

When feeding, the Black-eared Wheatear perched on the old croft or on top of the fence, flying down to the long grass and quickly back again, whereas the common Wheatears spent most of their feeding time on the road or adjacent bare field, using the fences only occasionally.

E. M. SMITH, R. W. J. SMITH, D. M. STARK.

(This is the first record for the North Coast faunal area.—Ed.)

### **Subalpine Warbler in Angus**

On 14th May 1970 during a period of easterly winds and coastal fog which had produced such migrants as a Wryneck, two Lesser Whitethroats and two Bluethroats, an unfamiliar warbler arrived at the cliff-top fields north of Arbroath. After making a detailed description, I identified it as a Subalpine Warbler. It frequented a drystone dyke, and I observed it at distances down to nine feet, using 10 x 40 binoculars. The bird continually flicked and cocked its tail.

**Description** Head, back and scapulars blue-grey; rump grey; distinct white moustachial stripes, and whitish patch below bill; chin and throat chestnut-pink; breast and flanks paler pink; rest of underparts white, with faint pink tinge; tail dark brown, with outer edges white; wings uniform black-brown; bill dark brown; legs pinkish-brown; eye-ring red.

Later that day I returned with N. K. Atkinson who also saw the bird.

M. NICOLL.

(This is the first record for Tay and Angus.—Ed.)

### **Black-headed Wagtail at Fair Isle**

On 7th May 1970 a very fine male Black-headed Wagtail was found by Julian Harris beside Easter Lother Water. It was seen later by many observers including myself, and was watched at ranges down to ten yards as it ran after insects in the short grass beside the loch and among the stones at the water's edge. In the evening it was more flighty and twice flew to the nearby cliffs. Next day it again frequented Easter Lother and on 9th May it was seen beside Byerwell pool in the middle of the island.

The most distinctive feature of the bird was its very black head, the black extending unbroken onto the nape and below the eye; there was no eyestripe and no white below the black. Otherwise it was similar to a Grey-headed Wagtail, although the whole of the underparts appeared even brighter and deeper

yellow. The wings were marked with two pale-yellow wing-bars and noticeable white edgings of the tertials. The call was slightly harsher than that of the other *flava* wagtails and was sufficiently different to distinguish the bird in flight. There were three Blue-headed Wagtails, two Grey-headed Wagtails and seven Yellow Wagtails on the island on 8th May. All three races are regular at Fair Isle, but this is the island's first record of a Black-headed Wagtail.

ROY H. DENNIS.

(The five previous Scottish records are listed in *Scot. Birds* 6: 176.—ED.)

## Obituary

JAMES MACGEOCH

(Plate 16)

The sudden death of Jim MacGeoch on Saturday, 19th September 1970, when his car struck a stone wall on the outskirts of Inverness, is a tragic loss to all who knew him, and to his fellow members of the SOC in particular.

Mr MacGeoch was well known throughout the north of Scotland, both in the Police Department, in which he served with distinction for 30 years, and in ornithological circles, where his knowledge and deep interest were held in great respect.

Jim MacGeoch was one of the founder members of the Inverness Bird Watching Group, which was begun in 1952, and he with others was responsible for this Group becoming the Inverness Group of the SOC, which in turn was to graduate into the Inverness Branch of the SOC. At the time of his death he was Secretary of the Branch, as well as a Member of Council, and it was due to his enthusiasm and boundless energy that the Inverness Branch has developed into the thriving and active organisation which it is today. Jim's interest in birds and in birdwatching was infectious and his strength lay in his ability to stimulate others, especially the young, so that under his guidance their enthusiasm soon matched his own.

Although birdwatching was probably his chief interest he was involved in many other activities. His unquestionable ability as a photographer was recognised far beyond the north of Scotland; he was interested in archaeology, Freemasonry, piping, the Gaelic language, and indeed almost any cause connected either with natural history or with his beloved Highlands.

In 1956 Jim MacGeoch was appointed Honorary Warden for