FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

BULLETIN

Edited by

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Director

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E D I T O R I A L

It is unfortunate that the size of this "Bulletin" is limited to 48 pp., due to technical reasons, with the result that several articles as well as a good part of two others have had to be left over for a future issue, - which we hope will not be long delayed. So far as the present issue is concerned we would like to commend the paper which Carl-Fredrik Lundevall has so kindly contributed, dealing with the range-expansion of a number of eastern and south-eastern species in Finland and Scandinavia within the last century. Those who are interested in Bird Observatory work in Britain will be glad to have this information for ready reference, for it seems unnecessary to emphasize that the Scandinavian colonists of to-day are our vagrants and drift-migrants of to-morrow.

There is no doubt that, judged by the high standard of the years 1949-51, the autumn season of 1952 was poor. True, there was the usual crop of "rarities" at Fair Isle and elsewhere, but we saw little of the commoner and regular outgoing summer guests. There was plenty of negative evidence at Fair Isle for the postulate that our passage-migration is due very largely to "drift" from the Skaggerak crossing, but collecting negative evidence day after day is a singularly uninspiring task! With so much high pressure to westward, however, there was a little consolation in the more frequent arrivals from breeding-areas in the Greenland-Iceland sector, as will be seen from a study of the Fair Isle report.

There is a strong Scandinavian flavour about the present "Bulletin", for which we have partly to thank Dr. Holger Holgersen and Mr. Ian C.T. Nisbet, both of whom took part, with others, in observing the migration in south-west Norway. A detailed analysis of all the records is not yet complete, and there may be more links with Fair Isle than are apparent at the moment. One period for which a definite link-up can be demonstrated is worthy of some comment: it comprises two movements of rather different kind, the first between September 25th-28th, the second following it on 30th and October 1st. Together they illustrate beautifully the conception that the bulk of Fair Isle migration is due to displacement of Continental birds from the Skaggerak and farther south, and not as previously supposed to "direct" immigration from the coast of west-central Norway.

During the first phase a deep depression moved eastwards from Fair Isle into the North Sea. There is good evidence from Utsira and Lista that some migration, notably of Redwings, was proceeding on the Norwegian coast. The winds at Fair Isle at this time were NE. to north, on the west flank of the depression, and such birds as reached us were cyclonic migrants which had sustained a drift off the central Norwegian coast and travelled round the northern half of the depression. At the beginning of the period an arrival of Snow Buntings (ca. 100) took place: this was not reflected at Utsira till 27th, when a second wave entered Fair Isle. In addition to the species listed in the Table, we had an influx of Herons and some grey geese and waders were well represented (50 Turnstone, 10 Dunlin, 50 Redshank and a Ruff). At both places Snipe, Lapwing, Golden Plover and Oyster-catcher appeared, - the first Oyster-catchers we had seen for nine days. There was also, at Fair Isle, a strong passage of Common Gulls.

The northern origin of the movement is supported by the prevalence of northern species, - in particular Snow Bunting, - and by the scarcity of departing summer guests, most of which may already have been concentrated farther to the south. The Blackcap is an exception, but it is a notoriously late migrant. The situation has a general interest in that it bears a close resemblance to the former view of a direct passage into this country from central Norway, but it seems worth while emphasizing that situations of this type are rather rare, and that when they do occur the numbers and variety of birds - and especially of passerines - are very small.

Contrast the situation of September 30th, when a small depression formed off the west coast of Denmark, causing westwards drift of night migrants from the Skaggerak-crossing on its northern perimeter. At Fair Isle there was no increase in Snow-Buntings, there were no further waders, and no Common Gulls. But there was the big "rush" of Turdidae and the variety of smaller migrants (and a skein of 30 geese) which is characteristic of this type of situation. And it is clear that Utsira benefitted too, though to a less extent.

(Table on next page)

Fair Isle Bird Observatory, January 10th, 1953.

TABLE.

List of Species and Numbers at Utsira (SW. Norway) and Fair Isle in late September 1952

Species.	Utsira.					Fair Isle.				
	24	25	26	27	30	25	26	27	28	30
Brambling			2		40			1		4
Snow Bunting			1	6	2	96	50	100		100
Flycatchers		4	2	2	1					3
Goldcrest	1	1	1	6	16				1	8
North. Chiffchaff					4					1
Willow Warbler			1	1			1			6
Blackcap							1	2	1	8
Lesser Whitethrt				1	1				1	4
Fieldfare			1	80	Many		2	9	15	500
Redwing	60	Many.		.	.Many	2	7	13	3	500
Blackbird		1	1	2	1					
Wheatear	1	1	3	6	8	20	99	60	50	50
Redstart	1	1			1					1
Robin	1	2		1	7			1		1
Hedge Sparrow		1		1			1	1		1
Wood Pigeon				1	1	1		1		1
Owls					1			1		1
Snipe		2	4	2	5			1	2	6
Jack Snipe			1	1		1	1	2	1	3
Oyster-catcher			3	2		4	2	1	1	1

Also at Fair Isle on 30th (but not at Utsira) Mealy Redpoll (male); Barred Warbler (1st w.) 2 Garden Warblers (2 at Utsira Oct. 1st); a Common Whitethroat; Long-tailed Duck; Water Rail. At Utsira (but not Fair Isle) there was a Yellow-browed Warbler Sept. 27th, and in all probability a second on 30th.

102. Eastern Birds which have extended their Ranges into Scandinavia during the last 100 years.

By CARL FREDRIK LUNDEVALL.

In this paper the author has tried to summarise in the main the situation of some Palaearctic bird species which seem more or less markedly to have extended their ranges in a western or northwestern direction since about 1900, and in some cases since about 1850. In many instances the changed distribution is probably due to cultural factors, but in other cases the new distribution or the tendency of an extended range is surely due to the climatic changes which have appeared in western Europe during the last 100 years. Investigations on these meteorological changes are published by O. Kalela (1946, 1952), among others, and his general paper "Changes in the geographic distribution of Finnish birds and mammals in relation to recent changes in climate" Fennia 75: 38-51, 1952, may be referred to here.

Most of the species referred to in the following list seem to have extended their ranges fairly slowly, but there are also some which have increased suddenly in the northwestern part of Europe, for instance the Red-flanked Bluetail Tarsiger cyanurus in Finland, the Pallid Harrier Circus macrourus in north Germany and southern Scandinavia, and the Indian Ring-dove Streptopelia decaocto. During the spring of 1952 several species seem to have increased due especially to meteorological factors. While most species which had to pass the western parts of Central Europe to reach their Scandinavian breeding areas were kept back by the strikingly cold spring climate in 1952 the eastern species seem easily to have come through a fairly narrow and warm

"corridor" or zone extending from the Black Sea through Rumania, western Russia and Poland to south-eastern Scandinavia. These conditions were responsible for the largest invasion of Circus macrourus ever known in north Germany and Scandinavia, where the species was found breeding at several places for the first time in both regions. Several other eastern bird species were also recorded in Scandinavia in 1952, e.g. Black-headed Bunting Emberiza melanocephala, Woodchat Shrike Lanius senator (from Bulgaria or Macedonia ?), Red-breasted Flycatcher Muscicapa parva, Greenish Warbler Phylloscopus trochiloides, Great Reed Warbler Acrocephalus arundinaceus, Marsh Warbler A. palustris, fairly surely Blyth's Reed Warbler A. dumetorum, Red-footed Falcon Falco vespertinus, Little Egret Egretta garzetta, Black-necked Grebe Podiceps nigricollis, Indian Ring-dove Streptopelia decaocto (breeding for the first time in southern Sweden) and Quail Coturnix coturnix.

From the point of view of actual westwards spread the following species are the most interesting and important.

Golden Oriole. Oriolus oriolus. Has increased and during the last few years seems to have extended its range to Sweden via Finland. The first Swedish nest was found in 1932. Now a regular breeder with from five to ten pairs.

Serin. Serinus canarius. Still extending its range from the south (and during the last few years probably also from the SE). Probably a fairly regular breeder in south Sweden since 1942 (possibly 1938). The first Danish nest was found in 1948. Occasional in Finland.

Scarlet Grosbeak. Carpodacus erythrinus. Now four breeding-records in Sweden, - 1938, 1949, 1950 and 1952. The recent nests were found at Hovran, near Säter, province of Dalarna (at 60 20 N. 15 35 E.) and it is likely the species has reached this area from the east via Aland in the Baltic. It has become regular in SE. Finland north to about 65 N. lat. Accidental in Norway.

Ortolan. Emberiza hortulana. According to W. Makatsch (in litt. 1952) and others it seems to have increased in SE. Europe during recent years. Kalela (1952) says it is spreading NW. from its earlier northern boundary in Finland, as well as in Sweden.

Yellow-breasted Bunting. E. aureola. Seems to have established a position in east Finland, and in 1952 several nests were found in a new (or earlier overlooked) area in NW. Finland, according to E. Merikallio (in a letter).

Rustic Bunting. E. rustica. Has markedly extended its range from NE. in Sweden during the last few years and is now found breeding south to about 63 N. lat. Accidental in Norway (at Utsira, 1934) and in south Sweden.

