

Dup

Vol. 2  
No. 3

# FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY BULLETIN



Edited by  
**KENNETH WILLIAMSON**  
Director

---

Issued to the Friends of Fair Isle

Subscription, £1, 1s. per year

Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin, Volume 2, No. 3,  
25th April 1954.

## EDITORIAL.

THE latest venture of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust, made possible through the co-operation of Mr. Christopher K. Mylne, is the establishment of a sub-station on the remote Shetland island of Foula, which lies 45 miles north-north-west of Fair Isle and about 20 miles west of the parish of Walls. Mr. Mylne has been appointed Schoolmaster - Missionary to the 70 or so folk who form the island community, and his many friends will wish him well in his bold adventure. He is well known in ornithological circles, having been an active member of the Cambridge Bird Club and hon. secretary of the Edinburgh branch of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club. He has had considerable field experience of migration work, both at the Isle of May Bird Observatory and at Lista in south-west Norway.

MR. MYLNE'S impending departure for Foula, so seldom visited by ornithologists (and then only in the summer months), seemed to us too good an opportunity to miss. So a provision was made by the Trust for the purchase of wire-netting, record-books and laboratory equipment, and it is hoped that Mr. Mylne will have a Helligoland Trap working in time for the autumn migration. The record-keeping and laboratory work will be modelled on the Fair Isle pattern, so that the results obtained at these two outposts will be strictly comparable;

and although the Schoolmaster-Missionary's time will naturally be limited in view of his manifold duties, we confidently look for the development of an invaluable link with the work done, and continuing, at Fair Isle.

ANOTHER change of major importance in the bird observatory scene is that the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust has abandoned the trapping-station at Cley, where the traps were completely destroyed in the disastrous January flood of 1953. The warden, Mr. R.A. Richardson, writes: "But 'it's an ill wind that blows no good,' and my secret ambition has now been realised, - namely, to have an observatory on Blakeney Point." The new station has the blessing of the National Trust, who own the land, and three traps are already in operation there. "The traps span a long, narrow strip of suda bushes sandwiched between the tidal flats and the high dunes, and on 'good' days the concentration of migrants has to be seen to be believed." We wish the new Blakeney Point Bird Observatory every possible success.

MR. PETER DAVIS, formerly the warden at Lundy, has been appointed warden of Skokholm Bird Observatory in south Wales in succession to Mr. Peter Conder, who has joined the staff of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

-----eoe-----

Printed and Published by GEORGE WATERSTON and SONS Ltd.  
Edinburgh 2, for the FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST.

### 36. Turnstones in Mid-Atlantic.

Dr. J. Bruce Falls of Toronto University tells us that on August 25th-26th 1953, when the ship in which he was sailing to this country was in mid-Atlantic some 500 miles south of Greenland, 30 or so Turnstones Arenaria interpres passed the ship each day, flying down-wind to the east. A single Turnstone had been seen on 24th. All flew past the ship and did not appear to be influenced by it in any way.

Examining the Daily Weather Report of the Meteorological Office for this period, we find a low centred about 200 miles south of Cap Farvel on 25th, with a north wind into mid-Atlantic from west Greenland on its western perimeter, and a strong westerly wind, gradually backing SW., on its southern side. The low had spread to the whole of southern Greenland and the surrounding sea-area by 26th, without much change in the prevailing winds.

A down-wind flight, assuming that the Turnstones held such a course, would almost certainly bring many of them to Iceland, since on 26th the British area was in the northerly airstream of the western flank of another depression active in sea-area Forties. This moved away over Norway on 27th, giving a NW. airstream between Iceland and northern Scotland.

The Fair Isle Schedule records a single Turnstone on August 27th, the species having been unrecorded for the previous 2 days, but 13 were counted on 28th and 30 next day, conditions during these days favouring immigration from the north-west. Cyclonic approach from Greenland has been described for the Wheatear Oenanthe oe. leucorrhoa (pp. 35-37) and has been postulated for Lapland Buntings Calcarius lapponicus (pp. 51-55) and other species, and discussed in Scot. Nat. 65: 65-94.

### 37. Some Migration Notes from Fair Isle in Autumn and Winter 1953-4.

KENNETH WILLIAMSON.

Selected species only are included in this list, and occurrences already mentioned in the two previous numbers of vol. 2 are not repeated. Most of the small migrants are excluded, since the most interesting period of passerine migration is analysed elsewhere in this issue (pp. 117-126). Notes from mid-November onwards have been supplied by Mr. James A. Stout.

