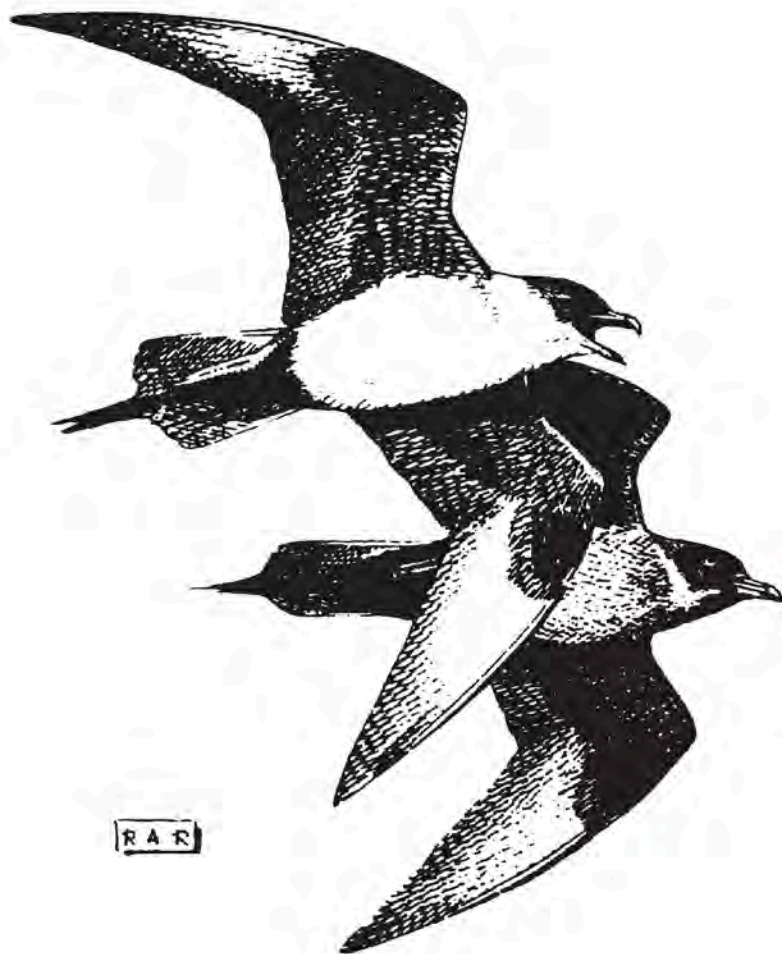


FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Report for 2007



Fair Isle Bird Observatory Report no. 60 (2007)

Edited by Deryk Shaw

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Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

A Company limited by guarantee.

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

Telephone: 01595 760 258

Fax: 01595 760 258

E-mail: fairisle.birdobs@zetnet.co.uk

Observatory Website: www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk

Fair Isle Website: www.fairisle.org.uk

Board of Directors:

Roy Dennis (*Chairman*)

David Okill (*Vice Chairman*)

Mike Wood (*Finance Director*)

Louise Batchelor

Peter Evans

Jane Reid

Chris Cox

Tim Loseby

Roger Riddington

Fiona Mitchell

Alexander Lindsay (*Co-opted*)

Pete Ellis

Warden:

Deryk Shaw

Administrator:

Hollie Shaw, Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland ZE2 9JU. Tel. 01595 760258.

Solicitors:

Anderson Strathern, 1 Rutland Court, Edinburgh EH3 8EY.

Bankers:

Bank of Scotland, 38 St Andrew Sq, Edinburgh EH2 2YR.

Accountants:

Momentum Ltd, Harelands Court, Melsonby, North Yorkshire

Chairman's Report

Roy Dennis

As in previous years, it's a real pleasure to introduce the annual report for Fair Isle Bird Observatory. Next year is our 60th birthday and it is remarkable that the Bird Observatory and its staff have carried out ornithological studies on Fair Isle over all those years and reported the year's events in our annual reports. At the same time we have provided excellent accommodation and a warm welcome to so many birdwatchers and island visitors over the years.

2007 was no different. On the ornithological front, it was a reasonably good year for migrants, with 205 species recorded during the year. Amazingly, and it's difficult to know how it can continue to happen, two new species for the island list were recorded - Terek Sandpiper and Surf Scoter. Spring migration highlights were an influx of redpolls (with over 90 ringed), Black-throated Thrush, Black-headed Bunting, Lesser Grey shrike, River Warbler and Paddyfield Warbler.

The seabirds' summer was again disappointing, with all species having a very poor breeding season, except for Gannets, which continue to increase and thrive because they can travel far to catch herring and mackerel. The staff carried out their important monitoring of the population, breeding success and the fish being delivered to the chicks. Fair Isle birds, particularly Starling, were again studied by research scientists from universities.

The Trustees have been very involved with plans for building a new Bird Observatory on the same site in 2009. We hope that we will raise the money in time to get all the work done to open the new building in 2010. This activity, on top of their normal duties, has meant extra work for our staff. We are extremely grateful to Deryk and Hollie for the superb way they run the Bird Observatory and welcome all of our visitors, and we also thank the rest of our excellent team.

I hope you enjoy reading this latest report, it is so important to have an annual statement of the ornithology and wildlife of Fair Isle. Nowadays, it complements the incredible amount of up-to-date information on Fair Isle Bird Observatory website, which is visited daily by hundreds of keen birdwatchers. It's amazing to think that 60 years ago, or even 20 years ago, reports of exciting birds and events on Fair Isle took days or even weeks to reach people, yet now photographs of the latest rarity can be viewed on the website that very evening. Well done to Deryk and to Dave Wheeler on Fair Isle, who maintain our website. Please do take a look www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk

Warden & Administrator's Report

Deryk & Hollie Shaw

It was another successful season with excellent visitor numbers and a great atmosphere at the Observatory. Good numbers of migrants and rarities made for some great birding but yet another poor seabird breeding season is a real cause for concern.

The health and current success of FIBO is indicated by the fact that bednights reached 3047 – yet another record figure, as a result of having no quiet months. This rise is due in part to an increase in JHMF's and researchers but also indicates a healthy rise in visitors. There was plenty for visitors to see, do and enjoy on the isle and we received hundreds of complimentary remarks and vows to return.

A total of 205 species of bird recorded is an average tally for recent years but included two new species for Fair Isle; Surf Scoter and Terek Sandpiper (in May & June respectively). Other spring highlights included a Common Redpoll influx in late February/early March (with 90+ ringed), River Warbler, (probable) Black-headed Bunting, Paddyfield Warbler, Black-throated Thrush and Lesser Grey Shrike. Autumn highlights included Hudsonian Whimbrel, Blyth's Pipit, Buff-bellied Pipit, Grey-cheeked Thrush, five Citrine Wagtails, five Lanceolated Warblers, Pallas' Grasshopper Warbler, Firecrest and Pine Bunting whilst the first Great Shearwaters to be recorded in Fair Isle waters since 1986 were, unfortunately, only enjoyed by the occupants of a boat 27km west of the isle.

It was a very poor breeding season for seabirds with all species faring badly except for Gannets, which increased again and Shags, which had average success. A summary appears elsewhere in this report.

Helping in the field this year were Mark Breaks (Migration Assistant) and Simon Davies (Seabird Monitoring Officer) who were both new to Fair Isle in 2007 and although very quiet, were very pleasant and good workers. We are pleased that both will be returning in 2008. Ben McCallum filled the post of Ranger and his enthusiastic approach and outgoing personality fitted the role well. He has since moved on to another Rangering role in the Highlands. There were four JHMF's/Volunteers: Jean Bergermeister, Will Balmont, Katherine Fraser and Rob Hughes - who stayed for three months and is returning for another four in 2008 as part of his college placement. All of them enjoyed their stay and also learned a lot and gained some valuable experience, which should help them with their quest for employment in the future.

In the guesthouse, Phil Bell completed a second year as Chef heading the catering and domestic team. He was re-united with New Zealander, Jean Manning who returned as General Assistant and they were joined by new-comer Tracey Weekes as the second domestic assistant. Unfortunately, our new Assistant Cook left after only one week, resulting in staff shortages for the first seven weeks of the season. Thankfully, Josie Wennekes filled the vacant post in late June until the end of the season and she has since moved to Fair Isle permanently! During a pre-planned absence from the isle for the month of August, Jean Manning was ably replaced by Jenny Stout (who grew up on Fair Isle). Jenny fitted in to the already established team very easily and her mature and hard working attitude belied her years. The three youngest Shaw children were well looked after this season with Kate Bailey as childminder. Her calm and caring attitude to them meant that she was missed long after she left at the end of the season. Staffing FIBOT each season is always difficult and sometimes problematical. Without dedicated, hard working and loyal staff, both on the ornithological side and guesthouse side of things, FIBOT simply would not survive. People come to work here for a variety of reasons and from a multitude of walks of life but they all have one thing in common – a desire to work at the Observatory and live on Fair Isle, even if only for a short time. However, it does not suit everyone and some do not complete a whole season, whilst others come back one season after another. Hopefully everyone takes away fond memories of a new experience and different challenge. We are immensely grateful, as always, to all the staff who have worked with us this season, especially given that we were short staffed for a considerable time and had our busiest season on record. Thank you to all of you.

Ornithological research is an important part of the ethos of FIBO and is something we are keen to encourage so I am pleased that we had several students carrying out various (mainly Starling-related) projects in 2007. Jane Reid, Daisy Brickhill, Jeroen Minderman and Peter Evans all visited at various times during the season to continue the long-term Starling studies. Unfortunately, Daisy had to leave due to serious ill health but after an extensive stay in hospital we are all very pleased and relieved to report that she has recovered and is itching to return to Fair Isle in 2008. An ex-JHMF recipient, Simon Boswell visited the isle in May/June to study Guillemot and Puffin diet as part of his studies at Reading University. Dr Mark Whittingham and Martin Hughes also visited to assist Jeroen with his project during the season.

Visitor numbers in 2007 were the highest they have ever been and for the first time since we have been at the helm this season we had very few 'peaks and troughs' but were steadily busy from start to finish. In April we had two large groups stay with us for a few days each: the Armitage family were in fact our first visitors and we actually opened two days early to accommodate them. Shetland Fisheries College also held a small conference here at the end of the month. On 6th May we held our Directors Meeting and AGM, which was well attended with Roy Dennis, Dave Okill, Roger Riddington, Mike Wood, Pete Ellis, Jane Reid and Louise Batchelor all making the journey here to be present for the meeting. As always it was encouraging to see so

many Directors on the isle, especially at such an important time for FIBOT and its future. In May we also saw the first two 'tour groups' of the season, with Shetland Wildlife bringing a group of birders on their week-long 'Spring Migration' trip and Limosa Holidays bringing a small group for a few days at the end of the month. June is always a busy month for groups and 2007 was no exception, with organised groups led by Ann Smith, the Association of Lighthouse Keepers and Shetland Wildlife (Island Insights) all visiting during the month. Cunningsburgh School also brought a group of Primary 6 & 7 pupils to stay at the Observatory for their summer term school trip. We held our last 'Half Price Offer' in August this year and as a result August continued to be busier than it has been historically. It was agreed at the Directors meeting that these offers would not be available after 2007 due to the fact that the Observatory is now so busy and prices have not been increased for some years. Another change in August was a trial 'closed week' to allow all domestic staff (Chef, Assistant Cook, and both General Assistants) to take their annual holiday at one time. Usually staff holidays during the season mean that we are short staffed on the domestic side for several weeks during the summer months. However, with increasing visitor numbers and the difficulty in finding staff generally, it has become harder and harder to cover these staff shortfalls. It was agreed, therefore, that the Observatory would close to guests for one week towards the end of August. This proved very successful and will be repeated in future seasons. In September we had our long-standing visit from Travelling Naturalists and our third visit of the season from Shetland Wildlife (Autumn Migration) and finally in October we had groups from Celtic Bird Tours and Oriole Adventures as well as a small group led by Anne Sime.

The major island event this year was the celebration of Jimmy and Florrie Stout's Ruby Wedding Anniversary. On the night of 22nd July the Hall was filled with family and friends of Jimmy and Florrie, spanning several decades. A sumptuous meal was followed with a dance and the next night a concert was held at the Kirk, with music, poems and hymns. The Community Hall was closed in October to allow major refurbishments to begin. With the islands main venue out of action, the Observatory was used to host a variety of events including the Harvest Festival raffle, the school children's Christmas play and the island Christmas party and Pantomime. It is hoped the Hall will be open again by next spring.

On the maintenance front, thankfully there were no new major problems with the building this season, however the FIBOT vehicles continued to be problematical. The red transit van purchased in 2006 proved to be a costly mistake and was scrapped at the beginning of the 2007 season. Thanks must go to Kenny Stout whose truck was borrowed numerous times to move barrels etc. A Renault Espace people carrier was purchased in April to replace the old Toyota, which had lasted just two seasons.

With the islanders' permission and Iain Stout's assistance our project to plant areas of crops and trees for shelter and food for migrating birds continued and was appreciated by visiting birds and birders alike. Also, Shetland Islands Council

provided us with a grant to improve access, which we have used to replace many old stiles with new. We aim to continue this in 2008.

It was a busy tourist season not only for the number of guests staying with us but with nine cruiseship visits also, swelling the island population from time to time. Adding to this was a twice-weekly scheduled air service from Kirkwall via North Ronaldsay to Fair Isle, operated by Loganair, Orkney. This is to continue in 2008 but minus the North Ronaldsay stop. With more advertising and the correct fare structure, this could be an increasingly popular route to Fair Isle from mainland Scotland.

The resident Fair Isle population itself has been constantly changing in recent years as some families move on to new ventures and others arrive to make a new start on the isle. In 2007, Linda Grieve, Phil Welch and their two daughters, Erin and Melissa left the island in March to begin a new life running a Fish restaurant in Lowestoft. After 15 years living within the Fair Isle community they will be greatly missed. We were also sorry to say goodbye to Paul Baxter, Shonagh MacMaster and their delightful baby boy, Arran, born in May 2007. They left Fair Isle after two years living at Barkland. The only new arrival was, as mentioned earlier, Josie Wennekes moving to the isle permanently, with a view to opening a Bed & Breakfast once she is established.

It just remains for us to thank all those individuals and organisations, too numerous to mention by name, who help to make Fair Isle and Fair Isle Bird Observatory the success that it is today and those who have contributed to this report be it with articles, vignettes, photographs or help with proof-reading.

New Observatory

The groundwork towards a new Bird Observatory continued in 2007, with a completed feasibility study and investigations into sources of funding and potential contractors. This bore fruit in early 2008 with Shetland Island's Council promising £1.15M – just over a quarter of the £4M required and applications to the Scottish Rural Development Programme, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Heritage Lottery Fund in progress. A FIBOT appeal to raise £1.5M is to be launched in August 2008. At the time of writing (November 2008) a preferred contractor has been chosen and discussions about building details and timescale are being held. FIBOT is optimistic that building work will commence in 2009.

Readers are advised to refer to the FIBO website for up to date information, including how you can make a significant difference *now* and help us raise the money to reach our target in time, so we can open a new Observatory in 2010.

PLEASE HELP us to secure the future of FIBOT and Fair Isle.

We look forward to welcoming you in the new Observatory in the near future!



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for Scotland
a place for everyone

Fair Isle in 2007

Alexander Bennett (Group Manager, Countryside & Islands, North)

Two thousand and seven was a year of restructuring in the Trust and as a result the island found that they are dealing with some new faces while others have moved on.

Fair Isle now falls into the 'Countryside and Islands, North' Group based in Inverness and headed up by Alexander Bennett as the Group Manager and who is well known to Fair Isle having been involved there since 1985. This new structure came into force on 1 November 2007 and extends from Mar Lodge Estate in Deeside to the Barrahead islands (Mingulay, Bernery, Pabbay and St Kilda in the Western Isles and as far north as Unst in Shetland as well as a few thousand hectares of West Highland Estates such as Torridon, Kintail and West Affric. A truly fantastic diversity of responsibilities indeed and not a little travelling into the bargain! There can be few other areas with such fantastic properties and opportunities for the Trust.

The primary NTS contacts going into 2008 are Angus Jack, Senior Building Surveyor for all building related work and Alan Barrow, Rural Surveyor for all work relating to the land. Both have access to specialist advice if and when required including an Archaeologist, Nature Conservation Adviser and a Species Recovery Officer. The team continues to be supported by Sheona Leonard our Finance Manager who is also based in Inverness.

During 2007 the Trust worked in partnership with the community (including FIBOT) in the development of a new 5 year management plan for the island. As part of this process Nicholas Meny, Management Planner, visited the island to meet with anyone who wanted to be involved in the process and Sue Mackenzie, Education Officer, carried out an interactive workshop with the school children in order for them to provide their feed back. We certainly felt that this was a very positive experience and would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part. The plan should be completed and adopted by our Leadership Team in September 2008.

A more challenging issue for all involved found us working with the community to try and understand how a potential croft house purchase (first in Fair Isle history) might affect the fragile dynamics of the crofting community. At the close of 2007 this remains ongoing however it is clear and greatly encouraging to see that there is a very strong commitment by the Fair Isle Community to finding the right answer and the Trust will endeavour to facilitate this process.

A number of people moved out of properties which are managed by the Trust during the year and as a result we were involved, in conjunction with the Fair Isle Housing Forum, in advertising and choosing replacement tenants. We wish these people the best of luck for their future on the island! The Trust also purchased the Chalet opposite Barkland from Shetland Island Council enabling us to secure its future for additional accommodation.

We look forward to 2008 and the various challenges which will no doubt arise and are always keen to hear from anyone who would like our assistance, is interested in volunteering for the Trust or is simply wishing to join our membership.



Orcas and Kittiwake © WT Miles

Map of Fair Isle



Fair Isle Weather in 2007

Dave Wheeler

Table 1. Meteorological data, Fair Isle 2007

Temp. (°C)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YEAR	1974-00
Mean	5.7	5.4	6.1	7.7	8.0	10.3	11.6	11.5	10.1	9.8	6.7	6.1	8.2	7.6
Maximum	10.2	10.0	9.9	13.5	12.0	15.7	16.0	16.1	14.1	13.5	12.6	11.8		
Minimum	-0.9	-0.7	-1.5	1.2	2.3	5.3	7.3	6.7	3.3	3.1	-0.1	0.9		
Sea	8.7	8.1	7.7	8.2	9.2	10.9	12.3	12.2	11.5	12.1	9.9	9.0	10.0	9.2
Rainfall (mm)														
Monthly	143.1	122.5	80.3	45.5	51.2	15.2	105.1	68.5	127.8	51.6	115.8	103.8	1030.4	924.4
Maximum Daily Fall	31.3	28.5	18.7	10.3	6.1	6.4	34.2	15.6	35.7	13.7	26.7	31.8		
Sunshine (hours)														
Total	30.4	47.0	137.6	137.9	221.8	154.1	113.5	160.6	96.7	67.2	32.3	43.1	1242.2	1223.5
Maximum Daily	4.8	6.9	10.8	14.0	15.7	16.2	14.9	12.5	10.8	9.1	5.4	4.8		
Wind speed (knots)														
Mean	18.2	15.5	15.8	10.8	11.2	10.1	9.4	10.9	14.6	13.6	15.4	17.0	13.5	16.0
Maximum Gust	63	54	79	41	52	36	38	42	53	48	81	56		
Number of days														
Hail	16	10	8	4	3	0	0	0	4	3	11	7	66	79.0
Snow/sleet	11	11	5	4	1	0	0	0	2	0	7	2	43	65.5
"Rain, >0.1mm"	29	24	18	18	21	11	19	19	20	14	26	16	235	242.3
"Wet, >0.9mm"	24	17	15	14	16	3	12	14	13	12	20	11	171	175.9
Ground frost	6	6	7	3	5	0	0	1	1	1	7	3	40	59.9
Air frost	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	10	18.0
Gale	10	2	8	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	9	8	41	56.5
Wind (direction at 0900)														
North	4	1	6	1	1	7	5	3	4	0	4	1	37	42.3
North East	1	0	2	3	4	14	1	3	0	0	0	2	30	22.1
East	2	8	0	2	3	2	7	4	1	0	4	1	34	34.7
South East	0	8	5	3	2	3	2	1	2	0	0	2	28	50.0
South	3	2	6	5	6	1	0	5	3	0	3	14	48	60.0
South West	9	2	8	4	5	0	4	4	7	0	4	5	52	51.3
West	6	4	3	10	4	1	3	9	10	0	6	2	58	62.5
North West	5	3	1	2	6	2	8	2	3	0	9	4	45	37.1
Calm	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	5.5

(Figures in brackets are the average for the period 1974-2000)

Report on investigations into causes of death and disease states in casualty birds found on Fair Isle 2006–2007

J. C. Waine

This report details the post-mortem findings of casualties sent from Fair Isle for the years 2006 and 2007. These corpses are sent as part of an ongoing investigation into disease states and causes of death in wild birds, which is now in its thirteenth year at Fair Isle.

Thirty-six specimens were examined representing 12 species from 9 Families and 4 Orders: Procellariiformes, one family Procellariidae (1 Northern Fulmar); Anseriformes, one Family Anatidae (1 Aythya species, 2 Common Eiders); Charadriiformes, three Families; Scolopacidae (1 Common Snipe), Sternidae (1 Arctic Tern), Alcidae (1 Common Guillemot, 1 Atlantic Puffin); Passeriformes, 4 Families: Hirundinidae (3 Barn Swallows), Turdidae (19 Redwings), Sylviidae (2 Garden Warblers and 1 Sedge Warbler), Sturnidae (3 Common Starlings). The most common species represented was Redwing as a result of one major lighthouse collision incident. It is interesting to note that all the birds killed in this incident were immature - do the younger birds travel together in a separate flock or have the older birds learnt the dangers presented by lighthouses?

A summary table, arranged by order of diagnosis, is presented on the next page.

Mainly because of the lighthouse collisions, these injuries are the most common cause of death in this group with 29 birds having signs typical of this type of incident. Compared to recent years numbers of birds found dead with starvation are significantly down with just five in total and only one Common Guillemot. Interesting individual cases include a Fulmar with aspergillosis (a complex fungal disease) of the lungs and a Common Guillemot with ulcerative parasitic gastritis - a problem which no doubt contributed to its death.

Once again I would like to thank the staff and friends of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory for their help and co-operation with this project.

Species / Latin Name	Age	Sex	Date fnd.	Conclusions
1 Common Snipe <i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	Adu	F	11/07/2007	Collision injuries
2 Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Adu	M	04/05/2006	Collision injuries
3 Common Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris zetlandicus</i>	Juv	M	12/06/2007	Collision injuries
4 Common Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Adu	M	29/09/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
5 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	M	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
6 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
7 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	M	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
8 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	?	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
9 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
10 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
11 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	M	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
12 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
13 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	M	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
14 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	M	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
15 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	M	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
16 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	M	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
17 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
18 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
19 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
20 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
21 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
22 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	M	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
23 Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries: lighthouse
24 Sedge Warbler <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	Adu	M	25/05/2007	Collision injuries: window
25 Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Adu	M	19/05/2007	Collision injuries; dislocated hip; shock
26 Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	2yr	M	not known	Collision injuries
27 Garden Warbler <i>Sylvia borin</i>	Imm	F	21/10/2006	Collision injuries
28 Common Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris zetlandicus</i>	Juv	F	14/06/2007	No diagnosis
29 (Tufted) Duck <i>Aythya spp</i>	Adu	M	18/10/2006	Parasitic enteritis; collision injuries
30 Northern Fulmar <i>Fulmaris glacialis</i>	Adu	M	07/03/2007	Parasitic gastritis, pulmonary aspergillosis, hepatitis, emaciation
31 Barn Swallow <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Adu	M	04/05/2006	Predation
32 Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Adu	M	10/06/2007	Predation
33 Common Eider <i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Adu	M	01/11/2006	Starvation - primary; drowned
34 Common Eider <i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Adu	M	01/11/2006	Starvation - primary; drowned
35 Atlantic Puffin <i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Adu	F	20/12/2006	Starvation; collision injuries; drowning
36 Common Guillemot <i>Uria aalge</i>	Juv	M	01/11/2006	Starvation; parasitic gastritis

Ornithological Monthly Summary

Mark Breaks & Deryk Shaw

The monthly totals of species were:

Jan	53	May	138	Sep	143
Feb	60	June	103	Oct	141
Mar	80	July	89	Nov	79
Apr	112	Aug	107	Dec	52

January: The year opened with the '*borealis*' Northern Eider still present in the Havens, where it remained all month and a wintering Shoveler was equally unusual. Just over 100 Greylags included single Pink-footed and Barnacle Geese. Up to four Water Rails were at Chalet Pond with another two at the Observatory and a few others scattered around the croft-land. A flock of 17 Lapwing increased to 25 (from 15th) and was joined by 1–2 Golden Plover (from 10th). The wintering Turnstone flock peaked at 195 (18th) and Curlew at eight (28th), but very few Purple Sandpipers were seen. During the last week, Oystercatchers began to arrive (peak of nine on 30th) and a Ringed Plover (30th). A couple of over-wintering Merlins were seen regularly with a Peregrine on the 20th. Passerines of note included a Skylark (11th), single Dunnocks at both the Observatory and Barkland, a scattering of thrushes (incl. 70 Fieldfare on 15th and 20–30 each of Blackbird & Redwing throughout), a couple of wintering Chaffinches, c.15 Twite and a low peak of nine Snow Bunting (23rd). A '*mealy*' Common Redpoll was seen on the 23rd.

February: As winter continued there was little of note during the first half of the month with a couple of Iceland Gulls and occasional Glaucous Gull present. Milder weather from 13th encouraged the first Skylarks (4) to pass through, increasing to 21 by 17th and 120 by 25th – very good numbers so early in the year. Also, an early Stonechat (19th) became six by 25th and the first Pied Wagtail and Siskin arrived on 24th. Waders increased in numbers during the final week, with peaks of 86 Oystercatcher, 80 Lapwing and 34 Ringed Plover. A Wood Pigeon was new for the year on 28th. However, the most significant movement of the month was that of '*mealy*' Common Redpolls. Four arrived on 22nd and peaked at 45 on 25th. However, over 70 were trapped and ringed, indicating a significant turnover of birds, which continued into March.

March: A first-winter Glaucous Gull opened the month whilst 'mealy' Common Redpoll numbers remained high, with a flock of 40 frequenting the Havens area on 2nd. Numbers began to dwindle from 4th and were down to just five lingering around the Observatory by 7th. A final total of some 90 (including one Lesser Redpoll) were ringed between the Observatory and Barkland! The first Skylarks were heard singing on 2nd amid a large movement of this species when there were also 100 Lapwing, 20 Ringed Plover and a couple each of Pied Wagtail and Rook. A flock of 21 Rook (third highest ever count) went through on 3rd, whilst Lapwings increased to 180, Ringed Plovers to 24 and Stonechats to six, with two first-winter Iceland Gulls also seen. Two first-winter Glaucous Gulls were the highlight of a stormy 5th, with one remaining the following day when a second-winter Iceland Gull was seen loafing in South Harbour, Ringed Plovers peaked at 47 and just a single Stonechat was logged. The first frogspawn was found in a ditch at Setter – also on 6th. A count of 235 Skylarks was made on a pleasant 7th with 128 Greylags, 43 Ringed Plover, a small increase in Song Thrush (11) and seven Wood Pigeon also noted. A quiet few days ensued until the first Meadow Pipit appeared on 11th, accompanied by five Stonechat and a Teal. Three Wigeon on 17th were followed the next day by three Teal plus singles of Red-throated Diver, Cormorant and Dunlin. The wintering female Shoveler was present throughout. Highlight of 19th was the unexpected arrival of an adult Mute Swan in South Haven – only our 8th record. It was still present the following day when a flock of 21 Curlew arrived and a party of 30 Snow Buntings was seen. A Mistle Thrush at North Light and the first Puffin offshore at South Light on 21st were welcome additions to the year list. The 22nd dawned calm, bright, sunny and warm - the best day of the year so far and commenced with a report of three Killer Whales off South Light. There were lots of Guillemots & Razorbills ashore plus the first few Kittiwakes back on ledges. Nine Whooper Swan flew past and counts included 24 Lapwing, 95 Snipe, 130 Turnstone, 42 Ringed Plover, 75 Greylag Geese (plus the Greenland White-front), seven Wood Pigeon, 280 Skylark, a Rook and 53 Snow Bunting. A single Pied Wagtail was the best of 23rd and the following day the first Goldcrests (4) arrived along with four Golden Plover, a pair of Stonechat, a Jack Snipe and Skylarks reached 330. New on 25th was a Grey Wagtail, a further increase of Skylark (380) with Pied Wagtail (3), Meadow Pipit (16) and Blackbird (25) also logged. There were two highlights on 26th, with the first Chiffchaffs (2) seen and a male Hen Harrier floating through. The following day saw another two additions to the year list with a cracking male Lapland Bunting and the first northbound Brambling. Five Chiffchaffs were counted and a few more Robins (10) were also evident. A female Peregrine spent the day spooking everything on 28th when Jackdaw and Black Redstart were seen. Highlight of 29th was the welcome sight (at least amongst Obs staff!!) of the first Bonxie of the year!! Three Grey Heron and a Puffin were in Mavers Geo, whilst a wander around the south produced 60 Purple Sandpiper, 40 Meadow Pipit, 250 Skylark, four Pied Wagtail, two Grey Wagtail, two Black Redstart, four Chiffchaff, four Goldcrest, two Siskin and a Chaffinch.

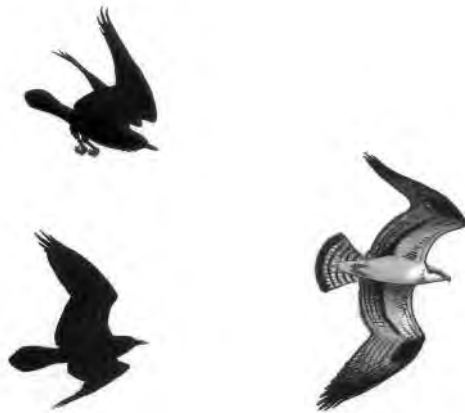
The final day of the month produced a female Great Tit at Houll – found by Brian Wilson as it fed outside his window. A Linnet at Barkland was also new in whilst Bonxie, Woodcock, Merlin and Stonechat were other highlights.