Little Bunting. E. pusilla. Perhaps formerly overlooked. The first Scandinavian nest was found in north Norway in 1907. A male was shot during the breeding-season in north Sweden in 1911, where the first nest was not found, however, until 1952. It is also found breeding in north Finland (according to P. Palmgren, 1936). Accidental in other parts of Scandinavia (e.g. Utsira, latest in 1952, according to H. Holgersen - see paras. 105, 106).

Red-throated Pipit. Anthus cervinus. Seems to

have extended its range into northern Scandinavia from NE. since the middle of the 19th century. It was first recorded in north Norway in 1837, in north Finland about 1860, and in north Sweden in 1875. The species shows considerable variation in numbers from one year to another. The southernmost breeding place yet located in Sweden is at about 66 20 N. lat.

Red-breasted Flycatcher. Muscicapa parva. Is probably now an annual breeder in SE. Sweden. It seems to have markedly extended its range from SE. since about 1920. The first Danish nest was found in 1941, and the first Swedish one in 1944.

Greenish Warbler. Phylloscopus trochiloides. The first Swedish record was in 1939, the second in 1949. In 1952 a small influx took place to SE. Sweden (Oeland). It has spread markedly in Finland during the last few years. Pynnönen observed it twice at 62 8 N. lat. in 1951 and five times there in 1952.

Eversmann's Warbler. Ph. borealis. Possibly overlooked earlier. Many records in the last few years, however, point to an increase in north Finland and northern Scandinavia since 1900. Apart from reports on nests in 1916 and 1940, not definitely confirmed, the first Swedish breeding record was made in 1952 at a place where a colony of singing males was located in 1950 and 1951.

Grasshopper Warbler. Locustella naevia. Seems to have extended its range in Scandinavia partly from the south and partly from the east. The first Swedish breeding record was at about 60 50 N. 17 E. in 1929. In the province of Dalarna, central Sweden, it was recorded in 1944, 1945 and 1952 (two localities) and it is supposed to have reached that area from the east via Aland in the Baltic.

Great Reed Warbler. Acrocephalus arundinaceus. Appears to have spread from the south in the beginning of the 20th century, and in 1944 was found breeding as far north as 58 40 N. 14 E. From 1949-51 has been found on Oeland, having probably arrived from SE. According to Tischler (1940) it is common in East Prussia. In 1952 a small influx from SE. appears to have taken place.

Reed Warbler. A. scirpaceus. Has spread in the eastern parts of Sweden during the last few years. It reached Riga in Latvia in 1931, was at Matzalwick in Estonia in 1934, and bred for the first time in Finland in 1935.

Marsh Warbler. A. palustris. Its early history in Sweden is unknown. Reports of breeding at different places in the southernmost province, Skane, during the 19th century have not been definitely confirmed, and the first reliable record of a nest is dated 1934. Since then it has been found breeding at different localities in SW. Sweden. Several reports of birds in SE. and east Sweden point to small invasions from SE. at different times, the last in 1952. Invasions into south Finland took place in 1944 and 1945.

Blyth's Reed Warbler. A. dumetorum. This bird appears to have established itself around Lake Ladoga about 1900. It has been found on different occasions in south Finland since 1934, in Estonia in 1939, and in east Sweden possibly in 1932 and 1949, and fairly surely also in 1952.

Aquatic Warbler. A. paludicola. Possibly a breeder in southernmost Denmark since the beginning of the century. It is regular in East Prussie and in SE. Sweden there have been four records since 1942, the last at Ottenby on August 14th 1951.

Icterine Warbler. Hippolais icterina. Has increased much in numbers in east Sweden since the last decades of the 19th century. In Finland it has decreased in recent years in areas near its northern boundary, however.

Black Redstart. Phoenicurus ochrurus. It has markedly extended its range from south and SE. since about 1900. The first Swedish nests were found in 1880 and 1901 respectively, and the first Norwegian one in 1944. Now the Swedish population consists of at least 20 - 30 pairs. It is regular at Ottenby Bird Observatory (Oeland) during the migrations, and seems possibly also to be breeding on Oeland. The northernmost Scandinavian record is from 69 N. lat.

Sprosser. Luscinia luscinia. This has markedly expanded its range in east Sweden since about 1930, partly perhaps from southern Finland.

Red-flanked Bluetail. Tarsiger cyanurus. Has suddenly extended its distribution into Finland from east since 1949. During the following years it was found at many places in east and central Finland (for full details see M. Sovinen, Ornis Fennica 29: 27-35, 1952).

Bee Eater. Merops apiaster. Has increased in SE. Europe, according to K. Makatsch, Journ. fur Orn. 93: 290-294, 1952 and others, and has also been found on different occasions in Denmark (two pairs bred on Bornholm in 1948) and Sweden during the last few years. A flock of 16-18 birds, for instance, was recorded outside Stockholm on May 31st, 1944.

Hoopoe. Upupa epcps. Appears to have increased somewhat during the last few years. It is now

again fairly regular during migration in SE Sweden and seems once again to be an annual breeder in the country.

Roller. Coracias garrulus. Decreased markedly in Sweden during the period 1850 to 1930, perhaps due to the change to a more maritime type of climate. During the last decades, however, the Roller is known to have extended its range northwards in Russia and the Baltic States (probably an effect of "population pressure" caused by the population in west Europe gradually moving east). In Estonia there were known to be 94 breeding localities in about 1940 as against 15 before 1900. A new Swedish breeding-area was found in 1939 on north Gotland at about 57 50 N. 19 10 E. and the nesting pairs there seem to be increasing.

Kingfisher. Alcedo atthis. Has increased very much since about 1850. A small Swedish population was known between 1872 and 1939. During the cold winters of 1939-42 the species almost vanished, however, but now it is back at most of the old localities and many new breeding-places. It seems to have grown more numerous than ever during the last few years.

Lesser Kestrel. Falco naumanni. According to Makatsch (1952) and others the Lesser Kestrel is extending its range northwestwards through SE Europe. It has been found at least twice in Denmark during the last few years.

Red-footed Falcon. F. vespertinus. Stegmann (in Fauna SSSR, Ptiсy: Order Falconiformes, 1937) says this falcon has extended its range markedly in NW Russia. It seems also now to be probably a regular nester in East Finland, the Baltic States and East Prussia. A Swedish nest was found on the

isle of Oeland in 1928, and it is a rare but fairly regular visitor now in eastern Sweden. At least 40 records have also been made in Denmark, as well as several in Norway.

Marsh Harrier. Circus aeruginosus. Decreased markedly in south and middle Sweden during the last decades of the 19th century and early 1900s, but has now again increased strongly and is breeding in nearly every suitable marsh in those regions, where it is protected.

Montagu's Harrier. C. pygargus. Noticeable extension of range from the south (and SE) since about 1900. The first Swedish nest was found outside the town Orebro in central Sweden in 1923. In 1952 the population probably consisted of about 15 pairs, most of them in the SE. In Denmark the first nest was found in 1901, and by 1946 a total of 97 Danish breeding-places were known.

Pallid Harrier. C. macrourus. According to B. Stegmann (1937) and others the Pallid Harrier seems during the last few decades to have spread from the open grass-steppes into the forest-steppes in central Russia. Invasions took place in E. Prussia in 1895, 1897, 1911, 1923, 1929, 1930, 1934, 1938 and 1940; in Estonia in 1901 and 1911; and in Scandinavia in 1884, 1895, 1923, 1930 etc. Until 1952, however, the bird had never been found breeding in Scandinavia. In that year the biggest invasion ever known took place and breeding was definitely proved at different places in Sweden and north Germany. Altogether some 60 individuals seem to have been recorded in Sweden, about 30 of them since 1930 (Denmark 10, Norway 11, Finland probably about 30 records - 15 since 1930).

(To be continued)

103. American Robin on Lundy.

by PETER DAVIS.

The bird was probably first seen on October 25th by one of the islanders, on top of the island near Quarterwall Pond. On the 27th I found it feeding voraciously on blackberries in a gully north of the Terrace Trap. With its blackish head, dark brown upper parts, pale brick-red underparts and upright stance it superficially resembled an over-sized cock Stonechat. When disturbed it gave a call not distinguishable to my ears from the low alarm rattle of an uneasy Blackbird.

Later it was taken in the Terrace Trap, and after examination and ringing was shown to F.W. Gade and other residents, photographed, and released near the Hotel. The next day it was back on the Terrace, half a mile away, but the remainder of its stay was spent on the open grassland near Quarterwall, where it fed with Redwings and Blackbirds. Another call-note was heard here, a low "tsee" given in flight. It was last seen on November 8th.

From the dull, dark olive-brown of the upperparts, the paleness of the breast, the ill-defined white orbital ring and small white tips of the outer rectrices, it was probably a first-winter bird. The dark brown, not blackish, tail suggests that it belonged to the race Turdus migratorious migratorious (Eastern Robin), which breeds north and east of a line East Alaska - Georgia, rather than to T. m. nigrideus (Northern Robin) of northeast Canada, Labrador and Newfoundland.

