and the first fledged juveniles were noted on 24th June. As in spring, passage is obscured in autumn by the resident birds but it was thought to be negligible. Peak monthly counts were nine on 18th August, eight on 5th September, 12 on 18th October and eight on 1st November.

**COMMON RAVEN** *Corvus corax*

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

Present all year. A bird was seen carrying nesting material on 14th March. Twelve on 29th March was the only notable spring count. Three pairs bred but only two fledged broods were seen. As in spring, no real passage was noted with 13 on 11th September and 11 on 15th October & 17th November the peak counts.

**COMMON STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*

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

Present all year. Peak spring counts were 560 on 19th March and 400 on 15th

April. A mixed breeding season with the highest number occupied nests on record and a high hatching success (91.6%) but a slightly below average fledging success (72.4%) and overall breeding success (66.3%). No influxes were noted in autumn.

**ROSY STARLING** *Sturnus roseus*

***Rare late summer/autumn migrant (36 previous records)***

In spring, adults were present from 14th-16th and 21st-23rd June. In autumn, a juvenile took up residence at Aesterhoull from 24th September-7th October.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

***Resident, breeds in small numbers***

Present all year. Eighty on 15th April was highest spring count. No autumn counts were made.

**EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*

***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

Five were discovered in the Observatory garden on 11th May, three of which remained until 30th.

**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*

***Common spring and autumn migrant***

In winter, two males were resident at the Observatory and a group of four ranged from Skerryholm to Lower Stoneybrek well into March. In spring, two on 9th March and a single on 13th preceded daily passage from 26th March-13th April with birds regular until 30th April. Counts were mainly below ten and just 14 on 7th April was the peak count. Finally, there was one from 20th-27th May. In autumn, passage was daily from 8th September to early November with odd stragglers until 25th. Heaviest passage was in the first half of October with daily counts of 20-45 and a peak of just 52 on 8th.

**BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*

***Common spring and autumn migrant***

Spring passage commenced on 28th March and was daily until 19th May, with stragglers until 27th. Most counts were of single figures but heavier passage in the third week of April saw peaks of 34 on 16th and 68 on 19th. In autumn, one from 11th-13th September preceded daily passage from 22nd September-29th October with stragglers until 5th November. Double figure counts were confined to the period 2nd-18th October and 90 on 8th, 70 on 9th, 53 on 10th and 125 on 14th were large peaks.

## **EUROPEAN GREENFINCH** *Carduelis chloris*

### ***Regular spring and autumn migrant***

An early spring passage comprised singles on 26th March & 31st March-6th April, followed by five on 7th, two the next day and one until 11th with two later birds on 30th April. A bumper autumn passage from 2nd October-17th November saw birds daily in October with counts in excess of 30 from 6th-18th and a peak of 70 on 8th – a figure only bettered once before (100 on 16th October 1983). A turnover of birds was demonstrated by ringing; 119 birds ringed is a record annual total and almost half the previous cumulative figure.

## **EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis*

### ***Scarce spring and autumn migrant***

One from 5th-7th May was the only spring record. In contrast, record numbers were seen in autumn. Twenty on 8th October had risen to 27 by the following day (smashing the previous record, of 11 on 16th October 1999) with just five remaining on 10th. Two on 11th, a single on 13th and four on 20th October were the other counts. This species, considered as a vagrant as late as 1990, has been seen every year since and (in the past few years) in increasing numbers.

## **EURASIAN SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*

### ***Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring***

Spring passage was typically light and sporadic. Five on 7th April were followed by daily sightings from 12th-23rd (peak of 7 on 17th) and sporadic counts of 1-3 on 17 dates until 14th June. In July, there was a male from 2nd-5th and another on 10th. Autumn passage commenced on 1st October and there were daily sightings until 27th with stragglers until 7th November. The vast majority of birds passed through in the period 4th-15th October with peak counts of 75 (8th) & 36 (14th). One on 10th December was unusual.

## **COMMON LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina*

### ***Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn***

Spring passage commenced on 29th March and was daily up to 13th April. Counts were of 1-5 but for a peak of 11 on 4th. Sporadic sightings of 1-3 were made right up until 19th June with a single on 1st July. In autumn, 1-3 were seen from 22nd-28th September and 1-2 on most days from 2nd-15th October with peaks of six on 7th and five on 15th.

## **TWITE** *Carduelis flavirostris*

### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant, small numbers over-winter; breeds in small numbers***

The maximum winter count was 41 on 12th February. Spring passage is hard to judge in this species but regular counts of 10-30 from March-May and peaks of 38 on 9th, 19th April & 10th May suggests that there was some light passage. By June

counts had fallen to 10-15 as just the breeding birds remained. Numbers began to pick up again from late July and main passage was from 18th August-7th October when counts exceeded 100 every day and were over 200 on 14 dates, with a peak of 320 on 7th September. Passage tailed off after mid-October to single figures (occasionally more) in November and December.

#### **LESSER REDPOLL** *Carduelis cabaret*

##### ***Scarce migrant in spring, summer and autumn***

Positively identified on just three days, 8th-10th October, with a peak of three on 9th.

#### **COMMON REDPOLL** *Carduelis flammea*

##### ***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

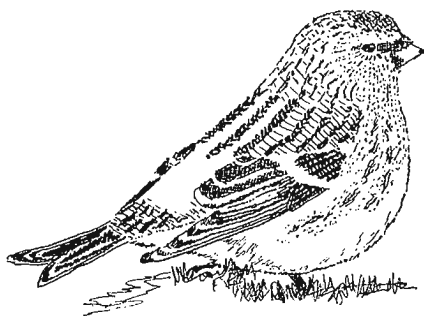
Birds of the Fenno-Scandian race *C. f. flammea* ('Mealy' Redpoll) were recorded as follows: in spring, one on 7th April was the only sighting until another on 21st-25th, then regular passage from 30th April-29th May. All counts were below seven but for a peak of ten on 10th May. One was seen on 1st July. In autumn, there was daily passage from 15th-27th October (peak of 25 on 18th) with stragglers until 14th November. Additionally, unidentified Redpolls were seen on 1st June, 14th-18th August, 30th September, 10th & 12th October.

#### **ARCTIC REDPOLL** *Carduelis hornemanni*

##### ***Rare autumn migrant, vagrant in spring (approx. eight records)***

An individual of the race *C. h. exilipes* was discovered at Guidicum on 19th October with a small group of 'Mealy' Redpolls.

*Accepted by BBRC*



*Arctic Redpoll – Paul French*

#### **TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL** *Loxia leucoptera*

##### ***Vagrant; seventeen previous records involving 24-25 individuals***

With exceptional numbers moving south along the Norwegian coast it was to be expected that some would

reach Fair Isle. A smart male, seen briefly at Wirvie on 2nd August was followed by a record group of four together (including one adult male) on 16th-19th at Dronger. A male and a juv/fem were seen feeding on thistles near the Plantation on 22nd August and finally another male was found at Barkland on 8th September and was seen as far north as the Finniquoy Gully until 11th September. A total of eight individuals constitutes a record year.

*All accepted by BBRC*

**COMMON CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*

**Regular/irruptive late summer/autumn migrant. Rare in spring**

Rare spring records concerned a male from 25th May-2nd June and small numbers (1-6) daily until 15th June with later singles on 18th & 26th. In July, there were singles on 8th & 15th-16th. An unidentified flyover Crossbill species on 3rd August (the day after the first Two-barred Crossbill) preceded daily passage of Common Crossbills from 7th August-10th September, with stragglers until 11th October. Counts over 50 were almost daily from 11th-29th August with a peak of 123 on 23rd.

**COMMON ROSEFINCH** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

**Regular spring and autumn migrant**

In spring, an unusual orange-coloured variant was trapped on 15th May and remained until the next day. Three (including one red male) on 27th May were followed by one on 29th with two on 30th and singles on a further five dates to 13th June. A total of 10-11 birds. In autumn, two on 23rd August had risen to three by 26th with further singles on 29th-30th and 4th, 6th, 11th & 28th September.

**COMMON BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

**Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring**

Single females seen occasionally from 2nd-18th November probably referred to the same bird.

**HAWFINCH** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

**Scarce spring migrant, vagrant in autumn**

In spring, two females were present, at Auld Haa and the Observatory, on 19th April. Unfortunately, one was found dead on 21st and the other on 5th May. Another was seen at Stackhoull on 27th May. In autumn, one on 30th September remained until 2nd October. Finally, there was an extremely late bird on 10th December but this too was later found dead – on 11th.

**LAPLAND LONGSPUR (BUNTING)** *Calcarius lapponicus*

**Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring**

In spring, a male was seen on 21st April and possibly the same on 23rd. In autumn, small numbers were seen daily from 31st August-3rd October with frequent sightings to the end of October and occasional stragglers in November – last on 25th. Counts were mainly of single figures but for low double-figure sightings in the third week of September and peak counts of 23 on 10th, 16 on 19th, 20 on 23rd & 19 on 26th September.

**SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

**Common autumn migrant, often over-winters, regular in spring**

The highest count in January/February was 45 on 12th February. Spring passage was irregular until 28th May with peaks of just 40 on 13th, 14 on 14th, 27 on 21st & 13 on 29th March being the only double figure counts. Autumn passage started

with 1-8 almost daily from 14th September until an influx of 28 on 16th October saw higher numbers until 27th. A count of 111 on 18th was much the highest number – 43 on 25th being the next highest. Further passage in November was much heavier with daily counts over 50 and frequent counts over 100, peaking at 125 on 17th. A flock of 90 remained into December.

**YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella*

**Regular spring and autumn migrant**

In spring, males on 17th & 19th March were the first, followed by regular sightings of 1-2 from 1st-21st April but for a peak of four on 7th. Two on 2nd May were the last. In autumn, one on 2nd October was followed by daily counts of 5-10 from 8th-20th and stragglers until 13th November.

**ORTOLAN BUNTING** *Emberiza hortulana*

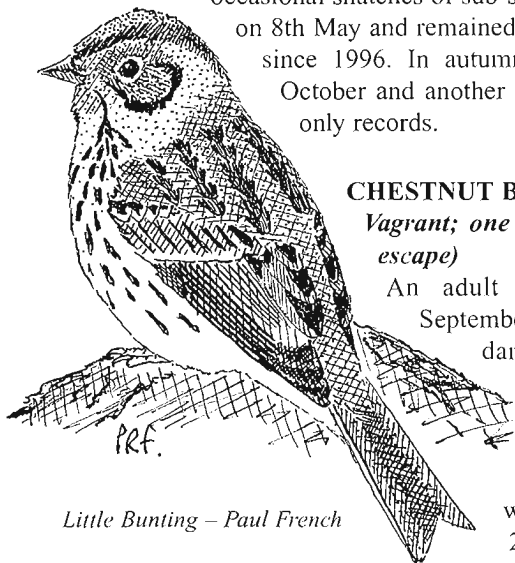
**Scarce spring and autumn migrant**

In spring, two in Boini Mire on 11th-12th May, with one remaining until 17th, was the only record. In autumn, singles were seen on 17th (earliest ever – by one day), 25th & 31st August.

**LITTLE BUNTING** *Emberiza pusilla*

**Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring**

In spring, a male at Field from 30th April-3rd May gave excellent views and even occasional snatches of sub-song. Another was found in Gilsetter on 8th May and remained until 10th – the first spring records since 1996. In autumn, singles near the school on 4th October and another at Kenaby from 11th-12th were the only records.



*Little Bunting – Paul French*

**CHESTNUT BUNTING** *Emberiza rutila*

**Vagrant; one previous record (deemed to be an escape)**

An adult female at Quoy from 4th-7th September (trapped on 5th) had some tail damage but was other-wise very healthy. This coincides with the date of an adult female on Out Skerries from 2nd-5th September 1994. Interestingly, a first-winter was trapped in Finland in October 2002.