April: The month started with very calm weather and the female Great Tit (which had moved to the Observatory, where it remained until the 9th). The only Woodcock of the month was also recorded, along with a single Black Redstart and male Lapland Bunting (to 7th). In the evening, Puffin numbers were increasing just offshore with 120 in Finnequoy. Very few migrants were noted in the first few days, with the only notable sightings being a ringtail Hen Harrier on 3rd, three Snow Buntings and two Grey Wagtails on 4th, Great Northern Diver on 5th and a handful of Goldcrests. A small arrival on the 6th included a first-winter Glaucous Gull, 14 Raven, two Rook and three Brambling. At last, the first Wheatear of the year arrived on 8th followed by an influx of 250 Redwings on the 9th. The next few days saw the arrival of a Sparrowhawk, Merlin, a flock of 16 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and two more first-winter Iceland Gulls joined the resident bird. The first Shelducks (3) of the year flew over the Observatory early morning on the 12th, followed with a small fall of common migrants. Totals of 200 Skylark, 12 Wheatears, 20 Golden Plover, 25 Black-headed Gulls, ten Great Skua and the first Swallow of the year were logged by the evening. Birds kept on arriving on the 13th with Yellowhammer, Siskin, Linnet, two Collared Doves, Rook and a Green Sandpiper all arriving. South-easterly winds continued for the next two days bringing a cracking male Lapland Bunting, Bar-tailed Godwit and a flyover Whooper Swan. On the 15th there was the first House Martin along with a Greenshank and a Whimbrel. A Willow Warbler was trapped the next morning and two cracking summer plumage Black-tailed Godwits were new. As the wind swung north-westerly on 17th, the first Arctic Tern arrived and a pair of Barnacle Geese were touring the island. A first-summer Little Gull arrived on the 20th for two days and a Whooper Swan also arrived to begin an extended stay (right up to 10th June). A strong south-easterly wind coupled with low cloud cover on the 21st produced a small fall of thrushes including 18 Ring Ouzels, followed with a Common Sandpiper on the 22nd.

The 23rd dawned with blue skies and a light south-easterly breeze and census produced several good birds with the best being a first-winter female Black-throated Thrush near Linnie Geo and then a summer-plumaged Slavonian Grebe at Hesti Geo. Other new arrivals were Sand Martin, Tree Pipit, Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcap and three Sandwich Terns. No sign of the thrush the next day but birds continued to arrive in the glorious sunshine; a drake Garganey in the Gully, 24 Swallows, 14 House Martins, over 100 Wheatears (including several *leucorhoa*), a smart 'Siberian' Chiffchaff and a handful of Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs.

Birds new for the year-list on the 26th were Sedge Warbler, two Goldfinch and a Grasshopper Warbler. Also present was a Shelduck around South Harbour. A Short-eared Owl followed on the 28th and a Whinchat was at Field the next day. The last day of the month was relatively productive with a probable *rubicola* (Continental) Stonechat, Lesser Whitethroat, Blackcap, the first Goldcrest for a couple of weeks and a Black-tailed Godwit. However, the bird of the day waited until the evening when a fine Little Bunting was found at Barkland.

May: The month started off with very settled weather and a light north-easterly wind on the 1st producing a Quail in the fields at Barkland and a pair of Tufted Duck on Easter Lother Water. Still very few migrants around on the 2nd but year ticks included a Wryneck at South Raeva and in the afternoon a Hawfinch popped up at the School. Other birds of note were two Short-eared Owls and a Tree Pipit. 'Spring' arrived on the 3rd when two Cuckoos were recorded but the main excitement of the day was five Minke Whales seen around the island and two Pilot Whales were reported from a boat to the north. Yellow Wagtail and Pied Flycatcher were new on the 4th with a Hen Harrier over. A *mealy* Common Redpoll trapped on the 5th arrived with a Blue-headed Wagtail and a Grasshopper Warbler. The next day the wind backed to a strong south-easterly resulting in sea-watching, when a Manx Shearwater and four Common Terns were logged, whilst the second Wryneck of the year was sheltering near the Puffinn. Over night the wind had swung westerly and the best bird of the day (7th) was a Corncrake seen from a vehicle at Leogh. The small flock of lingering Greylags was joined by a Dark-bellied Brent Goose and then in the afternoon five magnificent Killer Whales were seen moving up and down the east coast. It was very quiet over the next couple of days with just a Goldfinch (9th) and Cuckoo (10th) of note with the lingering Iceland Gull, Brent Goose and Whooper Swan. Killer Whales were again noted on the 11th and 12th with two Icterine Warblers being found on the evening of the latter date along with Pintail, Knot and Tree Pipit. The 13th was the best day of the spring so far for numbers of common migrants and census on a calm sunny morning produced three Tree Pipit, six Whinchat, 195 Wheatear, Grasshopper Warbler, Garden Warbler, Icterine Warbler, ten Willow Warbler, five Chiffchaff, Pied Flycatcher, two *mealy* Common Redpoll, two Snow Bunting, three Sanderling, three Dunlin, ten Whimbrel, two Common Tern and Arctic Terns had increased to 180. Year ticks were a single Spotted Flycatcher, Common Whitethroat, Common Redstart, Stock Dove, Wood Warbler and an Osprey over in the afternoon but the star bird of the day was a very flighty and elusive Thrush Nightingale. First located at Shirva, it ranged up as far as Lower



Ravens mobbing Osprey © WT Miles

Stoneybrek.

On the 15th the Icterine warbler reappeared again and a Spotted Flycatcher was present. Little change on the 16th but three Goosanders flew over. A Barnacle Goose flew around on the 18th and a passage of 71 Swallows the next day included a Sand Martin. A Common Scoter was sheltering in South Harbour on the 20th and a Black Redstart was also recorded. Strong south-westerly winds continued overnight and a Grasshopper Warbler and ten Sedge Warblers were seen on census the following morning but then just after lunch a female Surf Scoter was discovered in Furse. This is the first confirmed record for Fair Isle and it remained until 25th moving between Furse and North Haven and showing exceptionally well. The following morning a female Red-backed Shrike was trapped and a Swift passed over. On the scrape was a Black-tailed Godwit with three escaped Bar-headed Geese. Sedge Warblers increased to 15 with a few Tree Pipits, two Ring Ouzels and a large unidentified falcon seen along the west cliffs.

Similar numbers remained on the 23rd but there was the addition of a Turtle Dove, Grey-headed Wagtail and late in the afternoon a Subalpine Warbler was found in Schoolton garden. Another first for the year on the 24th was in the form of a cracking male Bluethroat behind Bullock Holes (where it remained until the 26th). A female Bluethroat was in Bulls Park on 26th and the large falcon was seen again - this time with a Peregrine and thought to be a Saker Falcon. By the 27th the wind had swung to a light north-westerly and there were several new migrants around including a Grey Heron, two Common Whitethroats, Common Redpoll, two Swifts and 50 Swallow. However, find of the day was a superb female Lesser Grey Shrike at the Chalet. A sunny day again on the 28th and although the Lesser Grey Shrike was still present, a first-summer Rose-coloured Starling at Wirvie was the best find of the day. The wind finally made it to north-easterly before swinging to a strong south-easterly on the 30th resulting in an instant arrival of birds; three each of Icterine Warbler and Red-backed Shrike were the most notable but with a supporting cast of 14 Spotted Flycatchers, ten Garden Warblers, seven Willow Warbler, four Redstart, three Tree Pipit, Grey-headed Wagtail and a Stonechat.

A light easterly breeze was still blowing on the 31st and there were several new scarce migrants on the island. An Osprey was around North Light, a Golden Oriole was spotted flying into the Observatory plantation, Common Rosefinches were at Pund and Haa, a Marsh Warbler in Walli Burn was trapped and found to have been ringed in Norway and there was also a smart Rustic Bunting nearby. Meanwhile, a male Red-backed Shrike had joined the Lesser Grey Shrike.

June: Continued on from last month with sunshine and an easterly wind, which meant that there were still good numbers of migrants to see. Several Red-backed Shrikes (reaching six on the 5th), a couple of Grey-headed Wagtails, Common Rosefinch, the Rustic Bunting and the Rose-coloured Starling and a Corn Bunting all made an appearance on the 1st, but the biggest surprise and headache was the finding of a flighty female Red-headed/Black-headed Bunting at Quoy. Eventually, the identification was thought to be a Black-headed Bunting and it lingered until the 7th.

A stunning European Bee-eater could not really be appreciated on a very foggy 4th but luckily it stayed until the sunny 6th, feeding on the few Shetland Bumblebees it could find. A Short-toed Lark was at Malcolm's Head on the 5th when the last Tree Pipit of the spring was also logged. The highlight on the 6th was the reoccurrence of Killer Whales along the east coast. During the first week a handful of wildfowl were logged with five Shelduck, Wigeon and singles of Teal, Tufted Duck and Red-breasted Merganser also noted. The long-staying Whooper Swan finally departed on the 10th.

As the misty week continued, a Marsh and Reed Warbler were seen on the 7th with single Black Redstart on 8th and four Icterine Warblers were the best for the 9th until the evening trap round produced a Paddyfield Warbler in the Gully! Finally the 11th saw a clear day with beautiful blue skies and a north-easterly wind. Two Sandwich Terns were in the Havens and census produced Cuckoo, Icterine Warbler, four Red-backed Shrikes and a Common Rosefinch as well as a good number of Painted Lady and Red Admiral butterflies. However, all these were beaten when a River Warbler was seen in flight at the Obs before being trapped and confirmed just prior to lunch and then, to finish the day, three Killer Whales were spotted actually in North Haven up against the pier!!! The run of good birds continued on 13th with another first for the island - a Terek Sandpiper in South Harbour present with a late Purple Sandpiper. It far overshadowed a Short-toed Lark on Vaasetter that afternoon. The next new arrivals were on the 15th with two Barnacle Geese, a Marsh Warbler, Black Redstart, Spotted Flycatcher and Common Sandpiper. An Osprey flew north on 17th when the Corn Bunting was seen again and a Red-backed Shrike was present.

On the 22nd another Marsh Warbler arrived and this bird remained in the Observatory plantation right into July. Also present on 22nd were late Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler. A Quail was heard on the evening of the 23rd and then subsequently heard every evening until the 2nd July. The biggest surprise whilst on trap round on the 24th was a juvenile Stonechat in the Vaadal, presumably from Orkney or Shetland. Strong northerlies on the 25th produced 21 Storm Petrels off north lighthouse. The last few days were very quiet and the only notable sightings were a Reed Warbler that joined the Marsh Warbler at the Observatory and a female Red-backed Shrike on the 30th.

July: A quiet month for migrant birds generally with most attention now being on the breeding seabirds, but the continued Lesser Grey Shrike presence delighted many visitors. Also, the Marsh Warbler remained singing in the Observatory trap until the 17th and a Reed Warbler to the 10th. The last Iceland Gull record of the spring was on the 1st and the singing Quail at Schoolton was last heard on the 2nd. A few scarce migrants were on the move during the month including Lesser Redpoll on the 9th, Black Redstart on 15th, Turtle Dove from the 18th – 27th and a Sandwich Tern on the 20th. However, the biggest surprise of the month by far was an Arctic Redpoll trapped in the Vaadal trap on the 19th – an extraordinary midsummer record. Storm Petrel ringing sessions were carried out at the Havens on suitable nights but these were few and far between and only producing low numbers with

the best night attracting just 14 birds (25th) and the only Leach's Storm Petrel was one heard on the 20th. Waders were now on their way back south with Golden Plovers being recorded in single figures all month, the first Purple Sandpiper on the 11th, the only Sanderling and Bar-tailed Godwit on the 16th, first Green Sandpiper on the 17th and single Whimbrel records scattered throughout the month. Oystercatchers reached a peak of 129 on the 23rd, Greenshank and Ruff from 24th, Common Sandpiper on 25th and Knot recorded on the 26th & 30th.

August: Daily autumn census commenced on the 1st with only one new arrival recorded, a Kestrel and a calm evening the next day produced 36 Storm Petrels in a ringing session. The following morning a slight south-easterly wind was blowing and new additions included a Whimbrel and four Swallows but the highlight of the day was a very obliging adult Pectoral Sandpiper on Mire o' Vatnagard. Trap round on the 4th produced a Sedge Warbler and a fly over Swift. Things improved on the 5th with Peregrine, four Grey Herons, three Green Sandpipers and an afternoon sea-watch off Bunes produced three Manx Shearwaters and a flock of 50 Dunlin. An increase in wader numbers were noted on the 6th with 34 Golden Plover, 11 Sanderling, four Ruff and two Black-tailed Godwits. The next day was a bright, sunny day and it was obvious that there was a large passage of Common Gulls heading south along the east coast with 830 logged along with 22 Black-headed Gulls, a Bar-tailed Godwit that joined the Black-taileds and a Sand Martin was overhead.

A foggy day on the 8th resulted in just a Grasshopper, Sedge and Garden Warbler, the first Fieldfare of the autumn and now eight Teal present. A Greenshank arrived on the 9th with three Ruff and just 10 Storm Petrels were trapped at night. A day of easterly wind on 11th brought results with a smart xanthistorange first-summer male Common Rosefinch singing at Barkland, backed up with a Wryneck and Icterine Warbler, all firsts of the autumn. Easterly winds continued with showery rain and on the 13th and produced an early Citrine Wagtail around Setter when a Spotted Redshank was heard flying over and a few Willow Warblers arrived. There was a small increase in warblers on the 14th with all the previous days birds also still present and Wheatears peaked at 173. The Citrine Wagtail roosted at the Chalet with around 25 'alba' Wagtails.

A juvenile Common Rosefinch was trapped on the 16th but the following day two Goldeneye on Easter Lothar Water and two Greylag Geese on 18th suggested that winter appeared to be on the way! Other new arrivals on 18th included a Sparrowhawk, Sedge Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, four Garden and three Willow Warblers whilst the long-staying Lesser Grey Shrike appeared to be bedraggled and weak and it was no surprise that it was not seen again, presumably succumbing to the wet weather. A strong south-easterly wind on 20th resulted in a Pied Flycatcher, Red-backed Shrike and increased wader numbers but the best bird waited until the evening trap round when a Greenish Warbler was found in the Plantation. Citrine Wagtail, Red-backed Shrike and Rosefinch all remained on 21st with the addition of Common Redstart and Whinchat. The *Good Shepherd IV*

crossing produced the first Sooty Shearwater of the year along with three Storm Petrels and then 11 'Stormies' were trapped that night.

The 22nd was a rather calm day with a fly-over Wood Sandpiper and the arrival of a second Red-backed Shrike. It was a generally good day all round with five Greylag Geese, 17 Cormorant, 61 Golden Plover, 23 Curlew, 38 Redshank, 42 Turnstone, 11 Swallow, two Whinchat, seven Garden Warbler, 17 Willow Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler and a Spotted Flycatcher. The following day brought a Tree Pipit, Wood Warbler and two more Common Rosefinch. A second Citrine Wagtail arrived in the south on 24th with the autumn's first Redwing. Incredibly, a third Citrine Wagtail, this time at Easter Lothar Water, arrived the following day and a Marsh Warbler was at Utra.

A windy day on the 26th with a strong north-westerly and, following a report of at least ten Great Shearwaters seen from a fishing boat 27km west of the isle, it meant a session of sea-watching was called for. However all that could be produced were four Sooty and a Manx Shearwater along with Arctic Skua, a few Kittiwakes and a handful of Puffins. A female Merlin was trapped in the Vaadal on 27th and a Mealy Redpoll was also new. At last, the first Barred Warbler of the year was at Shirva on 28th, 2+ Citrine Wagtails still were still present (including one that roosted and was trapped at the Obs) whilst a very late nesting Puffin was seen carrying fish at North Light. Another sea-watch on the 29th was very quiet until just before tea when a pale Whimbrel with a striking head pattern and dark rump was flushed from the rocks on Bunes – surely a Hudsonian Whimbrel? A search after tea was unsuccessful but 2 Spotted Redshanks were recorded. Thankfully the Whimbrel was found the next morning when it flew over the shop calling. It settled down on the east coast where it favoured the rocky cliff face and small skerries and its identity was confirmed as this North American Race. It made its way north along the east coast to Finnequoy where it was successfully twitched by a few Shetland birders. It departed on the final morning of the month as the wind increased from being flat calm to a strong north-



Barred Warbler © WT Miles

September: A very quiet start to the month with westerly winds preventing any

decent movements of birds. Two Citrine Wagtails remained from August (until 11th) and were the main highlights for visiting birders during the first week. A Jackdaw was at Setter on the 1st with a peak of 120 Turnstone and a Manx Shearwater past. An early first-winter Iceland Gull was briefly in North Haven on 4th and new birds the following day were a Kestrel and Common Sandpiper.

The very quiet spell continued with a Lesser Whitethroat and a Common Rosefinch on 11th. Many hours were spent sea-watching on the 12th in an attempt to grab a piece of North Ronaldsay's incredible Shearwater movement but the best we could manage were two very distant 'large' Shearwaters, 38 Sooty Shearwaters, three Storm Petrels, 79 Cormorants, two Arctic Skuas, 35 Kittiwake, four Arctic Terns, Puffin and five Red-throated Divers. Census produced an arrival of 330 Meadow Pipits, a juvenile Red-backed Shrike and an adult Glaucous Gull.

The 13th was again a cloudy day with south-westerly winds and new birds found included Common Redstart, Sedge Warbler, six Swallows, Greylag and up to eight Lapland Buntings. Gale force westerly winds greeted us on the 14th; amazingly the first Goldcrest of the autumn had arrived along with Kestrel, 98 Turnstone, Sedge Warbler and eight Swallows. A calm morning on the 15th saw the arrival of passerines including 15+ Snow Buntings in the north, 202 Skylarks and a few Redpoll spp. were flying around. In the afternoon the wind started to pick up to a brisk south-easterly, when five Common Redpolls were caught at Barkland - four large dark 'classic' Greenland and a similar sized, paler bird.

The wind was back to the south-west on the 16th when a distant Slavonian Grebe was off Bunes. The following morning the wind had swung to a north-westerly and the weather was sunny with heavy showers. As it turned out this was to be the best day of September so far for birds with a juvenile Pectoral Sandpiper on Mire O' Vatnagard, Barred Warbler at Pund, a Corncrake, two Common Rosefinch, a Reed Warbler plus a flock of 24 Pink-footed Geese over. A Jack Snipe was the best the 17th could offer. The 19th was a calmer day and 159 Pink-footed Geese were logged heading south, six Teal, Red-breasted Merganser and two Barred Warblers were also present. A Dotterel on Hoini was a nice find late in the evening on 21st. Firsts for the autumn on the 22nd were Moorhen and four Linnets whilst other new arrivals included Redwing, Garden Warbler, two Lesser Whitethroat and two Jack Snipe.

Five Pink-footed Geese, Common Scoter and two Swallows were all that was new on 23rd, that was until late in the afternoon when news broke of a possible Buff-bellied Pipit on Sukka Mire. Everyone was ferried to the airstrip and a few anxious minutes passed before it was located in a group of Meadow Pipits. Elation all round as everyone ticked Buff-bellied Pipit and the bird even made a short flight and called.

Weather conditions the next morning were very poor with low cloud and continuous rain but after a couple of hours searching, the Buff-bellied Pipit reappeared at the exact same place as the previous day. Also logged were a Tree Pipit, Song Thrush, Goldcrest and Spotted Flycatcher. The 25th had a dry and cloudy start and a slight increase in the wind strength from the northwest. Despite drier conditions, it was yet another quiet day with the best being the first Pochard of the year on Field pond, three Barred Warblers, three Blackcap, two Garden Warblers and

a Common Rosefinch. The Buff-bellied Pipit managed to elude most of the Shetland twitchers but was relocated late in the day back on Sukka Mire. The wind on 26th was now a strong northerly with just a few breaks in the cloud and winter waterfowl on the move - four Whooper Swans, 20 Pink-footed Geese and 22 Greylags. There was negative news on the Buff-bellied Pipit.

On the morning of 27th we were greeted with the sight of Redwings and Bramblings flying over the Observatory in a gentle northerly (with a slight hint of east). During morning census it was obvious there had been a big arrival of birds overnight. The highlight was two Citrine Wagtails together on Da Water but also two Yellow-browed Warblers, Bluethroat, five Barred Warblers, two Pied Flycatchers, a good scattering of common warblers, with thrushes (five Ring Ouzel, six Blackbird, eight Fieldfare, 50 Song Thrush and 100 Redwing) along with 18 Goldcrest, five Redstarts, four Whinchats, two Chaffinch and 18 Brambling making for a crowded notebook. It got better in the afternoon when a Lanceolated Warbler was found in the crop at Skadan – the first red flag of the autumn. As everyone gathered around the crop waiting patiently for others to arrive, there was suddenly a shout, everyone turned round and there just off South Harbour was a pod of five Killer Whales (including a magnificent bull) moving majestically west. The 'Lancey' was momentarily forgotten as everyone hurried to the cliff edge but as the whales disappeared towards South Light the last people arrived and everyone re-assembled at the Skadan crop, where they were treated to excellent views of the ultimate Fair Isle special! A Corncrake was seen at Pund on the way home and to the amazement of everyone another Lanceolated Warbler was discovered in the Plantation trap, ending the day on a big high. Autumn had finally arrived with a classic Fair Isle day.

Everyone was up bright and early for a very calm cloudy morning on the 28th with evidence that there were still birds on the move. The first bird of the day was an Icterine Warbler trapped just after breakfast, then a Long-eared Owl was swiftly followed with a Short-eared, the 'Lancey' was still present in Skadan crop, then shortly after a very showy Thrush Nightingale was discovered in the garden at Utra. There was an increase in warblers with up to 12 Yellow-browed Warblers, also three Barred Warblers, 16 Lesser Whitethroats and 210 Goldcrests. Bluethroats had increased to three, 25 Robins, two Grasshopper Warblers, 46 Brambling and also increased numbers of thrushes were noted. The afternoon was gloriously sunny and it seemed that there had been a clearout of birds. However, the final people to head home for dinner were making their way back across Gilsetter when a bird was seen darting down a ditch, a *Locustella* that suddenly disappeared through a pipe under the road before darting into the Plantation trap. Shortly after the bird was in-hand and then it was discovered the tail and tertials were tipped white, Wow! A Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler!!! What a fantastic end to another wonderful days birding.

The next morning saw another calm sunny day and with all wondering how the day could live up to the previous one, it seemed that there were actually fewer birds around. However, it didn't take long until a new Lanceolated Warbler was found in the nettles around Pund, followed shortly by a Richards Pipit at Wester Lother and then a Corncrake in South Raeva. A Hen Harrier flew south over the island and a

new Bluethroat was trapped in the afternoon with other passerine totals similar to the previous day's totals.

Unfortunately the wind had swung back to the north-west by Sunday the 30th and the first trap round produced very little apart from a Woodcock. However, just before breakfast, a Blyths Reed Warbler was trapped at Barkland. As census began another *Acro* was found at Homisdale, and this one turned out to be a Marsh Warbler. Other morning highlights were a Barred Warbler, 12 Jack Snipe, three Woodcock, three Ring Ouzel and 60 Goldcrests whilst several birds remained from yesterday with the 'Lancey' still at Pund, two Bluethroats, Common Rosefinch and a Richard's Pipit all seen. After lunch, it was a pleasant but quiet afternoon..... until 16.45 when at the top of Hill Dyke a small thrush was located, a Grey-cheeked Thrush!! The famous red flag was out once again whilst the Warden sat and watched as everyone came running up the hill towards him. The thrush showed very well before dropping down into Gunnawark at dusk and everyone made their way back to the Obs in shock, after a fantastic end to the month.

October: October arrived but could it live up to what had preceded? The 1st was a glorious calm sunny day and just after breakfast a (presumably the same) Buff-bellied Pipit was spotted briefly in Homisdale. It disappeared but was relocated later in the day on Vaasetter. The Grey-cheeked Thrush had gone, however a Buff-breasted Sandpiper was spotted flying around the south before landing on Meoness, where it remained until 5th. The Pund Lanceolated Warbler had moved to Charlie's Trees, whilst Bluethroat, Barred Warbler and four Yellow-browed Warblers were also present. The Buff-bellied Pipit remained on the 2nd (until 7th) but could be elusive at times, much to the annoyance of twitching birders (especially as it was once flushed by their charter plane). Another Lanceolated Warbler - this time in Gilsetter - was little consolation to these Shetland listers. Other new arrivals included a Marsh Warbler on the cliffs at the pier and a White-rumped Sandpiper in South Harbour, but the very fresh remains of a Whites Thrush near Kenaby brought tears to many eyes!

The 3rd turned out to be a quieter day with new arrivals being just a late Wryneck at Midway and an 'eastern' *flava* Wagtail and yet another new 'Lancey' at Meadow Burn. Meanwhile, what was thought to be the Pund bird had now moved to Upper Stoneybrek. No sign, in misty conditions, of any Lanceolated Warblers the following day and highlights were a Corncrake, Short-toed Lark on Hoini (to13th), Marsh Warbler, up to ten Yellow-browed Warblers and two Richards Pipits (up to three until 23rd). Geese were also moving through with 326 Pink-feet, two Greenland White-fronts, 26 Greylag and 11 Barnacle Geese being logged. New arrivals on the 5th were a few Tree Pipits, Blue-headed Wagtail, two *abietinus* Chiffchaff and Pied Flycatcher whilst Yellow-browed Warblers reached a peak of 12. A big arrival of thrushes logged for the 6th included 3200 Redwing and 440 Fieldfare and the following day a Little Bunting settled into the Skadan Crop (to18th).

The 'resident' Bluethroat was joined on the island by two more on 9th. As finch numbers increased, 60 Brambling, seven Siskin and 'Mealy' Redpoll were counted on 10th but the highlight for a few was a Minke Whale giving excellent views in

Hesswalls Bay. Only news for the 11th was the unlucky victim of a cat - the only Great Grey Shrike record of the year! Brief views of a pipit in Wirvie on 12th were unfortunately not enough to confirm it as Olive-backed Pipit, a day when two 'north-western' Redpolls also arrived. A Barred Warbler at Easter Lothar was the highlight of the 14th. Sea-watches continued to produce the occasional Little Auk and Great Northern Diver plus a Slavonian Grebe and Sooty Shearwater on 17th. A smart male Subalpine Warbler arrived on 20th (staying until 29th) - our latest ever record and followed shortly after by a Barred Warbler and the last Yellow-browed Warbler of the year. The first Waxwing of the autumn was seen the following morning, followed by a Little Grebe in Furse and two Goldfinch at the Obs. Highlight of 22nd was a very flighty Dusky Warbler at Walli Burn but the 23rd (a famous day in recent history) only produced a late Swallow. However on the 24th a Firecrest was discovered on the cliffs near north light and a Little Bunting later appeared there briefly! Meanwhile, in the south of the island, there had been an influx of Jackdaws with 85 birds recorded - the second highest island count (the highest being 270 in 1979). Also new was a Yellowhammer whilst the Dusky Warbler remained.

Yet another surprise arrived on a glorious sunny 25th - a cracking male Pine Bunting at Barkland and Jackdaws reached 114. Southerly gales and rain greeted us on the 26th resulting in a mass arrival of Woodcock with 120 counted, Greenfinch numbers increased to 20 and Bramblings to 56. On the 27th a Black Redstart, three Ring Ouzels and 110 Siskin were new but bird of the day was a Blyth's Pipit found near to the shop. However, it was exhausted and bedraggled and it came as no surprise that it died within hours. Later that afternoon there were reports of a small crake at Walli Burn and the following day it was claimed again, this time by the shop. Hours of searching produced nothing further. The one that got away!! The month finished with gale force westerly winds and heavy rain resulting in the final guests of the year being stranded, that was until a Helicopter arrived to rescue them!

November: The Pine Bunting remained until 10th whilst the Firecrest moved down to the Observatory on 6th-8th before disappearing. Waxwings were noted on 2nd (6), 14th and 20th. The last Wheatear was seen on 1st whilst small numbers of Blackcap were noted up to 14th and occasional (eastern) Chiffchaffs throughout. Other passerines included reasonable numbers of Brambling, Greenfinch and Siskin during the first week plus single Common Redpoll and Yellowhammer. A small influx on 14th included 180 Blackbirds plus Black Redstart and an increase to 115 Snow Bunting. A Common Rosefinch arrived on 18th, lingering with single Wood Pigeon, Chaffinch and Greenfinch on the seed in the Observatory garden until 22nd. Four new Greenfinch put in an appearance on 29th. The Jackdaw flock dwindled down from 78 on 1st to ten by the end of the month. A couple of Long-eared Owls were found and two overwintering Merlins were regularly seen. Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were spotted occasionally throughout, but never more than two in a day, while Little Auks were noted offshore, including 100+ from the *Good Shepherd IV* crossing on 13th.

December: The highlight of the month was a Black-bellied Dipper discovered in Wirvie on 5th, where it remained until mid-March 2008. Numbers of thrushes remained reasonable with 50 Blackbird, 45 Redwing and ten Fieldfare noted on 8th, along with nine Skylark, two Meadow Pipit, a 'tristis' Chiffchaff and a Linnet. The

First & Last Dates for Summer Migrants 2007

Simon Davies

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.