This agrees with your suggestion (K.W., in litt. to P.D., 12.xii.52) that the bird had come down the St. Lawrence, perhaps from the Great

Lakes region, in the extension of the United States anticyclone which brought fine, warm weather and light south-westerlies to the St. Lawrence estuary on the 21st-22nd. American Robins are normally still numerous in the Great Lakes region at this time but scarce in eastern Canada. Then on 23rd the warm sector of a depression over Hudson's Bay moved across the St. Lawrence estuary, with west winds ahead of the cold front which could have drifted the bird out to sea. From there it would come into the westerly airstream flowing round the southern side of a great depression centred south of Iceland, with winds reaching force 8 for much of the way to Lundy.

This would involve a journey of 3,200 miles, with a minimum sea-crossing of 2,800 miles from Cape Race. The bird was probably flying for at least 35 hours.

The bird's condition must have been critical when it reached the island. When trapped at noon on 27th it weighed only 69.8 gm., over 20 gm. less than the weight of Blackbirds of similar build and size (wing 130, tarsus 33 mm.) migrating through Lundy in the autumn. The weight-loss sustained may well have been in the region of 40 per cent.

104. Yellow-billed Cuckoo in Shetland.

An American Yellow-billed Cuckoo Coccyzus americanus was found dying at Exnaboe, close to Sumburgh, Shetland, on the evening of November 1st 1952, having crossed the Atlantic in the aftermath of the storm which caused the great and widespread wreck of Leach's Petrels Oceanodroma leucorrhoa a few days before. The bird was given to Tom Henderson who later sent it to me.

K.W.

105. Observations at Lista, South Norway, in the Autumn of 1952.

by IAN C. T. NISBET.

A description of the results of the Cambridge University Ornithological Expedition to the Lista peninsula in 1951 has appeared in Bull. No. 5, para. 48, 1951 (David Jenkins), and also separately as Stavanger Museum Smaskrifter zool. ser. no. 7, 1952 (John H. Hyatt and Christopher K. Mylne). In the 1952 season observations were made at Lista from August 26th to October 13th, the core of the observations coming from five members of the Cambridge Bird Club who stayed from September 8th to October 4th. A detailed paper discussing the results is in course of preparation, and the following brief summary is given for the purpose of comparison with other areas.

As in 1951, the work of the expedition was divided into two main parts, - daily observations at a comparatively isolated lighthouse at the SW. point of the peninsula, with an attempt to make a census of all migrant species in a localised area around the lighthouse; and regular watches of day migration at a point at the SE. corner of the peninsula, where geographical features concentrate the flow of migrants into a narrow stream along the coast. The numbers of migrants seen in other parts of Lista were recorded daily for comparison with the figures for the lighthouse area, special attention being paid to the region near the coast, which often showed a concentration of night-migrants. Systematic observations were maintained at the lighthouse from August 26th to October 3rd, and daily counts of diurnal migration were made from September 9th to October 13th.

Much time was spent in trapping and ringing, as in 1951; altogehter 335 birds of 31 species were marked, and the total would have been much higher had not the supply of rings run out towards the end of our stay. A Heligoland trap was again constructed in the lighthouse garden, and this accounted for many interesting birds (including 3 Bluethroats, 4 Pied Flycatchers, 3 Ring Ousels and the Chiffchaff mentioned below), despite the fact that the garden was too small to attract any large concentration of birds. Many waders were caught with the use of clap-nets on the shore, and the total includes 130 Dunlins, 7 Ringed Plovers, 5 Little Stints, 4 Sanderlings, 2 Knots, 2 Bar-tailed Godwits and a Grey Plover. Whenever possible, the weights and measurements of trapped birds were recorded (cf. Bull. No.6, para. 60), and some ectoparasites were collected.

The results of the counts of diurnal migrants indicate that the main direction of migration in this part of Norway is to SE., this being also the case for the concentration in SE. Lista. It is possible that the migration at Lista is merely an "outwash" on the flank of a larger movement going parallel to the coast, but just inland from it (the peninsula projects some 2 - 4 miles from the main line of the coast). When appreciable movement was seen at the lighthouse (the SW. point), it was always concentrated by the coastline in a NW. direction. It is interesting in this connection that very little evidence was obtained of an entry into Lista from SE., suggesting that most of the birds had come from farther inland. The birds passing NW. were almost entirely of two species, Bramblings and Meadow Pipits. These, with Siskins, Chaffinches and Fieldfares were prominent among a small number of birds seen leaving SSW. over the sea.

Migration during the first fortnight appeared, on the whole, to be slight, although many birds were about. Perhaps this period represents the departure of the local breeding birds, as the numbers of migrants were generally higher than at any later time, except for the peak periods of passage. A small peak occurred from about August 30th - September 1st following fine weather, with light easterly winds on 30th. The principal species involved were waders but a notable NW. movement of Tree Pipits occurred on 30th, and several Willow-warblers and Ortolans appeared. A Barred Warbler Sylvia nisoria eluded trapping on September 1st.

A long fine spell, with predominantly easterly winds, began on September 6th and lasted until 12th. The weather remained fine until 16th, but the wind became stronger and was mainly from the west. Small numbers of some species began to move on 6th and 7th, and from 8th and 9th onwards a large movement occurred, involving a very large variety of species. The peaks of diurnal passage were on September 10th and 12th, and the 10th also appeared to be the peak day for night-migrants, at any rate at the lighthouse. The whole movement has yet to be fully analysed, but it may be stated that the most prominent species were birds of prey (seen in larger numbers than at any other time); hirundines (mainly Swallows), Whinchats, Wheatears and Bluethroats. A number of migrant tits were seen at this period, mainly Blue Tits (in numbers in the lighthouse garden) on diurnal passage. Some species continued passing in numbers until 16th or even 20th, but the numbers of most species, notably the chats, declined very rapidly. Interesting birds in this movement were several Ortolans, an Osprey, and the first Crossbill and Lapland Buntings; late Swifts and Cuckoos were seen; and among non-passerines

may be mentioned large numbers of Cormorants passing SE. down the coast, and many Little Stints.

After this movement the weather remained unfavourable, with strong NW. winds and frequent rain almost continuously until September 24th. Practically no migration was observed in this period and the numbers of migrants to be seen decreased steadily almost to zero, - except for one or two species such as Lapland Buntings, which remained at about their former strength. A few birds were moving on September 19th-20th, with a notable NW. movement of Meadow Pipits on 19th. A brief improvement in the weather on 21st is perhaps connected with a small movement on 21st-23rd in which a few thrushes (almost the first seen) and a Great Grey Shrike were concerned. A Red-throated Pipit Anthus cervinus was seen near the lighthouse on the same day, 22nd.

On September 24th the wind, still strong, backed to SW. and remained there for three days. The change heralded a large movement of waders on 25th and 26th, and a number of Shore-larks arrived on the latter day. Small numbers of thrushes again appeared. On September 25th a Mediterranean Black-headed Gull Larus melanocephalus, a bird not previously recorded in Norway, was observed.

The wind returned to NW. for September 26th-28th, swung round to the east on the night of 28th/29th, and remained there until October 2nd, steadily strengthening until it reached force 8 on that day. It remained generally easterly to October 5th. Although the weather showed a marked improvement in this period, it never became really fine. The period was one of widespread passage, but the movement was much complicated by varying weather and a full analysis has not yet been made.

The dominant species were thrushes, notably Redwings, which passed in extremely large numbers. It is of some interest that the thrush movement began on 25th, and started in force on September 27th-28th, before the change in wind and weather (See the Editorial observations on this period). A large number of passerines, notably Bramblings and Yellow Hammers, were concentrated in the fields. Large NW. movements of diurnal migrants took place on September 28th-29th, especially of Bramblings, their numbers running into thousands. The broken weather conditions, however, never allowed such a "rush" of migrants as developed at the same period in 1951. Apart from the thrushes, the numbers of night-migrants - with the exception of Goldcrests and Redstarts - were much lower than in earlier movements. Almost all the nocturnal migrants showed some resurgence of passage at this period, the peak days being apparently the 28th and 30th and October 3rd, but especially 30th.

Birds seen in this movement which perhaps deserve special mention are a number of Great Grey Shrikes Lanius excubitor, a second Red-throated Pipit, a Red-necked Phalarope Phalaropus lobatus, further arrivals of Shore-larks Eremophila alpestris, and three Chiffchaffs resembling the Siberian race Phylloscopus collybita tristis, of which one was trapped. In this connection it may be of interest that three birds of this race were shot on Utsira, off the west coast of Norway to the north of Lista, at the end of September.

Cessation of systematic observations at the lighthouse makes observations subsequent to Oct. 4th difficult to analyse. The wind was variable but generally strong and westerly until the 11th; moderate east wind and fine weather prevailed on 12th and 13th. The most interesting observations

are those on the diurnal migration, which returned to "normal" (i.e. SE) after October 1st, and was generally much heavier than in September; and the almost incredible numbers of Fieldfares, Redwings and other thrushes which occurred. The peaks of diurnal passage appeared to be October 3rd-4th, around October 8th, and on the last two days of observation, 12th-13th. Many Bramblings and Chaffinches were involved, and species passing included Bullfinch, Crossbill and Mistle Thrush.