*Accepted onto Category 'D' by BBRC*





*Lanceolated Warbler, Observatory garden, 7th September.*

*Deryk Shaw*



*Grasshopper Warbler, North Light, 9th September.*

*Daniel Stenberg*



*Pechora Pipit, Skerryholm, 26th September.*

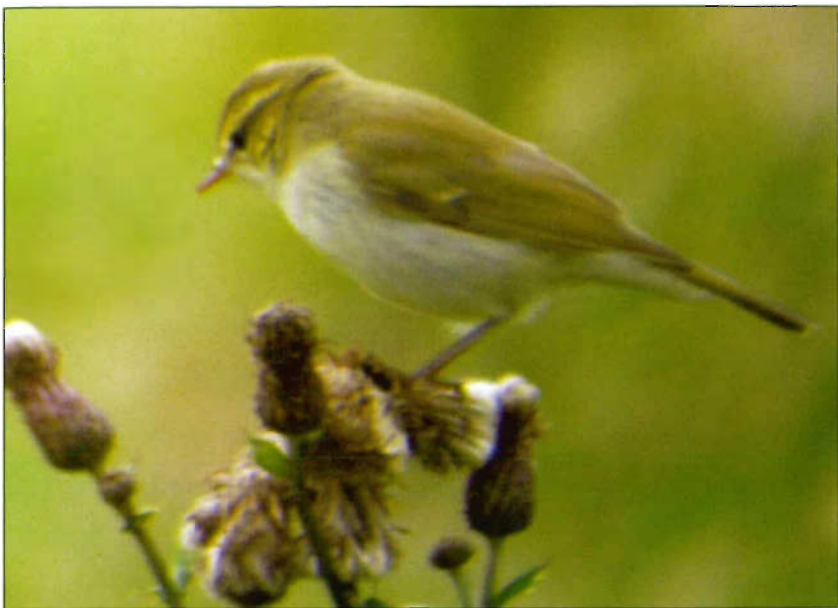
*Simon Stirrup*



*White's Thrush, Klinger's Geo, 29th September.*

*Hugh Harrop*





*First-winter Greenish Warbler, Midway, 23rd August.*

*Stuart Piner*



*Wood Warbler, South Haven, 8th August.*

*Deryk Shaw*



*Citrine Wagtail, Easter Lother Water, 31st August.*

*Deryk Shaw*



*Adult female Chestnut Bunting, 5th September.*

*Deryk Shaw*

**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

***Frequent spring and autumn migrant***

In spring, one on 28th-29th March was followed by regular sightings of 1-3 from 4th-22nd April and 1-6 between 1st-24th May (but for a peak of nine on 14th). In autumn, one from 11th-15th September was not followed until daily sightings from 2nd-22nd October. Counts varied widely, hinting at a rapid turn-over of birds, with peaks of 27 on 10th & 25 on 14th. Finally, there were two on 4th November.

**Escapes:**

**BLACK SWAN**

One flew north on 14th March.

**Update of Rarities Committees Decisions**

- 1949: Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler** – Imm. 8th-9th October has been declared first British record.
- 1956: American Golden Plover** – Adult 14th-15th September has been declared first British record.
- 1988: Blyth's Pipit** – One from 13th-22nd October has been accepted by BBRC as the first British record this century.
- 2000: Balearic Shearwater** – 7th September. Not accepted by SBCRC – removed from Fair Isle list.
- 2000: Great Snipe** – 22nd & 24th September. Accepted as two different birds.
- 2001:** All outstanding rarities have been accepted by BBRC except the following:
- Olive-backed Pipit** – 20th September (no description received). A total of three birds accepted (8th, 17th-25th and 26th-27th October).
- Black-headed Bunting** – Adult female 22nd September. Still pending.

## ***FAIR ISLE RINGING REPORT 2002***

*Alan Bull*

A total of 4,423 birds of 89 species were ringed during 2002. Table 1 gives the ten most commonly ringed species. Seabirds had a mixed breeding season, with some species doing better than others and this is reflected in the ringing totals (Table 2). With major repair work carried out to several heligoland traps throughout the season (particularly the Plantation – which was completely rebuilt) an average number of passage migrants were ringed. Due to these repairs a number of other capture techniques were employed, which included ‘dazzling’ and the use of mist nets and spring traps, resulting in the trapping of passerines at a feeding station and wading birds at night.

*Table 1. The ten most commonly ringed species, with totals, on Fair Isle in 2002; (2001 totals for comparison).*

<b>Species</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
Guillemot	1560	571
Razorbill	456	254
Shag	348	199
Wheatear	144	113
Blackbird	143	449
Puffin	139	88
Storm Petrel	133	444
Greenfinch	119	15
Starling	112	271
Meadow Pipit	101	114

Once again there were no new additions to the ringing list during 2002, which currently stands at 268 species, although several unusual captures were made; our 8th River Warbler, 12th Melodious Warbler, 14th Pink-footed Goose, 15th Dipper (of the Black-bellied race), 18th Short-eared Owl and 19th Hawfinch.

Species ringed in above average numbers included Bluethroat, Marsh Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat and Greenfinch, whilst species ringed in unusually low numbers included Storm Petrel and Arctic Tern.

Table 2. Numbers of birds ringed on Fair Isle and recovered/controlled elsewhere in 2002, together with cumulative totals from 1948

Species	Ringed as:		Total	Total	Recovered/Controlled	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	2002	1948-02	2002	1948-02
Red-throated Diver	—	—	—	1	—	—
Little Grebe	—	—	—	10	—	—
Great Crested Grebe	—	—	—	1	—	—
Red-necked Grebe	—	—	—	1	—	—
Slavonian Grebe	—	—	—	3	—	—
Fulmar	17	60	77	16695	3	167
Storm Petrel	133	—	133	29679	21	1164
Leach's Petrel	2	—	2	85	—	2
Gannet	1	—	1	348	—	9
Cormorant	—	—	—	7	—	—
Shag	10	338	348	21827	3	549
Grey Heron	—	—	—	20	—	—
Whooper Swan	—	—	—	40	—	7
Bean Goose	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pink-footed Goose	1	—	1	14	—	1
White-fronted Goose	—	—	—	3	—	1
Greylag Goose	—	—	—	42	—	8
Barnacle Goose	—	—	—	3	—	—
Shelduck	—	—	—	5	—	—
Wigeon	—	—	—	55	—	4
Teal	2	—	2	72	—	4
Mallard	—	—	—	15	—	1
Pintail	—	—	—	2	—	1
Shoveler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pochard	—	—	—	3	—	—
Ring-necked Duck	—	—	—	1	—	—
Tufted Duck	—	—	—	18	—	—
Scaup	—	—	—	5	—	—
Eider	—	—	—	166	—	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</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>
Sparrowhawk	3	—	3	354	—	24
Kestrel	—	—	—	47	—	8
Red-footed Falcon	—	—	—	1	—	—
Merlin	—	—	—	192	—	12
Peregrine Falcon	—	—	—	6	—	1
Quail	—	—	—	9	—	—
Water Rail	2	—	2	309	—	3
Spotted Crake	—	—	—	19	—	—
Little Crake	—	—	—	1	—	—
Baillon's Crake	—	—	—	1	—	—
Corncrake	—	—	—	40	—	2
Moorhen	1	—	1	98	—	3
Coot	—	—	—	14	—	1
Great Bustard	—	—	—	1	—	—
Oystercatcher	—	1	1	1489	1	70
Little Ringed Plover	—	—	—	1	—	—
Ringed Plover	—	—	—	662	—	6
Dotterel	—	—	—	4	—	—
Golden Plover	—	—	—	23	—	—
Grey Plover	—	—	—	1	—	—
Lapwing	—	2	2	334	—	6
Knot	—	—	—	98	—	2
Sanderling	—	—	—	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	3	—	3	158	—	1
Dunlin	—	—	—	542	—	7
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Ruff	—	—	—	41	—	1
Jack Snipe	3	—	3	137	—	3
Common Snipe	4	5	9	461	—	4
Great Snipe	—	—	—	2	—	—
Woodcock	10	—	10	435	1	22
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>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>
Whimbrel	—	—	—	16	—	—
Curlew	—	—	—	156	—	6
Spotted Redshank	—	—	—	3	—	—
Redshank	1	—	1	278	1	3
Greenshank	—	—	—	12	—	—
Green Sandpiper	—	—	—	56	—	1
Wood Sandpiper	—	—	—	18	—	—
Common Sandpiper	—	—	—	70	—	1
Turnstone	—	—	—	77	—	—
Red-necked Phalarope	—	—	—	5	—	—
Grey Phalarope	—	—	—	3	—	—
Pomarine Skua	—	—	—	1	—	—
Arctic Skua	2	32	34	3826	—	66
Great Skua	—	74	74	2414	2	42
Black-headed Gull	—	—	—	45	—	2
Common Gull	—	—	—	199	—	3
Lesser Black-backed Gull	—	5	5	1432	1	34
Herring Gull	—	26	26	4268	2	95
Iceland Gull	—	—	—	1	—	—
Glaucous Gull	—	—	—	40	—	1
Great Black-backed Gull	—	—	—	2837	2	110
Kittiwake	18	49	67	6964	1	36
Common Tern	—	—	—	481	—	3
Arctic Tern	—	1	1	11256	—	33
Guillemot	25	1535	1560	34739	26	1014
Razorbill	29	427	456	9804	2	229
Black Guillemot	—	3	3	1627	—	19
Little Auk	—	—	—	13	—	—
Puffin	86	53	139	12759	1	32
Rock Dove	—	—	—	67	—	—
Wood Pigeon	—	—	—	71	—	2
Collared Dove	13	—	13	317	—	6
Turtle Dove	—	—	—	81	—	2
Cuckoo	1	—	1	108	—	1
Snowy Owl	—	—	—	1	—	1
Long-eared Owl	2	—	2	245	—	13
Short-eared Owl	1	—	1	18	—	—
Nightjar	—	—	—	4	—	—
Swift	—	—	—	17	—	1
Hoopoe	—	—	—	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>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>
Wryneck	4	—	4	219	—	—
Great Spotted Woodpecker	—	—	—	29	—	—
Short-toed Lark	—	—	—	9	—	—
Woodlark	—	—	—	3	—	—
Skylark	6	9	15	1256	—	3
Shorelark	—	—	—	5	—	—
Sand Martin	—	—	—	8	—	—
Swallow	1	—	1	247	—	2
House Martin	—	—	—	141	—	1
Richard's Pipit	—	—	—	10	—	—
Blyth's Pipit	—	—	—	1	—	—
Tawny Pipit	—	—	—	3	—	—
Olive-backed Pipit	—	—	—	9	—	—
Tree Pipit	1	—	1	640	—	—
Pechora Pipit	—	—	—	9	—	—
Meadow Pipit	84	17	101	10049	—	45
Red-throated Pipit	—	—	—	9	—	—
Rock Pipit	26	—	26	9267	—	29
Yellow Wagtail	—	—	—	10	—	—
Citrine Wagtail	—	—	—	5	—	—
Grey Wagtail	—	—	—	31	—	1
White/Pied Wagtail	9	6	15	696	—	4
Waxwing	—	—	—	37	—	—
Dipper	1	—	1	15	—	—
Wren	25	—	25	855	—	—
Dunnock	20	—	20	2528	—	7
Robin	60	—	60	8759	1	40
Thrush Nightingale	1	—	1	32	—	—
Nightingale	—	—	—	28	—	—
Siberian Rubythroat	—	—	—	1	—	—
Bluethroat	9	—	9	276	—	2
Red-flanked Bluetail	—	—	—	2	—	—
Black Redstart	1	—	1	156	—	—
Redstart	7	—	7	1803	—	1
Whinchat	6	—	6	632	—	2
Stonechat	—	—	—	56	—	—
Northern Wheatear	144	—	144	16263	—	74
Pied Wheatear	—	—	—	1	—	—
Black-eared Wheatear	—	—	—	3	—	—
Rock Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>
White's Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Hermit Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Grey-cheeked Thrush	—	—	—	2	—	—
Ring Ouzel	5	—	5	493	—	8
Blackbird	143	—	143	22388	3	325
Eye-browed Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	1
Dusky Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Dark-throated Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Fieldfare	1	—	1	631	—	1
Song Thrush	48	—	48	2937	—	32
Redwing	61	—	61	8781	1	74
Mistle Thrush	—	—	—	22	—	—
Pallas' Grasshopper Warbler	—	—	—	12	—	—
Lanceolated Warbler	2	—	2	34	—	—
Grasshopper Warbler	1	—	1	118	—	—
River Warbler	1	—	1	8	—	—
Savi's Warbler	—	—	—	3	—	—
Aquatic Warbler	—	—	—	22	—	—
Sedge Warbler	19	—	19	468	—	—
Paddyfield Warbler	—	—	—	9	—	1
Blyth's Reed Warbler	—	—	—	9	—	1
Marsh Warbler	7	—	7	122	—	—
Reed Warbler	17	—	17	276	—	—
Great Reed Warbler	—	—	—	6	—	—
Thick-billed Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Olivaceous Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Booted Warbler	—	—	—	9	—	—
Icterine Warbler	1	—	1	99	—	—
Melodious Warbler	1	—	1	12	—	—
Subalpine Warbler	1	—	1	27	—	—
Sardinian Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Barred Warbler	11	—	11	405	—	1
Lesser Whitethroat	32	—	32	704	—	1
Whitethroat	19	—	19	952	—	—
Garden Warbler	47	—	47	3474	—	4
Blackcap	71	—	71	5343	—	24
Greenish Warbler	—	—	—	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>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>
Yellow-browed Warbler	—	—	—	118	—	—
Radde's Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Dusky Warbler	—	—	—	6	—	—
Bonelli's Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Wood Warbler	1	—	1	106	—	—
Chiffchaff	21	—	21	1207	—	3
Willow Warbler	35	—	35	3558	—	7
Goldcrest	13	—	13	1608	—	2
Firecrest	—	—	—	1	—	—
Brown Flycatcher	—	—	—	1	—	—
Spotted Flycatcher	11	—	11	750	—	3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	—	—	—	56	—	—
Collared Flycatcher	—	—	—	2	—	—
Pied Flycatcher	9	—	9	942	—	—
Coal Tit	—	—	—	1	—	—
Blue Tit	—	—	—	2	—	—
Great Tit	—	—	—	10	—	—
Treecreeper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Golden Oriole	—	—	—	8	—	—
Brown Shrike	—	—	—	1	—	—
Isabelline Shrike	—	—	—	2	—	—
Red-backed Shrike	4	—	4	210	—	—
Lesser Grey Shrike	—	—	—	6	—	—
Great Grey Shrike	—	—	—	114	—	1
Woodchat Shrike	—	—	—	13	—	—
Jackdaw	—	—	—	4	—	—
Rook	—	—	—	7	—	—
Hooded Crow	—	—	—	48	—	—
Raven	—	—	—	26	—	—
Daurian Starling	—	—	—	1	—	—
Starling	34	78	112	25559	—	192
Rose-coloured Starling	—	—	—	3	—	—
House Sparrow	13	—	13	1487	—	3
Tree Sparrow	1	—	1	111	—	1
Chaffinch	17	—	17	2933	1	12
Brambling	46	—	46	3439	1	15
Greenfinch	119	—	119	388	1	7
Goldfinch	—	—	—	11	—	—
Siskin	6	—	6	414	—	1
Linnet	—	—	—	152	—	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>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>1948-02</i>
Twite	50	—	50	5564	—	6
Lesser Redpoll	—	—	—	28	—	—
Common Redpoll	2	—	2	608	—	6
Arctic Redpoll	—	—	—	20	—	—
Two-barred Crossbill	—	—	—	1	—	—
Common Crossbill	41	—	41	528	—	2
Parrot Crossbill	—	—	—	37	—	—
Pallas's Rosefinch	—	—	—	1	—	—
Common Rosefinch	4	—	4	188	—	1
Bullfinch	—	—	—	109	—	—
Hawfinch	1	—	1	19	—	—
Tennessee Warbler	—	—	—	2	—	—
Savannah Sparrow	—	—	—	1	—	—
Song Sparrow	—	—	—	3	—	—
White-crowned Sparrow	—	—	—	1	—	—
White-throated Sparrow	—	—	—	2	—	—
Lapland Bunting	—	—	—	48	—	—
Snow Bunting	—	—	—	630	—	3
Pine Bunting	—	—	—	2	—	—
Yellowhammer	1	—	1	63	—	—
Ortolan Bunting	—	—	—	20	—	—
Cretzschmar's Bunting	—	—	—	1	—	—
Yellow-browed Bunting	—	—	—	1	—	—
Rustic Bunting	—	—	—	17	—	1
Little Bunting	—	—	—	35	—	1
Chestnut Bunting	1	—	1	2	—	—
Yellow-breasted Bunting	—	—	—	6	—	—
Reed Bunting	9	—	9	450	—	3
Pallas's Reed Bunting	—	—	—	2	—	—
Red-headed Bunting	—	—	—	5	—	—
Black-headed Bunting	—	—	—	4	—	—
Corn Bunting	—	—	—	3	—	—
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1700</b>	<b>2723</b>	<b>4423</b>	<b>322451</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>4814</b>