Species	Earliest	Earliest in 2007	Latest	Latest in 2007
Quail	30.04.61	01.05	13.10.89	02.07
Osprey	25.04.66	13.05	04.11.35	-
Corncrake	10.04.66	07.05	03.11.77	04.10
Dotterel	25.04.73	-	06.11.76	21.09
Whimbrel	15.04.72	15.04	12.12. pre FIBO	10.09
Green Sandpiper	08.04.79	13.04	12.11.70	12.08
Common Sandpiper	05.04.83	22.04	02.11. pre FIBO	09.09
Arctic Skua	04.04.88	21.04	25.10.	15.10
Great Skua	17.03. pre 80	29.03	16.11.	13.11
LBB Gull	06.03.85	09.04	12.12.57	25.08
Sandwich Tern	30.04.01	23.04*	18.09.77	20.07
Common Tern	25.04.83	06.05	18.10.75	15.09
Arctic Tern	No data	08.05	30.10.	16.10
Turtle Dove	23.04.71	23.05	01.11.82	27.09
Cuckoo	17.04.87	03.05	08.10.77	06.07
Swift	29.04.01	22.05	26.10.75	14.08
Wryneck	18.04.81	02.05	17.10.74	03.10
Sand Martin	02.04.89	23.04	19.10.78	09.08
Swallow	31.03.02	12.04	02.11.84	23.10
House Martin	19.04	15.04*	14.11.	01.10
Tree Pipit	14.04. pre 63	23.04	02.11. pre 63	20.10
Red-throated Pipit	08.05.36	-	01.11. pre FIBO	29.09

Species	Earliest	Earliest in 2007	Latest	Latest in 2007
Yellow Wagtail	25.03.54	04.05	20.11.57	05.10
Pied Wagtail	20.02.03	23.02	17.11.	20.10
Bluethroat	22.03. pre 63	24.05	13.11.83	30.10
Black Redstart	01.03.	26.03	22.12.86	14.11
Redstart	09.04. pre 63	13.05	11.11.81	07.10
Whinchat	14.04.81	29.04	26.11.90	29.10
Northern Wheatear	13.03. pre 59	08.04	19.11.59	01.11
Ring Ouzel	16.03.88	21.04	19.12. pre FIBO	28.10
Grasshopper Warbler	07.04.02	26.04	23.10.00	05.10
Sedge Warbler	19.04.87	26.04	11.11.75	14.10
Marsh Warbler	22.05.84	31.05	06.10. pre 63	05.10
Reed Warbler	28.04.01	26.05	31.10.80	10.10
Icterine Warbler	13.05.99	12.05*	13.10.76	28.09
Subalpine Warbler	20.04.00	23.05	04.10.79	29.10*
Lesser Whitethroat	20.04.	23.04	08.11.	23.10
Whitethroat	11.04. pre 59	13.05	21.10.78	18.09
Garden Warbler	21.04.68	07.05	20.11.76	23.10
Blackcap	07.04.	23.04	20.12.	14.11
Wood Warbler	14.04.81	13.05	06.10.73	23.08
Chiffchaff	12.03.	26.03	No data	08.12
Willow Warbler	03.04.81	16.04	23.11.27	18.10
Goldcrest	27.02	24.03	19.12.03	03.11
Spotted Flycatcher	20.04.49	13.05	26.10.85	07.10
Pied Flycatcher	21.04.83	04.05	29.10.85	05.10
Red-backed Shrike	04.05.84	22.05	08.11.93	22.09
Common Rosefinch	08.05.77	31.05	30.11.91	22.11
Ortolan Bunting	26.04.64	-	01.11.00	-
Rustic Bunting	25.04.80	31.05	08.11.75	-
Little Bunting	04.04.58	30.04	19.11.75	24.10

** denotes new record*

Systematic List 2007

Deryk Shaw

Notes

Nomenclature - the species order and some names have been changed to comply with recent changes to the official British list by the British Ornithologists Union (BOU). Most changes are obvious, but wherever confusion may be possible, the previous name is included in parentheses.

Status Categories

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

Breeding Categories

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

Abbreviations

+	All records documented
AIA	Apparently Incubating Adult
AON	Apparently Occupied Nest
BBRC	British Birds Rarities Committee
BOURC	British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
SBCRC	Shetland Bird Club Records Committee
SOTEAG	Shetland Oil Terminal Environmental Advisory Group

Species considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC), Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC) or Shetland Bird Club Records Committee (SBCRC) are followed by a statement as to whether records have been accepted or are still under consideration.

+ Mute Swan *Cygnus olor**Vagrant; seven previous records*

Hot on the heels of our seventh record in 2006, an adult frequented South Haven on 19th & 20th March.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus**Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring*

In the early part of the year, a single flew through on 17th February followed by a party of nine on 22nd March and a single on 14th April. An adult arrived on 20th April and remained until 10th June. In autumn, four on 26th September were early forerunners of sightings on a further 12 dates between 7th October–1st November. Most counts were single figures, but included 30 (7th), 10 (10th), 16 (16th) and an amazing record movement of 142 on 28th October. Later sightings comprised 2–4 between 25th November–7th December and a party of five on 28th December.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus**Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring*

An over-wintering bird with the Greylag flock remained until 19th February. Another lone bird joined the Greylags from 30th March–22nd April. In autumn, 24 on 17th September were followed by 159 on 19th and smaller numbers daily until 10th October, apart from a record movement of 326 on 4th October. Two on 17th October was the only later sighting.

+ Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons**Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring and winter*

A single Greenland White-front (*A. a. flavirostris*) mingled with the Greylags from 15th February–28th April. In autumn, two of this race were present from 2nd–5th October with three from 28th–30th October.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser**Common spring and autumn migrant*

The wintering flock of 105 birds (Fig 1) rose in mid-February to 173 as birds began to move north. During March, counts fluctuated between 22–115 birds and around 60 throughout April, rapidly tailing off in early May to single figures and stragglers until 22nd June. In August, 2–5 from 17th–23rd were almost certainly dispersing local breeders. Autumn passage began with eight on 22nd September and birds were daily from 25th. Most counts were below 50 but 200 on 7th & 10th October and a max of 220 on 17th October. Around 50 remained until the end of the year.

Numbers of wintering birds have been increasing since the early 1990s and especially so in most recent years. Is this due to climate change and the resulting milder winters now experienced in Shetland?

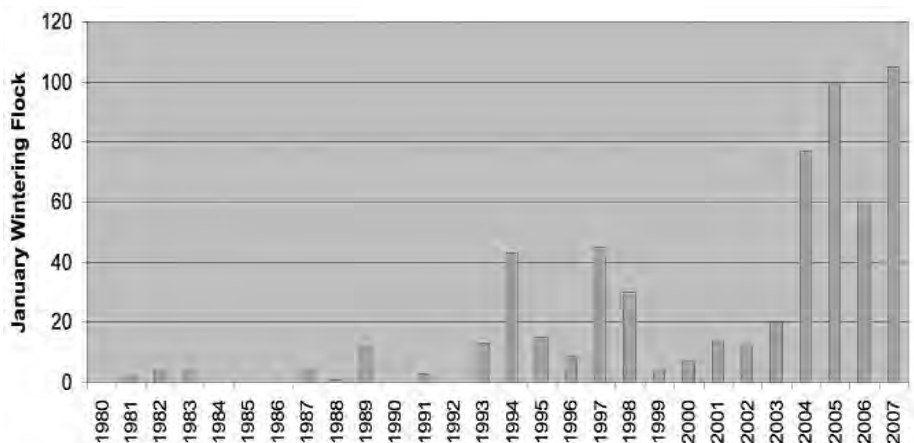


Figure 1. Numbers of wintering Greylag on Fair Isle 1980–2007.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Frequent autumn migrant, occasional in spring

In winter, the single that arrived on 18th December 2006 remained until 15th January. In spring, two arrived on 17th April staying until 1st May with further birds on 18th May, 28th May (2) and 15th–19th June (2). Autumn passage commenced with ten on 27th September and four the following day. There were then daily sightings between 4th–20th October with the vast majority passing through on just two days, with 140 on 9th and 387 on 10th.

+ Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

Rare autumn migrant, occasional in spring and winter

As last year, a single bird (of the dark-bellied race *B.b.bernicla*) on the unseasonable date of 7th–14th May was the only sighting of the year.

+ Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

Three flew past on 12th April and a further single on 26th April. There was a good count of five on 2nd June, with one remaining until 5th.

Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter

Irregular counts of 1–4 were made in February & March and again from mid-April–mid-June. In autumn, a single on 15th August preceded daily sightings from 20th. Counts were mainly below 20, but there was a peak of 47 on 24th September rising to 51 the following day. Numbers had fallen below five by November and into December.

Eurasian Teal *Anas crecca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter

There were no records in January/February. A ♂ on 11th March was followed with counts of 4–10 from 27th March–27th April and irregular counts of 1–4 from 1st May–7th June. A single from 15th–18th July preceded almost daily single-figure counts from 30th July–23rd September. An arrival of 35 on 24th September, 30 the following day and 32 on 28th were the maximum counts. Daily counts in October were in the range of 2–18 and single figures were noted in November, until 26th.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred

The increasing number of resident semi-feral birds makes it difficult to distinguish any real passage but if there was any it was slight. At least six pairs bred and the first ducklings were seen on 7th May.

+ Northern Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

In spring, a ♂ on 12th May was the only sighting. In autumn, a ♀ from 26th September–1st October and another from 25th–27th October were the only records. A typical year.

+ Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Vagrant; ten previous records (17 individuals), nine in spring, one in autumn

A ♂ was flushed from the Gully on 24th April and was present in Boini Mire the following day.

+ Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Scarce and irregular spring and autumn migrant

The long-staying ♀ from October 2006 (the first over-wintering record) remained right up until 17th April. In July, three on 2nd fell to two on 3rd–5th. Later autumn sightings concerned a single on 25th September and two on 13th October. A good year.

+ Common Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Rare migrant; 53 previous records (66 individuals)

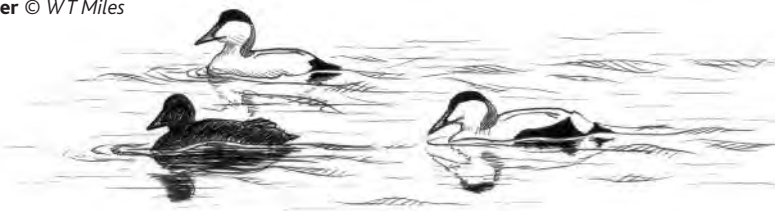
One on 25th September–5th October and two on 1st November were the first since 2003.

+ Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

In spring, 1–3 birds were seen almost daily from 1st May–7th June but probably involving no more than 8–9 birds. A ♂ was present from 22nd–27th June. In autumn, birds were present from 16th–27th September and 5th October–4th November. Most counts were of 1–2 but there were four on 7th–8th October.

Common Eider © WT Miles



Common Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Resident, breeds in small numbers

Present offshore all year. The post-breeding count on 11th August revealed 102 ♂ but just 21 ♀ and a mere 12 young. A moulting ♂ showing features of Northern Eider *S.m.borealis*, present from 22nd September 2006 remained right up to at least 20th February.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

A ♀ frequented Furse throughout January and another was in South Harbour on 22nd January. There were no further sightings until the autumn when birds were seen regularly from mid-October to mid-November with a peak of nine on 20th October. Three on 26th November was the last record of the year.

+ Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce spring, autumn and winter migrant

A ♂ was seen in various bays around the south-east of the isle on several dates from 8th–30th May. Another ♂ was present from 12th–17th June and a ♀ on 14th June. In autumn, singles were present on 23rd September, 18th–28th October (two on 20th) and 23rd November.

+ Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*

Vagrant; no previous records

The first for Fair Isle. A ♀ found in Furse on 21st May moved round to North Haven, where it remained until 25th May. *Accepted by SBCRC*

Common Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*

Regular winter, spring and autumn migrant

In the early part of the year, two on 25th and one on 28th February and a single from 17th–21st March were the only sightings. In autumn, two frequented Furse from 17th August–25th September followed by daily counts of 1–6 from 12th October–1st November and occasional singles up to 19th November.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A ♀ was in South harbour on 28th January. There were no further sightings until almost daily counts of 1–4 from 9th April–5th May and 1–2 on eight further dates up to 24th June. Up to three singles were seen in July and one in August before more regular sightings from mid-September. Counts were mainly below five, but a large peak count of 15 was made on 4th October. One on 17th November was the last.

+ Goosander *Mergus merganser*

Rare migrant in winter, spring and late autumn

Three together on 16th May equals the highest spring count.

+ Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce spring, summer and autumn migrant; has bred

One on 1st May was particularly early (there is only one earlier record - 30th April 1961). Singing birds were heard from 23rd June–2nd July but breeding was not proven.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Regular migrant, mainly late spring and autumn

A single in North Haven on 29th January is only the fifth mid-winter record. In spring, a single on 18th March was then followed with sporadic sightings of 1–2 from 9th April up to mid-June. A long-stayer was present from 9th–26th July (with two others on 17th) and sporadic counts of 1–2 from 17th August–24th October, but for a max of five on 12th September.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring

A single on 5th April was followed with three on 7th, a long-stayer from 13th–25th April and 1–2 in the first week of May. Another was present on 4th & 5th June. In autumn, a single on 8th September was not followed until regular counts of 1–4 between 8th–27th October. One on 10th November was the last.

+ Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Rare migrant, mostly in autumn

One was in Furse on 21st September.

+ Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring

A fine summer-plumaged bird was in Hesti Geo on 23rd April. In autumn, singles on 16th & 28th September and 17th October were the only records.

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Resident; breeds in large numbers

Following two years of recovery at monitoring plots, from a 50% crash in breeding numbers in 2004, numbers in 2007 fell by 12% to the third lowest on record - 37% lower than when monitoring began in 1987. Breeding success was also poor at 0.35 chicks fledged per AOS. 'Blue' individuals were recorded on 23rd September,

13th October (2) and 13th November.

+ Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*

Vagrant in autumn

The first confirmed records since 1986 comprised at least ten seen from a fishing boat 27km west of the isle on the morning of 26th August. Despite several subsequent hours of scanning from the land, none could be seen!

Large Shearwater sp.

Two distant large Shearwaters seen off South Light on 12th September, during the record-breaking movement of Great Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*) off the Western Isles and Orkney, must have been this species but were just too distant to identify confidently.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Regular autumn migrant

The first of the year, a single, was seen from the *Good Shepherd IV* on 21st August. Fourteen more were logged before the months end. There were regular sightings during September, both from the *Good Shepherd IV* and land-based watching. A total of 83 birds were logged during the month, including 38 on 12th and 11 on 14th. Five well-spaced singles were seen in October, the last on 23rd.

+ Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

One off Bunness on 6th May was a good spring sighting. In autumn, there were three on 5th August, another on 26th August and singles on 1st & 14th September.

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

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

The first sightings were, as usual, from the *Good Shepherd IV* with small numbers seen from 4th June. A count of 21 was made at North Light on 25th June. However, the majority of birds recorded are those caught during mist-netting sessions near the Observatory with the aid of a tape-lure. Numbers caught this year were however quite disappointing with a peak July count of 24 (on 28th) and a maximum of 36 on 3rd August. Sea-watches in September produced 1–6 on five dates. A single mist-netted on 2nd October and a juvenile attracted to the Observatory lights on 9th October were the last.

+ Leach's Storm Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Scarce migrant, summer and early autumn

Just three records this year, all in July. One was seen from the *Good Shepherd IV* on 2nd, one was heard singing in Kìrn o' Scroo on the night of 14th and one flew around

the mist-net during a trapping session on the night of 20th.

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Breeds in large numbers, seen offshore all year

A whole island census indicated that the breeding population continues to grow with a total of 1,957 AON counted. A new colony has started on Lerness (previously just a loafing site) where 56 AON were counted and the Sheep Rock colony now boasts 50 AON. Breeding success was slightly below average at 0.66 per AON.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring

In the early part of the year the only sightings were a single on 19th January and seven on 18th February. In spring there were 1–5 on three dates in April, four dates in May and three dates in June. Singles were seen on four dates in July. Main autumn passage was in late August and September, but sightings were not daily and exceeded single figures on just nine dates. However, included in this was a record count of 79 on 12th September (beating last year's record by two birds) with 42 on 10th and 35 on 15th also noteworthy.

European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers

Following a welcome large increase in numbers at the breeding plots in 2006, there was a slight overall decrease (-4.4%) this year. However, two sites showed large increases whilst the other three suffered significant declines. Breeding success, at 1.40 per AON, was about average.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter/spring

Recorded in every month. Singles were noted infrequently in January/February and probably related to an overwintering bird. Three on 29th March and 1–2 on nine dates between 16th April and 8th May were true spring migrants. Counts of 1–3 were made on five dates in June, 1–2 in July and 1–4 almost daily in August & September and throughout October with peaks of seven (10th August), five (30th September) and nine (4th October). Up to two birds were seen regularly in November/December.

+ Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A good spring saw an adult ♂ on 26th March (equal earliest migrant) followed with ringtails on 3rd & 23rd April and a ♀ on 4th May. Autumn produced just two records with ringtails on 29th September and 18th October.

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

The first of the spring was not seen until 10th April, followed with five more dispersed records until 25th May. In autumn, one on 18th August was the first but there were no further sightings until a ♀ on 14th–15th October, a ♂ on 27th October

and further ♀ on 3rd–5th and 12th November.

+ Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Rare spring and autumn migrant (85 previous records (87 individuals); 68 in spring, 17 in autumn)

Singles passed through on 13th May, 31st May and 17th June.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A single on 1st April was the first then 1–2 were seen on nine dates between 21st April and 20th May, a spring total of around six birds. In autumn, there were three singles scattered throughout August and almost daily sightings in September and October until the last on 23rd. All were singles but for two on 8th & 14th October.



Kestrel © L C Shaw

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

At least two wintering birds were noted regularly in January/February. Singles on 11th & 21st March were probably the first spring migrants and birds were seen regularly in April up to 2nd May. Later birds were seen on 16th May and 18th June. Autumn passage commenced on 19th August and singles were noted on ten dates in September. Passage was heaviest in October with regular multiple sightings and a peak of four on 12th & 14th. There were occasional sightings of 1–2 in November and December.

+ Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug*

Vagrant; one previous record (Cat D)

One was seen on 26th & 29th May, squabbling with a Peregrine on the latter date.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred

A ♂ on 20th January and a ♀ on 28th March were the only early records. There were no further sightings until two arrived on 20th April, rising to four on 27th. A pair was present until 18th May and at least one lingered until mid-June, although breeding was not suspected. Singles were seen on two dates in July and five dates in August before regular sightings of 1–2 throughout September that became daily in October, with a peak of three on 28th. A ♂ on 5th–7th December was the last.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; occasionally over-winters

Several over-wintering birds were seen during the first winter period including at least three at the Chalet, two at the Observatory and one at Haa. One at Wirvie on 20th May was the only definite spring migrant. In autumn, one on 2nd October was

the first and 1–3 birds were seen almost daily until late November. A few (3–4) remained until the year-end.

+ Corn Crane *Crex crex*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred

One at Leogh on 7th–8th May was the sole spring record whilst in autumn birds were noted on 17th, 27th & 29th September and 4th October.

+ Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

One at Golden Water on 3rd May was the sole spring record. In autumn, singles were seen on 22nd–29th September, 6th October, 29th October and 23rd–26th November. Two at Chalet on 11th December were surprisingly not seen again.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

A party of eight on 30th January were the first of the year, but numbers were low until 31 on 11th February then 60 on 19th February. Counts in March were around 30–40. Peak arrival was in April with a count of 118 on 21st. An estimated 40–50 breeding pairs was logged. A post-breeding count of 129 on 23rd July was the maximum and numbers rapidly tailed off after mid-August to just single figures by September until the last on 14th October.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The first was seen on 30th January, but no others were seen until 23 on 19th February, increasing to 30 the following day and birds were seen daily thereafter. The peak spring count was of 47 on both 6th March & 8th April. Around 14 pairs bred. Autumn numbers were quite low with generally below 30 in August and single figures by September with two on 16th October and a single on 27th October being the last.

+ Eurasian Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A juvenile on 21st September was the sole record.

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common spring and autumn migrant; has bred

One or two were seen in January and up to four in February and March. Peak spring passage was from mid to late April with counts regularly over 40 and a maximum of 71 on 20th. Counts were below five by 6th May and similar numbers were logged up to mid-June. Autumn passage commenced almost immediately with small numbers from early July building up in late August (peak of 52 on 24th) and dwindling away again in late October until 30th. A single bird was seen on 11th December.

+ Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

One on 18th September was the sole sighting - a typical showing.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

Up to 25 were recorded in January and early February. Passage picked up rapidly from mid-February, peaking at 180 on 3rd March and tailed off equally as rapidly to around 30 after the 10th March. Ten pairs bred with nests in the Parks, at Pund and on Eas Brecks. Numbers in autumn rarely reached 20 and were mainly single figures after mid-September.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

A poor spring resulted in just a single bird, on 12th May. There were 1–2 at the end of July before daily sightings from 11th August–25th September. A count of 19 on 21st August was over double the next highest whilst four was the peak September count. A lone bird during the first week of October was the last.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Regular autumn migrant, less common in spring

Spring sightings were confined to a single on 5th May, three on 13th May and two on 19th May. The first of the autumn, on 16th July was followed with regular sightings from 4th August until the last on 2nd October. Maximum count was 11 on 6th August, all other counts being below eight.

+ White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

Vagrant; four previous records

Hot on the heels of our fourth record in October 2006 came our fifth, on 2nd October this year. *Accepted by SBRC*

+ Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

Vagrant; 20 previous records

A confiding adult frequented pools on Mire o' Vatnagard on 3rd August. A juvenile was on Vaasetter on 17th September. *Accepted by SBCRC*

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; also over-winters

Few birds were noted in January /February and a count of 60 on 29th March (max count) indicated spring passage. Birds were seen daily until the end of May with counts fluctuating widely and peaks of 40 (12th April), 43 (22nd April) and 41 (3rd May). One or two were noted throughout the summer and early autumn but it was not until late October that birds were seen daily with a peak of just ten on 26th. Small numbers were noted in November and December.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred

A single on 18th March was the first and there were no others until one on 20th April before daily sightings from 1st May. All but two counts were single figures and the peak count was 13 on 20th May. Displaying birds were seen at Dronger in mid-May and Sukka Mire in late June. The first breeding since 1988 was strongly suspected at the latter site and two fresh juveniles were seen there in July. Autumn passage commenced on 3rd August and a large movement on 5th saw 62 birds logged, the next highest count being 28 on 17th. Just single figures were noted in September until the last on 29th October.

+ Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*

Vagrant; nine previous records

A juvenile frequented Meoness from 1st–3rd September. All previous records have occurred in September. *Accepted by SBCRC*

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*

Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring

One on 24th July increased to three on 31st and up to four were noted throughout August until 5th September. One on 5th–7th October was the only later sighting.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring

There were no records from the early part of the year. In spring, four singles on 12th, 24th & 26th March and 1st April represents a better than average total. Autumn passage commenced with two on 18th September and 12 on 27th & 30th September was the maximum count. Single-figures were logged daily throughout October and sporadic singles in November.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

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

Irregular counts in winter produced a peak count of 55 on 19th February. Higher numbers were noted in late March and 107 on 2nd April was the highest spring count. No breeding census was made. Autumn numbers were highest in mid September to mid-October when peak counts of 96 (29th September) and 77 (10th October) were made. Few counts were made late in the year but 65 were logged on 19th November.

Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Frequent spring and late autumn migrant, occasionally over-winters

Singles were flushed on two dates in the winter. Similarly just three were seen in spring on 31st March, 1st April and 20th May. Autumn passage commenced early with birds seen from 28th September but just irregular counts of 1–4 were made until 12 on 20th October signalled the start of some heavier passage. Twenty-five on 24th

rose to 40 the following day and there was a significant influx of 120 on 26th with 50 the following day. Numbers dropped rapidly to around ten by November with a single on 23rd being the last sighting.

+ Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

In spring, two on 16th April were followed with a single from 26th April–2nd May and another on 22nd May. In autumn, there were two on 6th–14th August and another on 17th August.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring

A single on 14th April was the sole spring record. One on 16th July was followed with 1–3 between 7th–18th August.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage commenced with four on 15th April and sightings were almost daily until 13th July. Most counts were single figures but there were 11 on 1st May and 12 on 5th May. Two singles in late July were followed with regular counts of 1–2 in August and peaks of five on 9th & 11th. One on 10th September was the last.

+ Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus*

Vagrant; one previous record

An adult of this North American race was present from 29th–31st August - the first since one on 27th–31st May 1955. *Accepted by BBRC*

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

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

Numbers during the first two months were generally less than ten and peaked at 17 in mid-February. Slightly higher numbers in March, as the breeders returned, produced a count of 22 on 3rd. Passage was more evident in April with highs of 32 (12th) and an amazing 71 (14th). Nine pairs bred with most at least reaching the chick stage. Return passage commenced in July but was most evident in late August with a peak count of just 23 on 22nd. Small numbers (< 10) were seen to the end of the year.

+ Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*

Vagrant; no previous records

The first for Fair Isle was discovered in South Harbour mid-morning on 13th June. It showed well to all-comers for the remainder of the day but had departed by next morning. There have been three previous Shetland records. *Accepted by BBRC*

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A single on 22nd–23rd April was the first of the spring and was followed with regular counts of 1–3 throughout May and a maximum six on 1st June. One on 15th

June was the last. In autumn, a single on 25th July was not followed until regular singles from 14th August–9th September.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, singles were recorded on ten well-spread dates between 13th April and 3rd June - a total of six birds. In autumn, one on 2nd–3rd July was followed with regular sightings of 1–3 from 17th July–12th August, but for a maximum count of five on 7th August.

+ Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

One flew over calling on 13th August and two were present on 29th August - the first multiple record since 1995.

+ Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

A poor year. A single on 15th April was the sole spring sighting. Likewise, one from 24th July–5th August with it or another on 9th August were the only autumn records.

+ Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A single on 22nd August was the only record.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

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

Recorded in every month. Peak monthly counts as follows.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
35	35	58	42	4	3	43	54	45	58	42	25

The March count is above average, the rest about average.

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	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
195	160	180	134	42	5	43	65	120	176	130	180

The counts and spread of numbers are about average.

Phalarope sp. *Phalaropus sp.*

A fleeting individual was seen on 16th October but could not be specifically identified although given the date was almost certainly a Grey Phalarope (*P. fulicarius*).

+ Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Rare spring and autumn migrant; at least 60 previous records

Singles were seen from the Good Shepherd IV crossing on 6th, 8th & 24th September and from Bunes on 9th October.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Frequent passage migrant, breeds in small numbers

Two birds on 17th April were the first to arrive and numbers had reached double figures by 28th. Following a reversal of recent fortune in 2006 when productivity (0.82 fledged per AOT) was the best since 1997, the 2007 season slumped to an all-time low when, from 68 AOT, no chicks fledged. A combination of a lack of food and

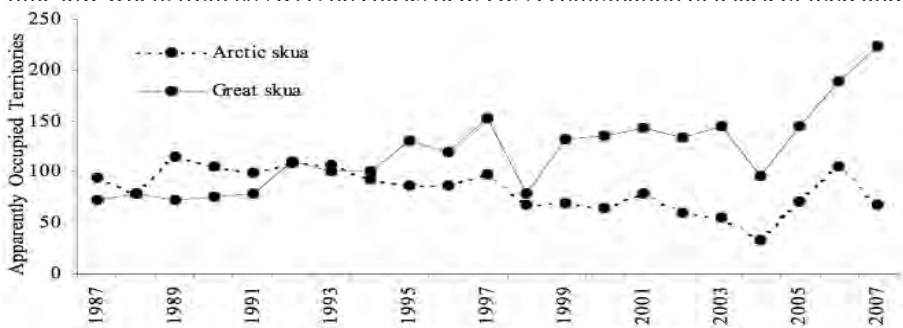


Figure 2. Numbers of territorial pairs of Great and Arctic Skuas on Fair Isle 1987–2007.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Frequent passage migrant, breeds in moderate numbers

One on 29th March was the first and numbers had built up to 40+ by mid-April. Birds were ever-present until mid-October with later singles on 24th October and 13th November. The breeding colony continues to increase, leaping from 189 AOT in 2006 to 224 AOT in 2007 (a 15.7% rise) and initially all seemed to be well with large numbers of chicks present. However, mid-way through the season things started to go wrong - chicks were disappearing or being found dead as a result of starvation and intra-specific depredation. Although 101 fledged (a productivity of 0.45) this was disappointing given the numbers present.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Common autumn passage migrant; breeds in large numbers

The first birds were not noted back on breeding ledges until 22nd March. The long-term decline in the breeding population took a further nose-dive with a 28.7%

decrease at monitoring plots from 2006. As in 2005 and 2006, birds were very late to start breeding in 2007, with many pairs / individuals standing on the cliffs doing nothing until late May. Out of 279 pairs on the plots, the vast majority (91%) built nests and laid eggs, but 44.8% then failed at this stage whilst those chicks that did hatch were lucky to survive beyond two weeks. Only four chicks fledged from all sites, an overall productivity figure of 0.016, the worst since the complete failures in 2003 and 2004. Depredation and starvation were the causes of failure. Snake Pipefish was by far the commonest food item collected from chick regurgitates and nests were littered with dried Pipefish. A large number of birds flying past in late summer could be observed to have a pipefish tail protruding from the bill. Birds were regularly seen offshore well into November.

Common Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Small numbers (1–5) were intermittently recorded from mid-February and then almost daily from 24th March right up to the last on 1st November. Single figures were the norm but in April there were 26 on 12th, 28 on 15th and 16 on 22nd with similar influxes on single dates in May, June, July & August.

+ Little Gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Vagrant; 16 previous records (19 individuals)

A first-summer frequented the fields at Lower Leogh on 20th–21st April - only our third spring record and first since 1991.

Mew (Common) Gull *Larus canus*

Common spring and autumn migrant, breeds in small numbers

Small numbers were occasionally recorded in the first two months, but there was an influx of 26 on 25th February. Numbers began to increase in March and became daily in April. Passage was heaviest from late April to mid May with peaks of 42 (28th), 80 (3rd) & 44 (6th). Eight pairs nested (ten in 2006) and fledged five young. Autumn passage was almost all in early August when counts of 113 (4th), 830 (7th), 170 (12th) & 110 (13th) were made. After that numbers rarely reached 20 and the last of the year was on 15th November.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The first of the year was not seen until 9th April and 16 arrived on 11th. Higher numbers were recorded in May with peaks of 40 (7th), 43 (19th) & 41 (26th). The breeding numbers continue to decline and they are now just clinging on with one pair on Bunes and two pairs on Goorn. Small numbers of migrants (1–10) were seen in July and early August until the last on 25th.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Resident, breeds in small numbers. Also hard-weather migrant, autumn and winter
Present all year. Counts were restricted to the late-autumn period, with a peak of 1600 on 17th November. Around 20 pairs bred, the majority on Goorn (10 pairs) and

Greenholm (6 pairs).