By far the most spectacular, however, were the vast diurnal movements of Fieldfares and Redwings on October 12th-13th, lasting for at least six hours on each day, and involving very many thousands of birds. Large numbers of Fieldfares had also passed on 8th and 10th. Extremely large flocks of the two thrushes, Chaffinches and Bramblings were seen in woods and cultivated fields at this time. A Little Bunting Emberiza pusilla seen on October 6th deserves special mention.

Altogether 170 species were recorded on Lista during the autumn, of which the following, in addition to those mentioned above, are of special interest as rarities in SW. Norway: a number of Carrion Crows Corvus c. corone (Lista is well to the north of the breeding-range), a Little Gull Larus minutus on September 22nd, several Grey Woodpeckers Picus canus, a Turtle Dove on Oct. 1st, an Iceland Gull Larus glaucoides on Sept. 17th, and two White-billed Northern Divers Colymbus adamsii on September 22nd and 29th.

In conclusion we would like to express our gratitude to a number of people for their help in making the expedition a success. Among them may be mentioned the Trustees of the Stavanger museum, and of several funds in Cambridge, for

financial assistance without which the expedition would not have been possible. Also Dr. Holger Holgersen of the Stavanger Museum for assistance in every conceivable way; Herr Fyrmeister Røsstad who permitted us to build and operate a Heligoland Trap in his garden; and, not least, to the Norwegians with whom, and among whom, we lived, and who contributed so much to our personal enjoyment and the success of our expedition.

106. Migration Notes from Utsira, S.W. Norway.

Dr. Holger Holgersen, Konservator of the Stavanger Museum, had a successful stay at Utsira between September 14th and October 10th. He was preceded by Miss Harriet Jörgensen, a well-known Danish ornithologist, so a six-weeks' survey of the bird-life was made which will prove valuable for comparison with the observations at Lista and Fair Isle.

Dr. Holgersen says of Utsira, which is an island off the west coast of Norway, between Bergen and Stavanger: "It is not situated on any migration route: only a few of our species seem (as far as we know from recoveries of ringed birds) to go west or even north-west in autumn. But some of them do, - Fieldfare, Blackbird, Heron, Curlew, Mallard and some gulls. Most of the migrants turning up at Utsira are drift-migrants, when the wind is easterly, or calm. Others touch the isle from the broad stream of migration going regularly north-south along the coast. As soon as the wind is onshore and fairly strong (force 3 or more) few birds reach the island, even if there is considerable migration going on over the land only ten miles to the east."

"The Turdus species became numerous from Sept. 30th. It is impossible for one or two observers to get exact figures, so we could only state which species occurred and approximate increases and decreases. But there were hundreds, on certain days even a thousand, of all species. Strangely enough, the Redwing was for long the dominant bird, later relieved by the Song-thrush, whilst Blackbird and Ring Ousel were scarce."

Some notes culled from the "schedule" kindly forwarded by Dr. Holgersen are given below:

Hornemann's Redpoll. A Redpoll collected on September 21st proved to be Carduelis h. hornemanni and is the first record for Norway.

Chaffinch. 13 on Sept. 16th, 60 on 19th and a small number daily afterwards.

Brambling. Movement of ca. 30-40 from Sept. 30th to October 2nd.

Little Bunting Emberiza pusilla. Two birds (one collected) on October 2nd and one on 3rd, 6th and 8th. There was an Ortolan on Sept. 13th.

Lapland Bunting and Snow Bunting. Three of the former and nine of the latter on Sept. 19th; a few at intervals afterwards.

Shore Lark Eremophila alpestris. Four, Oct. 7th.

Great Grey Shrike Lanius excubitor. One on October 6th-8th.

Red-breasted Flycatcher Muscicapa parva. One on Sept. 6th; one on October 3rd and two on 5th. Pied and Spotted Flycatchers only occasionally.

Goldcrest. Four on Sept. 12th and ten next day. Eight on 16th, six on 27th and a new movement from 30th to October 2nd.

Northern Chiffchaff. Four or five, Sept. 30th and Oct. 1st: one was collected and is thought to be Ph. c. tristis. Other Chiffchaffs on Sept. 20th and October 2nd (3).

Willow Warbler. Five on Sept. 10th, otherwise one or two at intervals.

Yellow-browed Warbler Phylloscopus inornatus. Seen on two different occasions in the same wood, where none was present on the two days between, - Sept. 27th and 30th.

Siberian Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia curruca blythi. Specimens seen for several days in the same wood were thought to be the same birds, and as three were collected this new Scandinavian sub-species was not too rare. One on September 22nd, one September 30th and October 1st-5th and one 7th. Other Lesser Whitethroats were present from Sept. 19th-23rd, 27th-28th, 29th (three birds) and Oct.6t

Fieldfare and Redwing. First big movements on September 27th and September 24th respectively.

Wheatear. Many - possibly all or most after mid-September - were Oe. oe. leucorrhoa on their field characteristics: two of the Greenland race were shot.

Robin. Several daily from Sept. 30th to Oct. 7th, with 13 birds on 6th. Movement of Wrens was noticeable from Sept. 28th, with a later peak Oct. 8th.

Turtle Dove Streptopelia turtur. One Oct.6th.

107. The Story of a Petchora Pipit.

By KENNETH WILLIAMSON.

When we examined the Schooltown cabbage-bed on the afternoon of October 16th Edward Skinner and I flushed a small, dark bird which rose with a monosyllabic call we later wrote down as "pwit". It flew to the Quoy cabbages 40 yds. away and immediately disappeared. Thereafter, for upwards of an hour, it oscillated between the two cabbage patches, flying up with one or more utterances of its very distinctive note each time we disturbed it, and dropping into the middle of the adjacent bed. We despaired of getting a decent view, as the bird showed a strong disinclination to come down anywhere in the open. After half-an-hour's walking to and fro, with only the fleetest of glimpses of it in the glasses, we were still not sure whether it was a rare pipit or a rare bunting.

Then, for a few brief seconds, it perched on the wall of the Quoy stackyard, and the momentary glimpse of a prominent buffish line against the dark brown of the mantle suggested the possibility of a Petchora Pipit. The outer tail-feathers we had already noted as "light", - certainly whitish, if not actually white. Twice after this it went away from the cabbages and perched on the roof of a small outhouse, but before we could get into a position to view it the bird was on the way back to its usual haunt. Eventually it grew tired of being hustled to and fro (as well it might, - it had been very patient, if unaccommodating!) and flew off behind Houll Hill several hundred yards away.

Next morning we found the bird again, in its beloved cabbages (for lack of a better name, it was now known to us as "The Cabbage-patch Pipit").

Before attempting to make it show itself we decided to get an opinion from James Wilson, who has had previous experience of this bird. (Where else in western Europe could you knock at a man's door and say, "Will you please come and confirm a Petchora Pipit in your cabbages ?"). Wilson joined us, together we flushed the bird, heard it call as it rose high and went away towards Shirva, and he gave his assurance that our suspicions were correct. We crossed the fields to Shirva, but were unable to find the bird again.

It was not in its usual cabbages on October 18th, and we feared it had left the isle. But at mid-day, as we worked the Quoy turnips a hundred yards east of the cabbage patches, we put up a dark brown bird and again heard that distinctive call. We watched its high, somewhat undulating flight through our glasses, saw it dive steeply when above Schooltown's cabbages, and were aghast to see a sudden flurry of feathers as the bird struck the telephone wires which cross the roadway alongside the croft. The pipit fell like a stone and a few minutes later we found the warm, limp body lying in the middle of the bed. We took it to the Haa, weighed and measured it and searched it for ectoparasites (a small tick, as yet unidentified, was removed from the gape, but no mallophaga were found), and later a skin was prepared. It had deserved a better fate.

A word about the call-note, which is without doubt the only field-character of any value if our experience of this bird's behaviour is any criterion. The Handbook of Brit. Bds. i, p. 202 says: "George and James Stout of Fair Isle agree that the note, when once heard, is a certain characteristic, and describe it as like a Meadow Pipit's, but noticeably softer and lower in key,

repeated two or three times." Now both George Stout of Field and James A. Stout of Midway know this bird well, and if it were not for the fact that there is always a strong personal element in the transcription, or expression in phonetics of any bird-call (with the possible exception of "cuck-oo!") I would hesitate to offer any comment on this statement. Two points that I would make are, firstly, that it is no use expecting to hear a call that in any way resembles a Meadow Pipit's (the type of call has perhaps more similarity with Meadow than it has with Tree Pipit, and I think that is what is intended in the present case); secondly, neither Skinner nor I can agree that the note is in any respect "soft". To our minds it is the opposite, a strong, hard and forceful call and the nearest rendering I can get is "pwit", - uttered perhaps once only, or maybe several times in fairly rapid succession. It is certainly lower in pitch than the Meadow Pipit's call and entirely lacking in sweetness or richness of tone. And it is certainly, once you have heard it, a "certain characteristic".