SLAVONIAN GREBE Podiceps auritus. One was in South Harbour, close to the shore, on September 11th, - and Bob Sharland leapt in with a net and caught it! It was an adult weighing 245 gm. and with a wing of 139 mm. We released it in the North Haven, where unfortunately it was found dead at the end of the month. The first grebes were one on September 10th and 2 next day, under weather conditions suggesting Icelandic origin.

CORMORANT Phalacrocorax carbo. First arrivals August 24th, 26th and 28th. Movement really began in earnest on September 3rd in cyclonic-variable weather, and 15 were seen in col weather next day. Passage was slacker on 7th but increased next day with a high over Britain, and lasted on and off till 16th. A few passed between 21st and 24th and a final phase began with a big movement in col weather on 25th. Meteorological evidence suggests that the bulk of our Cormorant passage is south-bound from Shetland.

HERON Ardea cinerea. Autumn passage really got under way during the last fortnight of August, although the usual odd birds had been seen from time to time since the end of June. There were 9 on August 21st with cyclonic weather in the North Sea, 8 on 29th and again on 31st. In

September there was a big movement on 10th-11th, again a cyclonic approach from West Norway, one flock of 20 coming in over Johnny's Peats at dusk, and other small groups soon afterwards. A dozen were seen on September 18th, with a low over Dogger; otherwise there were a few daily till the end of October. One was present during February.

MALLARD Anas platyrhyncha. Ten drakes were on the island throughout December, feeding in the Barkland marsh by night and resting on pools at Bunes by day.

GOLDENEYE Bucephala clangula. One or 2 were in North Haven from September 29th, to which I added a quite healthy bird caught in Vaadal on October 29th.

LONG-TAILED DUCK Clangula hyemalis. Three on October 12th, and 3 on 27th-28th. There was also a ♀ SCAUP Aythya marila with the local Eiders on Oct. 12th.

COMMON SCOTER Melanitta nigra. Two died in the North Haven during February. There were 5 VELVET SCOTER Melanitta fusca on October 27th.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER Mergus serrator. Five on September 26th-27th with a cyclonic airstream southwards from Iceland. There were 7 on October 14th with an anticyclone to the north, coinciding with the arrival of Merlins, Whooper Swans and Iceland Redwings.

SHELDUCK Tadorna tadorna. A juvenile on August 19th-20th; 2 birds on September 11th and 2 on 23rd. See p. 112.

GREY GEESE. There were arrivals at the beginning of September, 20+ on 2nd and 25 on 5th, - the latter in

all likelihood re-determined passage of the earlier wave. There were 17 on 20th and 3 on 24th. PINKFEET Anser a. brachyrhynchus were first identified on October 5th in anticyclonic weather, and more came in on 10th-11th with a col situated between Shetland and Iceland.

BARNACLE GOOSE Branta leucopsis. A skein of 8 was seen by Jerome Stout of Leogh on October 2nd. See p.123.

WHOOPEE SWAN Cygnus cygnus. A herd of 23 and a few odd birds were seen on October 2nd in anticyclonic weather and there were 3 each day, 4th-5th and 18th. A herd of 7 came down the west coast and flew south out to sea late on October 14th during another anticyclonic spell. See the note under Red-breasted Merganser.

(GOSHAWK Accipiter gentilis). James Wilson and James Stout watched a bird which they believe to have been a Goshawk on November 16th, and J.W. saw either the same or another at the New Year.

SPARROW HAWK Accipiter nisus. There were one or 2 birds on most days from September 2nd to 23rd, and an odd bird occasionally to mid-October. A ♂ and ♀ were trapped on November 3rd and 5th respectively, the former being the first adult ♂ that I have seen on the island. This bird weighed 176 gm. when first trapped at 1345 hrs. He went to roost in the Gully Trap at 1645 hrs. apparently without having made a further kill, as his weight was down to 167 gm. He lost a further 17 gm. overnight to scale 150 gm. when released at 0945 hrs. next morning. The ♀, at 287 gm., was the heaviest autumn bird we have recorded, but is surpassed by two May trappings at 290 and 300 gm.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD Buteo lagopus. One arrived on November 16th.

MERLIN Falco columbarius. The first were 2 on 17th August followed by at least 6 next morning, when 4 were trapped, 3 of these being self-caught in the Double Dyke. A fourth was sitting on the crossbar of the trap as I approached, and I think the birds must have been chasing each other to and fro, as there was no evidence that they had entered the trap in pursuit of prey. All were the Icelandic subspecies (see p. 32 for measurements).

Another influx took place in col weather on August 27th, at least 4 being present after a blank day on 26th. A small ♂ with wing 201 mm. and therefore Falco c. aesalon was trapped early on 31st.