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

Scarce migrant in winter and spring

At least three birds were recorded regularly from January–March, one of which remained until 1st July. Further birds were seen on 11th April (2), 27th April, 30th May and 6th–10th June. In autumn, a first-winter on 4th September was extremely early and the only other sighting was another first-winter on 7th–8th November.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Regular migrant in spring, late autumn and winter

A first-winter on 1st March was the first of the year and there were two on 5th with further singles on 6th & 17th April. In autumn, a first-winter on 11th September was followed with an adult the following day, which was seen intermittently up to 4th October. Two adults and a first-winter were noted on 9th November and another adult was seen from the *Good Shepherd IV* crossing on 19th - the last sighting of the year.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

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

Present all year. Around ten pairs bred on Sheep Rock with single pairs on Goorn, Toor o' da Ward Hill, Dronger and Greenholm. The highest count of the year was just 750 on 17th November.

+ Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Scarce summer migrant

Following on from a good season in 2006, when at least seven individuals were noted, 2007 sightings kicked off with three in South Haven on 23rd April. There were two more on 11th June and finally a single on 20th July.

Sandwich Tern © WT Miles



Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers

The first of the year were not until 6th May, when four birds were seen. Thereafter, 1–3 were seen sporadically until the end of the month and one frequented North Haven throughout June. There were sightings of 1–4 on seven dates in July, three dates in August and a juvenile on 15th September was the last.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers

Four 'commic' terns on 7th May were followed with 12 confirmed Arctics the following day, rising to 180 by 13th. These hung around the isle for a week or so before departing without settling to breed. An arrival of some 250 on 31st May rose to around 400 on 7th June. These chose to breed and 208 AIA were counted in colonies on Buness and Shalstane. A trip into the colonies on 1st July to assess the situation found that there were a few small chicks (1–3 days old) with the majority of nests still containing eggs. However, it seems likely that chicks were dying shortly after hatching and on 6th/7th July, both colonies were abandoned. Small numbers (1–10) were regularly noted offshore until 26th September with later juveniles on 9th & 16th October.

Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Common autumn passage migrant; breeds in large numbers

Small numbers were seen offshore in January and there were 300 ashore at Kristal Kame on 30th. Birds were ashore on many calm days in February/March with almost full attendance noted on 22nd March. However, attendance at the monitoring plots was erratic during April, even during spells of perfect weather. Numbers of adults in attendance at monitoring plots (Fig 3) were the lowest on record (32.5% less than in 2006) and few eggs were laid and even fewer chicks fledged at most colonies. However, the monitoring plot at Peitron appeared at odds with most colonies - many eggs were laid and a final productivity at this site of 0.47 is incredible compared to observations at most other colonies. A productivity figure of 0.06 at Da Swadin appeared to be a more representative figure of the isle as a whole. During a 24hr feeding watch, over half of prey items were small Lesser Sandeels, a quarter were gadidae and the rest were mainly Snake Pipefish, with a few Clupeids.

Very small numbers were seen offshore through the autumn

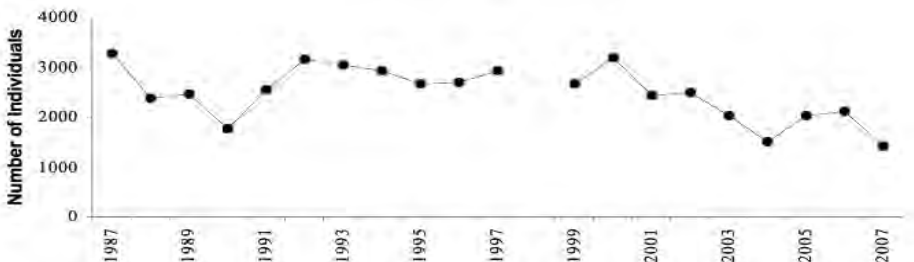


Figure 3. Plot counts of Common Guillemot on Fair Isle 1987–2007. Note: no counts in 1998.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers

As with Guillemots, this species also had a very poor breeding season. Despite a large number of eggs being laid at the Easter Locher monitoring plot, only half of which hatched, weekly visits to the colony indicated that chicks were obviously weak and starving to death leading to the inevitable zero productivity for the second time (Fig 4). Small numbers of birds were seen offshore throughout the autumn and

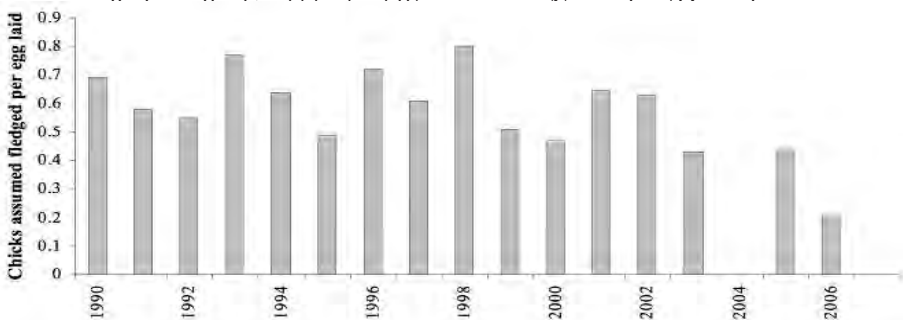


Figure 4. Breeding success of Razorbill at Easter Locher, Fair Isle 1990–2007.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers

The number of birds along the east coast of the isle rose for the third year in a row to 164 birds in breeding plumage - an 8.6% increase on the 2006 figure (151) but is still

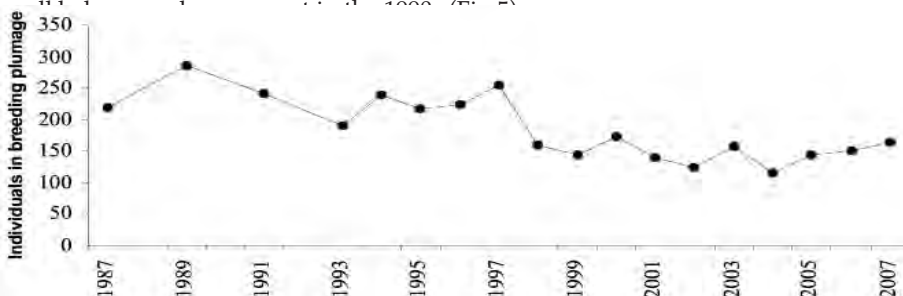


Figure 5. East coast counts of Black Guillemots on Fair Isle, 1987–2007.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Frequent late autumn/winter visitor

Small numbers were seen regularly offshore from mid-October and 100+ were reported from the *Good Shepherd IV* crossing on 13th November and 83 on 11th December.

Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers

Unusually, three were seen from the *Good Shepherd IV* crossing on 28th February. One past South Light on 21st March, followed with one in Mavericks Geo on 29th indicated the return of the local breeders and there were 120 in Finnequoy on 1st April. Breeding success was the worst on record. Puffins have always appeared to be fairly successful, with productivity between 1990 and 2005 never falling below 0.57 (apart from in 2001 - productivity of 0.31). In 2006 it was slightly below this figure, at 0.47. Breeding success in 2007 was much worse (Fig 6). A final productivity of 0.17 is a very disappointing result, bringing Puffin breeding success in line with the other auk species. A combination of a lack of Sandeels (with many discarded Snake Pipefish found in burrows) and a period of wet weather in late July / August (causing several burrows to be flooded) were major factors in this crash.

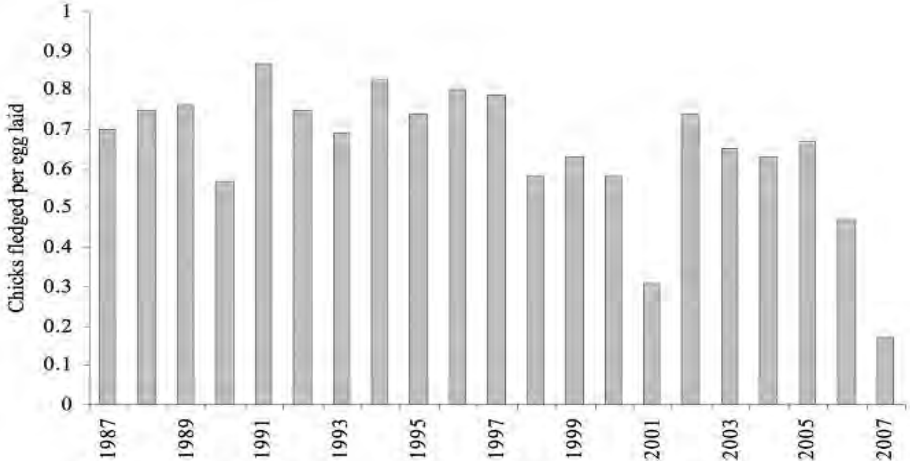


Figure 6. Breeding success of Atlantic Puffin at monitoring plots on Fair Isle 1987–2007.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

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

Present all year and not regularly counted.

+ Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Singles on 13th–16th May and 25th September were the only records.

Common Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

One on 28th February was the first and there were regular single-figure counts from 7th March through to mid-June with peaks of 14 on 25th April, 18 on 21st May and

13 on 1st June. Singles were noted on two dates in July and once in August. Autumn records comprised 1–3 daily from 28th September–20th October and occasional singles to 21st November.

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

In spring, there were almost daily counts of 1–6 from 13th April–30th June. There were sightings on two dates in July. In contrast, one on 15th September was the only autumn sighting.

+ European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Singles were present from 23rd May–11th June, 18th–27th July and on 27th September.

+ Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

In spring, two on 3rd May were followed with a single on 10th, at least three on 14th and two on 21st May with a further 1–2 on five dates in June, up to 16th. There was one from 2nd–6th July but no further sightings.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

One was flushed from the Gully on 17th February. There were no spring sightings. In autumn one on 28th September was followed with 1–2 on nine dates in October and two singles in early November, one of which remained to overwinter in the Obs plantation.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A single on 28th April was the first, followed with two on 2nd May and singles on 12th–14th & 18th May and on four dates in early June. In autumn, one on 30th–31st August was not followed until 1–2 almost daily from 27th September–1st November with a peak of four on 13th–14th October.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Frequent spring, summer and autumn migrant

In spring there were 1–2 on most days from 22nd May–3rd June, rising to eight on 5th and 18 on 7th June. In July, nine on 9th were followed with 1–3 on a further 12 dates to the last on 14th August.

+ European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

Vagrant; six previous records (eight individuals)

After one in June 2006 (the first since 1982), there was another this year. A lone bird frequented the south of the isle from 4th–6th June, favouring the South Harbour area and showed extremely well as it sat on Utra wall catching bees. *Accepted by SBCRC*

+ Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring sightings were confined to singles on 2nd and 6th–7th May. In autumn, there were two on 11th August, singles on 14th & 15th August and another on 3rd October. A quiet year.

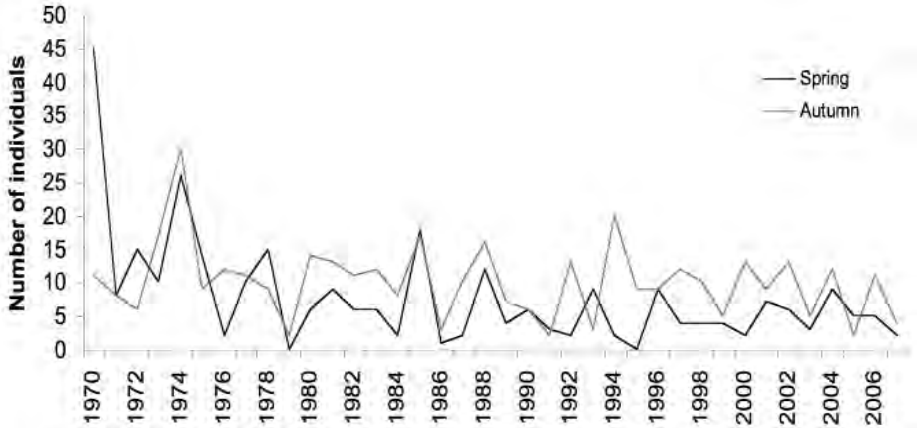


Figure 7. Numbers of Eurasian Wryneck on Fair Isle in spring & autumn 1970–2007.

+ Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

In spring, there were singles on 5th & 13th June. In autumn, singles on Hoini from 4th–6th October and at Pund from 9th–13th October may possibly have related to the same individual.

Sky Lark *Alauda arvensis*

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

One on 11th January was an unusual mid-winter occurrence. Four on 13th February signalled the start of 'spring' passage and had quickly built up to 21 by 17th and 120 by 25th. The first singing birds were noted on 1st March when 'lots' were moving northwards. Counts were regularly well over 200 throughout the month and peaked at 380 on 25th, before passage slowly tailed off in early April. Autumn passage was notable from mid-September to mid-October when counts exceeded 100 every day and were over 200 on nine dates, with a maximum of 258 on 29th September. Numbers tailed off to almost single figures by mid-November but there were still nine on 8th December.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

In spring, 1–2 from 23rd–27th April were followed with 1–3 on eight dates between 19th May and 1st June. Singles were noted on 30th June and 3rd July and one on 7th–9th August was the last.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common spring and autumn migrant; occasionally breeds

Spring sightings commenced on 12th April and there was a marked influx in the last week of April, including 60 on 27th. Heavier passage in late May included regular counts over 30 and a maximum of 84 on 21st before dropping off to single figures once more after the first week of June. Small numbers were recorded regularly throughout the summer right up to mid-September when sightings became sporadic. Counts of 1–5 in the first week of October and a later bird on 23rd October were the last.

Common House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred

The first of the year was a single on 15th April before an influx of 14 on 24th saw the start of almost daily sightings until mid-June. Most counts were single figures but there was a peak of 25 on 21st May. There were sporadic sightings of 1–2 in July and a single on 30th August and two on 1st October were the last.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Scarce autumn migrant; vagrant in spring

Two on 29th September were the first, with one remaining until the following day. In October, almost daily counts of 1–2 birds were made from 1st–23rd, with peaks of three on 7th–8th and 20th.

+ Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

Vagrant; three previous records

Hot on the heels of our third record in October 2006, our fourth appeared at Boini Mire on the morning of 27th October this year. It was very bedraggled and extremely weak and died a short while later. *Accepted by BBRC. Previous records; 13th–22nd October 1988, 31st October–10th November 1993, 21st–24th October 2006.*

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A single on 22nd April was the first, followed by two on 26th and a single on 27th April. May produced 1–2 birds on six dates until 11th before a light passage produced daily counts of 1–7 birds on most dates until the last on the 5th June. Autumn passage was slow to start, with singles on 23rd and 31st August not followed until a single on 24th September. Thereafter, 1–2 on three dates until the month's end and low counts of 1–4 birds on most dates in October, until the last on 20th.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The first of the year concerned a single on 11th March and was soon followed by two on 25th rising to 16 the following day and peaking at 40 on 29th March. Moderate passage during the first weeks of April saw daily double-figure counts (of

40–83 birds) until the 11th. A period of heavier passage saw counts quickly rise to over 200 birds from 12th and peaks of 307 (15th) and 280 (17th) before numbers dwindled, but remaining in excess of 100 birds, until the months end. Autumn passage was noted from 8th August (76) and fluctuated through the month, with peaks of 101 (14th), 116 (24th) and 141 (28th). Heavy passage through September saw daily counts in excess of 100 birds, exceeding 200 birds on 12 dates and peaks of 330 (12th), 364 (22nd) and 291 (27th). The opening week of October saw numbers remain high with a peak of 154 birds on 6th, dwindling to below 100 until the months end, but for 110 on 12th. Single figure counts were then made on six dates in November with the final sighting of the year of two birds on the 8th December.

Eurasian 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 on 22nd April, 1st, 15th, 25th and 29th May.

+ Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens*

Vagrant; one previous record

One was found in Sukka Mire late afternoon on 23rd September. It was very elusive but was seen again on each of the following two days ranging as far as Bullock Holes. Despite extensive searching it could not be found on 26th and was assumed to have departed. Then, one was flushed from Homisdale on 1st October and eventually settled on Vaasetter, where it remained until 7th October. Despite appearing to have different colour tones (under different light conditions) to the first sighting, there were no other obvious plumage differences and it was assumed to be the same individual. *Previous record; 17th September 1953. Accepted by BBRC*

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A ♂ of the Blue-headed race (*M.f.flava*) was present on 4th–5th May. Singles of the Grey-headed race (*M.f.thunbergi*) were recorded on 23rd–24th and 30th May before an arrival of three birds on 31st May, with two remaining until 1st June and a single until 5th June. Un-identified ‘*flavas*’ were recorded on 11th, 19th and 20th June. Autumn records comprised ‘*flavas*’ on 23rd August and 29th September. A single of the British race *M.f.flavissima* was also recorded on this date and was present the following day. A single of the Blue-headed race (*M.f.flava*) was present from 1st–5th October along with a bird showing characteristics of one of the eastern forms from 2nd–4th.

+ Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*

Vagrant; 49 previous records (including two in spring)

A juvenile, initially found at Setter on 13th August remained on the isle until the 27th August. A second bird arrived on 24th August and a third on 25th August, these both remaining until 11th September. Therefore, for the first time, there were *three*

individuals on the isle from 25th–27th August. It did not end there as two more were found together at Da Water on 27th September. A total of *five* birds - all first winters

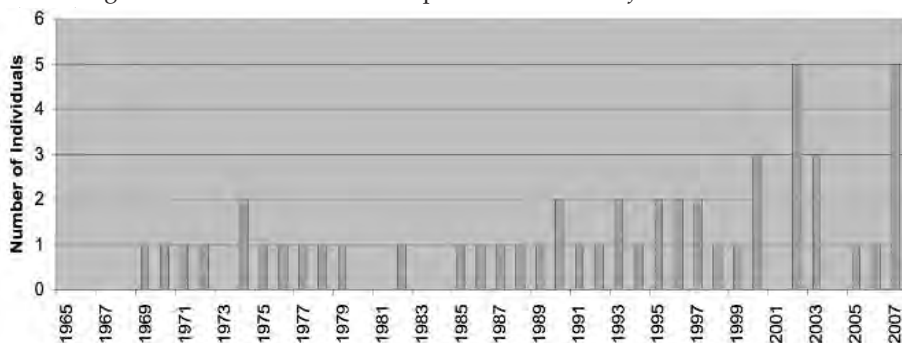


Figure 8. Numbers of migrant Citrine Wagtails on Fair Isle 1965–2007.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; has bred

A ♂ on 25th March was the first of the year, followed by two more on the 29th. April records involved 1–3 birds daily from 1st–8th. Single birds were recorded on twelve dates in May, with two on 18th and 28th. In autumn, 1–3 birds were present on six dates from 20th–30th September, before almost daily passage in October saw counts increase to 1–4 birds until the 15th and 1–3 until the last single on 28th.

White/Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; occasional breeder

Typically, the first of the year was a ♂ Pied Wagtail *M.a.yarrellii* on 23rd February. Subsequent daily sightings until the 28th February may have involved the same bird. Passage in March was light, with 1–4 birds recorded on just eight dates. Records of 1–6 birds were received daily through April, joined by daily sightings of 1–3 White Wagtails *M.a.alba* from 19th. Passage of both races continued through May and June with daily May counts of 1–4 birds (max. eight White Wagtails on 13th) and near daily counts (of 1–4 birds of both races) through June may have included local breeding birds, with two juvenile Pied Wagtails seen from 11th–13th. Single-figure counts were made through July into August, with moderate passage from 5th August when daily double-figure counts were made until the months end (peaking at 60 ‘*albas*’ on 20th). Passage remained moderate through September, with daily counts regularly exceeding 15 birds, tailing off during the last week to single figures and through October with the last, singles of both races, on 20th.

+ Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Scarce/irruptive autumn migrant, rare in spring

A light autumn passage saw two on 21st October, followed by six on 2nd November. Further November singles were then seen on 14th and 20th.

+ White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus***Rare spring & autumn migrant; 34 previous records**

A single bird of the nominate race (Black-bellied Dipper) was found in Wirvie on 5th December and was still present there in January 2008, later relocating to the Gully until March 2008.

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

Birds of the local race (*T.t.fridarensis*) were present all year and an absolute minimum of 27 territories (but possibly as high as 39) were recorded on the island during 2007. Birds of the 'nominate' British race were recorded on 8th May and 12th October.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis***Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred**

A single seen on six dates in January and three dates in February presumably referred to the same wintering individual. Two birds were present on 25th–27th February. The first spring migrants were recorded on 14th March (3), with two singles on 18th and 30th March. April records comprised 1–2 almost daily until 17th, followed by May singles from 5th–19th. An individual was present from 3rd–11th June. A light autumn passage did not begin until three birds on 27th September, rising to four the following day until the month's end. October saw 1–4 daily until the 8th and singles on five further dates until the last on 29th.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula***Common spring and autumn migrant**

Single-figure counts of 1–3 birds were made on six dates from January until 26th March when, on 27th March, ten birds were recorded. An extremely poor spring passage followed, with single-figure counts (of 1–4) recorded almost daily in April, but for a peak of eight on 1st, and a single, possibly the same bird on each occasion, recorded on six dates in May, until the 23rd. Autumn passage was equally as light, with the first on 28th August–2nd September. An arrival of 12 on 27th September and another increase to 25 the following day were the heaviest periods of passage and thereafter, counts of 1–9 were made daily until October 30th. 1–2 were recorded on 14 dates in November, probably involving two birds and a single was at the Observatory on 9th December.

+ Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia***Rare spring migrant (44 records), vagrant in autumn (seven records)**

A flighty individual was found at North Shirva on the afternoon of 13th May and a very obliging individual was at Utra on 28th September. *Both accepted by BBRC*

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A poor spring passage saw a single ♂ in Furse on 24th–25th May, followed by a ♂ and ♀ on 26th May. Autumn passage was slightly better with a single on 27th September, increasing to three the next day. Two birds were then seen sporadically between 29th September and 13th October, with three present on the 7th and 9th. One single remained until the 30th October.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

A ♂ on 26th March was the first, with near daily singles until the months end but for two on 29th. Singles were seen on two dates in April, seven dates in May and four dates in June up to 15th, but for two on 7th June. One on 15th July was not an uncommon occurrence. In autumn, October produced singles on 25th and 27th (with two on 28th) and the last of the year was in Troili Geo on 14th November.

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

In spring, two ♀ on 13th May were the first, with one remaining the next day, followed by a ♂ on 16th. A small influx of four was noted on 30th May, rising to seven (31st) with stragglers recorded until 3rd June. Singles were then recorded on 6th and 11th June. Autumn passage was equally as light, with the first on 21st August, another on 23rd and was not followed until a single on 13th September. Five on 27th September was the peak autumn count and, with the exception of four on 28th September, 1–2 were recorded almost daily until the last on 7th October.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

In spring, a ♂ on 29th–30th April was the first, followed by sporadic counts of 1–2 birds on eight dates in May, but for peaks of six on 13th and four on 31st. Further singles were recorded on 1st and 3rd June. One on 21st August was the first of the autumn and 1–2 were recorded almost daily until 12th September. Four on 27th September with five the next day were the peak autumn counts, followed by daily sightings of 1–2 birds thorough October until the last on the 29th.

Eurasian Stonechat *Saxicola torquatus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Early spring passage included a ♂ from 19th–22nd February, increasing to four by 24th and six by 25th. Thereafter, counts of 1–6 were made on thirteen dates until 3rd April. A ♂ from 30th April–2nd May and a ♀ on 30th May were the last spring migrants. A juvenile on 24th June was unusual.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small/moderate numbers

In spring, a ♂ on the 8th April preceded daily counts from the 11th and daily double-figure counts from the 13th April. Counts fluctuated until the end of May and exceeded 100 birds on most dates, peaking at 196 on 28th April and 195 on 13th May, with heaviest passage noted from 27th April–26th May. The first autumn ‘fall’ included 100 birds on 8th August and counts in excess of 100 birds were the norm. until the months end (max. 156 on 13th). Thereafter, numbers ranged widely from 8–70 birds through September. A further arrival of 100 birds on 2nd October was the last significant count and double-figure counts hereafter became single-figure from the 17th until the last bird seen on the 1st November.

+ Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*

Vagrant; two previous records

A long overdue third island record. A first-winter was discovered near the west end of Hill Dyke on the afternoon of 30th September. It showed well to all assembled until, in the fading light, it dropped down into Gunnawark and disappeared. *Previous records; 5th October 1953, 29th October 1958. Accepted by BBRC*

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first spring arrival included a good island count of 18 birds on 21st April. Near daily single-figure counts (of 2–5 birds) followed until the 5th May when numbers became fewer (typically 1–2 birds) until 6th June. A late spring influx included five on 7th June followed by a long-staying ♀ from 9th–26th June, with two on 10th. In autumn, five on 27th September were the first and counts of 1–4 were the norm. until the last on 28th October, but for peaks of seven (3rd and 4th) and five (10th).

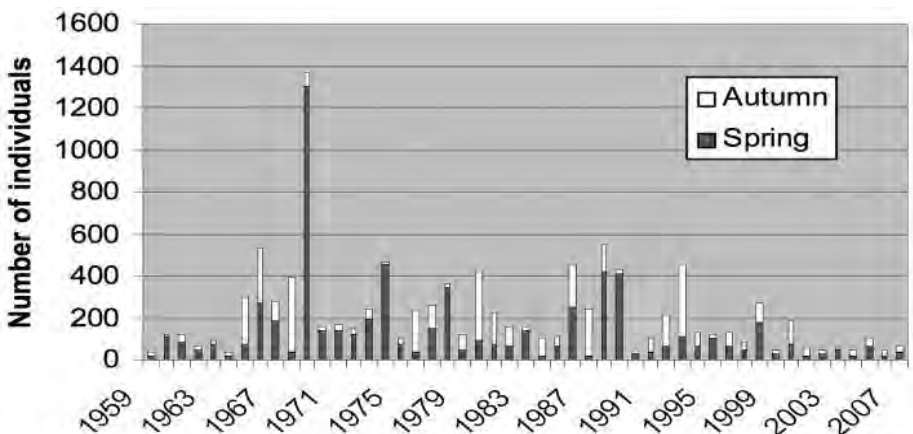


Figure 9. Estimated total numbers of Ring Ouzels on Fair Isle in spring & autumn 1959–2007.

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*

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

Sporadic counts were made of 5–30 birds from 19th February–30th March and daily passage from 1st April, peaking on this date with 52 birds. Counts remained in double-figures (between 15–43 birds) until single-figure counts were made from 16th April until the months end. One to six birds were seen on 17 dates in May and further singles were recorded on 3rd–5th June and 22nd July. Six on 27th September were the first followed by daily October passage, with the first moderate arrival of 80 birds on 5th. Counts fluctuated hereafter (from 35–355) and peaked at 400 (10th) and 600 (26th). November peaks included 270 (1st) and 180 (14th), with counts ranging widely (from 5–250) in this month and into December, with the last count of 60 birds on 8th December.

+ Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*

Vagrant; Ten previous records (nine in autumn)

Only our second ever spring record, a ♀ frequented the area between Midway and Leogh on 23rd April. *First spring record; 14th–17th April 2001. Accepted by BBRC*

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Common spring and autumn migrant, often over-winters

Double-figure counts were made on nine dates from January to March, with a maximum 74 on 3rd March. Spring passage was light, with near daily counts in April reaching double-figures on just seven dates and peaking at 140 on 22nd. In May, 1–6 were recorded until 18th. In autumn, one from 8th–13th August was the first and was not followed until a single on 25th September. Passage was daily from 27th September and large arrivals in early October included 440 (6th), 600 (9th) and the autumn's peak count of 1400 on the 10th. Hereafter, passage remained heavy until 15th (300–1000 birds recorded) when numbers tailed off to double-figure counts and rose again from 22nd, peaking at 430 on 25th & 26th. A count of 210 on 1st November was the last high count of the year, with stragglers remaining until the last record of ten on 7th December.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

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

Single-figure counts in February and March were made on nine dates, following the first on 5th February, with a peak of 11 birds on 7th March. Passage was light through April and May, with single-figure counts the norm, but for April peaks of 15 (12th), 12 (23rd) and 11 (24th), with the last single of the spring on 16th May. In autumn, six well-dispersed singles were recorded from 23rd August until the first real arrival of 50 birds on 27th September. A moderate passage followed, with double-figure counts (of 11–70 birds) until 16th October, when numbers dwindled to single-figure counts until the months end. A peak of 100 birds was recorded on 10th October. In November, 1–3 were recorded on five dates, with the last on 26th.

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

Small numbers (of 1–55 birds) were recorded from January until the first arrival of 250 birds on 8th April. Numbers slowly tailed off until the months end and were single-figure counts on most dates in May, until 30th. One on 7th June was the last. A single on 24th August was the first of the autumn and daily passage began on 27th September with an arrival of 100 birds. Numbers rarely dropped below 100 birds hereafter and 1200 on 5th October, rising to 3200 the following day were the first significant falls. Further arrivals from 9th–11th of 1000, 2700 and 1200 birds respectively, preceded fluctuating counts of 24–800 birds until the 30th October. Daily sightings were made (of 10–130 birds) in November with still 50 on 8th December.

+ Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus***Scarce spring and autumn migrant**

A single on 21st March was the only spring record. In autumn, singles in October were recorded on 1st, 4th, 6th and 25th.

+ Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola***Rare autumn migrant (17 previous records)**

An overdue 18th record. One discovered in a ditch in Gilsetter late afternoon on 28th September flew towards the Plantation where it was trapped, ringed and shown to a crowd of happy birders before being released into the Observatory Plantation. The first since 2001. *Accepted by BBRC*

+ Lanceolated Warbler *Locustella lanceolata***Rare autumn migrant (72 previous records)**

A good year with five individuals identified. The first was discovered in the bird crop at Skadan on 27th September followed quickly by the second in the Plantation later that afternoon. The Skadan bird was still present the following day. Another was found at Pund on 29th–30th, moving to Charlie's Trees on 1st October and then Upper Stoneybrek on 3rd October. Meanwhile the fourth was trapped in Single Dyke on 2nd October and finally the fifth was discovered in Meadow Burn, also on 3rd October. *All five accepted by BBRC*

+ Common Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia***Regular spring and autumn migrant**

In spring, one from 26th–28th April was the first. On 27th it was joined by a second, with a new bird on 28th and two more on 29th (one remaining until 30th). In May, singles were recorded on four dates, with two on 7th and 21st. Autumn individuals comprised birds on 8th & 22nd August, 10th & 28th September (2) and 4th & 5th October.