An interesting fact is that the day on which this bird was found, October 16th, was the peak-day of Northern Chiffchaff passage (see para. 110). These birds probably breed in much the same area. On the peak-day of Chiffchaff passage in 1951 - October 2nd - James Wilson disturbed a Petchora Pipit near the head of the Wirvie Burn. It may well be that the best time to look for this bird is when the Northern Chiffchaffs come in. This point seems worth making, since Fair Isle remains the only place in western Europe where Petchora Pipits have been seen, and there are now upwards of a dozen occurrences. It cannot be that Anthus gustavi only visits Fair Isle, and there must be dozens if not scores in Britain in some years.

After our brief experience of it Edward Skinner and myself have ceased to wonder why it has never been seen elsewhere: without a knowledge of that distinctive call the chances of a certain identification are exceedingly remote.

108. Rare Larks at Fair Isle.

A.G.S. Bryson had poor views of a very pale lark or pipit-like bird late in the afternoon of October 6th: it eluded close examination, and it was not seen again until late next day when Col. R. Meinertzhagen found and collected it. It was seen to be a Short-toed Lark, but the subspecies could not be determined until later when Colonel Meinertzhagen compared the skin with series in his own collection. It proved to be Calandrella cinerea longipennis, one of the eastern forms.

On October 9th Col. Meinertzhagen found an identical bird in the same stubble from which he had taken the first, and on that and the two following days this was watched by other observers. During this period a strong westerly gale was blowing, with frequent heavy showers, and the conditions for observation were anything but good. The bird struck us as very unlike a lark in its habits: although many Skylarks were feeding in the same stubble, it did not associate with them, nor did it ever call (as they did) on being flushed. Whereas the Skylarks climbed on rising and usually passed to another field this bird flew low and alighted only a short distance off. It was never seen to crouch as larks normally do when they are suspicious, but stood upright with head raised in an alert manner. It was difficult to make out plumage details in the stubble and in such strong wind, but the general impression was

of a pale grey-brown bird, streaked with darker brown above, and whitish below with some streaking confined to the breast. The crown was sandy brown, flecked with darker, and the ear-coverts were dark in contrast with the lighter eyestripe and cheeks: there was no crest.

The collected bird was an adult male, very fat, and had been eating seeds of Cerastium. Its weight was 26.3 gm. and the wing-length 94 mm.

These are the third and fourth occurrences of the Eastern Short-toed Lark at Fair Isle, the previous ones being dated November 11th 1907 and October 29th 1927 (W.E. Clarke, Scot. Nat. 1915: p. 100; J.H. Stenhouse, Scot. Nat. 1928: p. 16). It has occurred on Whalsay, Shetland, and there is a single Irish record. Four birds were present at Utsira, SW. Norway, from September 28th to October 5th 1936.

James A. Stout disturbed an unusual lark on November 2nd and had several close views of it on the ground (but only from the rear) and in flight, through binoculars. It was a very pale, sandy bird, practically unstreaked (by comparison with the Skylarks present in the same stubbles) and remarkably "long-headed", an effect due to the length of its crest when depressed. He was very confident at the time that the bird was a Crested Lark Galerida cristata, and one character which he noted (and which we confirmed from a skin later) was that the short tail, when expanded, showed a three-colour pattern, - the centre feathers dark brown and similar to the wing-feathers, the others almost black except for the buff outermost pair. This is not mentioned as a field-character in the Handbook of Brit. Bds. but J.A.S. considers that

the contrast may be a useful point if a close view of the rising bird is obtained. The bird was first disturbed from grassland and rose with a clear whistling note.

This is the first record of a Crested Lark for Fair Isle and appears to be the first for Scotland.

109. Redpolls at Fair Isle - A Contrast in Racial Characteristics.

The Greenland Redpoll Carduelis flammea rostrata was much in evidence in autumn 1952, a result of the frequent anticyclonic weather to westward providing suitable conditions for movement out of the north-west. The first was watched on Buness, September 7th - 9th, avidly feeding on the seeding heads of Plantago maritima and Plantago coronopus, Sea and Bucksthorn Plaintain. There were two birds on 12th and another on 15th, then two more on 21st and one on 27th. A single bird on October 5th was succeeded by five next day, two remaining on 7th. During the week from October 10th there were three or four birds each day: at this time they were to be seen mostly on the oat-stacks, in the stubble, or in the Busta cabbages.

All these were very distinctive birds in the field and when a few Mealy Redpolls Carduelis f. flammea arrived at the beginning of October there was little difficulty in distinguishing the two races apart. The Mealies were considerably paler - more "mealy", in fact - on the upper parts and had prominent whitish rumps, slightly streaked, - a feature lacking in the rostrata, although some Greenland birds showed a distinct tendency to greyness in this region, and had their dark brown

mantles relieved by greyish streaks. These also showed much stronger streaking on the flanks, and the heavier bill was noticeable when one got close views with binoculars. The Mealies were mostly to be found in the large flocks of Twites which were then working the stubbles and roots, and one could often spot them as the flock rose by virtue of their whitish rumps. The Greenlanders disdained such plebeian company and kept apart, usually in pairs or small parties.

The first Mealy, a male, was trapped on Sept. 30th and had wing 72 mm. and weighed 13.75 gm. There were two on October 3rd and may have been more, as six redpolls believed to be Mealies were seen next day. There were three on 6th and two on 10th. A male rostrata trapped twice on October 5th was unusually light at 15 gm., and a male and female on 12th weighed 21.2 gm. and 19.7 gm. and had wings measuring 80 mm. and 78 mm. respectively. There is no doubt that the Greenland birds average considerably heavier than the Continental.

The birds of October 5th-6th arrived by a cyclonic approach (the low weight of the one we caught may be a reflection of this) round the SW. flank of a depression which had developed quickly over north Iceland on 4th, replacing a ridge of high pressure there and in south Greenland. As a result gales which would have inhibited migration arose in Iceland, but southern Greenland remained in a comparatively calm col and almost certainly these redpoll arrivals originated there. Mealy Redpolls of October 3rd-4th appear to have come from west Norway in the NE. airflow of a depression centred over Heligoland. The Greenland birds of October 10th arrived during a period of anti-cyclonic weather when much redetermined passage of drift-migrants and immigration from the north-west was going on.

K.W.

110. Other Fair Isle Migrants - a Selected List.

Scarlet Grosbeak Carpodacus erythrinus. Two on Oct. 3rd and one next day, busy on oat-stooks; one on 16th. A Bullfinch P. pyrrhula on 19th.

CHAFFINCH. Fringilla coelebs. Very scarce - four females on Oct. 13th but no real movement until 19th-20th with 15 or so on the latter date. There seems little doubt, from examination of the weather-maps, that these had come from the Dutch coast in the SSE. airflow of an anticyclone then centred over Sweden.

BRAMBLING. F. montifringilla. First male on Sept. 27th, and four on 30th by a different route (see Editorial). There were a few on most days to October 13th, when upwards of 60 arrived, - all the way from Holland in a SSE. airstream between a Scandinavian high and a depression then centred over England. The next peak, of about 50 birds, coincided with the Chaffinch peak of 19th-20th and doubtless had the same source. There were some 15 Bramblings on 17th (unaccompanied by Chaffinches) and these appear to have come from the Skaggerak through a col in Forties and East Fair Isle.

Yellow-hammer Emberiza citrinella. A male with the first big lot of Bramblings, and a pair for the two days 15th-16th. One Ortolan Bunting E. hortulana was keeping company with a Lapland Bunting on Buness on September 1st.

LITTLE BUNTING. E. pusilla. The first we have seen in autumn since 1948 gave very good views (the reward of long and patient stalking, however!) on October 11th. The head-pattern and

lack of rufous in the wing and the "tic, tic" call were diagnostic. There had been one at Lista and two at Utsira a few days previously.

Reed Bunting. E. schoeniclus. Arrived on Oct. 13th, three next day, then six on 15th-16th, and afterwards a decrease. Four were found on 20th. For weather details, see CHAFFINCH and BRAMBLING.

LAPLAND BUNTING. Calcarius lapponicus. The prevalence of high pressure weather to westward during September assisted the movement of Lapland Buntings into Britain from Greenland, and the migration followed the customary pattern. The first was heard on Aug. 27th, and the first real movement was of seven birds on Sept. 4th, increasing to thirteen by 6th (for weather details, see MERLIN). About half-a-dozen were seen on most days until the middle of the month, when it seemed that only one or two remained. But, as they split up and wander much over the hill ground (one or two showing an unusual preference for the marshy Sukka Moor) their numbers are always difficult to assess after the first arrival. Three on 20th - 21st may have been new; one on 29th succeeded by five next day almost certainly were, and these undoubtedly came from an anticyclone covering eastern Greenland and Iceland with a following breeze along the eastern side of a ridge which extended through Faeroe to Scotland. Three more appeared on October 5th (with Greenland Redpolls - see para. 109) and there were four on 7th. One or two only, usually in stubble, remained after this date.