### ***Ringling recoveries/controls reported to FIBO during 2002***

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.** Three recoveries were reported during 2002. An adult ringed in July 1999 and a chick ringed in July 1983 were both found dead in Zeeland, **Netherlands** (937km, SE) in January 2002. A belated report concerns a bird ringed as an adult in June 1968 and found during the breeding season on Little Saltee Island, **Eire** in June 1977 (878km, SW).

**STORM PETREL.** A total of 21 individuals ringed on Fair Isle were controlled elsewhere and reported during 2002. These are summarised in the following table:

Table 3. Storm Petrels ringed on Fair Isle and controlled/recovered elsewhere: reports received during 2002

<b><i>Recovery Site</i></b>	<b><i>No.</i></b>	<b><i>Recovery Site</i></b>	<b><i>No.</i></b>
Eday, Orkney	5	Sanda Island, Strathclyde	1
North Ronaldsay, Orkney	1	Mayo, <b>EIRE</b>	1
Brough of Birsay, Orkney	1	Sogn og Fjordane, <b>NORWAY</b>	1
Eilan Nan Ron, Highland Region	4	Heroy, <b>NORWAY</b>	2
Eilean Hoan, Highland Region	1	Salthovdi, Sandur, <b>FAEROES</b>	1
Priest Island, Highland Region	3		

As is always the case, most birds listed in table 3 were controlled within four years of ringing, with the exception of the following birds. Three of the four birds controlled at Eilan Nan Ron (189km, SW) were found within the space of three days in July 2002, having been ringed in July 1991, August 1994 and August 1996. The bird controlled at Eilean Hoan was ringed in July 1991 and controlled in September 2002 (205km, SW). This bird had previously been captured at that site in 1996, 1999 and 2001. The Sanda Island bird was ringed in September 1997 and controlled in July 2002 (530km, SSW). The bird controlled in the **Faeroes** was ringed in August 1994 and controlled in August 2002 (381km, NW). Of the two

birds controlled at Heroy in **Norway**, one had been ringed in August 1995 and controlled in July 2002 whilst the other was ringed in August 1999 and controlled during the breeding season in 2000, 2001 and 2002!

**SHAG.** Four birds were reported during 2002, all were ringed as chicks. One ringed in June 1998 was found dead on the island in May 2002 (this bird does not appear in table 2). One ringed in July 2001 was found dead in a fishing creel at Copinsay Pass, Orkney in October 2002 (91km, SW). Two birds ringed in July 2002 were recovered in Mainland Shetland shortly after fledging; one at Aith Voe (86km, N) in August and the other at West Burra in October (60km, N).

**WOODCOCK.** A juvenile ringed in November 1994 was found freshly dead in Kilkenny, **Eire** in November 2001 (823km, SSW).

**OYSTERCATCHER.** A chick ringed in July 1996 was controlled in September 2002 at Llanfairfechan, Gwynedd (713km, SSW). It had previously been captured near the same site in October 2000. A chick ringed in July 1989 was found dead on the isle in July 2002 (4771 days).

**REDSHANK.** An adult ringed in October 2001 was found exhausted on the Nelson Oil Platform, North Sea in January 2002 (263km, SSE). Unfortunately it died soon after being found. This represents only the third recovery of a Fair Isle ringed Redshank.

**GREAT SKUA.** Only two recoveries away from the isle were reported during 2002. A chick ringed in June 1988 was found dead in June 2002 at Deerness, Orkney (89km, SSW). A chick ringed in July 1997 was found dead in July 2002 near Lingarth, Shetland (48 km, NNE).

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL.** A chick ringed in July 1996 was a road casualty at Vidlin, Shetland in July 2002 (100km, NNE).

**HERRING GULL.** A chick ringed in June 2000 had its ring number read through a telescope in December 2001 on Kirkwall Pier, Orkney (97km, SW). A chick ringed in July 2002 was found long dead at Blinkbonny, Orkney in November 2002 (103km, SW).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.** A chick ringed in June 1994 was found dead on a beach at Helmsdale, Highland Region in August 2002 (200km, SSW) and an adult ringed in February 1998 was observed in the field (ring number read through a telescope) at Rotterdam, **Netherlands** in February 2002 (928km, SE).

**KITTIWAKE.** An adult ringed in July 2000 was shot in **Greenland** in September 2000 (2672km, WNW).

**GUILLEMOT.** Details of twenty-six recoveries were received during 2002. Twenty-three of these were birds ringed as chicks. These are summarised in the text below:

**Shetland:** One ringed in June 1983 was found dead at Grutness, near Sumburgh in March 2002 (42km, N). One ringed in June 1996 was found dead at Burravoe, Yell in November 2002 (2330 days, NNW).

**England:** One ringed in June 2000 was found dead on a beach at Blakeney Point, Norfolk in December 2001 (747km, S). One ringed in July 2002 was found dead on a beach amongst other dead birds at Holy Island, Northumberland in September 2002 (430km, S).

**Scotland:** One ringed in July 2001 and found dead at Berwick, Lothian in December 2001 (393km, S). Birds ringed in July 2002 were found dead on beaches at Lossiemouth, Grampian (223km, SSW) and Dornoch, Highland (231km, SSW) in September 2002.

**Faeroes:** One ringed in June 1998 was shot near Nolsoy in October 2001 (372km, NW) whilst another, ringed in June 2000 was shot near Bordoy in November 2001 (388km, NW).

**Norway:** All reports received concerned birds found dead, having been accidentally caught in fishing nets. A bird ringed in June 1995 was found at Aust-Agder in May 2002 (599km, E). A bird ringed in June 1997 was found at sea at Rogaland (450km, E) in August 2002 and one ringed in June 1998 was found at the same site in December 2001. One ringed in June 1999 was found at Vest-agder in December 2001 (402km, E). One ringed in June 2000 was found in March 2002 at Averoy (625km, NE). One ringed in July 2002 was found in September 2002 at Agnefest, Vest-Agder (524km, ESE). One ringed in July 2002 was found at Topdalsfjord, Vest-Agder in November 2002 (577km, ESE). Finally, two birds ringed in July 2002 were found near Froya in October 2002 (699km, NE).

**Netherlands:** One was recovered at Friesland in October 2001 (829km, SE) having been ringed in June 1999 whilst another, also ringed in June 1999, was recovered at Noord-Holland in March 2002 (863km, SE). Both birds were found dead.

**France:** One ringed in June 1998 was found dying in January 2000 (1365km, S), whilst another was found dead, also in January 2000, having been ringed in June 1996 (1293km, S). The exact finding locations of these birds is unknown, but they were victims of the Erika oil disaster.

**Denmark:** One ringed in June 1996 was found at Sjaelland in February 2002 (943km, ESE) and three birds ringed in June 1999 were found at Jylland (738km,



ESE), two in February 2002 and one in November 2002. All were accidentally caught in fishing nets. One ringed in June 2000 was found dead on a beach at Jylland in December 2002.

Details of adult Guillemots concerned a bird ringed in July 1979 and found dead at Sumburgh, Shetland in March 2002 (8305 days, 41km, N). One ringed in July 1983 was found dead at Rogaland, **Norway** in May 2002 (6898 days, 422km, E). Finally, a bird ringed in June 1985 was accidentally caught in a fishing net at Ulvoya, **Norway** in March 2002 (6103 days, 728km, NE).

**RAZORBILL.** As in 2001, just two reports were received. Two chicks ringed in June 2001 were found dead. One was found in March 2002 at Dalgety Bay, Fife (402km, SSW), while the other was found in April 2002 near Kinghorn, Fife (396km, SSW).

**PUFFIN.** Only one recovery. An adult ringed in July 1983 was shot at Eysturoy, **Faeroes** in December 2001 (6723 days, 435km, NW).

**ROBIN.** A second-year bird ringed on 28th March 2001 was controlled just sixteen days later at Jylland, **Denmark** (728km, SE).

**REDWING.** An adult bird ringed in October 1998 was found dead at Inchnadamph, Highland Region in March 2002 (1261 days, 247km, SW).

**BLACKBIRD.** Details of three recoveries were received during 2002. An adult male ringed in December 2000 was found dead, having hit a window, in March 2002 at Uppsala, **Sweden** (1051km, E). A female ringed in March 2001 was controlled at Cheddington, Buckinghamshire in December 2001 (856km, S) and a first-year female ringed in October 2001 was controlled in December 2001 at Kirkwall, Orkney (98km, SW).

**GREENFINCH.** A first-year male ringed in October 2001 was controlled twice at More og Romsdal, **Norway** in October 2002 (518km, NE).

**CHAFFINCH.** A second-year male ringed in April 2001 was controlled at Jylland, **Denmark** in May 2001 (728km, SE) and represents only our twelfth recovery of this species.

**BRAMBLING.** As with the previous species, a rare recovery concerns a male ringed on 19th April 2002 and controlled the following day at Fladdabister, Shetland (63km, NNE).

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

**STORM PETREL.** We received details of just twelve Storm Petrels ringed at other sites and controlled on Fair Isle. All were trapped during regular mist-netting sessions near the Observatory in July and August.

*Table 5. Storm Petrels ringed elsewhere and recovered on Fair Isle; reports received during 2002*

<b><i>Ringling Site</i></b>	<b><i>No.</i></b>	<b><i>Ringling Site</i></b>	<b><i>No.</i></b>
Cove Harbour, Aberdeen	1	Hordaland, <b>NORWAY</b>	1
North Ronaldsay, Orkney	2	Lindesnes, <b>NORWAY</b>	2
Brough of Birsay, Orkney	3	Rogaland, <b>NORWAY</b>	1
Utsira, <b>NORWAY</b>	2		

With the exception of a bird ringed in July 1999 at Utsira, **Norway** (369km, SW) and controlled on Fair Isle in August 2001, all other Norwegian ringed Storm Petrels were ringed in August/September 2000 and controlled in July/August 2001. All other Storm Petrels controlled on Fair Isle in August 2002 were ringed in July/August 2002 with the exception of the bird ringed at Cove Harbour which was ringed in August 2000.