September 5th was the next day of increase and it is probable there were new birds on 9th: there was high pressure weather to the west on both occasions. One or 2 were present daily, apart from 4 on 23rd (probably from the Continent, see p. 119), to the end of the month. In October there were 3 on 1st and an influx of at least 7 on 4th, with anticyclonic weather to the north, and after this at least 4 were present daily to 11th.

Examples of Falco c. subaeson were captured on 1st, 4th and 6th, and a small ♀ aeson was taken on 8th. The last day on which any arrived was October 14th, when an Iceland ♀ was trapped and the only adult ♂ of the season was seen. Again, anticyclonic weather prevailed, and Iceland Redwings Turdus m. coburni arrived on this day. James Stout saw a single bird flying S.W. at wave-top height across Sumburgh Roost on December 9th.

Of the birds of the August 18th "rush" (which coincided with the first White Wagtail Motacilla a. alba influx) a ♂ with wing 203 mm. was subsequently found in Flanders (see p. 56). A young ♀ weighing 214 gm. was retrapped in Vaadal at 1930 hrs. on September 4th at 204 gm.: she was roosted in the lab. and lost 8 gm. in the night. Another ♀, also 214 gm. when first trapped, was still on the isle 6 weeks later, being recaptured in the Double Dyke at 1830 hrs. on September 30th at 239 gm.



This bird also was roosted and lost 23 gm. before 0700 hrs. next morning. It seems clear that it (but not the first ♀) had made a good meal prior to going to roost.

**KESTREL** Falco tinnunculus. A juvenile on August 2nd-3rd, and singly on 14th, 17th and the last few days of the month. There were 2 on September 2nd and again on 10th and 12th. Kestrels arrived in unprecedented numbers during the anticyclonic drift which followed, - see p. 123. Five or so remained at the end of the month and a singleton stayed into mid-October. One was seen to kill and eat a Redwing Turdus m. musicus but others did not appear to hunt birds at all and one wonders how they managed to survive. A starved specimen was brought in on September 30th, a ♂ with wing 240 mm., weighing only 116.5 gm. One was present throughout December.

**WATER RAIL** Rallus aquaticus. In September birds were seen on 19th and 24th, and one with the olive-brown mantle plumage of Continental stock was taken unhurt from a cat on 22nd. It was released at the Observatory and re-trapped there on October 2nd. Two ♂♂, again of Continental origin, were trapped on November 4th and 6th, the former being the heaviest we have recorded, 145 gm. There was movement between December 7th and 9th, birds being seen in all parts of the isle, and a few wintered.

**LAPWING** Vanellus vanellus. There was more movement of this species than usual. Flocks of 8 and 10 came on June 19th and 25th, and 14 and 10 on July 3rd and 27th. There were 20 from August 14th till the end of the month. A flock of 42 stayed from September 2nd to 5th, and 20 were present till 9th. There were a few thereafter on and off throughout the winter, sometimes up to 20 or so.

**RINGED PLOVER** Charadrius hiaticula. No marked passage was evident until August 16th (anticyclonic), with

Dunlins and Turnstones, and there was a small movement corresponding with Redshank passage on 20th (col). They were few thereafter, with an increase on 30th (col). A few passed in September, with about 10 on 3rd with Turnstones, and again from 12th-15th in local anticyclonic conditions. There were 12 on 19th and 7 on 23rd. Three juveniles caught by torchlight on the night of September 2nd were all small in the wing, 125-6 mm., and may have been Charadrius hiaticula tundrae.

GOLDEN PLOVER Charadrius apricarius. The first movement was of 9 on August 20th (col), a day of general wader increase. There were 5 on 31st. Flocks of 15 on September 9th, 15 on 13th, 21 on 16th and 27 on 26th all corresponded with Redshank increases and anticyclonic or col weather to the north-west. A flock of 18 containing one Northern Ch. a. altifrons still in summer plumage was seen on October 2nd (anticyclonic), and there were 30 + on 4th-5th (Azores high to N.W.) and 10 on 11th-12th.

TURNSTONE Arenaria interpres. There were 6 for a week from July 14th and a few irregularly thence until a similar influx appeared with Ringed Plovers on August 16th. There were 13 on 28th and 30 next day in unstable col conditions in the Faeroe-Iceland area. Numbers fluctuated from September 2nd and there were seldom more than 30. A total of 45 on 25th (anticyclonic) probably represents a new influx and there were 65 in similar weather on 27th, perhaps from Greenland in the westerly airstream on the northern side of the high.

WOODCOCK Scolopax rusticola. The first lot came on October 16th, but hardly any appeared with another movement of Turdidae on 19th. There were a few birds on 23rd and then the long-awaited big "fall" on November 3rd. There was another big arrival, again with Turdidae, on November 15th-16th, and a very late influx on December 9th, after fresh SE. wind and rain. See also p. 112.