SNOW BUNTING. Plectrophenax nivalis. Singly Sept. 6th and 8th, and three on 11th; first big party (20) on 14th and a dozen on 20th. These movements coincided with anticyclonic weather to

westward and almost certainly originated in Greenland. About a hundred arrived from the Continent on 25th with a further influx on 27th (see Editorial) and the species remained at this strength during the first week of October. In that period (Oct. 6th) we trapped an adult male, with white primary coverts, which showed the red-brown mantle plumage with intense black centres to the feathers which characterizes the Iceland race, Plectrophenax n. insulae. Later influxes were Oct. 11th and 14th. James Wilson writes that Snow Buntings were unusually scarce at the island in December, - only 22 on 11th and a single bird on 15th; but according to Jack Peterson they have been in greater strength on Shetland Mainland than for several years past.

WHITE WAGTAIL. Motacilla a. alba. There was a peak at the beginning of September, - 18 on 1st and over 40 on 2nd, apparently cyclonic migrants from Iceland in the NW. airstream of a depression centred over Norway (see MERLIN). Numbers fell gradually to only three on 7th, recovered somewhat on 8th-10th due to a new influx from the same source, and fell away to one only on 16th. No more were seen until three arrived from the Continent on Oct. 1st, a male remaining next day. See Bull. No.8, para. 97 for the August movements.

Great Grey Shrike. Lanius excubitor. One on Oct. 12th-13th, perhaps the same as the bird which trapped itself in the Double Dyke next morning - 58 gm. - and then in the Single Dyke in the afternoon. One on the hill on 17th.

Pied Flycatcher. Muscicapa hypoleuca. The poverty of the September migration is reflected in the paucity of records for this common "drift" species, - singly on 9th-10th, six on 12th, and

three on 30th. Those of 12th may represent "re-determined passage" of drift-migrants which had got to Shetland on 9th on the northern side of a Skaggerak depression.

Goldcrest. R. regulus. One on 28th-29th was a forerunner of the influx of September 30th (8), which continued on October 1st. There was another lot on 12th and more on 16th, but no big numbers this year. One trapped at 1000 hrs. September 30th was almost exactly the same weight (4.92 gm.) at 0830 hrs. next morning, and a female caught at 5.68 gm. at 1000 hrs. October 15th was 5.41 gm. when recaptured at 0700 hrs. on 17th.

NORTHERN CHIFFCHAFF. The usual influx of Northern Chiffchaffs was a fortnight later than in 1951, - five on Oct. 15th, eight next day, and a few present down to 20th. The first one trapped - after a long watch in the field, during which it was provisionally identified as "Siberian" - was inseparable from Ph. c. tristis as expected. A quite typical Ph. c. collybita was caught early next day, and in the afternoon two birds which matched our skins of Ph. c. abietinus were taken. The same heterogeneous mixture of "races" has appeared in previous years, 1949 and 1951, and the view that there is in north-east Europe a "hybrid zone" of secondary intergradation between eastern and western populations seems inescapable. (See Brit. Bds. 43: 48-9; 44: 96-7). A single Northern Chiffchaff was also seen on September 30th, a time when several were present at Utsira (see para. 106). The later movement appears to have come off the coast of west Norway around the NW. flank of a low situated in the south Baltic region: col weather, calm and clear, existed in the Shetland area. The four birds trapped were all small (wings 56-58 mm. as against 58-59 mm.

and 63-65 mm. for five birds in 1951; tail-length 44-47 mm. against 47, 50, 52 mm.), and possibly the 1952 birds were females. Weights were between 6 and 7 gm.

Willow Warbler. Ph. trochilus. We could echo the remark made under Pied Flycatcher. Birds appeared singly until September 9th (4) and 12th (3), and again at rare intervals until 30th (6).

MARSH WARBLER. Acrocephalus palustris. One, which at 12.8 gm. had probably been on the isle a few days, was trapped on October 6th. Prior to 1950 this species had three spring and two autumn records: since then we have trapped three, a fact which should be considered in the light of Carl-Fredrik Lundevall's remarks on this species.

Barred Warbler. Sylvia nisoria. One, September 9th-10th, 24.64 gm. Another watched on 30th.

Garden Warbler. S. borin. Very patchy. Three on Sept. 7th, two on 9th and two on 30th. A bird which haunted a patch of Heraclium spondyllium during the first week of October was apparently eating the seeds. There were singles from 11th-15th and on 18th.

Blackcap. S. atricapilla. Equally patchy, and mainly single birds. One or two, Sept. 26th-28th, succeeded by eight on 30th; two males, Oct. 18th. James Anderson trapped a female at the low weight of 15.42 gm. on December 5th, the latest record for the island.

Lesser Whitethroat. A S. curruca blythi was trapped on Sept. 8th (2nd primary between 6th/7th in both wings, wing 67 mm., tail 62 mm., which is 3 mm. more than the maximum given for this race in

the Handbook of Brit. Bds.). A second blythi was in the vicinity of the Haa from October 12th-17th and this had wing 64 mm. and tail 54 mm. Others were seen on September 10th (typical race), 28th, 29th, and four arrived on 30th.

Turdidae. Movements of Fieldfare, Redwing, Song thrush and Blackbird will be dealt with in a later Bulletin. See also Editorial.

WHEATEAR. Oenanthe oenanthe. By September 21st Wheatears were few enough to permit of a fairly accurate estimate of daily numbers. Down to 25th they were very few, but on that day twenty were noted, and a considerable increase to over a hundred followed. A male Oe. oe. leucorrhoa with wing 107 mm., and a 1st-winter bird with wing 105 mm., were trapped on 26th and 27th. A slight rise in numbers, probably from the Continent, took place on 30th, and on October 3rd there was again passage of big birds. Further "Greenlanders" appeared on 8th and a few were seen daily to 10th. On this day a young bird ringed locally in early July as a late nestling was retrapped, still in body-moult to 1st winter dress. A single bird from 13th-16th, three on 20th, with one remaining until November 6th were the only later records.

Stonechat. Saxicola torquata. One on Oct. 30th and two next day. Single Whinchats S. rubetra at irregular intervals in September.

Redstart. Ph. phoenicurus. One from Sept. 30th to Oct. 2nd, two females Oct. 13th, and one or two down to 20th. A female Black Redstart Phoenicurus ochrurus gibraltariensis was trapped on Nov. 2nd.

Bluethroat. Cyanosylvia svecica. Male on Oct. 4th, two birds next day and four on 6th. A male on 15th.

Robin. Erithacus rubecula. Very scarce. Two, Oct. 12th, two or three from 15th-17th; two, 30th. Hedge-sparrow Prunella modularis also occasional in October.

WREN. Troglodytes troglodytes zetlandicus. A wren trapped in the Gully on October 7th appeared too dark for local birds, which have a greyish suffusion on head and upper mantle in fresh dress (see Ibis 93: 599-601, 1951) and matched perfectly skins of the Shetland Wren. Its wing and tail measurements were greater than those of any T. t. fridariensis we have yet trapped, - 53 mm. and 37 mm. respectively, bill 15 mm., tarsus 20 mm., and weight rather low at 11.68 gm. There was a north wind at force 4 at the time.

Black-bellied Dipper. Cinclus c. cinclus. One on the beach at Easter Lother, October 13th.

HOOPOE. Upupa epops. We watched one having a long battle of wits with a Merlin above Wirvie on October 15th. The two were first seen at a height of about 200 ft, and within five minutes they had risen so high that we lost them when moving our position, and could not pick them up again. When first seen the black and white patterning of the Hoopoe's markedly rounded wings, the fawn body-plumage and the long bill were diagnostic. The Hoopoe's tactics were to climb in tight circles, and after a few minutes it was clearly getting the better of the situation. Its rounded wings gave it a better "lift" and the Merlin seemed unable to keep up with it except by making long, straight climbs which took it many yards distant from its prospective prey. Such climbs were followed by sudden stoops which the Hoopoe appeared to have little difficulty in avoiding, and after darting aside it continued with its spiralling, leaving

the Merlin faced with another long climb to gain sufficient height. Colonel Meinertzhagen tells me he has often seen Hoopoes outwit Eleanora's Falcons in the Middle East by employing the same tactics. Going up the Ward Hill afterwards I put up a female Merlin, and, fearing the worst, searched about for signs of prey, - and found the scattered wing and body feathers of a Goldcrest! The two incidents provided a nice illustration of the astonishingly wide size-range in the prey of this small falcon.

MERLIN. Only Iceland Merlins Falco columbarius subaesalon were trapped (see Bull. No. 8, para. 98 for details of these birds). Three we captured on September 4th had arrived by cyclonic approach in a northerly airstream on the western side of a vast depression then covering Scandinavia. There were also three on Sept. 9th, but these were probably arrivals of F. columbarius aesalon from the Continent, with two Kestrels F. tinnunculus, in the easterly airstream of a low pressure system affecting the North and Irish Seas. Similar conditions to 4th existed on 17th-18th and again one or two additional Merlins were seen. A new influx on 20th, when an Icelandic male was trapped, followed similar weather on 19th. Three Merlins and two Kestrels on 27th may have come from Norway (see Editorial). There were two or three Merlins daily until mid-October and the last was noted on 20th-21st.