**BLACKBIRD.** A female ringed at Holm, Orkney in November 2001 was controlled on the isle in April 2002 (101km, NE).

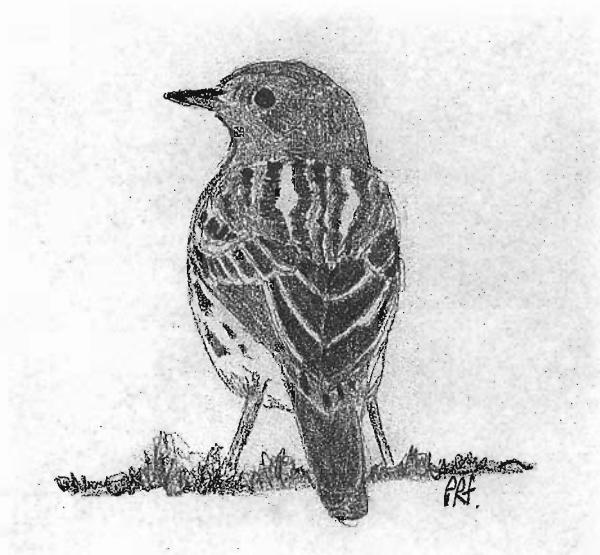
**REED WARBLER.** A first-winter ringed in August 2002 at Bloemendaal, Noord-Holland, **Netherlands** was controlled on the isle just ten days later (879km, NW). This bird had migrated the wrong way and hopefully re-orientated itself!

**CHIFFCHAFF.** An interesting recovery of an adult ringed in March 1999 at Jylland, **Denmark** and controlled on the isle in March 2001 (745 days, 728km, NW). Presumably when this bird was ringed it was heading for its breeding grounds and, judging by its arrival on Fair Isle, has probably over-shot its intended destination.

**GREENFINCH.** Two reports received. A first-year female ringed in October 2000 at Aust-agder, **Norway** was controlled on the isle in October 2001 (607km, W). A second-year female ringed in January 2001 at Wicklow, **Eire** was controlled in April 2002 (774km, NNE).

**LINNET.** One ringed on 9th May 2002 at North Ronaldsay, Orkney was controlled on the isle four days later (49km, NE).

**TWITE.** A bird ringed during the winter of 1999/2000 at Raggra, Caithness was seen in the field on 23rd June 2002. It was seen to be wearing a yellow colour ring and was ringed as part of a project to try and determine the origins of wintering birds in Caithness. These are the only details available on this bird.



*Red-Throated Pipit – Paul French*

## A Selection of Rarity Descriptions from 2002 . . .

### The Second of FIVE Citrine Wagtails (*Motacilla citreola*) on Fair Isle in 2002

*Deryk Shaw*

**Circumstances:** I was nearing South Light during SW census on 16th August with a Barred Warbler at Shirva the obvious highlight so far (apart from a “grip-off” phone call informing me of a Two-barred Crossbill on Dronger, in the north of the isle) and was scanning the rocky area at Smirri Geo. A couple of wagtails chased each other for a few seconds before parting and landing on the rocks. I raised my bins to one – “a white wagtail”. I looked for the other one and saw it fly a few yards calling – a very buzzy ‘dzzzut’. “Brilliant! Cit. Wag!” I thought. I raised my bins assuming it to be the elusive bird that I had found at Barkland on 10th then re-found at Setter three days later (but had not seen in-between, or since) and was surprised (and delighted!) to find that, due to obvious plumage differences, it was not! I phoned the news out and sat down to take some notes. The bird was happily chasing insects amongst the rocks and came quite close but after c1/2 hour (and just before the arrival of the Obs van), it flew toward South Harbour. It was not seen again that day, as most people chose to twitch the (flock of **FOUR!**) Two-barred Crossbills in the north instead (understandably!). However the following day, whilst searching for a reported Nightingale sp., I found it again knocking about on a wee pool near the Lighthouse. I phoned it out and watched it for c10 mins through a scope but it unfortunately flew off *again* before anyone else arrived.

**General impression:** A grey, black and white wagtail with striking white wing bars and a tail length between that of Yellow and White Wagtail. Aggressive towards nearby White Wagtail. Behaved in typical wagtail fashion, picking and chasing insects amongst the rocks.

**Head:** Crown grey with just a hint of brown. White supercilium of fairly even width becoming off white at the rear and as it continued to encircle the (isolated) ear coverts – never appeared broken. Ear coverts were grey but with some paler mottling in the centres giving the “hollow” appearance. Lores buffy-white.

**Upperparts:** Nape, mantle, back and rump concolourous grey (not quite as light as white wagtail) with a hint of a brown wash. Wing coverts black with broad white tips, greaterals also finely edged white, producing two equally obvious white wing bars but not as broad as those on the bird from 10th-13th. Primaries and tertiaries black with narrow white edges to the latter – which were more obvious than those of the nearby white wagtail. Uppertail coverts black. Tail black but for white outer feathers.

**Underparts:** Throat white. Dirty brownish buff wash to upper breast, fading toward lower breast, with blackish triangles at the sides joined by thin blackish marks forming a broken ‘necklace’. Belly off-white. Vent and undertail pure white.

**Bare Parts:** Bill entirely black. Eye dark. Legs black.

**Call:** A loud buzzy “dzzeut” given on take off.

## **The Pechora Pipit Conundrum**

*Paul French*

It was the 26th September and work on the plantation trap was proceeding at a rapid pace when one of the visiting birders passed by and told myself and Simon Pinder that a Pechora had been reported from Leogh. After a ride in Ian Best’s pick-up at near the speed of sound, we arrived at Leogh with the adrenaline dripping from our brows. We joined the crowd at Neder Taft who were looking towards Skerryholm, where the bird had been seen to drop in. After about ten minutes, we heard the distinctive call of a Pechora, but couldn’t really see anything. Two pipits were then seen on the roof of one of the Skerryholm sheds. Through my bins, they both looked strikingly pink legged, but otherwise similar. One person managed to scope them and said that at least one of them was a Meadow Pipit, but later events led myself and most other observers to question this. It now seems likely that both of these birds were Pechoras, and that’s why I (and Dave Hatton) thought they were both the same. After a few seconds, one of the birds flew off without calling, while the other dropped into Skerryholm. By this point, Deryk Shaw arrived on the scene, and we proceeded to search the area. At this point, events get rather confusing. With hindsight, no one is really sure what bird we were looking at and when. After about half an hour of chasing around and getting good views, a number of us became convinced that there were in fact two birds present. While we were watching one, several others and I heard another calling overhead. Dave Hatton actually saw one briefly on the ground and then realised that everyone else was watching a different bird. After a few minutes of quiet discussion, someone saw one land in the Walli Burn. As I ventured forwards to get views, a Pechora landed on the Haa wall next to me, before landing on a rusty plough a few metres away. As everyone was now engrossed in watching this bird, I quickly walked up the Walli Burn and promptly flushed the second bird. This landed at the other end of the Haa wall, and many people had the almost unique privilege of watching two Pechora Pipits in Britain at the same time! Due to uncertainties over which bird was the original one, the more strikingly marked bird was designated the bright bird, while the duller bird was designated, perhaps surprisingly, the duller bird. This description is concerned with the duller bird. I think that this is the one that I flushed out of the Walli Burn to

prove that there were two birds. It is also the bird that then chose to spend most of its time feeding in a ditch at the bottom of Skerryholm. It moved to the Haa on the 27th where it gave very close views, as it fed and preened within ten feet of its admiring crowd.

**Overall impression:** Although the duller of the two Pechoras, this was still a striking bird. Prominent black and pale lines above, prominent black streaking below and two prominent white wingbars combined to produce a contrasty bird. In flight, the tail was perhaps slightly shorter than Meadow Pipit, while the wings were longer. This combined to give a stronger, more sweeping flight, lacking the hesitancy of Meadow Pipit. When looking up from cover, it would stretch its long neck to give a large bodied and small headed appearance.

**Head:** Lores plain brownish grey. This colour extended to underneath the eye, before blending in to more gingery brown rear ear coverts. These were unstreaked. Forehead, crown and nape brown with ginger tones to fore crown and neck sides. Nape with slightly more greyish tones. Continuous thin but prominent black streaks reaching from forehead to base of nape. Thin white eye ring broken by a short faint dark eye stripe in front of the eye only. This extended a few millimetres on to the lores, but stopped well short of reaching the bill. Thin black malar stripe flared widely at base to form a solid black area on the sides of the throat. A very thin and faint dark moustachial stripe was very hard to see. It extended from the bill to level with just below the eye. Throat and submoustachial whitish and unmarked.

**Upperparts:** Central mantle effectively black with two thin brown stripes running from the nape to the rump. The black was bordered on both sides by a wide and bold pale cream stripe. Outside of this was another black stripe, with a thin pale cream stripe outside of this. Therefore, running from left to right, the mantle was pale cream, black, pale cream, black, brown, black, brown, black, pale cream, black, pale cream. The scapulars were brown with short blackish streaks. Rump and uppertail coverts brown, prominently streaked black. The wings were also strikingly marked. Black centred median coverts were broadly tipped white. Greater coverts black, narrowly edged brown, broadly tipped white. This formed two prominent white wingbars that were not only obvious on the ground, but also in flight. Tertiaries black. Inner tertial broadly fringed pale buff, outer two broadly fringed pale olive, getting paler towards the tip. All three tertiaries complete with no obvious signs of wear. Paler (exact colour not noted, but probably a pale buff) fringes to secondaries forming a pale wing panel. Distinct primary projection, extending approximately 10mm beyond the tertiaries.

**Underparts:** Faint yellowish buff wash to upper breast and upper flanks, contrasting with the white throat and submoustachial. This faded into a white belly

and rear flanks. The breast was overlaid with thick blackish streaking extending down from the flared malar. The streaks were thinner at the very bottom of the breast, before stopping short of extending onto the unmarked belly. The thick blackish streaking extended onto the flanks all the way to the very rear. Undertail coverts were not noted.

The tail appeared short, especially in flight. It was basically dark, with apparently white outer tail feathers. All three Pechoras I have now seen have all appeared to show white outer tail feathers, and not the greyish colour described in BWP, although the exact pattern and tone of the outer tail feathers could not be established.

**Bare Parts:** Bright pink legs. Eye dark. Bill fairly stout looking, with a fairly blunt tip. Pinkish base to lower mandible appeared to bleed onto base of upper mandible. Rest of bill dark horn.

**Call:** a harsh “tzep” given occasionally in flight.

### **The story continues . . .**

*Deryk Shaw*

**Circumstances:** Returning from a fairly uneventful census of SW on 27th September (apart from a venture over to the Haa to take another butchers at yesterday’s Pechora – which was still showing extremely well!), I caught up with John Sweeney at Setter. We had a brief chat (about Pechoras funnily enough) and kicked the Setter rig together – a Barred Warbler flew out. I then wanted to check the garden but John decided to continue heading for home (and lunch) as his feet were killing him – another poor victim of the Wellington boot! A couple of Twite flew out, then a bird hopped up onto the wall at the back of the garden. I put my bins on it and was absolutely gob-smacked to see that it was an absolutely stunning Pechora!! I whistled (quietly) to John but he didn’t hear. I shouted to him “John! . . . Pechora!” – at which the bird flew toward the rig we had previously booted. He turned and ambled back and I legged it back toward the rig. The bird was not in the rig but had landed short and was walking along the base of the fence – completely in the open and just a few metres from us. We marvelled at the striking plumage for a couple of minutes before it hopped over the fence into the neaps. It then flushed and flew low south out of the rig – appearing to drop just over the silage bales c20 metres away. We decided to leave it as we were completely satisfied with the views . . . and lunch was beckoning! A post-lunch search failed to turn it up again!

**General Appearance:** Absolutely stunning. A striking black and white striped pipit with very clean markings (unlike the ‘vagueness’ of most Meadow Pipits), a pure white belly and pink legs. Similar in size to Meadow Pipit.

**Head:** Crown greyish brown with thin, distinct black streaks. Fairly plain face – an indistinct dirty-white supercilium, short faint, thin, dark moustachial stripe (probably only seen due to closeness of bird) from bill-base to just below eye, pale lores and a short dark mark in front of eye which interrupted a very thin white eye ring. Ear coverts lighter (warmer) brown. Pure white sub-moustachial. Very narrow black malar did not reach bill and formed an almost solid black triangle at side of unmarked white throat.

**Upperparts:** Precise detail barely noted but suffice to say that it was basically black and white! Mantle had clean thick black lines separated by even broader pure white stripes which really stood out. Wings appeared dark but for two stonking broad white wing bars (“wing bars like a Chaffinch” was the comment at the time). Tertiaries blackish with brown edges, falling just short of wing tip. Back/rump/tail not noted.

**Underparts:** Very pale buff wash across upper breast overlaid by heavy black streaks. Ground colour of rest of underparts pure white. The heavy black streaks at sides of breast, emanating from the large black triangle at sides of throat, continued in almost continuous lines along the whole length of the flanks. Belly and undertail unmarked pure white.