CURLEW Numenius arquata. There were 10 on June 12th (high, Shetland-Forties), over 20 on 30th (high, W. Norway-Forties) and again on July 2nd. Otherwise there was slight passage daily from mid-June onwards to mid-August, with above-average numbers on 14th, 16th, 22nd and 31st. There were one to 3 birds daily throughout September. None wintered.

WHIMBREL Numenius phaeopus. Singly on June 20th and from 24th, 6 with Curlews on July 2nd (col in Faeroes area), and otherwise a few daily until September 12th, with 4 on August 3rd and 8 on 25th (anticyclonic). They were occasional at the end of September and in October with 4 late birds at Skaddan in anticyclonic weather on October 25th.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT Limosa lapponica. One on Aug. 28th and one from September 22nd-28th, in company with a Curlew.

SANDPIPERS. Passage of COMMON SANDPIPERS Tringa hypoleucos took place in two distinct waves in August, - 21st with a dozen birds (cyclonic weather in Forties), and 31st with 3, perhaps re-determined passage of the earlier drift. Another wave followed between September 20th-22nd (p. 121) with 6 on the last day. There was a late bird on 27th. WOOD SANDPIPER Tringa glareola passed with the first of these movements, 2 on August 21st and 24th, one having been seen on 19th. GREEN SANDPIPER Tringa ochropus were recorded singly on August 14th and 21st-22nd, and there were 2 on 16th with a single GREENSHANK Tringa nebularia.

REDSHANK Tringa totanus. One caught in a net on the shore on August 5th was big even for the Icelandic Tringa t. robusta, having a wing of 173 mm.; others, caught with torch and hand-net on September 5th and 16th, were also Iceland birds with wings measuring 167 mm. and 163 mm. respectively.

KNOT Calidris canutus. There were 2 Knots with the Turnstones on July 14th and a flock of 11 on 21st. The first juvenile appeared on August 16th and there were 9 on 20th. Two of 3 trapped on 26th were very light at 89.6 gm. and 81.4 gm. One or a few could be found almost daily from late August to early October, the most being 7 on August 27th-28th and 5 on September 5th.

LITTLE STINT Calidris minuta. Singly on Sept. 3rd-4th and 8th, one on 22nd and 2 next day. There was an early PURPLE SANDPIPER Calidris maritima on August 12th but no more until October 10th.

SANDERLING Crocethia alba. Three with Knots on July 21st were the first arrivals, and movement took place between August 14th-17th, with 6 birds, and 20th-28th, with 15 on 21st-22nd. There were a few from Sept. 2nd-9th.

DUNLIN Calidris alpina. Passage began with 15 + on August 16th and was renewed with the same number on 20th, with a peak of 20 on 22nd after cyclonic weather in Forties. There were one or two at the close of the month and new movement beginning September 2nd increased to 7 birds on 4th, - a similar cyclonic drift from S.W. Norway followed by onward passage in calm weather. Two arrived on September 20th and there was fresh passage on 22nd (see p. 121).

GLAUCOUS GULL Larus hyperboreus. We saw none prior to our departure on November 10th, and J.A.S. says they were scarce in the winter, - 3 only seen in December. GREATER BLACKBACKS Larus marinus were numerous in that month.

LESSER BLACKBACK Larus fuscus. There was an unprecedented movement of Lesser Blackbacks noticeably dark on mantle and wings in the third week of August. The

first was a good Larus f. fuscus seen by Mr. A.B. Duncan at the north pools on 11th. On 19th Messrs. R. Spencer and R. Porter and I gave close attention to a flock of 16 among Herring and Common Gulls at Gaila: although 2 or 3 of these were very dark, others were not really black enough to pass the formal test of "mantle as dark as wing tips", and we concluded the birds must be trans North Sea migrants probably from the southern Baltic, where intermediate birds occur (so-called "L. f. intermedius"). On the next day only 5 remained but there were 18 on 21st, coinciding with a 400 + peak of COMMON GULLS Larus canus (cyclonic weather in Forties).

LITTLE GULL Larus minutus. One arrived about the 10th on February and remained till the end of the month, sometimes feeding on scraps thrown out by J.A.S. Mr. G. Theo Kay informs me that 2 Little Gulls haunted Scalloway harbour, Shetland Mainland, during the same period.

TERNs. There were more records in this than in any previous year, including a SANDWICH TERN Sterna sandvicensis in mid-summer, June 28th to July 1st, - the only dated record for the island. From one to 4 "Comic Terns" were seen irregularly in July and from late August until October. The biggest passage was of 14 on July 31st in col weather.