+ River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis***Vagrant; 11 previous records (five spring, six autumn)**

One was trapped in the Observatory Plantation on 11th June. *Accepted by BBRC*

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

One on 26th April and another from 28th–30th were the first, with almost daily passage from 1st May–9th June and regular counts of 1–9 birds made, but for a peak of 15+ on 22nd May. Late spring/summer migrants included singles on 28th June and 12th–13th July. Autumn records comprised sporadic sightings of 1–3 birds from 4th August–13th October, involving approximately 16 individuals.

+ Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*

Vagrant in spring (three previous records), rare in autumn (13 previous records)

One trapped in the Gully on the evening of 9th June came as a complete shock to the visiting ringers who found it - the first in spring since 1993. *Accepted by BBRC*

+ Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Vagrant; 21 previous records (six spring, 15 autumn)

One was trapped at Barkland on 30th September. *Accepted by BBRC*

+ Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

A single on 31st May in the Walli Burn was the first, followed by singles on 7th, 15th and 22nd June. One singing bird on 24th June remained at the Observatory until 17th July. In autumn, singles were seen on 25th–28th August, 30th September, 1st and 4th–5th October.

+ Eurasian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Scarce spring migrant, regular in autumn

Late spring arrivals included singles on 7th June and 29th June–10th July. In autumn, singles were seen on 12th August, 17th September, and 4th & 10th October.

Acrocephalus sp.

Un-streaked 'acros' on 3rd and 9th October were thought to be either Reed or Marsh Warbler.

+ Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Two in Schoolton Ditch on 12th May were the first, with one or a new bird trapped the following day and remaining until the 15th. Three more arrived on 30th–31st May with two on 1st June and one remaining until 4th June. Two on 5th, three on 6th and a single on 11th June were the last. In autumn, one from 11th–14th August and another on 28th September were the only records.

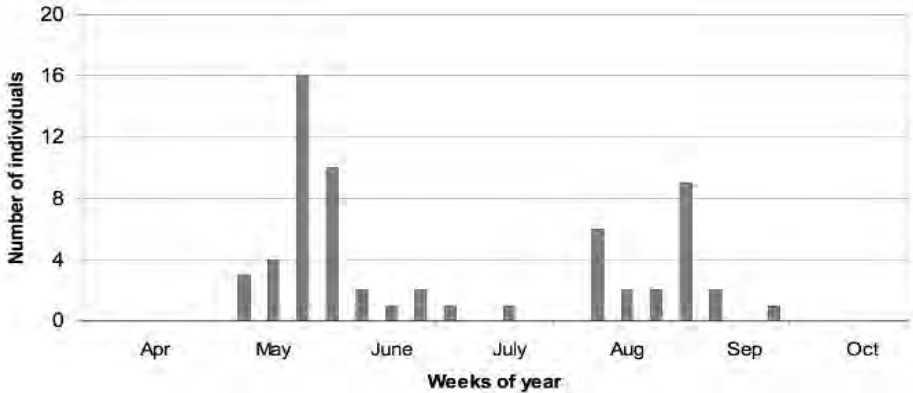


Figure 10. Total numbers and timing of arrival of Icterine Warblers on Fair Isle 1998–2007.

Eurasian Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common spring and autumn migrant

In spring, a ♂ on 23rd April preceded daily sightings of 1–4 from 26th April–24th May, with a max of five on 14th May. Further daily sightings of 1–4 were recorded from 30th May–11th June, with 1–2 from 19th–30th June, involving no more than three birds. A ♀ was present 10th–11th July. The first autumn record was on the 18th September and passage was light, with 1–9 birds daily until 5th November, but for 15 on 5th October. A ♀ on 14th November was the final sighting of the year.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Sporadic sightings were made of singles on six dates from 7th–29th May, before a small arrival of ten on 30th May. Daily single-figure sightings followed until 21st June, with peaks of 15 (1st) and ten (7th). Autumn passage was light, following the first on 8th August. Counts of 1–4 were then made on most dates in August (max. 7 on 22nd), with 1–4 on 11 dates in September, peaking at eight and 10 on 28th–29th. October records were much the same, with 1–4 noted on just nine dates until the last on the 23rd.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

Regular autumn migrant, vagrant in spring (three records)

One on 28th–29th August was the first, with another from 30th–31st. Daily passage, of 1–3, was recorded from 17th September–7th October, with a peak of five on 27th. Further singles were recorded on 11th, 14th & 20th October.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

An early spring single on 23rd April was quickly followed by two further singles and a peak of three on 30th April. One to two were recorded from 1st–8th May and

22nd–30th May, with four on 31st May. One to four were recorded daily from 1st–9th June with a peak of seven on 7th June. In autumn, 1–3 were recorded on most dates from 18th August–26th September before an autumn peak of 18 was noted on 27th September. Daily passage followed, with single-figure counts (of 1–6) from 29th September until the last on 23rd October.

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

Three on 13th May were the first, with 1–3 recorded on most dates until 21st June. One on 18th September was the only autumn record.

+ Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*

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

A ♀ at Schoolton on 23rd–24th May was a typical spring record. A ♂ at the Observatory from 20th–29th October was only our third autumn record. *Accepted by SBCRC*

+ Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Rare autumn migrant (29 Records), vagrant in spring (11 records)

One trapped in the Plantation late evening on the 20th August was still present the following day - a typical record. *Accepted by SBCRC*

Yellow Browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Regular autumn migrant

Two on 27th September were the first of the year, with 12+ recorded the following day and 11 on 29th. Daily sightings of 1–4 from 30th September–16th October were logged, with further peaks of 10+ (4th), 12 (5th) and ten (10th). Singles on 19th & 20th

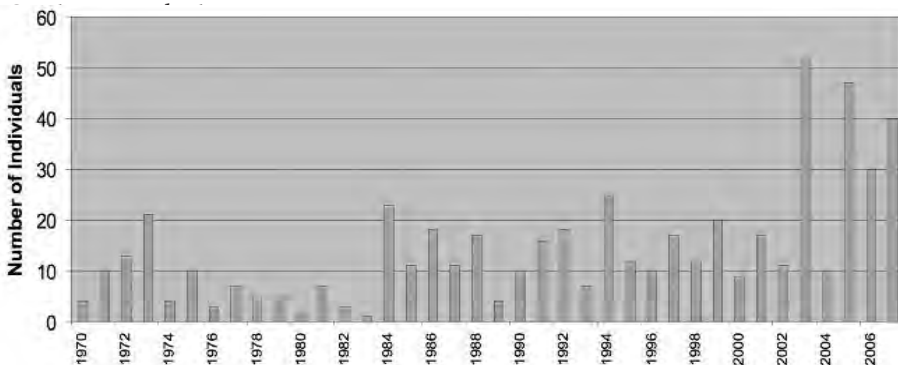


Figure 11. Estimated numbers of Yellow-browed Warblers on Fair Isle in autumn 1970–2007.

+ Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Vagrant; 12 previous records - all in autumn

One frequented the Walli Burn area from 22nd–24th October. *Accepted by SBRC*

+ Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix***Regular spring and autumn migrant**

One on 13th May was the only spring record. The only autumn record was one on 23rd August.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita***Frequent spring and autumn migrant**

In spring, two on 26th March were the first followed by regular sightings of 1–8 from 27th March until 17th June. Sightings of a single bird from 18th June–15th September involved the same summering individual. Autumn migrants comprised singles joining the summering bird on 9th and 11th August and 1–2 were recorded from 22nd August–11th September. Thereafter and into October, single-figure counts were the norm, typically of 1–3 birds, exceeding this on three dates with seven birds and an influx of ten on 29th September. November sightings included singles on four dates from 14th–23rd. Birds showing characteristics of the eastern races *P.c.abietinus* or *P.c.tristis* were seen from 23rd–30th April and 1–3 daily from 4th–20th October.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus***Frequent spring and autumn migrant**

A light spring passage following the first on 16th April (2), saw almost daily counts of 1–9 from 22nd April–12th June, with double-figure counts logged on 13th May (10) and 1st June (12). Singles were recorded on nine dates from 11th June–2nd July, with a summering individual recorded sporadically from 6th July–9th August. Autumn passage was equally as light, with single-figure counts the norm from 9th August–18th October and reaching double-figures on just six dates in August, max. 18 on 21st.

+ Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla***Vagrant; three previous records (two in spring, one in autumn)**

One was found on the cliffs near North Light on 24th October, where it remained until 1st November. One in the Observatory Plantation on 6th & 7th November was assumed to be the same. *Previous records; 7th–8th November 1981, 2nd May 1989, 15th–17th May 1992. Accepted by SBCRC*

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus***Frequent spring and autumn migrant**

Spring migrants were few, with 1–5 recorded on 15 dates from 24th March–15th April and peaks of eight (1st) and seven (14th). Further singles were noted on 30th April and 3rd May. Autumn singles on 14th & 24th September preceded an influx of 18 on 27th and a significant arrival of 210 on 28th September. Daily counts fluctuated hereafter (ranging from 6–104 birds), before passage slowed from 16th October to 1–10 birds almost daily until 22nd October and counts of two on 27th October & 3rd November.



Goldcrest © WT Miles

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Three on 13th May were the first and singles followed on four dates until 14 on 30th May started a period of near daily passage until 15th June of single-figure counts (1–6 birds) but for ten on 1st June. Autumn passage was slow, with singles on 22nd August, 24th, 26th & 27th September and singles daily from 2nd–7th October.

Eurasian Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

In spring, a ♂ on 4th–5th May was the first, with another on 13th and three on 14th. Two on 31st May and 1st June were the next highest counts with singles on four further dates up to 21st June. In autumn, singles on three dates from 20th–25th August (with two on 24th), 2–3 from 27th–29th September and a single on 5th October were the only records.

+ Great Tit *Parus major*

Rare spring & autumn migrant

A ♀ was found at Houll on 31st March. It had relocated to the Observatory the following day, where it remained until 9th April.

+ Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

Rare in spring. Vagrant in autumn; 41 previous records (34 in spring, 7 in autumn)

A ♂ at the Observatory on 31st May was the only record.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A ♀ from 22nd–27th May was the first, followed by three on 30th May and a ♂ on 31st. Daily passage, of 1–6 birds followed until 17th June - a minimum of 16 individuals. A further ♀ was seen on 30th June. In autumn, singles on 20th–26th August, with two on 22nd and a single at Schoolton from 12th–22nd September were the only records.

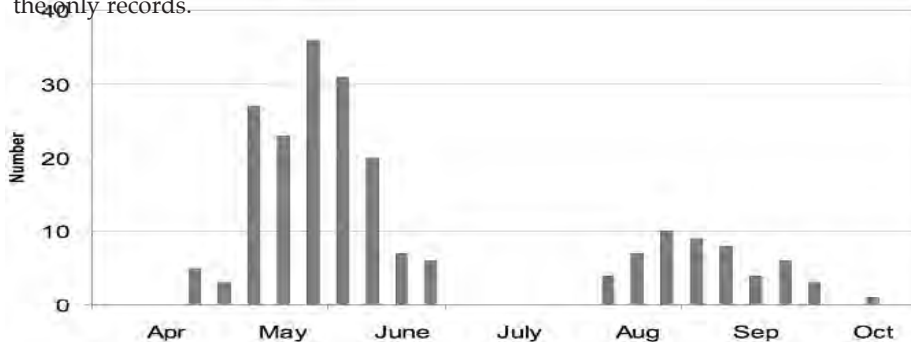


Figure 12. Numbers and timing of Red-backed Shrike passage through Fair Isle 1998–2007.

+ Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*

Vagrant; 20 previous records (13 in spring, seven in autumn)

A first-summer ♀ arrived at the Chalet on 27th May. It summered on the isle, mainly around the crofts between Quoy and Leogh. It was trapped and ringed on 14th June and discovered to be heavily laden with mites. This no doubt influenced its decision to remain here and it was last seen on 18th August, by which time it looked very weak and bedraggled. *Accepted by BBRC. One on 3rd June 1913 has been declared the first Scottish record.*

+ Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce autumn migrant; rare in spring

An unfortunate record concerned a bird taken by a cat on 11th October - unfortunately all that remained for visitors and staff was its head!

Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

In spring, singles were present on 27th–28th March, 8th–14th April and 26th–27th April. In autumn, a single on 1st September was the precursor to a very large movement in late October. Two on 21st–23rd rose to 85 the following day and a staggering 114 on 25th, peaking at 115 on 29th. Numbers had dropped to 88 by the following day and dwindled down to single figures by mid-November. Up to seven remained to the end of the year. Racial identification of Jackdaws can be tricky but many of these birds exhibited varying amounts of pale grey in the nape indicating a Scandinavian origin. *There has been one larger influx; in late October 1979 when 90 on 22nd October peaked at 270 on 25th.*

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

Two on 2nd March was followed with a flock of 21 passing through the following day and a single on 22nd March. Two on 6th April were followed with 1–3 on most days from 13th April–27th May. Singles on 22nd and 30th October were the only autumn sightings.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

An over-wintering bird paired with a Hooded Crow was seen intermittently in February & March. Spring passage recorded counts of 2–6 throughout April before heavier passage in early May produced counts of 16 on 3rd, gradually rising to 35 by 7th. Numbers dwindled to single figures by 9th and 1–3 in June to August. Daily counts of 2–5 were logged in September & October and a single once again was noted in November & December.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Resident, breeds in small numbers

Present all year. Spring passage was very slight with the three resident pairs rarely hassled by migrants and a peak spring count of ten birds. One pair, at Busta Geo, successful fledged young. Autumn numbers were slightly more with low double-figure counts in September, peaking at 19 on 29th. Up to seven were seen in November and December.

Northern Raven *Corvus corax*

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

Present all year. A few migrants were seen in spring with a flock of 14 on 6th April, nine on 11th, eight on 17th and six on 2nd May additional to the five resident breeding pairs. Nests were located at Millens Houlan, Felsi Geo, Naaversgil, Malcolm's Head and Sheep Rock. Three nests successfully fledged young. Migrants were barely noticeable in autumn but a party of five created havoc among the locals on 18th October and a group of six did the same on 26th November.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

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

Present all year and no formal counts made.

+ Rosy Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Rare spring, summer & autumn migrant (38 previous records, 39 individuals)

A first-summer was discovered at Wirvie on 28th May and was seen off and on until 9th June. Accepted by SBCRC

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Resident, breeds in small numbers

Present all year. Eighty on 14th November was the only count made.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A flock of nine on 12th October and a single on 18th October were the only sightings.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common spring and autumn migrant

As last year, two wintering birds (a ♂ and a ♀) were present from January to mid-March. Spring passage was, however, non-existent with a peak of just four on 6th April and an estimated total of just 11 birds, the last on 27th April. Autumn passage was almost as light commencing with two on 27th September, peaking at 16 the following day and single figures throughout October. Singles were noted at the Observatory and Auld Haa gardens in late November.

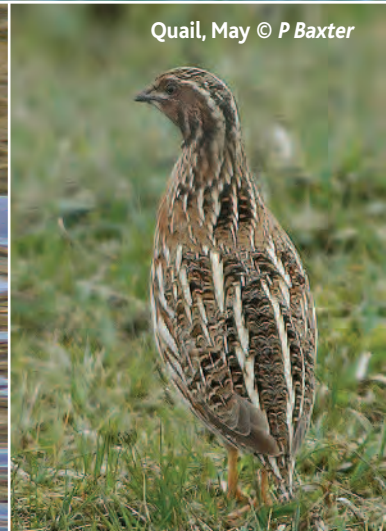
Surf Scoter, May © M Breaks



Slavonian Grebe, April © D Shaw



Quail, May © P Baxter



Pectoral Sandpiper, August © M Breaks



Hudsonian Whimbrel, August © D Shaw



Hudsonian Whimbrel, August © D Shaw



Hudsonian Whimbrel, August © M Breaks



Terek Sandpiper, June © D Shaw



European Bee-eater, June © *D Shaw*



Buff-bellied Pipit, October © *R Nason*



Thrush Nightingale, September © *P Baxter*



Citrine Wagtail, August © *M Breaks*



Grey-cheeked Thrush, September © *R Nason*



Black-throated Thrush, April © *M Breaks*



Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, September © *R Nason*





River Warbler, June © M Breaks



Subalpine Warbler, May © P Baxter



Icterine Warbler, June © P Baxter



Yellow-browed Warbler, September © *R Nason*



Red-backed Shrike, August
© *P Baxter*



Lesser Grey Shrike, June © *P Baxter*



Common Rosefinch, August © *M Breaks*



Hawfinch, May © *M Breaks*



Snow Bunting, May © R Nason



Little Bunting, October © R Nason



Black-headed Bunting, June © M Breaks



Rustic Bunting, June © M Breaks



Killer Whale, May © *M Breaks*



Killer Whales, May © *M Breaks*



Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Common spring and autumn migrant

A light spring passage with one on 27th March and 1–4 noted on most days from 3rd April–22nd May, including a fine singing male on 21st May. Autumn passage commenced with 18 on 27th September, rising to 46 the following day. Counts fluctuated between 6–60 in October but for a max of 90 on 4th with stragglers into November, the last on 23rd.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

One reported on 5th May was the only spring record. In autumn, a single on 8th October was followed with 1–6 from 13th–25th, rising to 20 on 26th and peaking at 25 the following day. Numbers had dropped to single figures by November and all had departed by 5th. Further arrivals comprised four on 10th November, 1–2 from 13th–22nd and the last, a party of four, on 29th November.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

In spring, two were trapped on 26th April and were still present the following day. Further singles were noted on 9th and 19th–20th May. In autumn, two on 16th–17th October were followed with five on 20th and the last remaining until 24th October.

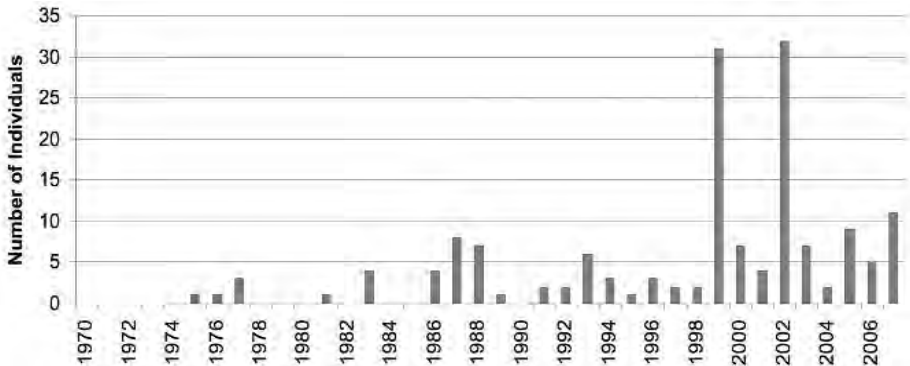


Figure 13. Numbers of migrant Goldfinches on Fair Isle 1970–2007.

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

A ♂ on 24th February was a most unusual winter record. A light spring passage commenced with a single on 13th April and daily counts of 1–9 from 26th April–25th May and later singles on 31st May, 9th June, 23rd June (a singing ♂) and a juvenile from 26th June–3rd July. In autumn, a single on 27th September was followed with single-figure counts from 1st–16th October before heavier passage from 20th October saw counts from 31–110 until 4th November. Later arrivals of 20 on 14th November and six on 23rd November were the last.

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

In spring, a single on 31st March was followed with sporadic sightings of 1–2 from 13th April to 19th May. In autumn, single figures were seen daily from 22nd September–6th October (max 8 on 27th September) and 1–2 on three further dates to 23rd October whilst a single on 8th December was an unusual winter record.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

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

Present all year. Peak count in the early part of the year was 50 on 25th February. Peak spring count was 43 on 1st April with most counts being between 15 and 25 attributed to the breeding population. The first fledged juveniles were seen on 15th June. As usual, numbers built up from mid-August and were over 100 throughout September (max 170 on 12th) until 6th October, gradually dropping to around 50 by November and 30 by December.

+ Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Scarce migrant in spring, summer and autumn

A single on 9th July was the only confirmed sighting but flyovers on 12th & 28th July may also have been this species.

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A single on 23rd January was an unusual mid-winter sighting. There was an extraordinary influx of ‘mealy’ Redpolls *C. f. flammea* from 22nd February until 17th March. The peak field count was 43 on 25th February but a total of 95 birds were trapped and ringed during the period, indicating a significant turnover of birds. Later spring records of this race comprised 1–2 on eight dates in May and one on 21st June. In autumn, singles of this race were seen on 26th–30th August, 7th–15th September and two on 18th September before a run of daily counts of 1–4 from 7th–30th October and later birds on 10th, 14th & 26th (2) November. Birds of ‘north-western’ origin *C. f. rostrata/islandica* were present from 15th–30th September and on nine dates in October. The largest counts were in September with regular counts above five and a peak of ten on 27th. Mainly singles were recorded in October but for three on 25th.

+ Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*

Rare autumn migrant; vagrant in spring

An extraordinary mid-summer record. One of the race *C. h. exilipes* (Coues’ Redpoll) was trapped on 19th July and was seen again on 22nd July. *Accepted by SBCRC. A Hornemanni Redpoll from 30th October 2006 is still awaiting a BBRC decision*

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus***Regular spring and autumn migrant**

In spring, two arrived on 31st May and singles were seen on 1st, 3rd, 11th & 12th June. Autumn records commenced with a ♂ on 11th–12th August followed with 1–3 daily from 16th–29th August and from 11th September–10th October and a late single from 18th–22nd November. An estimated autumn total of 12 birds.

+ Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes***Scarce spring and autumn migrant**

Singles were noted on 2nd and 14th May.

Lapland Longspur (Bunting) *Calcarius lapponicus***Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring**

A fine ♂ on 27th March was followed with further singles in April, on 1st–2nd, 3rd–7th and 14th. In autumn, a single on 31st August was followed with four on 3rd September before daily sightings from 6th September–29th October and the last on 1st November. Most counts were of single figures but there were ten on five dates, 11 on two dates, 12 on 27th September and a maximum 19 on 28th September.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis***Common spring and autumn migrant, often over-winters**

Very few (max 3) were seen in January/February until 30 on 20th March signalled spring passage, peaking at 53 on 22nd March. Small numbers (1–9) were occasionally seen until 20th April and a pair daily from 10th–23rd May. In autumn, a single on 12th–14th September preceded an arrival of 15 the following day and birds were recorded daily into November and were probably present to the year-end. Counts fluctuated widely with peak monthly counts of 58 (29th September), 82 (4th October), 115 (14th November) and 57 (8th December).

+ Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos***Vagrant; eight previous records (all October/November)**

A ♂ was discovered at Barkland on 25th October, where it was trapped and ringed. It was found to have very pale yellow edges to some primaries (visible in the field) and also a single pale yellow feather on the underwing (noted in the hand). It remained on the isle, visiting several of the Observatory-planted bird crops, until 10th November. *Accepted by BBRC. The ♂ from 29th–30th November 1995 which also had yellow edges to the primaries and was originally considered to be a hybrid Pine Bunting x Yellowhammer has recently been accepted by BBRC.*

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella***Regular spring and autumn migrant**

A single on 13th April was the only spring sighting. In autumn, 1–5 were recorded daily between 24th October–4th November and singles sporadically until 26th November.

+ Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

Scarce spring & autumn migrant; 119 previous records

A confiding individual frequented the Haa/Walli Burn area from 31st May–4th June, the only record for the year. *Accepted by SBCRC*

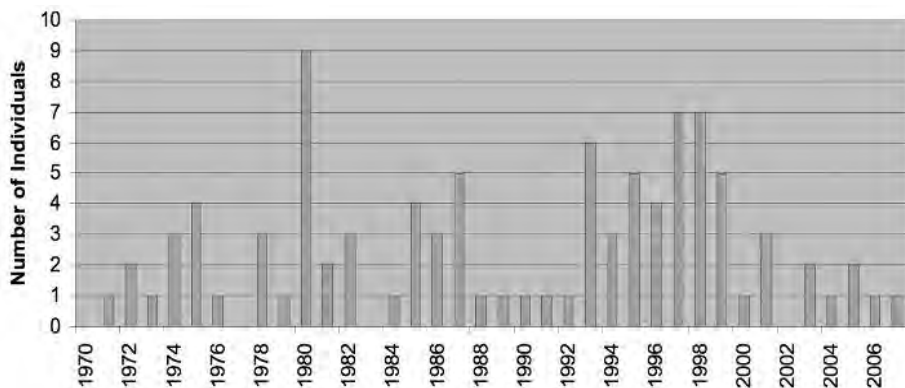


Figure 14. Numbers of Rustic Buntings recorded on Fair Isle 1970–2007.

+ Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring (25 previous records)

A ♂ at Barkland on 30th April was the first in spring since 2003. In autumn, singles were noted almost daily from 7th–18th October (possibly relating to just one very mobile individual) and another on 24th October.

Little Bunting

© L C Shaw

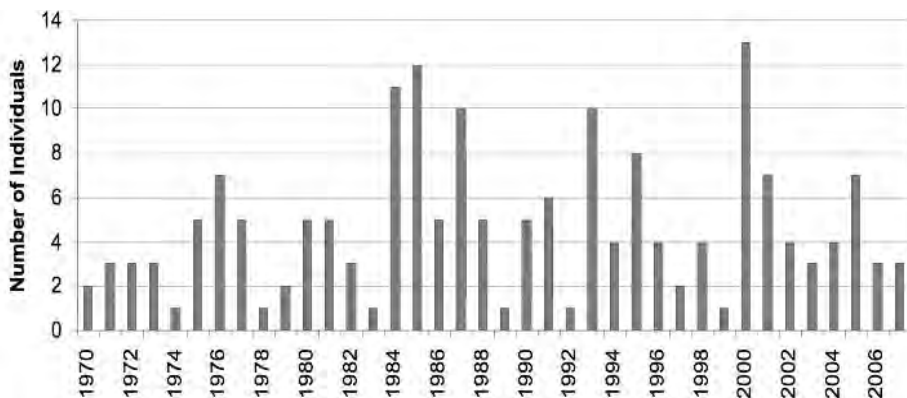


Figure 15. Numbers of migrant Little Bunting on Fair Isle 1970–2007.

Common Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

In spring, one on 13th & 18th March was not followed until 1–2 regularly from 1st–22nd April and again from 1st–8th May. Autumn counts were only slightly more with 1–3 almost daily from 26th September–28th October (peak of four on 14th) and a later single on 26th November.

+ Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala*

Vagrant April to October (24 previous records)

A puzzling ♀ bunting was found at Burkle/Quoy on 1st June and remained in the general area until 7th June. Identification of some Red-headed and Black-headed Buntings can be extremely difficult but after prolonged views it was thought to be this species. *Still under consideration by BBRC*

+ Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*

Vagrant; formerly bred

Recorded for the third year in a row. One was seen in Da water on 6th June and presumably the same was seen at Barkland on 17th June.

ESCAPES (Category E):

Bar-headed Goose *Anser indicus*

Two on 20th May, increased to three the following day with all remaining until 23rd May.

Ringling Report

Alan Bull & Deryk Shaw

Unsurprisingly, ringling numbers were down on the high total achieved during 2006. However, 4125 birds of 111 species is a respectable total when you consider that, due to yet another disastrous seabird breeding season, the bulk of the ringling was made up of birds caught in the heligoland traps. Table 1 highlights the ten most commonly ringed species in 2007.

Table 1. The ten most commonly ringed species, with totals, on Fair Isle in 2007; (2006 totals for comparison).

Species	2007	2006
Starling	628	451
Shag	393	506
Blackbird	361	522
Guillemot	231	1019
Great Skua	231	250
Puffin	191	102
Northern Wheatear	178	197
Meadow Pipit	166	132
Storm Petrel	154	375
Redwing	132	116

There were no additions to the ringling list in 2007. However, a Firecrest and Pine Bunting ringed during the autumn were just our 2nd and 3rd respectively. Four Jackdaws had been ringed on the isle up to 2007, but an impressive autumn arrival saw nine birds caught in the heligolands, becoming our 5th–13th captures! A Citrine Wagtail, trapped in the Observatory Plantation whilst roosting with Pied Wagtails was only the 6th to be ringed and the summering Lesser Grey Shrike was our 7th. Other unusual species ringed during the year included Paddyfield Warbler (10th), Blyth's Reed Warbler (12th), Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (13th), Great Tit (14th), Mallard (17th) and Goldfinch (18th–20th).

Seabirds once again suffered a poor breeding season and this is reflected in Table 1. With several PhD projects on the go there was increased effort to catch Starlings and this, combined with a good breeding season, is also reflected in the high total achieved.

Once again the Heligoland trap at Barkland was operational throughout the year and contributed 219 birds of 38 species to the Observatory totals.

Table 2. Numbers of birds ringed on Fair Isle and recovered/controlled elsewhere in 2007, together with cumulative totals from 1948.