**Bare parts:** Bill – not really noted, but I do remember a pink base to lower mandible. Legs – pale pink.

**Discussion:** This bird was certainly very striking, much more so than the bird I had watched an hour or so previously at the Haa. However it is known that there were TWO birds in the south (from the previous afternoon) that morning – the other at Taft. Whilst the Haa bird was extremely confiding, the one at Taft was much less so and although it spent a lot of time at this favoured site, it reportedly sometimes went missing. As a result (and due to having a very busy job!!) I never managed to see it during its three day stay (26th-28th). Or did I? Although I have received several descriptions and some cracking photos of the Haa bird, I have unfortunately not seen one of the Taft bird. Additionally, this latter bird although not looked for at the time of the Setter (my) bird (it being lunchtime), it was missing after lunch – but that was a good hour and a half later. It did reappear (at Taft) later that afternoon . . . and next day. As the Taft bird was also reputed to be well-marked, my description is possibly not detailed enough to prove the birds were different. Maybe we shall never know if there were two or three birds on Fair Isle that day? To quote “That’s magic!”.



## The Utra – then Barkland **Thrush Nightingale** (*Luscinia luscinia*)

*Simon Pinder*

**Circumstances:** While carrying out south-west census on the morning of 20th August 2002, I arrived with Juliette Kerr and Rob Pocklington at Utra garden in the extreme south of the island; it looked pretty empty, just a few Twite (*Carduelis flavirostris*) feeding in rank vegetation. Before walking on I pished briefly, this flushed a medium-sized dark-brown passerine with a reddish tail on to a low fence on the edge of the vegetable patch. The first thought that came into my head was “Sprosser”, which I shouted to the other two pointing at the bird. Looking at the bird on the fence it was an obvious “Nigthingale sp.” very dark on the back with a dull reddish tail. I began checking features and was surprised that it showed a plain throat and breast. The bird flew down to Kirky Geo where we observed it running around at the base of yoals pulled up on the shore and along walls in the vicinity. It disappeared round the back of the walls and I phoned Deryk Shaw, who was on south-east census. A few minutes later Deryk arrived from nearby and fortunately the bird reappeared on the beach at South Harbour, flying up onto rocks at the base of the slipway, it turned to face us and in the different light showed a very dark breast and flanks. Unfortunately it disappeared again before other birding staff on the isle had arrived. At about 14:30hrs myself, Paul French and others returned to the area, refound the bird and were treated to fantastic views as it moved around the walls, fences and yoals in Kirky Geo. At this time I noted other features I had not seen earlier (eg barring on the undertail coverts).

Seven days later (27th August) I was returning from census and could see Paul French walking ahead of me past the Chalet and was in two-minds whether to bother with the garden at Barkland assuming he had just looked through it. In any case I walked up to the garden wall and shook one of the bushes, to my great surprise a dark, red-tail bird flew out of the bushes and landed on a post a few yards in front of me. I immediately identified it as a Thrush Nightingale and called to Paul. Over the next forty minutes it showed very well to us, a group of about a dozen from the Observatory and to Glen Tyler (the resident of Barkland Croft) who digitally photographed it through his binoculars. Deryk and Alan Bull erected a mistnet and the bird was caught and taken back to the Observatory, where it was ringed, a full description taken and the bird released into the New Plantation.

### **Description taken in the field and in the hand:**

**Size and jizz:** largish chat, long legs compared to the other species I am familiar with eg Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), tail looked quite long when held cocked. Quite skulking in habits, but not as hard to see as others I have experienced eg. this spring on Fair Isle. When moving around on the ground, often ran with head held horizontally out in front, looking a little like a child's toy.

**Head:** Earth-brown crown and nape. Indistinct complete eye ring. Buff supraloral stripe. Mottled ear-coverts. Obvious grey flaring malar stripe. Chin and throat off white.

**Underparts:** Upper breast and sides mottled grey-brown. Flanks streaked greyish over a grey-brown wash (this later feature was far more obvious in the field. Belly off-white. Undertail coverts creamy, distinct barring on longest.

**Upperparts:** Mantle earth-brown. Uppertail coverts warm brown. Tail dull red brown, looking redder in the field, more contrasting with upperparts.

**Bareparts:** Legs pink. Upper mandible horn-coloured. Lower mandible, base pink, with a darker tip.

**Measurements:** Wing length 90mm. 2nd primary equal to 4th. Emarginated to 3rd primary. Measured 7.4 mm from tip of longest primary covert to tip of 1st primary.

### **Fair Isle's Seventh Whites Thrush (*Zoothera dauma*)**

*Simon Pinder*

**Circumstances:** Morning census on 29th September had taken me as far as Klingers Geo and I had written very little in my notebook. I walked up the hill towards Da Water along the small stream hoping for some *Locustella* action or at least some Snipe to record. Almost immediately I flushed a large long-winged, long-tailed brown bird from a few metres in front of me. It flopped down just at the top of a small hill, out of sight in the thick sedge and to be frank I had no idea what it was; it looked not only interesting, but also very tired. Running up the hill in the hope of picking it up again it flushed in front of me, flying more strongly this time. Just getting my bins on it before it dipped down into Klingers Geo I was amazed to see a large thrush with striped black and grey underwings. I stood a little stunned as I quickly realised there was only one thing it could be – a White's Thrush!! I called Deryk Shaw, Paul French and the Observatory. Within less than five minutes Paul arrived at a run with a visitor he had picked up along the way, having sprinted from South Raeva, on the other side of the island. I hadn't seen the bird since it flew over the cliff, but was pretty sure it hadn't flown out. Luckily only a couple of minutes passed before it flew out from a cleft in the cliff and showed very well out in the open before flying back in to the cleft. Over the next

hour or so it performed very well often sitting for long periods out in the open and flying around in front of the assembled 40 or so Observatory staff, visiting birders and islanders. It flew off around the cliffs where it was relocated and photographed, before disappearing for the rest of day, to be re-found the next day by birders twitching from Shetland – who had the added bonus of an Alpine Swift (*Apus melba*) also on the isle!

**Size and jizz:** Large thrush, at least equal in size to Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*). Large head with large eye and long bill. Elongated, attenuated body. Long winged and long tailed. Often sat out in the open, but would not allow close approach. At long range gave the impression of a large Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*). Strong flight, slightly undulating. Extremely long legged, some observers noted long central toe.

**Head:** Pale lores, white chin, narrow black malar stripe, white submoustachial stripe. Bold, white eye ring. Olive-brown crown, with black crescents tightly packed on crown and nape, crescents on the rest of the body larger than on nape and crown. Grey ear-coverts, vermiculated with small black chevrons. Large, black crescent moon where ear-coverts met at the nape.

**Upperparts:** Grey-brown ground colour to mantle, rump and uppertail coverts. Large black chevrons to the tips of mantle feathers, with pale buff inner edge to chevron. Chevrons most regular and tightly packed on rump, compared to mantle and back, where more random spacing. Tail uniform grey-brown with small white corners very visible in flight. Wings golden brown. Black median coverts, with large white-buff tips. Greater coverts olive, with white tips and black stripe along shaft. Tertiaries black, with buff-white inner edge. Primaries irregularly banded golden and black.

**Underparts:** Buff breast, with many downward pointing crescents, some merging together to form a pectoral band. Below pectoral band, crescents less dense down the breast and along flanks. Ground-colour of belly and undertail coverts white.

**Underwing:** Although initially looked black and grey, as the light improved the very striking black and white characteristic underwing showed really well in flight.

**Bareparts:** Bill long, uniform and dark. Long legs and toes bright pink.

**Previous records:** 19th October 1929; 18th October 1944; mid-November 1948; 6th November 1958; 13th February 1971; 24th September 1973.

## The Walli Burn **Lanceolated Warbler** (*Locustella lanceolata*)

*Paul French*

**Circumstances:** My census of the south east on 6th October was ambling along nicely, but I didn't really have any thing good to show for it. All that changed when I stepped into the Walli Burn and flushed what was clearly a small *Locustella*. It flew about 10 metres along the burn and dived into the bank. With my heart in my mouth, I carefully approached the spot. Nothing happened. I bent down and shook the grass tussock and out fled the bird. It landed in the short grass next to the burn, and I could just see its head eyeing my up. All I could see at this point was a gorget of streaking on the breast. It then flew to a nearby wall and promptly dived into it. After ten minutes of waiting for it to reappear, I decided to 'phone Deryk Shaw. "Don't red flag it yet, but I reckon I've got a Lancey at the Haa". Five minutes later, just as the car pulled up at the Haa, the bird stuck its head out of the wall. As it craned its neck around, I could see the continuous dark streaks on the crown, and the gorget of streaks on the breast that extended down the flanks. The rest of the bird remained hidden. I gestured to Deryk that it was in fact a Lancey and we both then got a brief view as it ran along the bottom of the wall before disappearing again. We waved to Hollie in the car to fly the red flag, and a small crowd soon gathered. After a short while, it came out of the wall and proceeded to give utterly gratifying views. Myself, Hugh Harrop and a couple of others went back after lunch and watched it for a couple of hours. During this time, it came within a foot of me, and I added the finishing touches to my field description.

**Size and jizz:** Tiny. Like a thin, elongated Wren in flight. Clearly smaller than Grasshopper Warbler both in flight and on the ground. Short tail still had the classic broadly tapered shape of a *Locustella*. Flight low and direct on short whirring wings. Creeping gait through dense grass interspersed with fast sprints across small open areas. Often flicked its wings nervously when in close proximity to us. It appeared to be watching us with as much interest as we were watching it! Sitting in the wall and on the fence, it would crane its neck around to see us.

**Head:** Forehead, crown and nape grey brown, densely streaked blackish. The black feather centres reached the tips of the feathers, forming continuous streaks rather than isolated streaks. Ear coverts grey brown with fine faint streaks towards the rear. Supercilium olive brown joining unmarked olive neck sides. The olive supercilium isolated the darker crown area, giving a capped appearance. Indistinct short and thin moustachial stripe.

**Underparts:** Chin and throat washed olive yellow. Breast dull washed out buffish, extending as a dirty buffish down the flanks. Belly dull off whitish. Indistinct malar

stripe. Thin faint streaks over entire chin and throat. Well defined streaking began on the upper breast, forming a gorget of thin short streaks. These extended down over the entire breast and along the flanks. The streaking became more prominent towards the rear flanks, with the final few streaks being fairly large “tear-drop” shapes. The undertail coverts were off whitish with distinct short streaks that did not reach the end of the feather. This feature was checked in the hand.

**Upperparts:** Mantle and rump warm brown, forming an obvious contrast with the grey brown nape. Overlaid with continuous blackish streaks, formed by the dark feather centres reaching the tip of the feather. When viewed from directly above, the blackish streaks extended in continuous lines from the forehead, over the crown and down over the nape and mantle. The rump was hidden. Uppertail coverts blackish with broad warm brown fringes and tips. This formed a spotted rather than streaked appearance. Tail dark brown. Proportionately appeared shorter tailed than Grasshopper Warbler, but the distinctive graduated *locustella* tail shape was still apparent. The short tail was also apparent in flight. Tips of feathers slightly abraded.

**Wings:** Greater coverts glossy blackish with clear-cut olive fringes. Tertiaries glossy blackish with clear-cut olive-buff fringes. These were of a constant narrow width. These were a striking feature of the bird, and easily seen on most views. The longest two tertiaries had tiny nicks out of the tip. The primary projection was short (in the hand, the wing length was measured at 54mm). The distinctive curved primaries of a *locustella* were easily seen.

**Bare parts:** Iris grey brown. Upper mandible dark horn. Lower mandible dull pink with dark tip. Legs long, thick and dull pink. Toes long, giving a huge footed appearance.

## The First July Arctic Warbler

*Deryk Shaw*

**Circumstances:** A pre-breakfast phone call on 19th July from Glen Tyler “There’s an Arctic Warbler in my garden!” had all the ornithologically interested staff bundling into the van heading for Barkland. The bird was still in the garden when we arrived and one good look was enough to convince me that it definitely was an Arctic – a classic individual at that (if a bit scruffy). It flew across the road to the Chalet, then proceeded to work its way rapidly along the fence towards Gilly Burn. I managed to head it off and had some corking views as it fed along the fence, before taking off again and flying back toward the Chalet. A few minutes later it was off again – flying to Setter, where it was not followed. It returned to Barkland in the afternoon but had gone by the next day.

**General Appearance:** A classic Arctic but very scruffy. Large *phyllosc.* – large headed and long billed with very long narrow supercilium and eyestripe, olive-grey upperparts and an indistinct small dirty-white wing bar.

**Head:** Large ‘bull’ headed. Scruffy, olive-grey crown. Thin whitish supercilium from about half way between eye and bill extended over and well beyond eye to rear of ear coverts. Dark eyestripe running full length of supercilium (and may have touched bill) was narrower and more distinct in front of eye, wider and more diffuse behind. Ear coverts dirty greyish yellow with greyer flecks and a thin dark border along rear and lower edges. Chin/throat dirty greyish-white.

**Upperparts:** Whole of upperparts fairly uniform olive-grey, but for slightly brighter (yellow/green) edges to secondaries and dirty-white tips to three or four outermost greater coverts on right wing, slightly more on left wing – where the bar was broken. Long primary projection (about equal to tertial length). Primaries worn but nowhere near as tatty as the tail which was pretty battered.