A COMMON TERN Sterna hirundo lived through some wild weather in the Havens from October 22nd until our departure from the isle on November 10th (p. 77). For the three days of a severe southerly gale, November 1st-3rd, an adult ARCTIC TERN Sterna macrura was with it. The comparison was interesting, as one does not often see the two together in winter plumage. The tail-streamers of the Common were much shorter than those of the Arctic, and the forehead showed a good deal more white. The under-parts of the Arctic were greyish in tone, those of the Common much cleaner-looking and with a distinct buffish

yellow suffusion on the upper breast, a feature which may not be normal as I cannot find it mentioned in any of the standard works. In the Common the secondaries showed as a triangular white patch in the open wing; the legs were dull red, upper mandible black, lower one mostly red but darkening at the tip and palest at the base. The bill of the Arctic, which was not seen at such close quarters, - and never at rest, - appeared black.

LITTLE AUK Plautus alle. A hale and hearty specimen was sitting beside the burn in the Gully early on November 7th, having doubtless been blown ashore in the night's SW. gale. When released in the North Haven it was able to swim and dive quite well. The wing was 116 mm. and the weight 107.8 gm. In December they were more numerous in the Roost than for several years past.

CUCKOO Cuculus canorus. A juvenile on August 13th and an incredibly late bird on the Ward Hill, seen well by James Wilson and Jerome Stout, on October 15th.

SHORT EARED OWL Asio flammeus. More frequent in 1953 than usual, single birds being seen on July 8th, August 26th-27th and 31st, September 9th, and from 20th-26th. The mid-October drift brought in several, as many as 6 being seen on the hill, and there were 7 on November 16th.

SWIFT Apus apus. There was marked passage during the last four days of June (9 on 29th) and first three days of July (15 on 1st). In August a singleton on 19th was followed by 5 on 21st, and there were one or two from 26th to 29th. There were 3 on September 3rd and the last was seen on 23rd.

WRYNECK Jynx torquilla. One on August 31st was succeeded by 2 next day and one on September 2nd.

JACKDAW Corvus monedula. Two arrived in December and wintered. J.A.S. says "it was amusing to see them on the

crowns of the skroos, - how quickly they could dig into and expose and clean the seed off the beards of the top sheaf!"

**BLACK-BELLIED DIPPER** Cinclus c. cinclus. On 9th December, when a big influx of Woodcock and Turdidae took place, James Wilson heard and later saw a Dipper on the wet ground east of Burrashield. On the forenoon of the 17th James Stout watched a Black-bellied Dipper near Chapel Brac, - perhaps the same bird.

**FIELDFARE** Turdus pilaris. After the few September immigrants (p. 120) there were 8 on October 8th and 10 on 12th, and vast numbers during the third and fourth weeks of the month, the invasion beginning on 16th. With the next drifts in early and mid November there were fewer.

**REDWING** Turdus musicus. Forty arrived on September 22nd and there were 350 + next day, a very early date for their arrival in force. There were 40-50 on 26th-27th but very few in October until 250 + came in on 7th, the number increasing next day. Further increments arrived on 16th and November 3rd. No Iceland Redwings Turdus m. coburni were recognised until birds were trapped on October 14th-15th. There was a later influx on 25th.

**BLACKBIRD** Turdus merula. There were very few until the big drift of October 16th, and with SE. wind after this they were numerous, particularly on November 3rd. Some 2,000 arrived on November 16th.

**GREENLAND WHEATEAR** Oenanthe oe. leucorrhoa. On October 2nd only 3 Wheatears were noted, but next day there were over 30, mostly very big birds.

**BLUETHROAT** Luscinia svecica. A ♀ caught by James Anderson at Setter on October 13th was ringed and set free at the Havens and "homed" to Setter croft, where it

remained until 17th. This seems to be a normal habit of migrant Bluethroats and we now have at least three notes of this behaviour.

MARSH WARBLER Acrocephalus palustris. One was trapped on August 16th, - probably a bird of the year, as the plumage was rather rusty and I believed it to be a Reed Warbler until I examined the wing-formula in the lab. A similar bird (perhaps the same) was in the crops at Kennaby on 17th-18th, and on 19th another and more olive-brown Acrocephalus without rusty tinge, probably this species, was observed in Peerie Uri Geo.

BARRED WARBLER Sylvia nisoria. A 1st-winter bird had the misfortune to lose the whole of its tail soon after it was first trapped on August 14th. It remained in the neighbourhood until September 11th, by which time the new rectrices were protruding nearly half-an-inch from their sheaths. Another Barred Warbler was present on August 25th and no fewer than 4 were seen on September 2nd. There were two birds on 10th. The first bird was trapped at 19.72 gm. at 0800 hrs. August 14th, and was re-trapped at over 24 gm. on three occasions at the beginning of September.