Species	Ringed as:		Total 2007	Total 1948–07	Recovery/Control	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus			2007	1948–07
Whooper Swan	-	-	-	41	-	7
Bean Goose	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pink-footed Goose	-	-	-	15	-	1
White-fronted Goose	-	-	-	3	-	1
Greylag Goose	-	-	-	53	-	11
Barnacle Goose	-	-	-	4	-	-
Shelduck	-	-	-	5	-	-
Wigeon	-	-	-	56	-	5
Teal	1	-	1	74	-	4
Mallard	1	-	1	17	-	1
Pintail	-	-	-	2	-	1
Shoveler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pochard	-	-	-	3	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	1	-	-
Tufted Duck	1	-	1	20	-	-
Scaup	-	-	-	5	-	-
Eider	1	-	1	170	-	1
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	-	18	-	1
Velvet Scoter	-	-	-	2	-	-
Goldeneye	1	-	1	22	-	1
Red-breasted Merganser	-	-	-	3	-	-
Goosander	-	-	-	3	-	1
Quail	-	-	-	9	-	-
Red-throated Diver	-	-	-	1	-	-
Little Grebe	-	-	-	10	-	-
Great Crested Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Slavonian Grebe	-	-	-	3	-	-
Fulmar	58	73	131	17135	-	176
Storm Petrel	154	-	154	30909	13	1215
Leach's Petrel	-	-	-	95	-	3
Gannet	5	45	50	520	-	9
Cormorant	-	-	-	7	-	-
Shag	18	375	393	23685	7	573
Grey Heron	-	-	-	21	-	-
Marsh Harrier	-	-	-	1	-	-
Hen Harrier	-	-	-	2	-	-
Goshawk	-	-	-	2	-	-
Sparrowhawk	2	-	2	382	-	24
Kestrel	1	-	1	52	-	8
Red-footed Falcon	-	-	-	1	-	-
Merlin	1	-	1	196	-	12
Peregrine Falcon	-	-	-	6	-	1

Species	Ringed as:		Total	Total	Recovery/Control	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	2007	1948-07	2007	1948-07
Water Rail	5	-	5	335	-	3
Spotted Crake	-	-	-	19	-	-
Little Crake	-	-	-	1	-	-
Baillon's Crake	-	-	-	1	-	-
Corncrake	-	-	-	43	-	2
Moorhen	-	-	-	103	-	3
Coot	-	-	-	15	-	1
Great Bustard	-	-	-	1	-	-
Oystercatcher	-	10	10	1536	-	73
Little Ringed Plover	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ringed Plover	9	9	18	731	-	6
Dotterel	-	-	-	4	-	-
Golden Plover	-	-	-	24	-	-
Grey Plover	-	-	-	1	-	-
Lapwing	-	2	2	348	-	6
Knot	1	-	1	105	-	3
Sanderling	3	-	3	117	-	1
Semi-palmated Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Little Stint	-	-	-	123	-	-
Temminck's Stint	-	-	-	2	-	-
White-rumped Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Baird's Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	-	-	5	-	-
Curlew Sandpiper	-	-	-	6	-	-
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	174	-	1
Dunlin	-	-	-	594	1	8
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ruff	-	-	-	41	-	1
Jack Snipe	2	-	2	143	-	3
Common Snipe	8	-	8	509	-	4
Great Snipe	-	-	-	2	-	-
Woodcock	13	-	13	479	-	24
Black-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	1	-	-
Bar-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	9	-	2
Whimbrel	-	-	-	17	-	-
Curlew	1	14	15	196	-	6
Spotted Redshank	-	-	-	3	-	-
Redshank	1	-	1	285	-	3
Greenshank	1	-	1	14	-	-
Green Sandpiper	1	-	1	58	-	1
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	19	-	-
Common Sandpiper	-	-	-	70	-	1
Turnstone	7	-	7	96	-	-
Red-necked Phalarope	-	-	-	5	-	-
Grey Phalarope	-	-	-	3	-	-
Pomarine Skua	-	-	-	1	-	-

Species	Ringed as:		Total	Total	Recovery/Control	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	2007	1948-07	2007	1948-07
Arctic Skua	-	3	3	3948	-	71
Great Skua	-	231	231	2975	1	52
Black-headed Gull	-	-	-	48	-	2
Common Gull	-	13	13	232	-	3
Lesser Black-backed Gull	-	4	4	1453	1	35
Herring Gull	-	48	48	4464	1	97
Iceland Gull	-	-	-	1	-	-
Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	40	-	1
Great Black-backed Gull	-	1	1	2849	-	113
Kittiwake	9	-	9	7083	-	37
Common Tern	-	-	-	481	-	3
Arctic Tern	-	12	12	11753	-	38
Guillemot	18	213	231	37034	8	1086
Razorbill	17	1	18	11472	20	286
Black Guillemot	5	4	9	1667	-	19
Little Auk	-	-	-	14	-	-
Puffin	130	61	191	13379	-	33
Rock Dove	28	-	28	105	-	-
Wood Pigeon	2	-	2	74	-	2
Collared Dove	6	-	6	382	-	6
Turtle Dove	1	-	1	83	-	2
Cuckoo	-	-	-	108	-	1
Scops Owl	-	-	-	2	-	-
Snowy Owl	-	-	-	1	-	1
Long-eared Owl	-	-	-	255	-	13
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	18	-	-
Nightjar	-	-	-	4	-	-
Swift	-	-	-	17	-	1
Hoopoe	-	-	-	3	-	-
Wryneck	1	-	1	238	-	-
Great Spotted Woodpecker	-	-	-	29	-	-
Short-toed Lark	-	-	-	9	-	-
Woodlark	-	-	-	3	-	-
Skylark	13	2	15	1353	-	3
Shorelark	-	-	-	5	-	-
Sand Martin	-	-	-	8	-	-
Swallow	2	-	2	263	-	2
House Martin	-	-	-	142	-	1
Richard's Pipit	-	-	-	12	-	-
Blyth's Pipit	-	-	-	2	-	-
Tawny Pipit	-	-	-	3	-	-
Olive-backed Pipit	-	-	-	10	-	-
Tree Pipit	2	-	2	660	-	-
Pechora Pipit	-	-	-	9	-	-
Meadow Pipit	142	24	166	11117	-	45
Red-throated Pipit	-	-	-	9	-	-

Species	Ringed as:		Total	Total	Recovery/Control	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	2007	1948-07	2007	1948-07
Rock Pipit	101	17	118	9825	-	29
Yellow Wagtail	-	-	-	10	-	-
Citrine Wagtail	1	-	1	6	-	-
Grey Wagtail	5	-	5	46	-	1
White/Pied Wagtail	28	6	34	824	-	4
Waxwing	-	-	-	67	-	-
Dipper	-	-	-	15	-	-
Wren	16	-	16	951	-	-
Dunnock	14	-	14	2689	-	10
Robin	40	-	40	9150	-	40
Thrush Nightingale	-	-	-	34	-	-
Nightingale	-	-	-	30	-	-
Rufous-tailed Robin	-	-	-	1	-	-
Siberian Rubythroat	-	-	-	2	-	-
Bluethroat	2	-	2	292	-	2
Red-flanked Bluetail	-	-	-	2	-	-
Black Redstart	1	-	1	163	-	-
Redstart	4	-	4	1846	-	1
Whinchat	3	-	3	642	-	2
Stonechat	2	-	2	61	-	-
Northern Wheatear	166	12	178	17261	1	75
Pied Wheatear	-	-	-	1	-	-
Black-eared Wheatear	-	-	-	3	-	-
Rock Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
White's Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Hermit Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Grey-cheeked Thrush	-	-	-	2	-	-
Ring Ouzel	2	-	2	508	-	9
Blackbird	361	-	361	23966	3	335
Eye-browed Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	1
Dusky Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Dark-throated Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Fieldfare	5	-	5	649	-	1
Song Thrush	24	-	24	3092	-	32
Redwing	132	-	132	9318	-	74
Mistle Thrush	-	-	-	22	-	-
Pallas' Grasshopper Warbler	1	-	1	13	-	-
Lanceolated Warbler	2	-	2	39	-	-
Grasshopper Warbler	3	-	3	137	-	-
River Warbler	1	-	1	9	-	-
Savi's Warbler	-	-	-	4	-	-
Aquatic Warbler	-	-	-	25	-	-
Sedge Warbler	30	-	30	545	-	1
Paddyfield Warbler	1	-	1	10	-	1
Blyth's Reed Warbler	1	-	1	12	-	1
Marsh Warbler	3	-	3	139	-	-
Reed Warbler	3	-	3	312	-	1

Species	Ringed as:		Total	Total	Recovery/Control	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	2007	1948-07	2007	1948-07
Great Reed Warbler	-	-	-	7	-	-
Thick-billed Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Olivaceous Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Booted Warbler	-	-	-	8	-	-
Sykes's Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Icterine Warbler	4	-	4	113	-	-
Melodious Warbler	-	-	-	13	-	-
Subalpine Warbler	1	-	1	29	-	-
Sardinian Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Barred Warbler	5	-	5	439	-	1
Lesser Whitethroat	21	-	21	790	-	1
Whitethroat	10	-	10	1019	-	-
Garden Warbler	42	-	42	3695	-	4
Blackcap	51	-	51	5915	-	26
Greenish Warbler	1	-	1	24	-	-
Arctic Warbler	-	-	-	33	-	-
Pallas's Warbler	-	-	-	4	-	-
Yellow-browed Warbler	14	-	14	156	-	-
Hume's Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Radde's Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Dusky Warbler	-	-	-	7	-	-
Western Bonelli's Wblr	-	-	-	2	-	-
Wood Warbler	-	-	-	111	-	-
Chiffchaff	51	-	51	1409	-	5
Willow Warbler	60	-	60	3918	-	7
Goldcrest	31	-	31	1804	-	3
Firecrest	1	-	1	2	-	-
Brown Flycatcher	-	-	-	1	-	-
Spotted Flycatcher	7	-	7	792	-	3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	-	-	-	60	-	-
Collared Flycatcher	-	-	-	2	-	-
Pied Flycatcher	6	-	6	980	-	-
Blue Tit	-	-	-	2	-	-
Great Tit	1	-	1	14	-	-
Coal Tit	-	-	-	1	-	-
Treecreeper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Golden Oriole	-	-	-	8	-	-
Brown Shrike	-	-	-	1	-	-
Isabelline Shrike	-	-	-	2	-	-
Red-backed Shrike	6	-	6	245	-	-
Lesser Grey Shrike	1	-	1	7	-	-
Great Grey Shrike	-	-	-	114	-	1
Steppe Grey Shrike	-	-	-	2	-	-
Woodchat Shrike	-	-	-	13	-	-
Jackdaw	9	-	9	13	-	-
Rook	-	-	-	8	-	-
Hooded Crow	-	-	-	48	-	-

Species	Ringed as:		Total	Total	Recovery/Control	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	2007	1948-07	2007	1948-07
Raven	1	-	1	28	-	-
Daurian Starling	-	-	-	1	-	-
Starling	287	341	628	28113	1	196
Rose-coloured Starling	-	-	-	3	-	-
House Sparrow	30	-	30	1709	-	3
Tree Sparrow	-	-	-	118	-	1
Chaffinch	8	-	8	3152	-	12
Brambling	46	-	46	3807	1	18
Greenfinch	18	-	18	493	-	31
Goldfinch	3	-	3	20	-	1
Siskin	28	-	28	530	-	1
Linnet	8	-	8	181	-	5
Twite	121	-	121	6191	-	12
Lesser Redpoll	1	-	1	36	-	-
Common Redpoll	95	-	95	743	-	6
Arctic Redpoll	1	-	1	23	-	-
Two-barred Crossbill	-	-	-	1	-	-
Common Crossbill	-	-	-	534	-	2
Parrot Crossbill	-	-	-	37	-	-
Pallas's Rosefinch	-	-	-	1	-	-
Common Rosefinch	6	-	6	225	-	1
Bullfinch	-	-	-	300	-	-
Hawfinch	-	-	-	26	-	1
Tennessee Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Savannah Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-	-
Song Sparrow	-	-	-	3	-	-
White-crowned Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-	-
Lapland Bunting	1	-	1	49	-	-
Snow Bunting	1	-	1	664	-	3
Pine Bunting	1	-	1	3	-	-
Yellowhammer	-	-	-	69	-	-
Ortolan Bunting	-	-	-	20	-	-
Cretzschmar's Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Yellow-browed Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Rustic Bunting	-	-	-	17	-	1
Little Bunting	-	-	-	35	-	1
Chestnut Bunting	-	-	-	2	-	-
Yellow-breasted Bunting	-	-	-	6	-	-
Reed Bunting	2	-	2	492	-	3
Pallas's Reed Bunting	-	-	-	2	-	-
Chestnut-eared Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-headed Bunting	-	-	-	5	-	-
Black-headed Bunting	-	-	-	4	-	-
Corn Bunting	-	-	-	4	-	-
Totals:	2604	1521	4125	345950	58	5130

Selected ringing recoveries/controls reported to Fair Isle Bird Observatory during 2007

The co-ordinates of Fair Isle are 59°32'N, 01°38'W.

Key to symbols and abbreviations used in the text

Age: The figures do not represent years. Interpretation is as follows:

Pullus (nestling or chick)

hatched during calendar year of ringing

hatched before calendar year of ringing, but exact year unknown

hatched during previous calendar year

hatched before previous calendar year, but exact year unknown

hatched more than two calendar years before year of ringing

Sex: M = male, F = female

Condition at recovery: X	found dead
SR	sick or injured, released with ring
+	shot
V	alive and probably healthy, caught and released
but not by ringer	
VV	alive and probably healthy, ring or colour marks
read in the field	
R	caught and released by ringer

Birds ringed and found dead on the isle are not included in table 2.

Eider

A chick ringed on Fair Isle in August 2001 was found dead on the isle in July 2007.

Storm Petrel

Just thirteen reports were received during 2007 of Fair Isle ringed Storm Petrels being recovered elsewhere. A bird ringed on Fair Isle in July 1986 was re-trapped on the island in 2006.

2592744	4	02/08/05 Fair Isle, Shetland
	V	13/08/06 Mykinesholmur, Faeroes (434 km, 312°, 376 days)
2592699	4	02/08/05 Fair Isle, Shetland
	V	11/08/06 Villingarurd, Faeroes (374 km, 314°, 374 days)

Interestingly, these birds were ringed on the same date in 2005 and then recovered within the space of two days on the Faeroes. Additional reports received included birds controlled at regular sites in Shetland (2), Highland Region (2), Orkney (5) and singles in Strathclyde and Grampian Region.

Birds ringed elsewhere and controlled on the isle within their first year of ringing came from Orkney (2) and Grampian Region (2), with singles from the Isle of May and North Yorkshire. One ringed at Copeland Bird Observatory, Northern Ireland in August 2005 was found dead on Fair Isle in October 2007 (588 km).

Shag

Seven reports were received, all of birds ringed on the isle as chicks and found dead between March–May 2007. Four reports came from Shetland, two from Orkney and another of a bird ringed on the isle in June 1996 and subsequently found dead on the isle in March 2007.

Oystercatcher

An adult ringed in March 1998 on Fair Isle was found dead on the isle in June 2007.

Knot

SV23966	3	14/08/06 Fair Isle, Shetland
	vv	22/12/06 Den Helder, Strekdam Thv Strandpaal, Netherlands (830 km, 152°, 130 days)
	vv	26/03/07 As above (224 days)

This bird appeared in the 2006 bird report, having had its ring number read in the field at a nearby site in September 2006. Amazingly, this bird also had its ring number read again in the field on both subsequent occasions.

Dunlin

NB84753	4M	22/05/05 Fair Isle, Shetland
	4M	02/05/07 Waterfoot, Annan, Dumfries & Galloway (517 km, 191°, 710 days)

Curlew

Coincidentally, an adult that was ringed on Fair Isle on the same date as the Oystercatcher (above) in March 1998 was found dead on the isle in May 2007.

Arctic Skua

Seven Fair Isle-ringed birds were found dead on the isle during 2007, the oldest of which was ringed in 2003. All were thought to have been predated by Great Skuas.

Great Skua

HT78380	1	13/07/06 Fair Isle, Shetland
	x	01/02/07 Hauptstrand, Ostfriesische, Germany (834 km, 143°, 203 days)

Additionally, a bird ringed as a chick on Foula, Shetland in July 1996 and a chick ringed on Fair Isle in July 1998 were found dead on Fair Isle in July 2007.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

GA22206 1 09/07/02 Fair Isle, Shetland
 vv 18/03/06 Toledo, **Spain** (2186 km, 186°, 1348 days)

Lesser Black-backed Gull is predominantly a summer visitor to the Northern Isles, with wintering grounds as far south as Spain, as demonstrated by GA22206. It is conceivable that this bird was returning north to breed when its ring was read in the field.

Herring Gull

GA22349 1 09/07/05 Fair Isle, Shetland
 sr 27/01/07 nr. Blackborough, King's Lynn, Norfolk (771 km, 171°, 567 days)

Great Black-backed Gull

HT55104 1 30/06/94 Fair Isle, Shetland
 sr 15/07/07 Fair Isle, Shetland

HT78346 10 16/07/94 Fair Isle, Shetland
 x 24/05/07 Fair Isle, Shetland

Guillemot

GJ79506 1 30/06/82 Fair Isle, Shetland
 x 20/04/05 Sund, Hordaland, **Norway** (376 km, 80°, 8330 days)

T00491 1 01/07/83 Fair Isle, Shetland
 x 05/08/07 Glommen, Halland, **Sweden** (865 km, 110°, 8801 days)

X96867 6 05/07/99 Fair Isle, Shetland
 x 27/11/06 Eik, Sogne, **Norway** (566 km, 107°, 2702 days)

R09334 1 28/06/00 Fair Isle, Shetland
 x 12/11/00 Judaberg, Rogaland, **Norway** (428 km, 96°, 137 days)

R09625 1 15/07/00 Fair Isle, Shetland
 x 21/11/02 Faksen, More og Romsdal, **Norway** (580 km, 54°, 859 days)

With the exception of X96867, which was apparently killed by a cat, all birds were, typically, found dead in Scandinavian fishing nets. Additional records included three birds ringed as chicks in June / July 2006 and found dead between January–May 2007 in Norfolk, **Denmark** and Shetland.

Razorbill

Twenty Fair Isle ringed birds were found elsewhere, dead or dying during 2007. The oldest of which was ringed as an adult in June 1988 and found dead in the **Netherlands** (823 km). Northern populations of Razorbills are mainly migratory, dispersing into the North Sea and south, as far as Morocco. Therefore, it is not surprising to report a wide spread of recoveries of Fair Isle ringed birds. Closer to home, birds were found dead in Strathclyde (2), Isle of Man and Dorset, having been ringed as chicks in 1993, 1998 and 2002 respectively. Four birds were found in **Norway**, five in **Sweden** and three in **France**. Single birds were found in **Germany** (891 km), **Faeroes** (352 km) and **Spain** (1962 km).

Puffin

Three birds were found dead on the isle during 2007, having been ringed here in 1989, 1994 and 1996.

Wheatear

V682070	3J	08/08/07 Fair Isle, Shetland
	vv	14/09/07 Fair Isle, Shetland
	vv	11/10/07 Bardsey Island, Gwynedd, Wales (779 km, 195°, 27 days)

This bird bore colour rings as part of a study on the isle and this enabled it to be recorded here in September without being trapped and then again on Bardsey in October.

Additionally, a juvenile ringed on the isle in July 2004 was the victim of a migrant Sparrowhawk on the isle in May 2007.

Blackbird

LA02037	5F	04/04/06 Fair Isle, Shetland
	r	20/10/07 Calf of Man, Isle of Man (640 km, 198°, 564 days)
CL41774	6M	28/03/06 Fair Isle, Shetland
	x	24/02/07 Stanford-le-Hope, Essex (900 km, 172°, 333 days)
CL41662	6M	28/03/06 Fair Isle, Shetland
	x	02/08/07 Kauvatsa, Kokemaki, Finland (1338 km, 82°, 492 days)

CL41662 and CL41774 were caught during a large fall of thrushes, with more than 1000 birds present on the isle that day. Blackbirds on Fair Isle are thought to largely come from populations in Scandinavia and further east. It is fair to assume that CL41662 may have been of Finnish origin and was found dead on its breeding grounds. CL41774 may also been of eastern origin and may well have made the hop across the North Sea for a third time before being found dead in Essex.

An adult male ringed in **Norway** in April 2006 was controlled on Fair Isle in October 2007 (699 km) and an adult female ringed on Orkney in December 2001 was controlled on Fair Isle in April 2006 (99km)

Redwing

H293266	4	15/10/03 Militair Duin, Vlieland, Netherlands
	r	05/10/06 Fair Isle, Shetland (807 km, 330°, 1086 days)

Our first recovery of a Redwing ringed in the Netherlands.

Reed Warbler

3E82527	4	23/07/05 Miletjern, Beskerud, Norway
	r	31/05/07 Fair Isle, Shetland (656 km, 269°, 677 days)

Willow Warbler

Y15006	4	15/05/07 Laaxum, Friesland, Netherlands
	r	26/05/07 Fair Isle, Shetland (861 km, 330°, 11 days)

Starling

CL40936	1	03/06/05 Fair Isle, Shetland
	vv	29/09/07 Quendale Mill, Shetland (45 km, 23°, 848 days)

Three birds ringed on the isle in June 2004 were found dead on the isle in 2007.

Brambling

T668801	3M	17/10/05 Fair Isle, Shetland
	r	26/05/06 Drevdalen, Hedmark, Norway (797 km, 74°, 221 days)
T823718	5M	21/01/06 Buteland Farm, Balerno, Lothian
	r	14/04/07 Fair Isle, Shetland (421 km, 15°, 448 days)

Reed Bunting

V645227	5	28/03/07 Lackford Estate, Suffolk
	r	03/05/07 Fair Isle, Shetland (818 km, 351°, 36 days)

Whereas British breeding birds move only short distances in the winter, Scandinavian birds are migratory, wintering mainly in France. This bird was probably from this population, heading north again in spring.

Seabirds on Fair Isle in 2007

Deryk Shaw

Overview: Following a comparatively successful breeding season in 2006, the 2007 season has reverted to recent type. Apart from Northern Gannet and Eurasian Shag, every species had well below average breeding success, a lack of suitable food being the primary cause. Lesser Sandeels were still very scarce and those that were available were particularly small. Snake Pipefish were still very much in evidence, rejected by chicks and found discarded around many nests and colonies.

Northern Fulmar: Numbers of AOS on the plots fell by 12.1% compared to 2006, to the third lowest on record and are currently 37.1% lower than when monitoring began in 1987. Productivity was below average with a mean from the five plots of 0.35 (range 0.24–0.43).

Northern Gannet: The breeding population continues to rise, reaching a new record of 1957 AON. A new breeding colony has been initiated on Lerness (56 AON) and the Sheep Rock site also continues to increase, from 44 AON to 50 AON. Breeding success was characteristically high owing to this species having huge foraging ranges and an ability to take larger fish species such as Mackerel and Herring.

European Shag: This species had a better breeding season than most. Following a high number of nests on the plots in 2006, numbers fell slightly (-4.4%) this year whilst breeding success (1.40 chicks fledged per nest) was only just below the long-term mean (1.44).

Skuas: Following four years of extremely poor breeding success and falling numbers, Great Skuas had a surprisingly successful season in 2006 (record numbers of AOT and a productivity of 0.95). They increased again this year, up 18.5% to 224 AOT. However, only 101 chicks fledged (a productivity of 0.45) (Fig 1) with starvation and intra-specific depredation the suspected reasons for failures.

Arctic Skuas have been in trouble since 1998 with falling numbers and very low breeding success. The years 2003–2005 saw a total of just ten birds fledge. Things improved dramatically in 2006 with the highest number of AOT (105) since the early 1990s and good productivity (0.82). In 2007 however, the situation deteriorated once again and from 68 AOT (a 35.2% decrease), not a single chick fledged (Fig 1).

Black-legged Kittiwake: The species in most trouble! Numbers of AON at the plots continued to fall (by 27.0% since 2006) to the lowest ever - 82.4% less than in 1987 (Fig 2). Although the vast majority (91%) of pairs built nests and laid eggs, 44.8% failed at this stage whilst those chicks that did hatch were lucky to survive beyond two

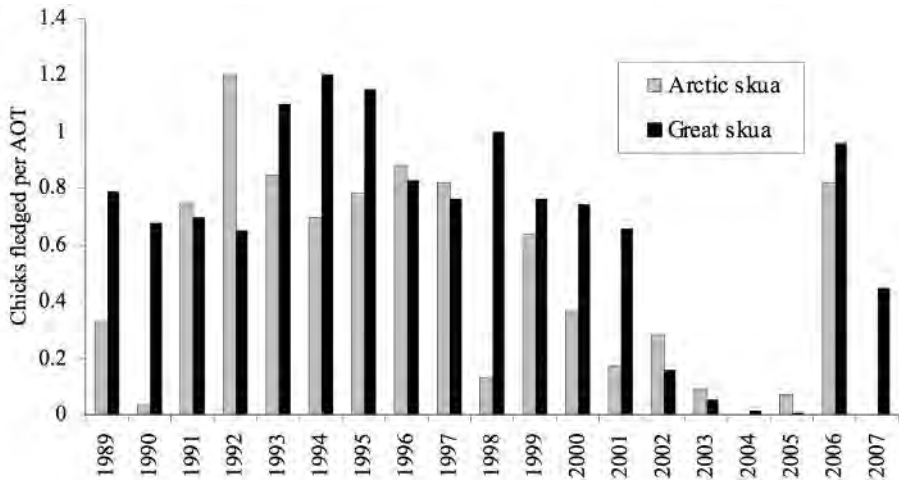


Figure 1. Breeding success of Arctic and Great Skuas on Fair Isle, 1989–2007. *Note: Arctic Skua failed to fledge any young in 2004 & 2007.*

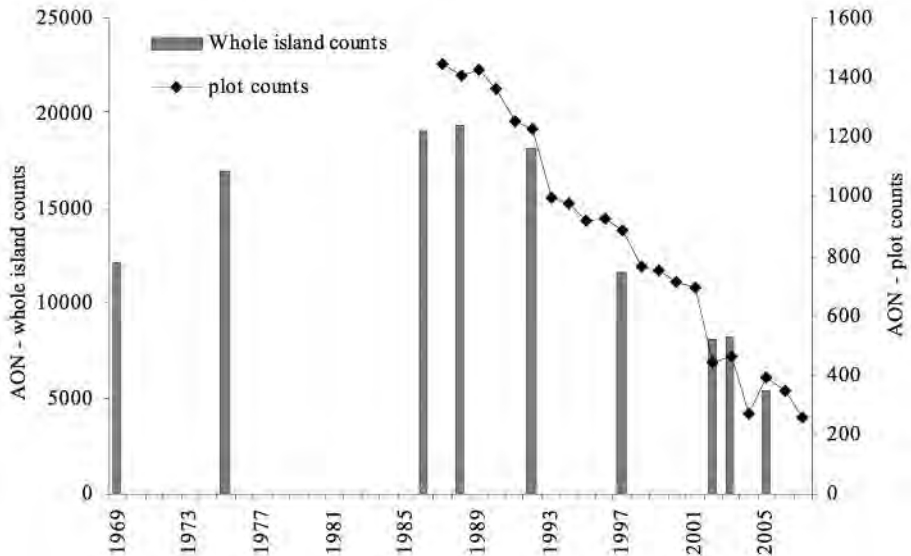


Figure 2. Whole island and plot counts of Black-legged kittiwake nests on Fair Isle, 1969–2007.

weeks. Only four chicks fledged from 254 nests on the monitoring plots - only the complete failures of 2003 & 2004 have been worse. Depredation and starvation were the causes of failure. Many chicks and adults regurgitated Snake Pipefish and these were also evident as discards in nests indicating a lack of availability of favoured food (ie sandeels).

Arctic Tern: In 2006, after five consecutive years of failure to fledge any chicks and with numbers of nesting birds dwindling each year, it was a surprise to record over 800 AIA and even more surprise that over 300 chicks fledged - a productivity of 0.39. We therefore waited with baited breath to see what would happen in 2007. Around 150 birds arrived in mid-May but all departed a week later. Birds returned in late May and an estimated 208 AIA were counted in two colonies - on Bunness and at South Light. However, only a handful of eggs managed to hatch (the chicks of which died shortly after) before the whole colony was deserted for good.

Common Guillemot: Numbers of birds on the plots were the lowest on record (32.5% less than in 2006) and only small numbers of eggs were laid. Productivity at the two monitored sites was markedly different; Peitron 0.47 and Da Swadin 0.06 (mean 0.37). Observations during ringing trips into various colonies would suggest that the figure from Da Swadin was (unfortunately) more representative of the isle as a whole. Feeding watches indicated that provisioning rates were very low (1.9 feeds/chick/day) and although 56.6% of food items were Sandeels, these were of less than average size.

Razorbill: The ten years (1994–2003) saw a mean productivity at the Easter Lother monitoring plot of 0.60. However in 2004, productivity was **zero** for the first time ever and despite record numbers of eggs being laid, fledging success has been poor each year since (0.44 in 2005, 0.23 in 2006). A good number of eggs were again laid this year but only half (51.6%) of these actually hatched and, as in recent years, repeat biometrics showed that chicks were in very poor condition (some even losing weight between visits to the colony). For the second time on record no chicks fledged.

Atlantic Puffin: Puffins have always appeared to be fairly successful, with productivity between 1990 and 2005 never falling below 0.57 (apart from in 2001 - productivity of 0.31). In 2006 it was slightly below this figure, at 0.47. Breeding success in 2007 was much worse. A final productivity of 0.17 is a very disappointing result, bringing Puffin breeding success in line with the other auk species. A combination of a lack of Sandeels (with many discarded Snake Pipefish found in burrows) and a period of wet weather in late July / August (causing several burrows to be flooded) were major factors in this crash. Very small Rockling were a significant part of the diet of chicks.

Note: AON = Apparently Occupied Nest. AOS = Apparently Occupied Site AOT= Apparently Occupied Territory. **Productivity** = Number of chicks fledged per nesting attempt.

Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust Ornithological Scholarship Fund

FIBOT has set up a scholarship fund to encourage research on the abundant natural history of the isle. Applications are invited from independent individuals or students from a College, University or Institute. Each application is adjudged on its own merit by a sub-committee chosen by the FIBOT Directors. There were three recipients of a grant towards PhD and MSc studies in 2007. Each recipient was asked to produce a short summary of their work and two of these follow...

Spatial structuring in Starlings - initial steps

Daisy Brickhill, Aberdeen University PhD

Understanding why natural populations change in size is becoming increasingly important in today's world, since it allows us to make predictions about the future state of populations that are of conservation or economic importance.

A population's dynamics are predicted to depend upon the spatial structure of that population, which comprises the physical arrangement of the population in space and spatial variation in the survival, reproduction and movement of individual animals. However, despite the importance of these issues, surprisingly few studies have quantified small-scale spatial variation in survival, reproduction and movements in natural populations. The main aim of my PhD study is to quantify the pattern, causes and population-level consequences of spatial variation in Starlings on Fair Isle.