**Underparts:** Scruffy, dirty greyish-white but for whiter undertail. No hint of yellow at all.

**Bare parts:** Bill – long, broad, stout. Upper mandible dark, lower mandible pale orangey at base, dark toward tip. Legs – orangey brown. Eye – dark.

### And the second . . .

*Alan Bull*

**Circumstances:** I had been down the south of the island and had not seen much. Whilst making my way back past Barkland I noticed a warbler flick up onto the fence from the angelica. I raised my bins and thought I must be seeing things! The bird had a short wing-bar and long supercilium! I suspected that the bird may be an Arctic Warbler, but the light was really poor and the bird (at that time) was not showing very well. Luckily a phone-call to the Obs saw Deryk Shaw racing down isle with his telescope and he quickly managed to focus on the bird and confirm the identification. It showed as well as the remainder of the (already poor) light allowed but was not seen again. I did not see the bird two weeks previous to this sighting but Deryk Shaw did and commented that this bird was a lot smaller, had more yellow tones and more of a wing-bar than the first.

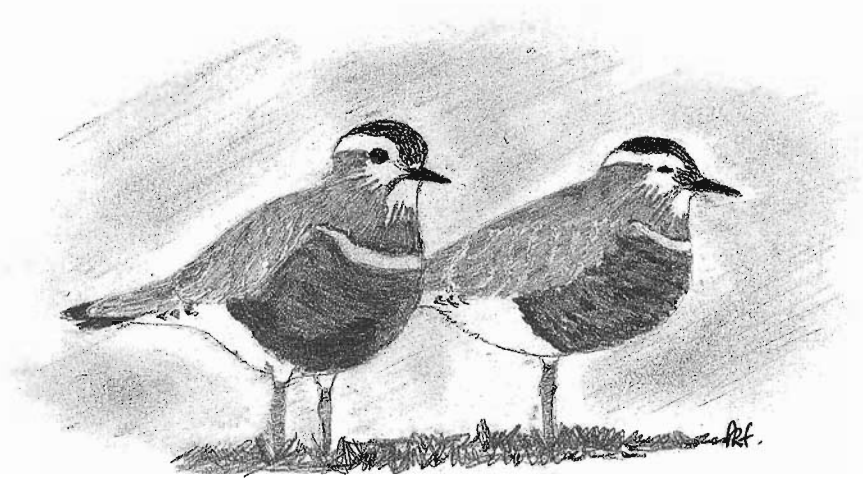
**General appearance:** A small, but chunky *phylloscopus* warbler. Long supercilium and short wing-bar. It was quite a worn individual.

**Upperparts:** The whole of the upperparts (including wings) were olivey-green throughout. There was some slight green 'edging' to the primaries and secondaries. Very short but obvious narrow wing-bar was formed on the greater coverts. Supercilium was long, broadest behind the eye and was quite worn. It did not meet above the bill and was pale yellowish in colour. Long primary projection.

**Underparts:** Underparts were pale, but had a yellowish wash to them.

**Bare parts:** Legs – dark brownish-orange. Eye – dark. Bill – chunky, two toned: dark upper mandible and orange base to the lower mandible.

**Call:** It was heard to call just once and can be described as a loud 'tzit'



*Dotterels – Paul French*

## Moths on Fair Isle 2002

*Glen Tyler*

The long, warm summer and mild autumn and second winter period resulted in an interesting year for moths.

Systematic moth recording took place between late-June and end-November with light traps being run regularly at the observatory (MV 'Skinner' type) and at Barkland (actinic 'Heath' type), with more or less regular 'sugaring' at Barkland and Schoolton. The actinic light trap was run a few times at other sites on the island.

In order to give an indication of how common different moth species are we use 'moth-nights' to indicate number of records in the same way as 'bird-days' are often used. The interpretation of this value should be informed by the fact that sugaring and light-trapping appear to produce quite different numbers of 'moth-nights' for the same population, and that trapping effort varied throughout the year in an inconsistent manner between sites. However as a relative guide we feel that it is a useful indicator, but readers should bear in mind the trapping effort table below.

The number of trap nights and bait nights for each site were as follows

Location	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Bird Observatory	14	24	17	14	0	0
Barkland	3	11	14	12	10	1
Schoolton	0	1	15	19	0	0
Other sites	0	3	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>

In all 54 species were recorded during the year, with several additions to the Fair Isle list, two species new for Shetland, one new for Scotland plus one second record for Scotland.

### Systematic List:

**Map winged Swift** (*Hepalius fusconebulosa*). First emergence noted on 8th June, with a few records at light and on sugar in June and July, the last on 15th July.

**Large Pale Clothes Moth** (*Tinea pallescentella*). A few records, mainly in buildings July to September.

**Diamond-back Moth** (*Plutella xylostella*). Two influxes of moths were recorded, small numbers in mid August and larger numbers between 10th and 13th September (a few hundred individuals noted in the field). A couple of singles seen at Barkland on 29th and 30th September.



(*Rhigognostis senilella*). Recorded only on two dates in August from Barkland.

(*Rhigognostis annulatella*). Apparently more common than *senilella*, recorded between late August and mid September on four occasions at both Schoolton and Barkland.

**Brown House-moth** (*Hofmannophila pseudospretella*). Regularly seen throughout the year in various houses on the isle.

**White-shouldered House-moth** (*Endrosis sarcitrella*). Seen occasionally in houses but recorded in traps only four times in July, August and September at Barkland and Schoolton.

(*Eana osseana*). Recorded in July and August from all three main trap sites, very common on the hill in July. 70 moth-nights at the observatory between 10th July and 12th August.

(*Eana penziana*). Regularly recorded only at the Observatory trap, 15 moth-nights in July and then one record on 5th September. One at Schoolton on 5th August.

(*Agriphilla straminella*) Not captured at light traps or sugaring, but abundant, as usual, in grassland in July.

(*Udea lutealis*) Generally common but only once recorded at traps, on 5th August at Schoolton.

**Rusty-dot Pearl** (*Udea ferrugalis*) An addition to the Fair Isle list - one at the Observatory trap on 5th September.

**Rush Veneer** (*Nomophila noctuella*). Only one trapped - at the Observatory on 30th September - but a few additional field records in that month.

**Thistle Ermine** (*Myelois cribella*). The second record for Scotland (and Fair Isle!) of one on sugar at Barkland on 16th June extends the species range northwards by about 1 km. The previous record was at Schoolton in June 1992.

**Red Carpet** (*Xanthorhoe decoloraria*). Scarce at the Observatory trap, one in August and one in September, more regular down the island with 11 moth-nights at Schoolton in August and 27 moth-nights at Barkland between 17th July and 27th August.

**Silver-ground Carpet** (*Xanthorhoe montanata*). Not common, two records each at Barkland and the Observatory between 16th June and 24th July.

**Garden Carpet** (*Xanthorhoe fluctuata*). No early records, but probably missed due to reduced trapping effort in May/June. A few records from Barkland in August, but more at the Observatory where recorded between 13th July and 7th September with two July moth-nights, 13 in August and 9 in early September indicating a good second brood this year.

**Yellow Shell** (*Camptogramma bilineata*). One at the Observatory on 7th July.

**Autumn Green Carpet** (*Chloroclysta niata*). One in the Observatory trap on 30th September.

**Twin-spot Carpet** (*Perizoma didymata*). The only record was one at Wester Lother on 16th August. Is this species declining on Fair Isle?

**Netted Pug** (*Eupithecia pulchellata*). One at Barkland on 17th June.

**The Magpie** (*Abraxas grossulariata*). The increase in records continues. After the first in 1999, and 5 records in 2001 there were 6 reported between July 6th and 17th.

**Water Ermine** (*Spilosoma urticae*). A 'white' ermine trapped at the Observatory on 7th June was initially identified as Water Ermine, although close inspection of the hind wings revealed faint distal spots and suggested it was an extreme pale variant of White Ermine (*S. lubricipeda*). To prevent uncertainty the specimen was sent to C. Plant who confirmed that it was indeed Water Ermine. First record for Fair Isle, Shetland and Scotland.

**Dark Sword-grass** (*Agrotis ipsilon*). One at the Observatory on 3rd September was the only 'light-trapped' specimen, but at Schoolton there were 29 moth-nights between 27th August and 23rd September, including four individuals on the night of 11th September. Not recorded from Barkland.

**Northern Rustic** (*Strandfussiana lucerneae*). Regular at the main trap sites. First recorded 8th July, last record 11th September. During this period there were four moth-nights at Schoolton, 75 at the Observatory and 161 at Barkland including 51 individuals on 16th July.

**Large Yellow Underwing** (*Noctua pronuba*). Regular migrant recorded at main trap sites between 23rd July and 30th September. 51 moth-nights at Barkland, 51 at the Observatory and 115 at Schoolton, most common in August.

**Autumnal Rustic** (*Eunorisma glareosa*). Not recorded at Schoolton, but regular at the Observatory between August 6th and September 4th (62 moth-nights). Seen at Barkland between 12th and 28th August (16 moth-nights).

**True Lover's Knot** (*Lycophotia porphyrea*). Only recorded at trap sites north of the hill dyke. At the Observatory there were 188 moth-nights between 8th July and August 7th.

**Ingrailed Clay** (*Diarsia mendica*). A very common species at all trap sites between 13th July and 18th September, with a very early record from the Observatory on 24th June. 96 moth-nights at Barkland, 233 at the Observatory and 417 at Schoolton where sugaring appeared to sustain a semi-resident population during August and early September, which peaked at nearly 90 individuals at the end of August.

**Setaceous Hebrew Character** (*Xestia c-nigrum*). One at Schoolton on 27th August.

**Square-spot Rustic** (*Xestia xanthographa*). A generally common species, especially so at Schoolton where there were 906 moth-nights between 5th August and 23rd September, including an impressive 171 individuals estimated on the 28th

August. Elsewhere in the same period there were 333 moth-nights at the Observatory and 96 at Barkland.

**Heath Rustic** (*Xestia agathina*). One at the Observatory on 3rd September was a first for Fair Isle.

**The Shears** (*Hada plebeja*). One record from Barkland (16th June) and eight from the Observatory between 5th and 24th June.

**Bright-line Brown-eye** (*Lacanobia oleracea*). One at Barkland (on sugar) on 18th and 20th June was a new species for Fair Isle.

**Marbled Coronet** (*Hadena confusa*). Not recorded during the first emergence period (May/June) but one record from the Observatory trap on 3rd September.

**Antler Moth** (*Cerapteryx graminis*). Common between 8th July and 10th September at the Observatory where 384 moth-nights were recorded in that period. Less common down the isle with 23 records from Barkland between 12th July and 10th September and one record on sugar at Schoolton on 6th August.

**Smoky Wainscot** (*Mythimna impura*). A single at the Observatory on 28th July.

**Common Wainscot** (*Mythimna pallens*). A single at the Observatory on 8th June.

**Brindled Ochre** (*Dasypolia templi*). Three records at Barkland between 22nd September and 6th October of what is presumably a regular breeding species here.

**Red Sword-grass** (*Xylena vetusta*). None seen in the light traps but recorded at Schoolton on 6th, 13th, 18th, 22nd and 23rd September. Most likely three individuals.

**The Satellite** (*Eupsilia transversa*). One at Schoolton 13th September, and a torpid specimen found at North Haven by N. Thomson on 27th December, which may well be the first overwintering individual recorded in Shetland.

**The Brick** (*Agrochola circellaris*). Daniel Stout found one at the School on 9th September, which was then followed by a series of records at Schoolton from 11th to 18th September, probably involving 2-4 individuals. One at Barkland 1st October.

**Mouse Moth** (*Amphipyra tragopoginis*) One on 25th August at Barkland.

**Angle Shades** (*Phlogophora meticulosa*). Good numbers in autumn revealed more by sugaring than light traps. At the Observatory one on 12th June was the first record of the year soon followed by one at Barkland on 16th June. Then there was a gap until regular appearances started at Schoolton from the 18th August. At Schoolton there were four moth-nights in August and 131 in September up to the 23rd. The Observatory recorded one on 27th August and seven in September. At Barkland, a mixture of light trap records and sugaring produced 11 moth-nights between 6th September and 5th October.

**Dark Arches** (*Apamea monoglypha*). Common all over the isle. First record on 8th July from the Observatory, with the last there on 5th September. There were 137 moth-nights at Barkland, 18 at Schoolton and 102 at the Observatory.

**The Confused** (*Apamea furva*). Small numbers trapped at the three main sites between 16th July and 23rd August. Then a late record of one on sugar at Barkland 22nd September.

**Dusky Brocade** (*Apamea remissa*). Two records, both from the Observatory, on 24th June and 31st July.

**Middle-barred Minor** (*Oligia fasciuncula*). Occasionally seen during the day at several sites around the island, but rare in the traps - the only one caught was at the Observatory on the 15th July.