BLACKCAP Sylvia atricapilla. Douglas Stout saw one at Shirva on November 27th, hawking for flies along the dykes.

WHITE WAGTAIL Motacilla a. alba. A ♂ was seen almost daily at Skaddan, usually on the Smirri Geo beach, from mid-July: at the beginning of the month there had been a pair, but no evidence of attempted nesting could be found. Return migration began with 2 birds on August 18th and numbers built up to 30 + on 20th. There was a new but small passage on 25th, and in September we noted slight increases on 2nd, 5th and 10th-11th. Two birds on October 3rd were the last.



SCARLET GROSBEAK Carpodacus erythrinus. The only bird of the autumn was watched on October 15th: "very distinctive with its greenish-brown mantle, rather greyer head, white wing-bars and tips to the tertials, and dark streaks ending abruptly below the breast. A characteristic feature is the beady black eye set in the nicely-rounded head: a hen sparrow, with which it might be confused, has a flatter crown by contrast."

### 38. The Cold Spell at Fair Isle.

JAMES A. STOUT.

From mid-January right up to the present time (16th February) Woodcock have been fairly numerous. On some days during the last week of January there must have been hundreds here, and they were all over the island. We did not market any, but shot a few for the pot. The average number of Blackbirds over this time has been about 100, - hardly any at all on the hill, though there were about 50 Fieldfare there in a flock. The Blackbirds are now down to 20-30.

There was a flock of 64 Redwings which came about January 22nd and stayed a few days only: 30 came again on February 13th. About 100 Skylarks came in last week and are still here. There was a Shelduck on 3rd, and a Coot on 10th. Two Water Rails are evidently wintering under the F.I.B.O. hutting at North Haven, and there is also a Robin. One Chaffinch has wintered in the crofting area, and the two Jackdaws (p. 109) are still hanging on: 3 Rooks joined them on 13th.

There have been Lapwings varying in number from 5 to 18 since the year began, and Snipe recently have been extraordinarily many. I saw 7 Jack Snipe when crossing the Barkland marsh the other day. There are several flocks of Turnstones, about 60-70 in all, and about 30 Redshanks. There have been a few small lots of Mallard.

According to Mrs. Traill-Clouston, Shelducks returned to breeding quarters at Ophir, Orkney, on January 20th.

39. The Effects of the Severe Weather of January  
and February 1954 on Lundy.

PETER DAVIS.

Before I came to Lundy in the late summer of 1951 I had read R.M. Lockley's descriptions of the effects of hard weather on birds at Skokholm (e.g. in "Dream Island Days," pp. 96-99), and subsequently had verbal accounts of similar conditions on Lundy during F.W. Gade's 25 years of residence. Apart from a brief snap in January 1952 my first personal experience came during the recent winter.

The first frost was on the night of January 26th-27th, and from then until February 6th the temperature generally remained below freezing-point, dropping to the lower twenties on most nights. Bitter, penetrating east winds prevailed. The ground, and all surface water with the exception of a few springs on the west side of the island, were hard-frozen during this period. A thin covering of snow on the morning of January 29th blew away during the day, but a heavier fall early on 31st did not clear until February 2nd. Snow is a rare phenomenon on Lundy.

The first birds to arrive, on January 27th, were a number of Redwings, with a few Fieldfares and Song-thrushes and perhaps the single Jack Snipe seen. On 29th a few Woodcocks and Starlings had come in, to be followed on 30th by 10 Teal, a Golden Plover, a few Snipe, a Curlew and 2 Black-headed Gulls. About 50 other ducks, probably Teal, flew over, - the largest number seen at Lundy for many years. Ravens, unperturbed, were carrying nesting material.

On January 31st there were 30 Teal clustering in one of the open runnels: 18 Golden Plovers, a large number of Snipe, and new flocks of Skylarks, Fieldfares, Song-thrushes, Redwings, and 2 Linnets appeared. A Heron

arrived on February 1st, also a party of Lapwings, 10 Curlews, a Dunlin (our first February record), a Mistle Thrush, more Redwings, and the Linnets increased to 10.

The only new bird noticed on the 2nd was perhaps the most exciting of all, - a female Lapland Bunting, which remained until 16th. The record suggests that this bird had wintered in the south-west. No more small birds came, but two Wigeon joined the refugees on 4th.