Hen-Harrier. Circus cyaneus. A female from September 20th-24th. Buzzard, Buteo sp., on Sept. 14th and from October 10th-13th. Female Sparrow Hawk Accipiter nisus September 1st-2nd, and in mid and late December.

(To be continued).

111. The Autumn Migration of 1952 at Great Saltee.

By R.F. RUTTLEDGE.

The island was manned from August 3rd until October 4th, the following observers taking part: W. Boardman, P.W.P. Browne, Arnold Darlington, M. P. Grover, G.C. Johnson, R.T. Ling, R.F. Ruttledge, J.F. Sharp, John Weaving and R.G. Wheeler. It had been intended to continue observations until Nov. 15th but the lack of observers forced us to leave the island much earlier.

Weather. August. Westerly winds up to force 5 on 3rd gave way to light variable on 5th and NE. to force 4 on 6th. There followed a period of strong SW. to W. wind until 14th on which date force 1 only was registered. There were gales on 10th and in the night of 12th. From 15th-20th variable winds, often with an easterly component, mainly light but reaching gale force from ESE. on 18th. From 21st to the end of the month light W. wind prevailed, except on 27th when force 6 from WSW. was recorded. There were periods of fog on 25th, 29th and 30th.

September. Moderate or fresh winds from W. or NW. for the first four days. In the night of 4th/5th a strong N. wind moderated and veered on 5th to ENE. There followed a period of winds between NNE. and ENE. up to 17th, when after a calm night a period of light to moderate NW. wind held to 19th. On that evening the wind changed from ENE. and was WSW. on 20th. There followed days of light to moderate westerlies, reaching force 7 from SW. on 24th. Westerly type weather continued until 29th when, in the evening, the wind veered to ENE., but by dawn on 30th it had backed to N. and reached gale force at times during the day. There were some hail showers.

Throughout September the days and nights were, on the whole, bright and clear. There was drizzle in the night of 21st, and rain on 24th. Visibility varied from good to excellent.

October. Moderate to fresh NW. wind at first. On 3rd the wind veered NE. through E. to reach SE. early on 4th, but backed to NE. during the morning. The nights were bright with a nearly full moon and day visibility was good.

Migration. The following notes are selected from observations on the migrant species seen. Notable occurrences were a RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER, a GREENISH WARBLER and a YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER.

Starling Sturnus vulgaris. Occasional only in the first half of August, none later.

Greenfinch Chloris chloris. One, October 3rd. Goldfinch Carduelis carduelis. Two the same day.

Linnet C. cannabina. Aug. 5th (1); Sept. 13th and 22nd (1 each day), 23rd (9) but only one next day. Marked movement on Oct. 5th when J.W. and R. F.R. watched at Carnsore Point on the mainland NE. of Saltee from 0600 to 0830 hrs. There was a huge build-up and more than six parties varying in strength from 30 to 70 birds left seawards, after mounting high, flying SE. until lost to binocular vision. Skokholm showed a peak in numbers on the same date. Wind very light variable, visibility excellent. (A weak "high" over southern Ireland and St. George's Channel left by receding ridge of high pressure, 0600 hrs. weather-chart - K.W.)

Chaffinch Fringilla coelebs. The main movement had not commenced when we left on Oct. 4th. On 3rd two females were noted. Single birds on September 29th and October 1st.

Skylark Alauda arvensis. No evidence of any migration until Sept. 14th when two came high into the island from SW. Little or no movement until 29th after which date very small numbers were seen moving from SE. to NE. or N. Maximum Oct. 3rd (25).

Tree Pipit Anthus pratensis. Singly Aug. 11th, 13th, 17th, 19th, 22nd, 26th, 28th, 29th and Sept. 6th. At least one, Sept. 4th. One or two were identified at Kilmore Quay on Aug. 15th: in each case the call-note was heard by observers familiar with the bird.

Meadow Pipit Anthus pratensis. Movement was on a far greater scale than in 1951. The first evidence of migration was denoted by increases on Aug. 5th and 8th, and more markedly on 17th. A minor peak on 23rd (50 plus) and again Sept. 4th. From Sept. 8th to 16th movement was more intense, reaching a peak of 200 on the latter date. Then numbers fell away until a renewed migration began on 22nd, continuing until the island was vacated on October 4th. Peak days were Sept. 23rd (200), 27th (over 500), 29th (650) and October 2nd and 3rd with over 600 each day.

Direction. Movements were sometimes confusing but on the days of heaviest migration from Sept. 22nd to the end of the month birds poured in from NE, and were seen leaving the island on a course to W. or SW. On September 26th arrival was from the east and departure took place to NW. Sept. 30th and Oct. 2nd birds came from south and went away ENE. On 4th the movement was markedly from SW. to NE.

Migration nearly always commenced about the hour of sunrise and peaked from half-an-hour to an hour later. Except on the rare occasions when there was some late afternoon migration movement had ceased from between 1000 and 1100 hrs. GMT.

Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava. One, August 26th, flavissima. Other flava wagtails were seen singly on five days between Aug. 21st and Sept. 3rd.

Grey Wagtail M. cinerea. Singly Aug. 10th, 26th, Sept. 10th, 13th and 19th. One or more on Aug. 29th, two on Oct. 2nd. Singly Oct. 3rd and 4th. Those on 2nd arrived from NE., crossed the island and left flying west.

Pied Wagtail M. alba yarrellii. Singly, Sept. 9th, 22nd and 23rd; Sept. 20th (4), Oct. 2nd and 3rd (5 each day) and 4th (3). Four of the Oct. 2nd birds arrived from NE. and left flying NW.

White Wagtail M. alba alba. Daily from Aug. 22nd to Sept. 14th. Numbers did not exceed ten on any day and were usually less then six, up to Sept. 2nd when more than 10 were noted; Sept. 4th (over 45), 5th (over 20), thereafter dwindling slowly. Most arrivals were from NE. and departures to SW. but on 5th and 6th passage was to NE. (Alba wagtails seen, but not subspecifically identified, on Sept. 16th and Oct. 1st - 7 each day - may have been Pied: on the last day they were moving to between NW. and NE.)

Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata. Intermittent passage of from one to three birds from Aug. 7th to Sept. 9th. Marked passage Sept. 12th to 17th with 15 each day 16th-17th. One on 21st.

Pied Flycatcher M. hypoleuca. Singly on Sept. 4th, 16th and October 4th.

Red-breasted Flycatcher. M. parva. An adult female was trapped on September 17th, the eighth Irish record.

Goldcrest Regulus regulus. Intermittent passage of single birds from Sept. 1st-11th; one to four daily Sept. 12th-19th, two on 27th, three on Oct. 3rd and two on 4th.

Chiffchaff Phylloscopus collybita. Passage commenced with a single bird on Aug. 26th. There were less than ten daily, with none on Sept. 1st and 3rd, to Sept. 6th (10). A peak Sept. 12th of 30 plus and on 16th (50) and 17th (75). Numbers declined rapidly from 18th (10); none were seen 24th to 26th, but there were two each day 27th-30th. Four on Oct. 3rd.

Willow Warbler Ph. trochilus. Passage most days from Aug. 4th to Sept. 18th. Peak period, Aug. 5th-8th (about 100 daily); a minor peak 12th (30) and on Sept. 12th (20). Also Sept. 17th (15), 18th (2), none afterwards.

Greenish Warbler Ph. trochiloides viridanus. The first Irish specimen was collected by P.W.P. Browne on August 25th after he had carefully studied its characteristics in the field, but had failed to trap the bird. Full details are recorded in the Observatory's "Field Record Book." The "collecting" of specimens is contrary to the accepted principles of this Observatory.

Wood Warbler Ph. sibilatrix. One, Aug. 20th.

Yellow-browed Warbler Ph. inornatus. One clearly seen at very close quarters, August 6th. The second Irish record.

Sedge Warbler Acrocephalus schoenobaenus. In small numbers, almost daily from Aug. 4th to Sept. 17th, mostly between Aug. 8th (20) and 15th (30).

Garden Warbler Sylvia borin. Singly, September 11th and October 3rd.

Whitethroat S. communis. Almost daily, August 4th to Sept. 19th; peak on August 8th (30).

Song Thrush Turdus ericetorum. Occasional bird in August (but five on 13th), Sept. 7th, October 3rd (2) and 4th. Mistle Thrush T. viscivorous on October 3rd.

Redwing T. musicus. The first were nine on October 4th.

Ring Ousel T. torquatus. August 3rd (2), and singly on 30th and September 22nd.

Blackbird. T. merula. First increases noted on August 29th-30th; subsequently on Sept. 2nd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 22nd and 29th. Peak passage on October 4th when the island was vacated.

Wheatear Oe. oenanthe. Passage was at its height from August 5th (50) to 9th (50 plus) with peak on 8th (80). Another peak of 80 plus, Aug. 15th, and minor peaks Aug. 19th (40) and 21st (30). Otherwise a thin passage throughout the period.

Whinchat. Saxicola rubetra. Single birds on 4 days between Aug. 16th and 24th. One Sept. 6th and one or two daily 12th to 17th.

Stonechat Saxicola torquata. Almost daily in small fluctuating numbers throughout the period. Maximum eight on September 18th.