**Common Rustic** (*Mesapamea secalis*). One trapped at the Observatory on 23rd July.

**Small Wainscot** (*Chortedes pygmina*). One trapped at the Observatory on 24th August.

**Rosy Rustic** (*Hydraecia micacea*). A very early record of one in the Observatory trap on 11th July. Then 41 moth-nights in August and 15 in September to the 24th. 71 moth-nights between 10th August and 6th October at Barkland. Recorded from Schoolton between 25th August and 23rd September with 32 moth-nights.

**The Crescent** (*Celaena leucostigma*). One at Schoolton on 4th August and another at the Observatory on 17th August. Typical dates for this scarce migrant.

**Bordered Straw** (*Heliothis peltigera*). One in the Observatory trap on 9th September.

**Silver Y** (*Autographa gamma*). Not abundant this year and although fairly frequently seen, rather rarely trapped. First record 8th June at the Observatory, none in July and then a few August and September records at all three main trap sites.

**The Herald** (*Scoliopteryx libatrix*). Three records; one at the Observatory on 7th August, another at Schoolton on 26th August, and one at Lower Stoneybrek in early September.

**The Snout** (*Hypena proboscidalis*). One trapped at Barkland on 11th July was a new species for Fair Isle and Shetland.

## Other Wildlife

*Alan Bull*

Records of most forms of wildlife are kept at the Observatory, with all visitors encouraged to either report their sightings directly to staff members, or at the daily log. Cetaceans, butterflies and moths make up the bulk of these 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 from 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 the 'Good Shepherd IV' during the crossings to and from Shetland). Membership £5, includes Annual Report. Contact Austin Taylor, 44 North Lochside, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0PD

### *Summary of Cetaceans*

As usual, most of the Cetacean sightings from 2002 came from the '*Good Shepherd IV*' (full details of which can be found in the Shetland Sea Mammal Group Report). Following on from 2001, 2002 was another good year for sightings of cetaceans from Fair Isle itself. Although no 'firsts' this year, good numbers were seen to entertain staff and visitors when there were few migrant birds! The highlights of the year were undoubtedly the pods of **Killer Whales** seen hunting around the isle. After a blank year in 2001, several sightings were reported this year: a single on 8th May; a pod of ten, seen very close to shore from North Light to South Light, on 2nd June; two from South Light on 13th September and four hunting around the island from 29th – 30th September. A Whale sp. seen briefly from South Light on 15th October was also thought to be this species. Other species for the year included:

**Minke Whale:** One was seen c. 2 miles east of Sheep Rock from a local fishing boat on 18th July.

**Harbour Porpoise:** An excellent year for sightings of this species. The first sightings of the year were of two seen from South Light on 14th April, followed by two on 4th May, one on 18th May, two on 17th July, seven on 18th July and two on 31st July. August sightings included two on 5th, one on 6th and three on 20th. Small groups were then seen in September with two on 4th, five on 6th, 20 on 14th, three on 20th and one on 21st. Up to 25 were then seen feeding off Bunness between 23rd-27th September followed by eight on 30th. The last sightings of the year were of one on 1st October and six on 16th.

**White-beaked Dolphin:** The first sightings of the year were groups of three on 30th April and 18th May. There were no sightings after that until eight were seen from Bunness on 27th August. Further sightings included three on 7th September, six on 24th and one on 26th.

**Risso's Dolphin:** In September, sightings from Bunness were of nine on 13th, eight on 14th and eight on 18th. These probably relate to the same group which were often seen feeding with Harbour Porpoise.

**Dolphin sp:** Unidentified dolphins were seen on 21st May, 12th August (4), 25th August (3), 18th September (3), 25th September (6), 30th September and 15th October (6).

### ***Summary of other Mammals***

The annual Grey Seal pup census conducted in October and November counted a total of 124 new-born pups in the geos around the island, compared to a count of 103 pups in 2001. Common Seal yearlings and adults were again seen frequently around the island, mainly in the South Harbour area.

### ***Summary of Butterflies***

2002 was a record year for numbers of butterflies seen around the island. Sightings were centred mainly around the excellent spells of weather during the summer. There were a total of 1772 sightings or 'butterfly days', compared with 38 in 2001! These are summarised in the table below.

	May	June	July	August	September	October
Painted Lady	5	20	—	1262	64	1
Red Admiral	—	17	1	350	38	1
Small Tortoiseshell	—	—	1	8	—	—
Peacock	—	—	—	3	1	

The first butterfly of the year was a Painted Lady on 22nd May. The last sighting of that species was on 3rd October. Red Admirals were recorded between 6th June and 6th October, whilst Small Tortoiseshells were recorded between 17th July and 24th August. Peacocks were recorded between 10th August and 3rd September. The 24th August was by far the best 'butterfly day' when the island was literally carpeted in butterflies! At least 500 Painted Ladies and 200 Red Admirals were recorded, although the actual number could easily have been twice that many.

### ***Summary of other sightings***

An attractive Crane-fly species with white tarsi was captured in the Observatory van on 12th June. It was identified as *Dolichopeza albipes* – the first for the isle and most northerly British record. Incredibly, a second was found in the Wirvie Burn two weeks later. Sightings of Shetland Bumblebees (*Bombus muscorum*) were frequent throughout the summer months as were records of Hover Flies. A Garden Bumblebee (*Bombus hortorum*) was recorded on 9th June but the status of this species on Fair Isle is un-clear. Common Frogs appear to be on the increase with large amounts of frogspawn in the ditches around Pund/Barkland, however the dry weather meant that few tadpoles reached maturity.

# Systematic Checklist of the Birds of Fair Isle

*Alan Bull*

The table below is a checklist of the birds of Fair Isle. The species name is followed by a code to summarise their status on Fair Isle (see below). All names appearing are the 'new' names, complying with recent changes made by the BOU (British Ornithologists Union). The list below does not include Category 'D' species.

## Status Categories

Vagrant (V)	ten records or less in the past 20 years
Rare (R)	11-40 records in the past 20 years
Scarce (S)	averaging 10 records or less per annum
Regular Migrant (RM)	averaging 11-40 records per annum
Frequent Migrant (FM)	averaging 41-500 records per annum
Common Migrant (CM)	averaging more than 500 records per annum

## Breeding Categories (B, followed by:)

Small Numbers (S)	on average, less than 100 pairs per annum
Moderate Numbers (M)	on average, 101-1000 pairs per annum
Large Numbers (L)	on average, more than 1000 pairs per annum

Red-throated Diver (RM)						
Black-throated Diver (V)						
Great Northern Diver (S)						
Yellow-billed Diver (V)						
Little Grebe (R)						
Great Crested Grebe (V)						
Red-necked Grebe (V)						
Slavonian Grebe (S)						
Black-browed Albatross (V)						
Northern Fulmar (BL, CM)						
Cory's Shearwater (V)						
Great Shearwater (V)						
Sooty Shearwater (FM)						
Manx Shearwater (S)						
European Storm-petrel (BS, FM)						
Leach's Storm-petrel (RM)						
Northern Gannet (BL, CM)						
Great Cormorant (FM)						
European Shag (BM, CM)						
Little Bittern (V)						
Grey Heron (FM)						
Purple Heron (V)						
White Stork (V)						
Mute Swan (V)						

Bewick's Swan (V)						
Whooper Swan (FM)						
Bean Goose (V)						
Pink-footed Goose (FM)						
Greater White-fronted Goose (S)						
Greylag Goose (CM)						
Canada Goose (R)						
Barnacle Goose (FM)						
Brent Goose (R)						
Common Shelduck (S)						
Eurasian Wigeon (FM)						
American Wigeon (V)						
Gadwall (R)						
Eurasian Teal (FM)						
Mallard (BS, FM)						
Northern Pintail (S)						
Garganey (V)						
Northern Shoveler (S)						
Common Pochard (R)						
Ring-necked Duck (V)						
Tufted Duck (S)						
Greater Scaup (S)						
Common Eider (BS, FM)						
King Eider (V)						
Steller's Eider (V)						
Harlequin Duck (V)						
Long-tailed Duck (FM)						
Black (Common) Scoter (S)						
Velvet Scoter (S)						
Common Goldeneye (RM)						
Smew (V)						
Red-breasted Merganser (FM)						
Goosander (S)						
European Honey Buzzard (R)						
Red Kite (V)						
White-tailed Eagle (V)						
Eurasian Marsh Harrier (R)						
Hen Harrier (S)						
Pallid Harrier (V)						
Montagu's Harrier (V)						
Northern Goshawk (V)						
Eurasian Sparrowhawk (RM)						
Common Buzzard (S)						
Rough-legged Buzzard (V)						
Golden Eagle (V)						
Osprey (S)						
Lesser Kestrel (V)						
Common Kestrel (RM)						
American Kestrel (V)						
Red-footed Falcon (V)						
Merlin (RM)						
Hobby (R)						



Gyr Falcon (V)						
Peregrine Falcon (RM)						
Common Quail (S)						
Water Rail (RM)						
Spotted Crake (R)						
Little Crake (V)						
Baillon's Crake (V)						
Corn Crake (S)						
Common Moorhen (S)						
Common Coot (R)						
Common Crane (V)						
Sandhill Crane (V)						
Little Bustard (V)						
Great Bustard (V)						
Eurasian Oystercatcher (BS, FM)						
Pied Avocet (V)						
Stone-curlew (V)						
Collared Pratincole (V)						
Black-winged Pratincole (V)						
Little Ringed Plover (V)						
Ringed Plover (BS, FM)						
Kentish Plover (V)						
Eurasian Dotterel (S)						
American Golden Plover (V)						
Pacific Golden Plover (V)						
European Golden Plover (CM)						
Grey Plover (S)						
Northern Lapwing (BS, FM)						
Red Knot (FM)						
Sanderling (FM)						
Semipalmated Sandpiper (V)						
Western Sandpiper (V)						
Red-necked Stint (V)						
Little Stint (RM)						
Temminck's Stint (V)						
White-rumped Sandpiper (V)						
Baird's Sandpiper (V)						
Pectoral Sandpiper (V)						
Curlew Sandpiper (S)						
Purple Sandpiper (FM)						
Dunlin (FM)						
Buff-breasted Sandpiper (V)						
Ruff (RM)						
Jack Snipe (FM)						
Common Snipe (BS, CM)						
Great Snipe (R)						
Long-billed Dowitcher (V)						
Eurasian Woodcock (FM)						
Black-tailed Godwit (S)						
Bar-tailed Godwit (RM)						
Whimbrel (FM)						
Eurasian Curlew (BS, FM)						

Upland Sandpiper (V)						
Spotted Redshank (S)						
Common Redshank (CM)						
Common Greenshank (RM)						
Lesser Yellowlegs (V)						
Solitary Sandpiper (V)						
Green Sandpiper (RM)						
Wood Sandpiper (S)						
Common Sandpiper (FM)						
Spotted Sandpiper (V)						
Ruddy Turnstone (CM)						
Red-necked Phalarope (V)						
Grey Phalarope (V)						
Pomarine Skua (S)						
Arctic Skua (BS, FM)						
Long-tailed Skua (R)						
Great Skua (BM, FM)						
Mediterranean Gull (V)						
Laughing Gull (V)						
Little Gull (V)						
Sabine's Gull (V)						
Black-headed Gull (FM)						
Ring-billed Gull (V)						
Mew (Common) Gull (BS, FM)						
Lesser Black-backed Gull (BS, FM)						
Herring Gull (BS, CM)						
Iceland Gull (S)						
Glaucous Gull (RM)						
Great Black-backed Gull (BS, CM)						
Black-legged Kittiwake (BM, CM)						
Ivory Gull (V)						
Gull-billed Tern (V)						
Caspian Tern (V)						
Sandwich Tern (S)						
Roseate Tern (V)						
Common Tern (BS, RM)						
Arctic Tern (BL, FM)						
Black Tern (V)						
White-winged Tern (V)						
Common Guillemot (BL, CM)						
Brunnich's Guillemot (V)						
Razorbill (BL, FM)						
Black Guillemot (BM)						
Little Auk (FM)						
Atlantic Puffin (BL, CM)						
Pallas's Sandgrouse (V)						
Rock Pigeon (BS, FM)						
Stock Pigeon (S)						
Common Wood Pigeon (FM)						
Eurasian Collared Dove (FM)						
European Turtle Dove (S)						
Oriental Turtle Dove (V)						

Common Cuckoo (RM)						
Barn Owl (V)						
Snowy Owl (V)						
Long-eared Owl (RM)						
Short-eared Owl (RM)						
European Nightjar (V)						
White-throated Needletail (V)						
Common Swift (FM)						
Pallid Swift (V)						
Alpine Swift (V)						
Little Swift (V)						
Common Kingfisher (V)						
European Bee-eater (V)						
European Roller (V)						
Hoopoe (R)						
Eurasian Wryneck (RM)						
Great-spotted Woodpecker (S)						
Calandra Lark (V)						
Bimaculated Lark (V)						
Greater Short-toed Lark (S)						
Crested Lark (V)						
Wood Lark (V)						
Sky Lark (BS, CM)						
Horned (Shore) Lark (R)						
Sand Martin (RM)						
Barn Swallow (CM)						
Red-rumped Swallow (V)						
House Martin (FM)						
Richard's Pipit (S)						
Blyth's Pipit (V)						
Tawny Pipit (V)						
Olive-backed Pipit (R)						
Tree Pipit (FM)						
Pechora Pipit (R)						
Meadow Pipit (BS, CM)						
Red-throated Pipit (R)						
Rock Pipit (BS, FM)						
Buff-bellied Pipit (V)						
Yellow Wagtail (RM)						
Citrine Wagtail (R)						
Grey Wagtail (S)						
White/Pied Wagtail (BS, FM)						
Bohemian Waxwing (S)						
White-throated Dipper (V)						
Winter Wren (BS, S)						
Hedge Accentor (Dunnock) (FM)						
Alpine Accentor (V)						
European Robin (FM)						
Thrush Nightingale (R)						
Common Nightingale (R)						
Siberian Rubythroat (V)						
Bluethroat (RM)						