During this time many birds, and particularly the thrushes, had been finding little food, and were plainly becoming weaker. Two wintering Stonechats and two Goldcrests had disappeared by January 30th. Many Redwings no longer flew away when approached, but merely ran aside from one's path. With the larks and resident Chaffinches and other small birds they congregated in the places where domestic fowls and animals were fed. By February 3rd they had begun to die: several Redwings, Song-thrushes, a Teal and a Lapwing were picked up, and the number of corpses increased on each ensuing day. Most of these were Redwings, but more Lapwings and a Curlew were found.

On February 5th I crossed to North Devon by air. The entire countryside, including Hartland Point, 11 miles from Lundy, was still snowbound, and had been for several days. The island obviously had certain advantages.

---

( concluded from p. 115 )

A few males have been caught each autumn and tentative racial assessments made. These suggest that whereas F.c. gengleri and some F.c. coelebs are involved in the early southerly movements, the November migrants are mainly F.c. hortensis with coelebs rather less common. It is obvious that much further work is necessary in this field.

40. Late Autumn Migration to Ireland  
through Lundy.

PETER DAVIS.

R.S.R. Fitter's interesting article on westward bound migrants in Pembrokeshire (pp. 93-96) came as a sobering reminder to me of how easily one may take something for granted! The great Ireland-bound stream of migrants over Lundy in November is much the most spectacular movement of the year, yet although I have referred to it in my reports (e.g. Lundy Field Society 6th Annual Report 1952, pp. 24, 33-34) I have tended to assume that most people knew of it already.

Large numbers of Starlings and Chaffinches, with other species, begin to move through in the first or second weeks of October, but these movements are southerly until the end of the month or the first days of November. At this time the tide suddenly turns, and many thousands of birds pass to the north-west and north. The biggest movements are on fine days when the wind is below force 5. Wind-direction seems immaterial, but westerlies usually prevail at this time. The stream continues until late November or even early December.

The Starling and Chaffinch are by far the most numerous of the species involved, but many Bramblings and some Skylarks, Greenfinches and Goldfinches move with them. Rooks, Jackdaws and Wood Pigeons have not been recorded. From the direction taken by many flocks on leaving the isle, it seems likely that they must bypass Pembrokeshire by a few miles.

One is naturally tempted to associate these movements with the large immigration from the Continent into south-eastern England, and the taxonomic position of the Chaffinches caught is therefore of considerable interest.

( concluded on p. 114)

41. Some Recoveries of Birds Ringed at  
Fair Isle.

PUFFIN Fratercula arctica grabae. Ringed as a nestling on Hoill Lee, July 19th 1953. Found oiled and dying at Seaton Carew, West Hartlepool, NORTHUMBERLAND, January 28th 1954.

SONG THRUSH Turdus ericetorum philomelos. A 1st-winter bird caught in the Gully Trap on October 22nd 1952 (wing 113 mm., weight 56.63 gm.), - a very greyish bird on mantle and rump when compared with a skin of a migrant T. e. philomelos from the South Lighthouse, October 10th 1948. Overnight October 21/22nd 1952 there was calm, cloudy weather in S.W. Norway (anticyclonic) and an east wind in the Skagerrak and Denmark veering E.S.E. in the Fair Isle sea-area, so that the bird was undoubtedly a drift-migrant. It was recovered near Bridport, DORSET, on January 31st 1954.

MEADOW PIPIT Anthus pratensis. Trapped in the Double Dyke on August 28th 1953, weight 17.06 gm., and recovered near Jerez de la Frontera, SPAIN, on October 10th (Lat. 36 6' N., Long. 6 7' W., 1,700 miles south).

TWITE Carduelis flavirostris bensonorum. An adult ♀ in heavy moult when trapped in the Double Dyke on July 26th 1953, so unmistakeably a Fair Isle bird. It flew aboard a vessel which was proceeding from N.W. Germany to Denmark, in the North Sea, during October, - the date is not accurately known. This is an astonishing movement for a local bird and strongly suggests an oversea drift on southward migration from Fair Isle. It is not known where our Twites winter, but the only previous winter recovery is from no farther afield than Orkney.

42. Migrational Drift at Fair Isle in  
Late September 1953.

KENNETH WILLIAMSON.

The most interesting migration month in 1953 was undoubtedly September: not only was there the big influx of Lapland Buntings Calcaeus lapponicus, as reported on pp. 51-55, but also a protracted immigration from the Continent which began on 14th and continued intermittently during the next ten days. A point of interest is that the movements fall into two distinct phases, - an anticyclonic phase beginning on 14th and continuing till 18th, and a cyclonic one lasting from 19th to 24th.