Fair Isle is ideal for this study not least because Starlings on Fair Isle have been the focus of a long-term project by Dr. Peter Evans. Since 1980, Peter has recorded clutch and brood sizes across Fair Isle and has ringed chicks in the nest with unique colour combinations, allowing individuals to be identified in the field. Adult Starlings have also been trapped and ringed.

To measure spatial variation in survival of colour-ringed Starlings, I spent late April 2007 reading colour-ring combinations of Starlings across Fair Isle. I will use these resighting data to calculate survival probabilities for Starlings that fledged in different areas of the island, or that are currently breeding there. To increase the number of ringed Starlings across the island, I also made an effort to trap and ring as many adults as possible during this period, with particular effort at the Haa, South Harbour, and North Haven. The same locations were used for a second trapping period during late June and early July, after the fledging of the first broods and these efforts proved much more successful due to the numbers of juveniles that were easily lured into traps! A total of 237 adult and fledged juvenile Starlings were colour-ringed during 2007, which should give me plenty of individuals to look for on my return to the island in 2008!

I helped to measure variation in reproduction across Fair Isle, by helping Peter Evans with his annual endeavour of recording clutch and brood sizes, chick biometrics and ringing chicks. During late April I identified 139 active nests in accessible places. The nests were revisited throughout May and early June to record clutch sizes, egg measurements, brood sizes and to take multiple measurements of weight and tarsus and wing lengths of chicks. A total of 265 chicks were ringed and the mean number of ringed chicks per brood was 3.15.

To augment the main dataset we also recorded reproductive parameters of second broods. Some 60 active nests were identified during early July and the same measurements as for first broods were recorded, 68 chicks were ringed and the mean number of ringed chicks for these broods was 1.68.

Initial analysis shows that while clusters of nests around the island showed no significant differences in numbers of ringed chicks per nest for first broods, when this data was combined with second broods some differences became apparent. For example, Starlings breeding at North Light on average fledged more chicks (mean of 3.7 chicks per nest) during the season than Starlings breeding in Homisdale (1.4 chicks per nest). Other clusters include South Light (mean of 1.5 chicks), the Mills (2.6 chicks) and Bunes (2.75 chicks).

The underlying mechanisms of variation in survival, reproduction and movement are an important aspect of my project and to assess food availability I carried out trial watches on clusters of nests to identify foraging locations.

The 2007 season has provided some interesting preliminary results and we will be continuing the work in 2008. I will add to the main dataset by carrying out more extensive foraging watches as well as gathering data on abundances of crane-fly larvae, a main food item for Starlings.

Acknowledgements: Thanks to Jane Reid, Peter Evans and Jeroen Minderman for their unending help and support. Thanks to Hollie and Deryk Shaw for looking after me so well. Thanks to Mark Whittingham for help with the foraging watches. Finally thanks to Tommy and Liz Hyndman for letting us bumble around their house catching Starlings.

Starling 'personalities' on Fair Isle, 2006–2007

Jeroen Minderman, Martin Hughes, Jane Reid, Mark Whittingham & Peter Evans

Have you ever wondered whether different animals of the same species have different strategies or ways to find food, find a mate or to survive? For us humans it is quite common to think of ourselves as having a 'personality'. Some of us are more likely to take risks, more likely to go up to a stranger for a chat or alternatively to stay at home and watch TV. In human society, differences in personality can be both

very large and very important: for example, it has been shown that shy or more nervous people are less likely to have large, successful families.

However, when we think of other animals, especially ones that look very similar on the outside, we tend to think that they all should behave or 'think' in a similar way. It would be one thing to think of a Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*) as having a different personality than its mate, but many of us will find it difficult to think of a Horsefly (*Tabanus sp*), an Octopus (*Octopoda sp*) or even a Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) to have what we would think of as a personality.

Thus, the study of an animal's behaviour in relation to its environment ("behavioural ecology") has classically focused on studying the 'average' behaviour of a group or population of animals. This leads to the idea that (all else being equal) each animal should behave in a certain 'optimal' way. A very simple example would be where there is a constant food supply (like a bird feeder) in a fixed spot. Birds breeding nearby should come to this feeder, collect a peanut, and fly back to its nest to feed its young. Because it is assumed that all birds are the same in terms of their behaviour, we expect none of them to deviate from this 'best strategy' - if one would, it might lose out, not get as many peanuts as its mate, and its young might starve.

However, pioneering studies on Great Tits (*Parus major*) in the Netherlands in the 1980s upset this idea. It was discovered that Great Tits can be divided into different behavioural 'types'. Some birds were very quick to explore a novel environment (in this case, an aviary), whereas others sat in a corner and did not explore much at all. Such 'exploratory behaviour' was then shown to be linked to various other behaviours. For example, explorative birds were also shown to be prone to take risks, more likely to attack other Great Tits and quickly formed routines while feeding. Furthermore, birds of a certain 'type' passed these qualities on to their offspring, showing that these consistent behaviours are heritable. In general, it seems that individual Great Tits are either 'fast' and 'bold' or 'slow' and 'shy', a division very similar to one that can be made in human psychology. Further studies of other species of bird, fish and mammals show that this isn't rare in the animal kingdom: personality-like behavioural traits exist in many non-human animals.

So, does this make a difference? Is it relevant to know that one bird is behaviourally different from another? To investigate this, we need information both on a bird's personality and its behaviour and survival in the wild. Although it has been shown that a Great Tit's survival can depend on its personality, studies linking personality traits measured in captivity to what happens in the wild are rare. The reasons for this are mainly practical. Because animals cannot be interviewed or canvassed using questionnaires (as is usual in human personality research), their personality traits must be measured in (short-term) captivity. To show that different birds are consistent in their behaviour (and is not just affected by how hungry they are, or what time of day they were observed), measurements must be taken several times on the same individual. For wild birds, this means that the same bird needs to be captured more than once and

anyone who has ever tried to catch birds will know that this is often not a trivial task. Finally, to actually show that personality traits measured in captivity are at all relevant to a bird surviving in the wild, we need to be able to follow the birds for which we have information, and look at how well they do finding food, finding a mate, raising a family, and avoiding becoming a Great Skua's (*Catharacta skua*) lunch in the process.

Therefore,, studying animal personality and its consequences for wild animals needs very specific circumstances and a very special study system. Fortunately, the Starling research project started on Fair Isle by Peter Evans in 1980 provides an excellent opportunity to do this. There are 27 years worth of data available on Starlings that have bred on the Isle and more importantly, Starlings have been fitted with colour rings every year since the project started, making them individually recognisable without having to catch them. The small size of the Isle and the large number of permanently operated (in the breeding season) bird traps makes repeatedly catching the same individuals uniquely easy. Also, the fact that breeding birds will be relatively restricted by the confines of the island makes tracking and observing them in the wild relatively simple.

All this led to the start of this study of Starling 'personality' on Fair Isle in 2006. In this year, visitors might have noticed a bright red 'box'-like shed amongst the buildings in the North Haven. This was in fact used as an aviary to measure the exploratory behaviour of young Starlings both in 2006 and 2007. Birds that were caught in one of the many traps on the island were brought to the Bird Observatory, ringed and processed in the usual way, and then housed for a brief period of time (at least two hours during the day and no more than 16 hours overnight) in holding cages. Obviously food and water were provided. This procedure has been tried and tested in other studies and shown to be completely harmless to the birds. One by one, birds were taken from their cages and released into the aviary, where they were allowed to fly around for 10 minutes. During this period, their behaviour was recorded and specific, carefully selected, behaviours were taken as a measure for 'exploration'. Thus, each of these observations yielded an 'exploration score' for an individual, similar to the observations collected on for example Great Tits. Immediately after the 10-minute observations were finished, the Starling was released.

Thanks to the enormous help provided by the Bird Observatory staff in 2006 and 2007, we were able to collect 106 such 'exploration scores' on 86 juvenile Starlings in 2006 and 153 on 115 juveniles in 2007. Although statistical analyses of the results are still ongoing (and more data will be collected in 2008), we found that at least 25% of the total variation in exploration scores could be 'explained' by individual differences. In other words, individual juvenile Starlings differ consistently in exploratory behaviour, much like individual Great Tits do. This suggests that exploratory behaviour of Starlings in general could be an indication of their personality. Besides the work on Great Tits, these are the first results to show such personality variation in birds in the wild.

What does this mean for the Fair Isle Starlings? Is the exploration score from the aviary in any way relevant to a Starling's behaviour in the wild? In 2006, we investigated this by looking at the relationship between exploratory score and the distance that birds moved around the Isle. This is where the colour ringing comes in handy - because every ringed individual has its own distinct combination of colour rings, they can (with the aid of a telescope) be identified from a distance and movements of particular individuals can be collected simply by walking around the Isle with a telescope and looking at as many Starlings' legs as possible. By looking at those observations of birds for which we also obtained an exploration score, we could try to answer the question whether birds that 'explore' more of the aviary than others also move larger distances around the island.

Interestingly, based on these 'colour ring re-sightings' in 2006, we found quite the opposite pattern to what we were expecting from previous studies of birds and fish: more 'explorative' birds in the aviary seemed to move *shorter* rather than longer distances when roaming freely. Although our results here may seem both puzzling and counter-intuitive, it actually raises very interesting questions. In particular, why and how would one expect that more 'explorative' birds should move 'further' in the wild in the first place? Perhaps more explorative birds don't need to move far as they are better at exploiting the places they know already! In other words, we conclude that we need to know more about the particular *mechanisms* that drive exploration in both wild and captive animals.

To follow this up and to enable us to collect more detailed data on the movements of individual Starlings on Fair Isle, in 2007 we decided to fit small radio transmitters to the tail feathers of some of our studied animals. Such 'radio tracking' of animals, though still fairly cutting-edge technology, is now employed frequently in field biology. Transmitters can now be fitted that weigh less than 2g, which is less than 3% of a Starling's body weight. During the 2007 breeding season visitors may have noticed several people wandering around the Isle, wielding an impressive-looking handheld 'Yagi' antenna. This antenna can receive the signals from the transmitters fitted to a select number of Starlings, allowing us to collect very precise, daily (sometimes even up to four times daily) locations of individual birds. Again, thanks to the small size of the island and the particular homogenous habitat, this yields a uniquely detailed picture of the tracked birds' movement patterns that can be summarized in what is known as a 'home range', that is the maximum area that is exploited by an animal. Unfortunately, due to the high cost of these high-tech transmitters, only a relatively small sample of Starlings could be fitted with one. We had 17 transmitters available in 2007, and all of these were successfully fitted onto juvenile Starlings that had finished growing their tails. In spite of this being a relatively small sample, the project was extremely successful, and useful data were obtained from 16 of the 17 birds. Although the transmitter was apparently working fine, after several days, the seventeenth bird unfortunately transmitted from a single location only: the top of Sheep Rock! We can only speculate what had happened to

it, but two of the most likely possibilities are that either the transmitter dropped off or the bird fell victim to a predator, either a large gull or Bonxie. A few examples of the sort of data that were collected from the remaining birds are shown in fig. 1.

The eventual aim of the radio tracking is to relate these 'home range' data to the birds' exploration scores. It is too early to show the results here as the data are still awaiting full analysis, and further data from a larger sample of tracked birds will be collected during the 2008 breeding season.

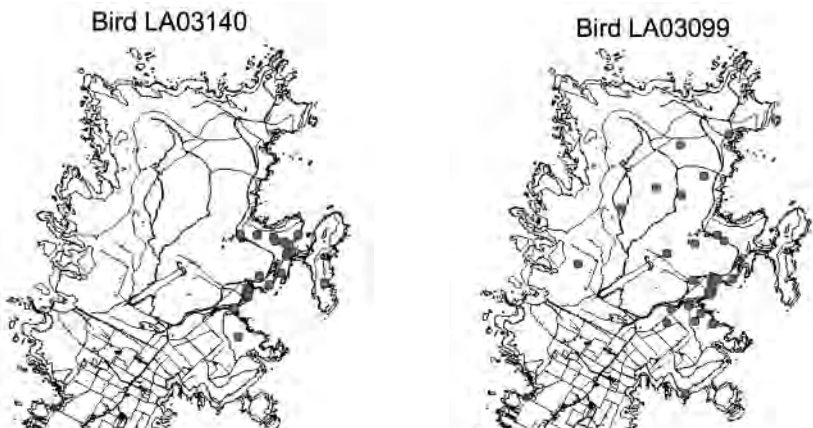


Figure 1. Two examples out of the seventeen birds that were radio tracked between 11 June and 13 July 2007. For each bird, a dot on the map (a 'fix') represents precise location of that bird at a given moment in time. Between 17 and 31 such fixes were collected for each of the seventeen birds, most of which were on successive days. As is clear from these examples, individuals can be very different in the areas they visit. It must be noted that the seemingly large density of points around Finnickuoy and Dutfield are due to birds roosting on the cliffs in that area.

In conclusion, Fair Isle and its breeding Starlings have provided us with a unique opportunity to study behavioural variation and animal personality in the wild. Although the results may seem puzzling, a lot of work and analyses remain to be done and we have been able to collect interesting and novel data. All of this is only possible because of the unique nature of Fair Isle, the long history of the Starling research project there, and the help and support of both FIBO and the Fair Isle community, for which we are very grateful.

We are looking forward to reporting our final findings in a future FIBO report.

Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Brian Wilson for allowing us to use some of his shed in the Havens to house birds, for building the original 'box' aviary and for getting it to the Havens in the first place. This project would not have been possible without huge help from the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Ornithological Scholarship Fund, and we are very grateful for their patience and trust in this project. JM also receives a basic PhD studentship from Newcastle University.

Fair Isle moths and other invertebrates in 2007

Nick Riddiford, Donna & Geoff Atherton

Moths

In stark contrast to the previous year there was just one new species for the isle in 2007, and that was a previously overlooked resident.

Light traps were operated regularly at three sites: the Bird Observatory, Lower Stoneybrek and Schoolton, and sugar put out at the last two. Trapping effort was supplemented by field observations from island residents and visitors. Some of the most significant observations came from relief nurse Donna Atherton and her husband Geoff during the month of March. Their nocturnal activities with a torch added considerably to our knowledge of the immature stages, and they produced a number of micro moth records too. A summary of their finds, which includes the first *Coleophora discordella* for Fair Isle and Shetland, is given below.

"Out of 13 species of Lepidoptera we found in March 2007, eight were macros and five were micros. Five were adults - Brindled Ochre at Actinic light, Acleris hyemana, Large Pale Clothes Moth, White-shouldered House Moth and Brown House Moth. The tortricid Acleris hyemana was located by daytime searching. It occurs on the heather but is not easily disturbed, probably because of the poor weather. It was found by net sweeping and looking deep into the vegetation."

"Many larvae emerged to feed at night when they could be found feeding on low vegetation. Square-spot Rustic was the most abundant species, for instance more than 50 between Shirva and Springfield on 3rd March. The larvae of Small Square-spot were almost as numerous, similarly feeding at night on low vegetation. Map-winged Swift larvae were commonly found in earthen burrows under stones. A solitary Angle Shades larva was feeding in the Springfield garden."

"Indoors, the not so welcome 'house moths' of the Oecophoridae family included Brown and White-shouldered House Moths, the latter being surprisingly pretty when viewed up close."

"The Shirva hen house was the home to larvae and adults of Large Pale Clothes Moth which belong to a group of moths whose larvae feed on hair, feathers, wool and skins."

"From the larvae and pupae we collected and have tried to rear, we have had mixed success. The majority of the pupae were found under vegetation on or near the soil surface. The Netted Pug and Marbled Coronet pupae that emerged were collected from the 'banks' under overhanging Fescue."

"The distinct pistol-shaped larval cases of Coleophora discordella were found to be numerous on its food plant Bird's-foot Trefoil. Although present in Orkney, the find proved to be the only known record from the Shetland Islands."

"Lastly a Brindled Ochre female was attracted to the Actinic light down at Springfield. Mating takes place in the autumn, but only the females overwinter. She then lays her eggs in the spring on Wild Angelica." [note: Angelica is its only food plant on Fair Isle].

The run of new species in 2006 was largely due to an exceptional summer of immigration. Immigrants were much scarcer in 2007 but not so the residents.

One always has to be careful in analysis of population trends from moth traps, particularly on Fair Isle where rain and wind strength can seriously depress captures and even prevent the traps being operated for periods of time. Nevertheless, numbers of the commonest species have been steadily climbing and on one extraordinary night in August all-time record numbers were achieved at all three trap sites and for two separate species. By happy fortune, this event coincided with National Moth Night and was witnessed by a number of visitors and islanders.

The night of 10th/11th August 2007 beat all previous records for total numbers in each of the three light traps, and for captures of Large Yellow Underwing and True Lover's Knot. The 153 Dark Arches at Schoolton also exceeded all totals from previous years, but took second place this summer to 162 trapped during the night of 21st July. In total, 889 moths were trapped during this night designated as National Moth Night.

The records were:

Total captures

Schoolton: 298 moths (of 11 macro and 2 micro species).

Lower Stoneybrek: 224 (of 10 macro and one micro species)

Bird Observatory: 367 (of 7 macro and one micro species)

Species records

Large Yellow Underwing: 84, Schoolton trap (previous highest: 52 on sugar at Schoolton, 5th August 2004).

True Lover's Knot: 239, Bird Observatory trap (previous highest: 108, also at the Bird Observatory, 31st July 2000).

There was a nearly 40% decrease in trapping activity in 2007 compared with 2006. This was partly due to loss of Barkland as a trapping site and partly due to inclement weather on a greater number of summer nights. A summary of the 2007 trapping effort is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of trapping effort in 2007

Site	Year	Trap nights						
		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
All sites	203	14	6	31	56	66	27	5
Observatory (Mercury Vapour)	62		3	16	20	17	3	3
Lower Stoneybrek (Actinic)	49			6	19	19	6	1
Schoolton (Actinic)	67	11	2	9	15	19	11	
Schoolton (sugar)	25	3	1		2	11	7	1

There are always marked differences in species composition between Bird Observatory captures and those at Schoolton and Lower Stoneybrek as illustrated for the commoner species in Table 2 below. The Bird Observatory nestles in a grassy hollow at Mavers Cup, in the north of the isle. Immediately seawards is a strip of close cropped coastal grassland and to the north and west an expanse of moorland dominated by prostrate and dwarf heather *Calluna vulgaris*. The two traps in the south of the isle are sited in small gardens, surrounded by arable, pasture and rough grassland. There is very little heather close to Lower Stoneybrek and Schoolton, hence the absence of True Lover's Knot which is a classic heather-feeding species. Autumnal Rustic is another heather moorland species. Some penetrate into the crofting area, as demonstrated by moderate captures at Lower Stoneybrek, but very few stray as far south as Schoolton.

Grassland species fair better in the south. This explains the larger numbers of Silver-ground Carpet, Northern Rustic, Ingrailed Clay, Square-spot Rustic and Dusky Brocade at the crofting area traps, and the complete absence of Small Square-spot at the Observatory. Relatively lower numbers of Large Yellow Underwings at the Bird Observatory is also explained by lack of suitable habitat for the species; but it tells us that the large numbers in the south are local residents. The species is also a migrant, but during migration influxes could be expected to be more evenly spread between sites.

Despite being commoner in the south, Dark Arches was well represented at all three sites suggesting either a wider habitat tolerance or stronger dispersal abilities of this robust species. The weather conditions may have limited trap activities, but it was still possible to ascertain that local populations of some moth species had had a good year. Dark Arches was abundant from mid July until mid September and Large Yellow Underwing was also present in good numbers over an extended period. In addition, Northern Rustic was caught in unprecedented numbers.

Other highlights of 2007 were: an unprecedented run of Smoky Wainscots, mainly at Schoolton. Taking into account the paucity of migration, the captures may denote that the species is now breeding on the isle.

Systematic List

The following list summarises all moth records for the year by species. Selected commoner species are treated differently. Their records are summarised in Table 2.

The number preceding entry below is the official number allocated each species on the British list. *An asterisk preceding a record in the systematic list indicates that the moth has been seen and confirmed or determined by Dr Mark Young of Aberdeen University - including from genitalia characters in the case of difficult species.

Hepialidae

18 **Map-winged Swift** *Hepialus fusconebulosa*. Larvae were found regularly throughout March. There were two field records of adults on 20th and 21st July. Trap records for adults are summarised in Table 2.

Tineidae

227 ***Skin Moth** *Monopis laevigella*. One in the Schoolton trap on 30th July.

245 **Large Pale Clothes Moth** *Tinea pallescentella*. Larvae and adults found in the Shirva hen house in March, one larva taking on 15th March reached adult stage in captivity on 10th May.

Coleophoridae

547 ***Coleophora discordella**. Four cases of this species were discovered on the lower stems of Common Birdsfoot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* near South Light on 7th March and a further 10 in the Funniequoy Gully three days later. First Fair Isle records.

Plutellinidae

464 **Diamond-back Moth** *Plutella xylostella*. The Schoolton trap produced 2 on 17th June and singles on 26th & 27th July and 12th August. The Bird Observatory trapped one on 11th June and 2 on 22nd July. Captures are an incomplete reflection of numbers on the isle. There was a major influx on 17th June when hundreds were present on roadsides, cliffs, etc. - in fact everywhere the vegetation was dense.

466 ***Rhigognostis senilella**. One on sugar at Schoolton on 8th August. One came to a lighted window at Schoolton on 16th September.

Oecophoridae

647 **Brown House-moth** *Hofmannophila pseudospretella*. There was just one trap capture, a single at Schoolton on 15th July. Recorded indoors a Springfield on 10th March and, at Schoolton, *singles entered the house on 25th July and 21st August and *2 were netted by day in the Schoolton hen house on 14th September.

648 **White-shouldered House-moth** *Endrosis sarcitrella*. The only records noted were one inside the Haa on 25th February, singles at Springfield on 4th and 30th March, singles in the Schoolton trap on 4th July and 9th August, and one there on sugar on 9th. The species occurs regularly in houses and out-houses as demonstrated by a larva taken from the Shirva hen house on 15th March which emerged as an adult on 11th May.

Gelechiidae

787 **Bryotropha terrella*. Three were taken from several seen on the southern flank of Malcolm's Head on 29th June, close to the cliff edge. The species showed a preference for dry eroded patches, and may have been associated with rabbit and puffin burrows.

811 **Scrobipalpa samadensis*. Abundant in sunny weather on a sward of sea plantain *Plantago maritima* on the southern flank of Malcolm's Head on 28th June and again the next day.

Tortricidae

988 **Bilberry Tortrix** *Aphelia viburnana*. Abundant in early summer in moorland habitats but no notes kept of dates or numbers.

1029 *Eana osseana*. There were 66 moth-nights at the Schoolton trap between 12th July and 28th August, maximum 9 on 10th August.

1030 *Eana penziana*. The species was commonest at the Bird Observatory where 1–3 were trapped on ten nights between 5th & 27th July and 1–2 on four nights between 9th & 14th August, with 4 on 10th. At Schoolton there were just three trap captures: one of 22nd and 2 on 23rd August.

1055 *Acleris hyemana*. All records were in March. One was recorded on Ward Hill on 3rd, 2 at Eas Brecks on 9th, one at Burn o Gilsetter on 10th and 2 at Golden Water on 22nd.

1201 *Eucosma cana*. Singles were trapped at Schoolton on 12th, 29th and 24th July.

1109 *Lobesia maritima*. One on thrift *Armeria maritima*, its food plant, on the southern flank of Malcolm's Head on 28th June.

Pyalidae

1304 *Agriphila straminella*. The first of the year was on the northern flank of Malcolm's Head on 28th June. Singles in the Schoolton trap on 22nd and 24th July were the only captures, but the species was common in grassy areas in the same period.

1334 **Scoparia ambigualis*. One netted by day on the Rippack on 24th July.

1388 *Udea lutealis*. There were 13 moth-nights on scattered dates between 20th July and 18th August at Schoolton trap, with a maximum of 3 on the first date. Two were on sugar there on 10th August. Common in grassy areas of the south during the same period.

1342 **Eudonia angustea*. One in the Schoolton trap on 20th July was only the third Fair Isle record, the others occurring in 1995.

Pterophoridae

1502 **Platyptilia isodactylus*. At least four were present in the Schoolton meadow on the evening of 13th July. The first was flushed off marsh ragwort *Senecio aquaticus*, the food plant. This is only the second Fair Isle record (the first was in 2003) but indicates that the species is established on the isle, its northernmost UK locality.

Geometridae

1723 **Red Carpet** *Xanthorhoe munitata*. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

1727 **Silver-ground Carpet** *Xanthorhoe montanata*. Commonest at Schoolton. Lower Stoneybrek trap only recorded three, on 16th & 17th July and 10th August. The only record on sugar was one at Schoolton on 9th August. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

1728 **Garden Carpet** *Xanthorhoe fluctuata*. Lower Stoneybrek trap had 2 on 22nd June, one on 5th August & 2 on 9th August. One was trapped at Schoolton on 10th August.

1761 ***Autumn Green Carpet** *Chlorochlysta miata*. One against a lighted window at Shirva on 19th October.

1809 **Twin-spot Carpet** *Perizoma didymata*. Captures were one trapped on 7th and one on sugar on 10th August, both at Schoolton. The species was frequent in amongst the reed-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* alongside Meadow Burn during the same period.

1823 **Netted Pug** *Eupithecia venosata*. Two pupae were found on vegetated cliffs in March. The adult from one collected on 7th March emerged on 7th June while the other, found on 26th March, emerged on 9th May. Two adults were found dead in a water butt at Lower Stoneybrek on 6th June. The Bird Observatory trapped adults on 7th June and 11th July.

1862 **Double-striped Pug** *Gymnoscelis rufifasciata*. One trapped at the Bird Observatory on 9th June is the second Fair Isle record.

1884 **The Magpie** *Abraxas grossulariata*. After six consecutive years of incremental increases in numbers, the annual influx has, at least temporarily, stuttered. The first field observation comprised 2 on 9th July, rising to a minimum of 10 on 13th July. One was at Shirva on 14th. Three were trapped at the Bird Observatory the same day and one on 15th July.

Sphingidae

1987 **Bedstraw Hawk-moth** *Hyles gallii*. There were two records. One was watched visiting a series of ragged robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi* flowers at Quoy on 17th June; and one was trapped at Lower Stoneybrek on 9th July.

Noctuidae

2091 **Dark Sword-grass** *Agrotis ipsilon*. There were 12 moth-nights at Lower Stoneybrek between 18th & 30th June, maximum 6 on 30th. One entered the Schoolton trap on 30th July.

2104 **Northern Rustic** *Standfussiana lucerneae*. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

2107 **Large Yellow Underwing** *Noctua pronuba*. At Schoolton, recorded on every trap night in July, August and to 11th September. The species was equally abundant at Lower Stoneybrek trap during the same period, including an unprecedented 164 on 3rd July - presumably boosted by an influx of migrants. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

2117 **Autumnal Rustic** *Paradiarsia glareosa*. 23 of the 25 moth-nights at Lower Stoneybrek were concentrated on 21st to 23rd August, including 9 on the last date. Three of the 9 were of the dark form *edda*; and *edda* comprised 7 (28%) of total Lower

Stoneybrek captures. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

2118 **True Lover's Knot** *Lycophotia porphyrea*. A caterpillar was found on the hill on 3rd March. Single adults were in the PSB trap on 11th and 21st July. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

2120 **Ingrailed Clay** *Diarsia mendica*. Two caterpillars were found at Shirva on 22nd March and a full-grown one near Schoolton on 26th July. Trap records for adults are summarized in Table 2.

2123 **Small Square-spot** *Diarsia rubi*. Larvae were encountered frequently in March. At Schoolton all records of adults were from 12th to 27th July apart from one on 10th August. Trap records for adults are summarized in Table 2.

2126 **Setaceous Hebrew Character** *Xestia c-nigrum*. Singles at the Bird Observatory on 20th, 22nd and 28th August were the only records.

2134 **Square-spot Rustic** *Xestia xanthographa*. Larvae were found regularly, frequently in numbers, throughout March. Trap records for adults are summarized in Table 2.

2137 **Great Brocade** *Eurois occulta*. One trapped at Schoolton on 22nd August - third Fair Isle record.

2147 **The Shears** *Hada plebeja*. All records were in June. The earliest were at the Bird Observatory: singles on 8th, 9th and 11th, with 2 on 10th. One entered the Schoolton trap on 17th. Three were trapped at Lower Stoneybrek on 18th and one on 23rd. One was on a wall there on 30th.

2171 **Marbled Coronet** *Hadena confusa*. A pupa found on the vegetated cliff of Busta Geo on 20th March emerged as an adult of the form *obliterae* on 17th May. The first adult was trapped at the Bird Observatory on 1st June and there were 2 at Lower Stoneybrek on 30th June. There was a small run of captures at the Bird Observatory in July with singles on 2nd, 5th, 9th, 10th & 11th and an outlier on 24th.

2173 ***The Lychnis** *Hadena bicruris*. The Schoolton trap took one on 23rd June, 2 on 5th July, one on 15th July and 3 on 7th August - an impressive run after the first Fair Isle records in 2006.

2176 **Antler Moth** *Cerapteryx graminis*. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

2198 **Smoky Wainscot** *Mythimna impura*. An unprecedented year. Schoolton trap intercepted the majority: 2 on 20th July, singles on 21st, 23rd, 24th, 26th & 30th July, 2 on 2nd, 2 on 4th and one on 9th August. In addition, there was one in Lower Stoneybrek trap and another in the Bird Observatory trap on 10th August.

2199 ***Common Wainscot** *Mythimna pallens*. One was trapped at Schoolton on 9th September.

2229 **Brindled Ochre** *Dasypolia templi*. One was trapped at Springfield on 30th March.

2306 **Angle Shades** *Phlogophora meticulosa*. A larva was found at Springfield on 2nd March. The first adult was trapped at the Bird Observatory on 1st May and one seen at the Havens on 5th May. Lower Stoneybrek trap took one on 30th June, 3 on 21st July and one on 24th July. In October, one was attracted to sugar at Schoolton on 1st while the Bird Observatory trapped one on 1st and 2 on 9th.