Robin Erithacus rubecula. Singly, Aug. 16th and 17th, two on 19th. Thereafter small fluctuating numbers (ten on Sept. 23rd) to the end of

the month. Ten on Oct. 1st and 15 each day from 2nd to 4th.

Hedge Sparrow Prunella modularis. Marked increases on Sept. 13th, 16th, 22nd, 28th and Oct. 3rd-4th.

Wren Troglodytes troglodytes. Marked increase on October 3rd and again on 4th. On the latter day Skokholm noted a vast increase in the number of Wrens. (The Irish Sea at this time lay in a col between highs SW. of Iceland and over France; calm or light air conditions prevailed in Ireland, Wales and SW. England. - K.W.)

Swallow. Hirundo rustica. From August 5th (40) to October 4th migration was in progress on all but seven days, though numbers on some days were as low as one or two birds. The chief movements took place on Sept. 7th (150), 8th (100) and 11th (230). On Sept. 12th and 14th the maximum was reached (1,500 each day). There followed a sharp drop on 15th to 12 and numbers were small for the rest of the time except for a sudden rush on Sept. 29th (200).

Weather. Sept. 7th-8th: anticyclone to west, calm or light air conditions. 11th: similar, but with NE. to east light wind in southern Irish Sea and Wales, wind increasing to moderate on 12th but falling light again 14th. By 15th the anticyclone was over northern Scotland with NE. moderate wind in the Irish Sea. 29th: ridge of high pressure to west of Ireland, but Irish Sea winds northerly on the western side of a low over East Anglia.

Direction. From Aug. 16th when migration was really well established until Sept. 14th movement was determined and with very few exceptions was to NE. On days of heavy passage it was invariably to NE., and during this period arrivals often came in from SW. On September 19th movement was from NE.

to SW.; on 27th to the west, and on 29th most came in from the east and after coasting round the isle departed NW.

The majority of Swallows seen from September 27th to October 1st were juveniles.

House Martin Delichon urbica. A thin irregular movement throughout the period except from August 15th to September 7th, when none was seen. Peak Oct. 3rd (9), on which date in 1951 over 200 were recorded.

Sand Martin Riparia riparia. Less than six on six days from August 23rd, and on the four days Sept. 4th-7th. Maximum Sept. 11th (19), ten on 13th and none after 14th(2). Direction: to west from Aug. 26th to Sept. 4th, thereafter to NE, or north.

Swift Apus apus. One to four on most days, Aug. 3rd to 15th. A straggler on Sept. 8th.

Cuckoo Cuculus canorus. Singly Aug. 16th-17th and 20th-22nd. Those on 20th-21st were juveniles.

Merlin. Falco columbarius. Singly very occasionally in August and the first half of Sept. One or two daily Sept. 27th to October 3rd.

Common Buzzard Buteo buteo. One on August 14th eventually flew away westwards.

Sparrow-hawk Accipiter nisus. Seldom seen till early September. One or two daily from 4th to 19th and 25th to October 1st. On Aug. 18th one was disturbed whilst feeding on a Turnstone, an item of prey not specifically mentioned in the Handbook.

Turtle Dove Streptopelia turtur. Singly on

August 24th, 26th, 31st, Sept. 8th, 14th, 16th and 25th, with two on 24th.

Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus. Between three and ten on most days between Aug. 3rd - Sept. 5th, after which singly (rarely two) until 18th. Peak from Aug. 7th-9th with 15 to 20 birds.

Turnstone Arenaria interpres. Constant movement of varying numbers. Peaks Aug. 5th-7th (60-74) 18th and 19th (about 100) 24th (92) and 27th (130). Sept. 24th-28th was also a period of well marked passage.

Dunlin. Calidris alpina. Passage in August from 3rd to 15th peaking 13th (25). One to three birds Aug. 20th-28th; one or two Sept. 5th-8th.

Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos. Thin movement daily from Aug. 3rd to Sept. 3rd; peak Aug. 9th (35) and minor peaks 13th-14th (15).

Waders. Knot Calidris canutus Aug. 11th (2). Curlew Sandpiper C. testacea Aug. 11th (1) - an early date for Ireland. Spotted Redshank Tringa erythropus Sept. 7th (1).

Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula. Two days of marked movement, Sept. 14th-15th (ca.15). Grey Plover Ch. squatarola, one on seven days from mid-September and one on October 4th.

Black Tern Chlidonias niger. August 21st.

Sandwich Tern Sterna sandvicensis. Up to ten on most days Aug. 13th to Sept. 4th. Peaks Aug. 20th (20), Sept. 2nd (20). Common and / or Arctic Terns peaked noticeably Aug. 9th (150), 14th (200), 20th (100).

Roseate Tern S. dougallii. Five on Aug. 20th and four on 30th.

British Lesser Blackback Larus fuscus graellsi. Passage from Sept. 10th to 20th of between one and 18 birds. Three Sept. 22nd and one 24th-25th.

Corncrake Crex crex. Singly Sept. 8th and 12th. A small crake of unknown sp. was seen on Sept. 16th.

Water Rail Rallus aquaticus. Seen or heard irregularly from Aug. 30th to Sept. 6th; singly Sept. 23rd, 28th and October 3rd.

Ringing and Trapping. The total number of birds ringed during the year was 1,209, of which 1,137 were trapped. Species represented numbered 44. Willow-warblers headed the list with 409 and over 100 each of Chiffchaff, Whitethroat and Rock Pipit were taken. Eighty Rock Pipits were colour ringed for purposes of intensive study of their movements on the island and with the hope that local and other migrations might be traced.

Ringing Recoveries. Spotted Flycatcher. One ringed on Sept. 12th 1952 was found dead at CADIZ Spain on October 21st. A Willow Warbler ringed in its first year on October 3rd 1951 was found at Ondres, LANDES, France, on October 10th 1952. An adult female Chaffinch ringed at Saltee on November 7th 1951 was captured and released at Comblain la Tour, LIEGE, Belgium, on October 11th 1952. Blackbirds in their 1st year ringed on Oct. 4th and 25th 1951 were retrapped on Sept. 11th and 13th 1952. A Hedge Sparrow ringed on October 27th 1951 was retrapped on Aug. 6th 1952.

I am indebted to Mr. I. Conder for permission to quote Skokholm observations which have a bearing on movements at Saltee and Carnsore Point.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

THE WORK OF THE OBSERVATORY

The purpose of the Bird Observatory is to provide facilities for visitors to carry out scientific research on the island, not only in the sphere of ornithology, but in every aspect of Natural History. Work will be mainly concentrated however on ornithology under the supervision of the Director.

TERMS

Full board, including service, is *Six Guineas per Head per week.* Reduced terms are available for parties of students from schools and universities.

APPLICATIONS

Priority in bookings will be given to "Friends of Fair Isle," and to *bona fide* naturalists prepared to take part in the scientific investigations of the station under the leadership of the Director, and to help with such other duties as may be necessary from time to time in connection with the station or hostel. Anyone else wishing to visit the island will be made welcome, provided room is available. Those who are not keen ornithologists are asked to book for the summer months—June, July, and August—so that more accommodation will be available in the spring and autumn for students of bird migration. Application should be made as follows:—

(1) *If made between* 1*st April and* 31*st October.* To the Director, Fair Isle Bird Observatory, by Lerwick, Shetland. Telegraphic address: "Migrant, Fairisle." Telephone: Fair Isle 8.

(2) *If made between* 1*st November and* 31*st March.* To the Director, Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust, 17 India Street, Edinburgh. Telephone: Edinburgh CENtral 4532.

PROSPECTUS

Prospectus giving details of transport to and from Fair Isle, and other information, will be sent on application.


FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY
0 100yds. 440yds. 880yds. 1 mile
Roads
Bird Trap TRAP
Boundaries
Stacks o' Skroo
Da Flesse
North Light
Niv
Kristal Kame
Skroo
Mopal
Kubbie Skerry
Ward Hill
Toor o' da Ward Hill
Toor o' Larness
Burrista
Burrastield
Keesta
Hundi Stack
Hoini
Da Holes
Reeva
Fugli Stack
Mekum
Head
Rippack
Brecks
Springfield
Sladen
South Harbour
Meoness
Da Sherry
Da Keels
Da Burrian
Da Flees
Hjuberg
Whaleback
Quarrel Gio
Busta
Kennack
Leagh
Chapel
Church
Quay
Shirva
Manse
Taing
Maavie Tongue
Field
Shaldi Cliff
Vaasetter
Sheep Craig
Gowans
Setter
Pund
Vaadal
Old Mill Pond
Mill Pond
Sukka Meer
Hoofs Dale
Burn of Vatstaster
Burn of Mirvie
Mirvie Brecks
Ward Hill Strip
Ward Hill Trap
Mill Trap
Mill Dam Trap
Bird Observatory
North Haven
South Haven
Buness
Funniequoy
Buttfield
North Gavel
South Gavel
Easbrecks
Wester Lother
Easter Lother
Golden Water
Kirkigio
Shetland Is.
Foula
Fair Isle
Orkney Is.
Cornwall
Wick