Red-flanked Bluetail (V)						
Black Redstart (RM)						
Common Redstart (FM)						
Whinchat (FM)						
Stonechat (S)						
Isabelline Wheatear (V)						
Northern Wheatear (BS, CM)						
Pied Wheatear (V)						
Black-eared Wheatear (V)						
Desert Wheatear (V)						
Rock Thrush (V)						
White's Thrush (V)						
Hermit Thrush (V)						
Swainson's Thrush (V)						
Grey-checked Thrush (V)						
Ring Ouzel (FM)						
Common Blackbird (CM)						
Eye-browed Thrush (V)						
Dusky Thrush (V)						
Black-throated Thrush (V)						
Fieldfare (CM)						
Song Thrush (CM)						
Redwing (CM)						
Mistle Thrush (S)						
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (V)						
Lanceolated Warbler (R)						
Common Grasshopper Warbler (RM)						
River Warbler (V)						
Savi's Warbler (V)						
Aquatic Warbler (V)						
Sedge Warbler (RM)						
Paddyfield Warbler (V)						
Blyth's Reed Warbler (R)						
Marsh Warbler (RM)						
Eurasian Reed Warbler (RM)						
Great Reed Warbler (V)						
Thick-billed Warbler (V)						
Olivaceous Warbler (V)						
Booted Warbler (V)						
Icterine Warbler (S)						
Melodious Warbler (V)						
Dartford Warbler (V)						
Subalpine Warbler (R)						
Sardinian Warbler (V)						
Barred Warbler (RM)						
Lesser Whitethroat (FM)						
Common Whitethroat (FM)						
Garden Warbler (FM)						
Blackcap (CM)						
Greenish Warbler (R)						
Arctic Warbler (R)						
Pallas's Leaf Warbler (V)						

Yellow-browed Warbler (RM)						
Radde's Warbler (V)						
Dusky Warbler (V)						
Western Bonelli's Warbler (V)						
Wood Warbler (RM)						
Common Chiffchaff (FM)						
Willow Warbler (CM)						
Goldcrest (FM)						
Firecrest (V)						
Spotted Flycatcher (FM)						
Red-breasted Flycatcher (S)						
Collared Flycatcher (V)						
Pied Flycatcher (FM)						
Willow Tit (V)						
Coal Tit (V)						
Blue Tit (V)						
Great Tit (R)						
Eurasian Treecreeper (V)						
Eurasian Golden Oriole (V)						
Brown Shrike (V)						
Isabelline Shrike (V)						
Red-backed Shrike (RM)						
Lesser Grey Shrike (V)						
Great Grey Shrike (S)						
Woodchat Shrike (V)						
Black-billed Magpie (V)						
Eurasian Jackdaw (S)						
Rook (RM)						
Hooded Crow (BS, RM)						
Carrion Crow (FM)						
Common Raven (BS, RM)						
Common Starling (BM, FM)						
Rosy Starling (V)						
House Sparrow (BS)						
Eurasian Tree Sparrow (R)						
Chaffinch (FM)						
Brambling (FM)						
European Serin (V)						
European Greenfinch (RM)						
European Goldfinch (R)						
Eurasian Siskin (FM)						
Common Linnet (RM)						
Twite (BS, FM)						
Lesser Redpoll (S)						
Common Redpoll (FM)						
Arctic Redpoll (R)						
Two-barred Crossbill (V)						
Common Crossbill (RM)						
Parrot Crossbill (V)						
Common Rosefinch (RM)						
Common Bullfinch (S)						
Hawfinch (R)						

Tennessee Warbler (V)						
Blackburnian Warbler (V)						
Yellow-rumped Warbler (V)						
Blackpoll Warbler (V)						
Savannah Sparrow (V)						
Song Sparrow (V)						
White-crowned Sparrow (V)						
White-throated Sparrow (V)						
Lapland Bunting (FM)						
Snow Bunting (CM)						
Black-faced Bunting (V)						
Pine Bunting (V)						
Yellowhammer (RM)						
Ortolan Bunting (S)						
Cretzschmar's Bunting (V)						
Yellow-browed Bunting (V)						
Rustic Bunting (S)						
Little Bunting (S)						
Yellow-breasted Bunting (R)						
Reed Bunting (FM)						
Pallas's Reed Bunting (V)						
Black-headed Bunting (V)						
Corn Bunting (V)						
Bobolink (V)						
Baltimore Oriole (V)						

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**Tel : 0131 653 0653 Fax : 0131 653 0654 E-mail : [mail@the-soc.org.uk](mailto:mail@the-soc.org.uk)**

# **Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust (FIBOT)**

## **Financial Report and Accounts for 2002**

*Mike Wood*

A summary of FIBOT's draft accounts for the year ended 31st October 2002 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 2002 was another very successful year in every respect. The guest numbers were again at a high level of 2,321 bed-nights, similar to the previous year's total of 2,365 and well above our target level of 2,000 bed-nights. Shop income maintained a similar high level to the previous year in response to the wide range of goods available. Any fresh ideas for the shop are always gratefully received. The bar offered an increased range of products and the bar revenue was up by a third on 2001, its first year of operation.

We continued to repair and refurbish items such as windows, electrical equipment, kitchen items, furniture, mattresses etc. out of our cash flow, whilst also being able to increase the cash reserves of FIBOT. Our expenses remained under control, although there were one-off legal expenses associated with a property in Edinburgh.

We continue 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. In this context, further progress was made with the Fair Isle Bird Observatory web-site during 2002 with regularly-updated pages covering accommodation, bird news and travel arrangements. Readers are recommended to visit our web-site at [fairislebirdobs.co.uk](http://fairislebirdobs.co.uk) to view progress.

We received several generous donations during the year and, where appropriate, some of these have been placed in the FIBOT Endowment Fund. Any readers wishing to make a specific or non-specific donation to support the Observatory can be assured it would be gratefully received and effectively used.

The overall financial position remains satisfactory in that we retain reasonable cash balances and investments whilst at the same time continuing to make the Observatory an even more comfortable and pleasant place to stay. So long as we continue to improve the facilities of the Observatory sensibly and operate comfortably within our cash flow without taking the future for granted, the financial situation should remain healthy. With continued careful management and prudent control of expenditure, we will aim to maintain this balance between accumulating financial reserves and improving the ambience of the Observatory.

## Income and Expenditure Report for the year ended 31st October 2002

	2002 £	2001 £
<b>Income</b>		
Hostel Income	70,578	70,800
Shop Sales	6,541	6,665
Bar Income	12,578	9,267
Miscellaneous Hostel Income	2,246	2,057
	<hr/> 91,943	<hr/> 88,789
<b>Cost of Sales</b>		
Purchases	31,184	30,662
Wages & Salaries	30,104	33,794
	<hr/> 61,288	<hr/> 64,456
<b>Gross Profit</b>	30,655	24,333
<b>Other Income</b>		
Interest Received	4,040	4,325
Deferred Grant Income released	2,400	2,400
Subscriptions	5,415	5,012
Donations	4,093	2,389
Grants Received	16,580	17,008
Other Income	0	0
	<hr/> 32,528	<hr/> 31,134
	63,183	55,467
<b>Other Expenses</b>		
Administration	7,616	8,387
Establishment	25,900	25,475
Sales & Marketing	7,530	7,601
Financial & Legal	5,512	1,745
Depreciation	12,125	12,125
	<hr/> 58,683	<hr/> 55,333
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<hr/> 4,500	<hr/> 134



## Balance Sheet as at 31st October 2002

	31/10/02 £	31/10/01 £
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible assets	92,689	102,814
Investments	10,857	10,857
	<u>103,546</u>	<u>113,671</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Stocks	8,530	7,877
Debtors	10,412	13,432
Cash at bank and in hand	54,222	36,666
	<u>73,164</u>	<u>57,975</u>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<u>(15,702)</u>	<u>(16,775)</u>
<b>Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)</b>	57,462	41,200
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	<b>161,008</b>	<b>154,871</b>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	<u>(1,100)</u>	<u>(3,500)</u>
	<b>159,908</b>	<b>151,371</b>
<b>Representing:</b>		
<b>Accumulated Surplus</b>	159,908	144,140
<b>Appeal Reserve</b>	0	7,231
	<u>159,908</u>	<u>151,371</u>

**Fair Isle Endowment Fund – Accounts for the year to  
31st October 2002**

<b>Revenue Account</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Investment Income (Gross)	<b>1,698</b>	2,709
Investment Income (Net)	<b>395</b>	114
 Total	 <b>2,093</b>	 <b>2,823</b>
Management Fees	<b>335</b>	335
Balance due to FIBOT	<b>1,758</b>	2,488
 Total	 <b>2,093</b>	 <b>2,823</b>

**Capital Account**

Investments at Market Value

£2,875 5.5% Treasury Stock 2008/12	<b>3,035</b>	3,048
Unit Trusts (several)	<b>34,208</b>	24,443
Cash at Bank	<b>40,860</b>	44,910
Less Accumulated Income due to FIBOT	<b>(8,464)</b>	(6,694)
Total	<b>69,639</b>	<b>65,707</b>

Represented by:–

Balance at beginning of year			
– Dr John Forster Will Trust – Advance	<b>60,000</b>		
– General Fund	<b>5,707</b>	9,859	
Unrealised Gain/Loss on Investments		<b>(6,068)</b>	(4,152)
Dr John Forster Will Trust – Advance		60,000	
Donations received for General Fund	<b>10,000</b>		
Total	<b>69,639</b>	<b>65,707</b>	

## **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 16 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 substantial 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 six-day-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 data entry on the Observatory computers, migration census work, ringing, trap repairs, visitor assistance and some maintenance work.

It is 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 (01595-760258). Completed application forms should be sent to Dr Peter Evans, 11 Jersey Road, Oxford OX4 4RT 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 2002**

<b>Revenue Account</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Investment Income – Gross	<b>490</b>	490
Net	<b>9</b>	6
Deposit Interest received	<b>58</b>	75
Total	<b>557</b>	571
Grants Paid	<b>450</b>	800
Management Expenses	<b>0</b>	0
Balance to Capital Account	<b>107</b>	(229)
Total	<b>557</b>	571

**Capital Account**

**Investments at Market Value**

£7,255 6.75% Treasury Stock 2004	<b>7,672</b>	7,752	
Mercury 637 British Blue Chip Units		<b>601</b>	729
Cash at bank	<b>1,418</b>	1,311	
Total	<b>9,691</b>	9,792	

Represented by:–

Balance at beginning of year	<b>9,792</b>	10,027	
Balance from Revenue Account	<b>107</b>	(229)	
Realised Gain/Loss on Investments	<b>0</b>	0	
Unrealised Gain/Loss on Investments		<b>(208)</b>	(6)
Total	<b>9,691</b>	9,792	

# islesburgh ★

## islesburgh community centre

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

Cafe open	Monday to Saturday	10.00am-5.00pm
Youth Cafe	Monday to Saturday	6.30pm-10.30pm
	Sunday	7.30pm-10.30pm

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

## lerwick youth hostel

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- \* "An excellent hostel with great facilities" - *J Ashton, New Zealand*
- \* "Excellent accommodation and friendly, helpful staff" - *D Lambourne, Co. Durham*

**Islesburgh House Cafe** - The award-winning cafe serves a selection of delicious hot and cold foods, vegetarian dishes and healthier options. Open all year round.

Cafe open	Monday to Thursday	11.00am-9.00pm
	Friday and Saturday	11.00am-5.00pm

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Tel. 01595 692114 Fax. 01595 696470  
E-mail [enquiries@islesburgh.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@islesburgh.org.uk)



The Islesburgh Trust is a community based charity established to provide social, cultural and recreational facilities for the people of Shetland.

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website: [www.sumburgh-hotel.zetnet.co.uk](http://www.sumburgh-hotel.zetnet.co.uk)



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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

Crarae Garden, 11m S of Inveraray on A83



### Mountains & Wild Land

Glencoe

17m S of Fort William on A82

Kintail

Glomach

West Affric

Torrion

16m E of Kyle of Lochalsh on A87

9m W of Kinlochewe on A896

*For further details contact*

*NTS Highlands and Islands, Balnain House, 40 Huntly Street, Inverness IV3 5HR*

*Tel. No. Inverness 01463 232034*

*website: [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk)*



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