2321 **Dark Arches** *Apamea monoglypha*. Super abundant at Schoolton throughout July and August, with captures well above 100 on 21st & 22nd July and 10th & 11th

August. The highest totals at Lower Stoneybrek were 99 on 22nd July and 135 on 10th August. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

2326 ***Clouded-bordered Brindle** *Apamea crenata*. One in Schoolton trap on 30th June.

2329 **The Confused** *Apamea furva*. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

2330 **Dusky Brocade** *Apamea remissa*. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

2340 **Middle-barred Minor** *Oligia fasciuncula*. Two entered the Lower Stoneybrek trap on 5th July. One was attracted to sugar at Schoolton on 20th July. All other observations were in the field, mainly in late July and early August.

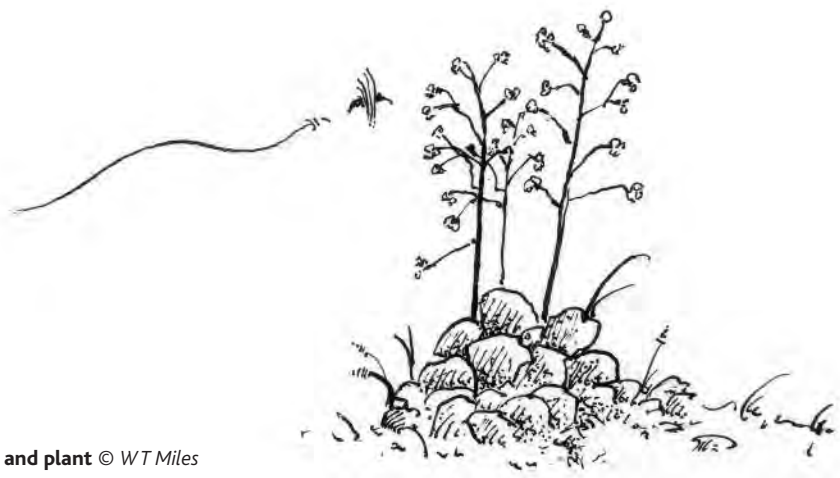
2343a **Common Rustic** *Mesapamea secalis*. *singles were confirmed at Lower Stoneybrek on 2nd August and Schoolton on 12th August. Captures at Lower Stoneybrek on 15th & 21st August were this species or Lesser Common Rustic *Mesapamea didyma*.

2350 **Small Wainscot** *Photedes pygmina*. A record run of 12 moth-nights at Schoolton trap between 20th July and 9th August with 2 on the first night and on two nights in August.

2361 **Rosy Rustic** *Hydraecia micacea*. Trap records are summarized in Table 2.

2441 **Silver Y** *Autographa gamma*. There were field records of 1 to 3 on eleven dates from 1st to 27th June and 4 on 23rd July. Captures on nine nights between 17th June and 26th July at Schoolton totalled 78 moth-nights, including 55 on 22nd June and 14 the next night. The exceptional numbers on 22nd was the result of positioning the trap alongside a carpet of flowering white clover *Trifolium repens*. The scent of this flower that night was overpowering and attracting hordes of the moth. Peak captures in the Lower Stoneybrek trap were during the same period, 26 on 21st June, as was the only June capture at the Bird Observatory, 4 on 22nd - which also caught singles on 2nd & 8th July.

2442 **Beautiful Golden Y** *Autographa pulchrina*. One trapped at Schoolton on 21st



Moth and plant © WT Miles

August was only the fourth Fair Isle record.

Table 2. Moth-nights, first dates, last dates and maximum catch size for selected species in Fair Isle light traps, 2007

	Moth-nights per light trap				First	Last	Max; Date;
	Sa	Ss	L	O	Date	Date	Locality
Map-winged Swift	14		2	38	5/6	12/8	7; 3/7; O
Red Carpet	9		23		23/7	30/9	4; 21/8; L
Silver-ground Carpet	19	1	3	4	23/6	10/8	3;24&26/7;Sa
Northern Rustic	473		150	125	28/6	10/9	75; 2/8; Sa
Large Yellow Underwing	586	104	674	104	17/6	1/10	164; 3/7; L
Autumnal Rustic	8		25	70	10/8	12/9	21; 22/8; O
True Lover's Knot	8		2	782	2/7	23/8	239; 10/8; O
Ingrailed Clay	469	19	311	185	11/7	1/10	57; 22/8; Sa
Small Square-spot	19	3	12		30/6	10/8	5; 22/7; Sa
Square-spot Rustic	275	26	72	23	11/7	1/10	15; 23/8; L
Antler	110		27	255	8/7	12/9	26; 14/8; O
Dark Arches	1548	136	893	442	30/6	17/9	162; 21/7; Sa
Confused	4		14	2	3/7	21/8	4; 21/8; L
Dusky Brocade	71		61		18/6	10/8	16; 5/7; L
Rosy Rustic	39		21	2	9/8	2/10	8; 8/9; L

Key: Sa = Schoolton (actinic); Ss = Schoolton (sugar); L = Lower Stoneybrek; O = Bird Observatory

Butterflies

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*. Recorded on the isle from 6th June–27th August but over 95% of sightings were in June with an influx of 60+ on 9th and counts over 15 on 50% of days during the month. One was seen ovipositing on spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* on the cliff edge at the Geo da Busta on 27th June.

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*. First recorded on 9th May but no further sightings until 4th June. There was an influx on 10th June with at least 20 logged. Smaller numbers were seen regularly until late July and further singles on 28th September, 14th & 21st October.

Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae* It was a good year for this species with singles on 13th & 28th May, 1st June, two on 6th June, one on 5th August and another on 29th September.

Cabbage White *Pieris brassicae* There were singles on 10th & 14th June of this less than annual species.

Other insects

Only casual records were made of other insect groups. Nevertheless, these included first ever identifications for two groups not previously studied. Details of these are given below.

Sawfly (Hymenoptera: Symphyta)

Pachynematus obductus. Single females were found floating in a water-filled container at Schoolton on 3rd and 27th July. Both individuals were collected and sent to Andrew Liston for expert identification. First Fair Isle record for the species and sub-order.

Thrips (Thysanoptera)

Thrips tabaci. An infection of chilli peppers grown from seed at Lower Stoneybrek proved to be this species: first for Fair Isle for the species and order.

Other invertebrates

A further two 'firsts for Fair Isle' related to non-insect terrestrial invertebrates. The most unexpected was a Garden Cross Spider *Araneus diadematus*, found by Tom Best at Kenaby on 9th August. The other 'first' was the Grain Mite *Acarus siro*. The latter record involved thousands on white feed bags at Setter. Island crofters will be familiar with the beastie, even if it has not been formally identified before. It is probably common in similar conditions of feed bags in damp, cool outhouses.

Acknowledgements

Thanks once again to Deryk Shaw and his assistants at the Bird Observatory, Pat and Neil Thomson at Lower Stoneybrek, Elizabeth Riddiford and John Walmsley at Schoolton. As usual, some of the most interesting records came from other sharp-eyed islanders and visitors. Geoff and Donna Atherton not only added valuable information on immature stages but introduced a number of Fair Islanders to the joy of searching for caterpillars at night. Mark Young was again instrumental in determining and verifying records of difficult species. Verification of the sawflies was provided by Andrew Liston of the German Entomological Institute and the thrips were determined by Dominique Collins of the Central Science Laboratory, York. Many thanks, one and all.

Other Wildlife in 2007

Deryk Shaw

Records of most forms of wildlife are kept at the Observatory and visitors are encouraged to report their sightings to a member of staff and during the evening log. Cetaceans, Butterflies and Moths make up the bulk of these sightings. These records are also submitted to the relevant organisations in Shetland:

Summary of Cetaceans

Cetaceans are often seen during the *Good Shepherd IV* crossings during the summer months, but there were also many seen from the isle in 2007, including regular sightings of Killer Whales in May and early June.

Minke Whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*): Two were seen offshore on 28th April before a long-dead corpse drifted into South Harbour on 30th. Two on 1st May were followed with a count of five on 3rd, two on 4th and a single on 9th May. A single on 7th June was the last sighting from land until September. Animals were seen from the *Good Shepherd IV* crossing on 9th June, 28th July, 2nd, 18th & 28th (3) August and 11th, 12th & 15th September (3 on each day). Two from the isle on 19th September, a single on 6th October and a very close individual in Hesswalls on 10th-11th October was the last.

Long-finned Pilot Whale (*Globicephala melas*): A female and calf Pilot Whale (almost certainly this species) were observed from a boat c 5 km north of the isle on 3rd May.

Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*): Orcas are often very obliging when they visit us, coming very close to shore as they hunt for seals, allowing excellent viewing and photographic opportunities. The year started well with a pod of three off South Light on 22nd March but there were no others until May when there were sightings of 2-5 on seven dates between 7th and 25th. Eight together on 5th June were followed with six (possibly the same) the following day then three came right up to the pier in North Haven on 11th, causing great excitement amongst the visiting yachts, Observers and staff! Five on 6th July was the only sighting that month and five past South harbour on 27th September (distracting a crowd watching a Lanceolated Warbler at Skadan!) were the last of the year. Unusually there were none reported from the *Good Shepherd IV* crossing!

White-beaked Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*): Nine off Bunness on 28th August was the only sighting from land whilst the *Good Shepherd* crew reported a single on 21st July, five or six dolphins (probably this species) on 11th and 18th August and finally two or three on 21st December.

Atlantic White-sided Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*): Two off Bunness on 9th October and a school of 10-12 from the *Good Shepherd IV* crossing on 20th December were the only confirmed sightings.

Risso's Dolphin (*Grampus griseus*): A single in Finniequoy on 25th September was the only record.

Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*): Noted from July to October with singles or small groups on four dates in July, three dates in August (including a peak of ten on 18th), six dates in September and two dates in October.

Dolphin spp Unidentified dolphins were seen on 10th (2) August, 22nd (3+) August and 12th September.

Pinnipeds

Grey Seal (*Halichoerus grypus*): The autumn census of newborn pups, carried out every four days from late September to mid-November found that, as in 2006, cows were slightly late to start pupping in 2007 with the first not born until 3rd October. An estimated total of just 63 pups were born in various geos around the isle. This is the lowest ever recorded (a third less than in the previous year) and only half that of the record 126 born in 2003.

Common Seals (*Phoca vitulina*) were regularly seen in spring and autumn in South Harbour with c20 often hauled out on the shingle there.

Summary of other miscellaneous sightings

Jellyfish There was a large influx of *Aurelia* (Moon) *Cyanea* (Lions mane) and *Mnemiopsis* (Comb) Jellyfish into Fair Isle waters on 13th July.

Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) One was found freshly dead at the Setter cattle grid on the very early date of 17th February. The first spawn was noted in the ditches around Pund/Barkland on 6th March.

Common Eels (*Anguilla anguilla*) were noted in the Vaadal stream on 24th May and 13th October.



Minke Whale and Black Guillemot © WT Miles

Grants for young birdwatchers to visit Fair Isle

Have you thought of joining the staff of Britain's most famous Bird Observatory as a supported volunteer? A limited number of grants are given to young people to work with other ornithologists at Fair Isle Bird Observatory.

The John Harrison Memorial Fund provides financial assistance to young ornithologists between the ages of 16 and 24 to enable them to visit Fair Isle and take part in the daily work schedule of the Bird Observatory. This opportunity has launched the careers of many budding ornithologists, and several have later become staff of Fair Isle Bird Observatory itself. It was established in 1968 by the late Richard Richardson in memory of John Harrison of Hunstanton, Norfolk, who visited the island three times before he died, aged just nineteen.

Grants are towards the cost of travel (so long as it is by the most economic means) from home to the Observatory and back. A full grant may only be given for visits of two weeks or longer. While at the Observatory, awardees pay just £10 per day towards the cost of food and accommodation. Successful applicants are responsible for arranging their own travel.

Awardees take part in the routine work conducted by the ornithological staff. The type of work varies depending on the time of year, so you are advised to contact the Warden if you have a particular interest such as seabird ringing or migration studies, so that you can arrange your visit at the most appropriate time. Preference will be given to applicants wanting to come between April and July, which incidentally are great times for spring migrants and breeding seabirds. However there are no places available in September & October. Daily duties can involve on average two hours of data entry on computers, as well as migration censusing, ringing, trap repairs, fencing, stile building, tree planting, visitor liaison and building maintenance tasks.

Successful applicants will be expected to write a short report of their stay suitable for publication in the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Annual Report.

Application forms are available from the Bird Observatory and once completed should be sent to Dr Peter Evans, Cynifryn, Abershore, Llanfaglan, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL54 5RA (e-mail peter.evans@bangor.ac.uk, tel. 01286 672071) along with a detailed CV (including your e-mail address and phone number), and two references (such as from a school teacher or university lecturer, and a senior naturalist/ornithologist) with whom you are well acquainted.

Dr Evans will then notify you if your application is successful, and you should then check the availability of accommodation with Hollie, the Administrator at the Observatory, and reserve your bed. Once booked, you should provide Hollie with details of your travel, and don't forget to save all travel receipts and present them to her when you arrive, to claim them back. Cost of travel will be offset against your bill for accommodation.

Don't miss this opportunity!

The JHMF Experience

Will Balmont

My two-week stay in Fair Isle, as a JHMF volunteer was a brilliant experience. It was such a refreshing change to actually be carrying out bird conservation work rather than just hearing about it in a lecture theatre!

I have to admit that I was a little unsure on my first day when I had to descend the steep Toor o'da Ward Hill to reach a puffin colony, though I do admire the lengths the observatory staff go to in order to achieve their goal. I certainly didn't expect to be restraining a puffin and given the chance to ring it while I perched among the puffin burrows, but assistant warden Mark and seabird officer Simon were only too happy to show me how the ringing operations were carried out. It was valuable to see first hand the food crisis which has started to hit many seabird populations. The incoming puffins we caught in the mist nets had a high proportion of pipefish in their beaks rather than their usual sandeel prey, which is becoming scarce. I learnt that Pipefish are very difficult for the chicks to digest and contain few nutrients.

The three trips out in the Zodiac inflatable were excellent, clambering out onto rocks to find guillemot and shag chicks while Deryk held the boat steady was very exciting. We also used the boat to go round to Greenholm Islet in the south to check on the progress of puffin chicks. It was on Greenholm that I also discovered how hard an adult fulmar can bite as we caught them on their nests for ringing.

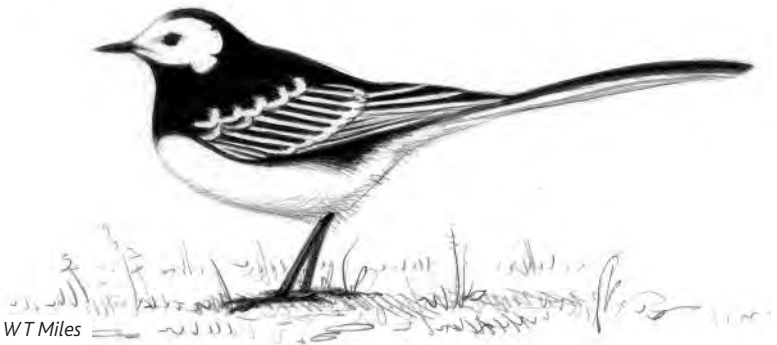
I was also involved with various maintenance tasks which was good because such work is always going to be needed where large amounts of equipment (for trapping etc.) are used. It was good fun building the new ringing shed with Mark, Simon and the other volunteers, and many thanks to islander Ian for saving the day and showing us how to make proper concrete! I also carried out Heligoland trap repairs with Rob, another volunteer, and learnt with Simon the frustrations of fitting a shower tray.

Another day we were out on Bunes catching puffins again, except not with mist nets but burrow nets which catch the puffins as they exit their burrows. We also used long poles with nooses attached to their ends. The idea was to slip the noose around a perched puffin's neck and pull it tight so they could be brought to hand. Although it seemed impossible to get close to the birds at first, it was very rewarding to eventually 'catch' a puffin with this contraption, and then have it ringed and safely released.

Another bird species and another technique was the skua sweep. I had no idea that great skuas nested in such high density on the Island. Two groups did different areas, and my group did Ward Hill. We spread out in a straight line and then started to walk up the hill. Dive bombing by adult skuas told us when we were in their territory, and then it was a case of scanning the ground for a buffy brown ball of fluff which was a skua chick. On finding a chick, the whole line stopped while the bird was ringed and measured, and then the sweep would continue to move forward again. This sweeping technique seemed very effective, and altogether 180 chicks were ringed that day, though I'm sure we missed a few because the chicks could be well camouflaged.

There were also lots of social events happening too. I really enjoyed listening to the Island band 'Fridarey' and other musicians play, and also the excellent presentation by Jimmy on how Fair Isle has changed over the years. The two games of football at South Light were great fun, as was the party down at the beach in North Haven.

So my trip to Fair Isle really was first class in terms of both practical experience and having an enjoyable time. I thank Deryk and Hollie and all the observatory staff for such brilliant hospitality, as well as the people of Fair Isle for their friendly and welcoming attitude.



Pied Wagtail © WT Miles

Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust (FIBOT) Financial Report & Accounts for 2007

Mike Wood

A summary of FIBOT's draft accounts for the year ended 31st October 2007 appears on the following pages. The full statutory accounts can be inspected at the Bird Observatory on Fair Isle. The year ended 31st October 2007 was an outstanding year for FIBOT as a business. Guest numbers in 2007 totalled 3,047 bed-nights, more than 11% above the previous record of 2,739 in 2005. Other highlights included:-

The Hostel Revenue total of £119,400 is some 20% higher than the equivalent 2005 record revenue total.

Shop Income was at another record high at £8,493 with profits at £2,649.

The Bar had an excellent year with income at £15,039 with profits at £4,054.

During 2007 we invested in a Renault Espace and spent £6,300 on the New Observatory project.

Total Income was £150,892 (2006 equivalent - £132,213). Total Expenditure (excluding Depreciation) was £130,705 (2006 equivalent - £120,854).

The overall Profit for the year was £8,187, after Depreciation charges of £12,000.

The Balance Sheet remains in good shape with net current assets of £122,445. This compares with an equivalent figure of £96,684 at the end of October 2006.

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 requirements of these two organisations.

We received some generous donations during the year and, where appropriate, these will be 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. We have opened a new bank account for donations that have been made specifically for the new Observatory project.

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, the financial situation should remain healthy. With continued careful management and prudent control of expenditure, we aim to maintain the right balance between accumulating financial reserves and improving the Observatory. My personal thanks go to Hollie, Deryk and their staff for their extremely hard work in making this situation possible.

Income and Expenditure Report for the year ended 31st October 2007

	2007	2006
	£	£
Sales Income		
Hostel Income	91,321	74,410
Shop Sales	8,493	8,332
Bar Income	15,269	15,039
Miscellaneous Hostel Income	4,317	4,510
	119,400	102,291
Cost of Sales		
Purchases	43,714	40,085
Wages & Salaries	35,820	31,307
	79,534	71,392
Trading Profit	39,866	30,899
Other Income		
Interest Received	5,047	5,156
Deferred Grant Income released	0	0
Subscriptions	5,558	5,586
Donations	2,151	1,769
Grants Received	18,736	17,411
Other Income	0	0
	31,492	29,922
Gross Profit	71,358	60,821
Other Expenses		
Administration	8,059	7,661
Establishment	33,038	33,375
Sales & Marketing	7,792	7,388
Financial & Legal	2,282	1,038
Depreciation	12,000	11,000
	63,171	60,462
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	8,187	359

Balance Sheet as at 31st October 2007

	31/10/07	31/10/06
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	64,484	69,484
Investments	10,857	10,857
	75,341	80,341
Current Assets		
Stocks	7,943	9,368
Debtors	12,995	8,470
Cash at bank and in hand	109,592	99,493
	130,530	117,331
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(8,085)	(20,647)
Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)	122,445	96,684
Total assets less current liabilities	197,786	177,025
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(0)	(0)
	197,786	177,025
Representing:		
Accumulated Surplus	197,786	177,025
Appeal Reserve	0	0
	197,786	177,025



Systematic Checklist of the Birds of Fair Isle

Alan Bull & Deryk Shaw

The table below is a checklist of the birds of Fair Isle up to the end of 2006. The species name is followed by a code to summarise their status on Fair Isle (see below). The main list includes all birds recorded on Fair Isle from Categories A-C of the British List (365 species). Five species in Category D, two Category D candidates, presumed escapes (Category E) and one extinct are also included in lists at the end.

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Mute Swan (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Garganey (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Quail (S)
<input type="checkbox"/> Bewick's Swan (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Shoveler (S)	<input type="checkbox"/> Red-throated Diver (RM)
<input type="checkbox"/> Whooper Swan (FM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Pochard (R)	<input type="checkbox"/> Black-throated Diver (V)
<input type="checkbox"/> Bean Goose (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Duck (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Northern Diver (S)
<input type="checkbox"/> Pink-footed Goose (FM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tufted Duck (RM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-billed Diver (V)
<input type="checkbox"/> Greater White-fronted Goose (S)	<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Scaup (S)	<input type="checkbox"/> Little Grebe (R)
<input type="checkbox"/> Greylag Goose (CM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Eider (BS, FM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Crested Grebe (V)
<input type="checkbox"/> Canada Goose (R)	<input type="checkbox"/> King Eider (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Grebe (V)
<input type="checkbox"/> Barnacle Goose (FM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Steller's Eider (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Slavonian Grebe (S)
<input type="checkbox"/> Brent Goose (R)	<input type="checkbox"/> Harlequin Duck (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Black-browed Albatross (V)
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Shelduck (S)	<input type="checkbox"/> Long-tailed Duck (FM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Fulmar (BL, CM)
<input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Wigeon (FM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Scoter (S)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cory's Shearwater (V)
<input type="checkbox"/> American Wigeon (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Surf Scoter (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Shearwater (V)
<input type="checkbox"/> Gadwall (R)	<input type="checkbox"/> Velvet Scoter (S)	<input type="checkbox"/> Sooty Shearwater (FM)
<input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Teal (FM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Common Goldeneye (RM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Manx Shearwater (S)
<input type="checkbox"/> Mallard (BS, FM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Smew (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> European Storm Petrel (BS, FM)
<input type="checkbox"/> American Black Duck (V)	<input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Merganser (FM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Leach's Storm Petrel (B?, RM)
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Pintail (S)	<input type="checkbox"/> Goosander (S)	<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Gannet (BL, CM)

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|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Cormorant (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific Golden Plover (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-headed Gull (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> European Shag (BL, CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> European Golden Plover (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Gull (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Bittern (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Grey Plover (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughing Gull (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grey Heron (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Lapwing (BS, FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mediterranean Gull (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purple Heron (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Red Knot (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mew (Common) Gull (BS, FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White Stork (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanderling (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ring-billed Gull (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> European Honey-buzzard (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-palmated Sandpiper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Les. Black-backed Gull (BS, FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red Kite (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Stint (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Herring Gull (BS, CM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White-tailed Eagle (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Stint (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Iceland Gull (S) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Western Marsh Harrier (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Temminck's Stint (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Glaucous Gull (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hen Harrier (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> White-rumped Sandpiper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Black-backed Gull (BS, CM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pallid Harrier (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Baird's Sandpiper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Gull-billed Tern (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Montagu's Harrier (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pectoral Sandpiper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Caspian Tern (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Goshawk (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Curlew Sandpiper (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Tern (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Sparrowhawk (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Purple Sandpiper (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> White-winged Tern (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Buzzard (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dunlin (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sandwich Tern (S) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rough-legged Buzzard (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Buff-breasted Sandpiper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Tern (BS, RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golden Eagle (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruff (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Roseate Tern (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Osprey (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Jack Snipe (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Arctic Tern (BM, FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Kestrel (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Snipe (BS, CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Guillemot (BL, CM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Kestrel (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Snipe (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brünnich's Guillemot (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Kestrel (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-billed Dowitcher (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Razorbill (BL, FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-footed Falcon (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Woodcock (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Guillemot (BM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Merlin (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-tailed Godwit (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Auk (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Hobby (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bar-tailed Godwit (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Atlantic Puffin (BL, CM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gyrfalcon (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Whimbrel (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pallas's Sand grouse (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peregrine Falcon (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Curlew (BS, FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Dove (BS, FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water Rail (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Terek Sandpiper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Stock Dove (S) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Crake (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Upland Sandpiper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Wood Pigeon (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Crake (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Sandpiper (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Collared Dove (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baillon's Crake (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Sandpiper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> European Turtle Dove (S) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corn Crake (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Green Sandpiper (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Oriental Turtle Dove (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Moorhen (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Solitary Sandpiper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Cuckoo (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Coot (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Redshank (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Barn Owl (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Crane (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Greenshank (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Scops Owl (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sandhill Crane (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Yellowlegs (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowy Owl (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Bustard (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Sandpiper (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-eared Owl (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Bustard (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Redshank (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Short-eared Owl (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Oystercatcher (BS, FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruddy Turnstone (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> European Nightjar (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pied Avocet (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-necked Phalarope (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Swift (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Stone-curlew (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Grey Phalarope (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pallid Swift (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collared Pratincole (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pomarine Skua (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Alpine Swift (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-winged Pratincole (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Arctic Skua (BS, FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Little Swift (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Little Ringed Plover (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-tailed Skua (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Kingfisher (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Ringed Plover (BS, FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Skua (BM, FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> European Bee-eater (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kentish Plover (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ivory Gull (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> European Roller (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Dotterel (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sabine's Gull (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hoopoe (R) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Golden Plover (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-legged Kittiwake (BM, CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Wryneck (RM) |

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|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Spotted Woodpecker (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> White's Thrush (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Chiffchaff (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calandra Lark (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Thrush (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Willow Warbler (CM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bimaculated Lark (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Swainson's Thrush (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Goldcrest (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Short-toed Lark (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Grey-cheeked Thrush (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Firecrest (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crested Lark (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ring Ouzel (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Flycatcher (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Lark (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Blackbird (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Flycatcher (S) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sky Lark (BS, CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eyebrowed Thrush (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Collared Flycatcher (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horned (Shore) Lark (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dusky Thrush (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pied Flycatcher (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sand Martin (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dark-throated Thrush (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Tit (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barn Swallow (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldfare (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Tit (R) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common House Martin (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Song Thrush (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Coal Tit (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-rumped Swallow (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Redwing (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Treecreeper (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Richard's Pipit (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mistle Thrush (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Golden Oriole (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blyth's Pipit (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Shrike (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tawny Pipit (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lanceolated Warbler (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Isabelline Shrike (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Olive-backed Pipit (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Com. Grasshopper Warbler (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-backed Shrike (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Pipit (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> River Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Grey Shrike (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pechora Pipit (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Savi's Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Grey Shrike (S) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meadow Pipit (BS, CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatic Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Southern Grey Shrike (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-throated Pipit (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sedge Warbler (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodchat Shrike (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Rock Pipit (BS, FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Paddyfield Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Magpie (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buff-bellied Pipit (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Blyth's Reed Warbler (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Jackdaw (S) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Wagtail (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Marsh Warbler (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Rook (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citrine Wagtail (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Reed Warbler (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Carrion Crow (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grey Wagtail (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Reed Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hooded Crow (BS, RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White / Pied Wagtail (BS, FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Thick-billed Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Raven (BS, RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bohemian Waxwing (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Olivaceous Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Starling (BM, FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Dipper (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Booted Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Rosy Starling (R) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Winter Wren (BS, RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sykes's Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow (BS) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dunnock (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Icterine Warbler (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Tree Sparrow (R) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alpine Accentor (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Melodious Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Chaffinch (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> European Robin (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Blackcap (CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brambling (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rufous-tailed Robin (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Warbler (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> European Serin (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thrush Nightingale (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Barred Warbler (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> European Greenfinch (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Nightingale (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Whitethroat (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> European Goldfinch (R) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Siberian Ruby throat (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Whitethroat (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Siskin (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bluethroat (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dartford Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Linnet (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-flanked Bluetail (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Subalpine Warbler (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Twite (BS, FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black Redstart (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sardinian Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesser Redpoll (S) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Redstart (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenish Warbler (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Redpoll (FM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whinchat (FM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Arctic Warbler (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Arctic Redpoll (R) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Stonechat (S) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pallas's Leaf Warbler (R) | <input type="checkbox"/> Two-barred Crossbill (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Isabelline Wheatear (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-browed Warbler (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Crossbill (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Wheatear (BS, CM) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hume's Leaf Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Parrot Crossbill (V) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pied Wheatear (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Radde's Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Rosefinch (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-eared Wheatear (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Dusky Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Eurasian Bullfinch (RM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desert Wheatear (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Western Bonelli's Warbler (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawfinch (S) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (V) | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Warbler (RM) | <input type="checkbox"/> 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) Longspur (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)
- ☐ Chestnut-eared Bunting (V)
- ☐ 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)

CATEGORY D

- ☐ Saker Falcon (V)
- ☐ Asian Brown Flycatcher (V)
- ☐ Daurian Starling (V)
- ☐ Chestnut Bunting (V)
- ☐ Red-headed Bunting (V)

CATEGORY D CANDIDATES

- ☐ Wood Duck (V)
- ☐ Yellow-headed Blackbird (V)

CATEGORY E

- ☐ Black Swan
- ☐ Bar-headed Goose
- ☐ Red-breasted Goose
- ☐ Lanner Falcon
- ☐ White-shouldered Starling
- ☐ House Finch
- ☐ Pallas' Rosefinch
- ☐ Long-tailed Rosefinch
- ☐ Yellow-billed Grosbeak
- ☐ Black-headed Grosbeak
- ☐ Indigo Bunting
- ☐ Lazuli Bunting
- ☐ Painted Bunting
- ☐ Varied Bunting

EXTINCT

- ☐ Great Auk



Citrine Wagtail © WT Miles

HUGH HARROP

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Longhill, Maywick, Shetland, UK, ZE2 9JF
Tel +44 (0) 1950 422483 or +44 (0) 7909 917394
hugh@hughharrop.com
www.hughharrop.com

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