The numbers of the chief species concerned in the movements are shown in the Table on pp. 120-1, and some additional notes on these and on the scarcer birds not included in the Table are given below. A summary of the meteorological background follows, together with a brief migration analysis.

Detailed Notes

SISKIN. Carl-Fredrik Lundevall (in lit. 2.x.53) says: "Since the middle of September there has been a marked emigration of Continental Coal Tits Parus a. ater from south Oeland, and since 20th of the Siskin." Movements of these two species are usually well-marked in Crossbill "irruption" years. At Ottenby Bird Observatory the peak of Coal Tit passage seems to have been between September 23rd-26th, when 263 birds were ringed; whilst in the case of the Siskin the first bird was ringed on 20th, 45 being captured next day. Subsequently birds were fewer but passage continued till 27th. It will be seen that although the first of the Fair Isle arrivals had no parallel at Ottenby our maximum of 30 birds on 23rd was two days behind the Ottenby peak. The Lista (S.W. Norway) maximum of 27th was not reflected at Fair

Isle, where there was a single ♀ only at the end of the month. Two Siskins appeared at Monks' House (Northumberland) on 18th.

There was a Redpoll at Fair Isle on 17th and two, identified as Mealy Redpolls Carduelis f. flammea, on 26th; also two Linnets C. cannabina on 22nd.

CHAFFINCH. The movement was an unusually early one and there were 5 birds in Dunrossness on 16th. A Brambling F. montifringilla turned up in Dunrossness as early as 14th, a day after the first was observed at Lista, but none was seen at Fair Isle until 3 arrived on 22nd followed by 6 on 23rd.

CROSSBILL. The influx of 19th coincides with the maximum passage at Lista. A party of 12 reached the Isle of May on 18th.

BUNTINGS. John Wightman and M.F.M. Meiklejohn identified an Ortolan Emberiza hortulana and a Little Bunting E. pusilla on 22nd. A Little Bunting was taken at Lista on 15th and another seen on 19th, and one was identified at Great Saltee (S.E. Ireland) on 17th.

LARKS and PIPITS. There was noticeable Skylark Alauda arvensis and Meadow Pipit Anthus pratensis movement on 15th and 23rd, and some movement of the latter on 17th-18th. There were more Tree Pipits on 23rd than in any previous autumn season, and the 50 + in the Schedule is probably an under-estimate as only the village area was covered that day. A flava wagtail was seen on 24th.

PETCHORA PIPIT Anthus gustavi. A pipit with an unfamiliar call-note attracted the attention of J.W. at the Haa on the afternoon of September 18th: he and W. Conn had good views of it and thought it might be this

species. Next day a single pipit flew over our heads at Shirva with the loud, clear and quite unmistakeable "pwit" call-note which I recognised as belonging to A. gustavi, - see Bull. no.9, para.107. What was almost certainly the same bird was seen again by the same party, with the addition of R. Burn, J. Webb, Andrew Macmillan and M.F.M. Meiklejohn, near the Reeves on 21st-22nd. The finely streaked head and twin buffish-white lines down the mantle were well seen.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER Muscicapa parva. A ♀ adult was trapped in Vaadal on 15th, weighing 8.83 gm. It is interesting to compare this weight with 10.85 gm. for a 1st-winter bird trapped on the afternoon of 13th October under weather conditions suggestive of re-determined passage. There were 2 Pied Flycatchers in Dunrossness on 16th, and a dozen Goldcrests were seen there the same day.

WARBLERS. On 16th, the day on which we got the PADDYFIELD WARBLER Acrocephalus agricola (see pp. 15-18) a WOOD WARBLER Phylloscopus sibilatrix was in the Gully in the early morning, and a SEDGE WARBLER Acrocephalus schoenobaenus was found in long grass below Shirva. This bird remained until 18th and a second was seen on 22nd. The only YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER Ph. inornatus was watched by M.F.M.M. on Ward Hill on 24th, and the only LESSER WHITETHROAT Sylvia curruca of this period occurred the same day. Single BLACKCAPS S. atricapilla were noted on 16th, 18th-19th and 23rd-24th.

THRUSHES. Fieldfares were passing at Lista from 10th (one in Dunrossness 18th), Redwings from 13th and Song Thrushes from 17th. Redwings trapped between 22nd and 24th were all T.m. musicus of low weight (40-60 gm.) but birds were heavier after 25th.

WHEATEAR. One trapped on 15th was a Greenlander Oe. oe. leucorrhoa with wing 108 mm. Birds of typical race trapped on 17th and 19th were very light, - 19 gm.



T A B L E

[illegible]

	September	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
REDSTART <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>				3	33	17	9	7	5	8	6	7	1	3
ROBIN <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>			1		1	2					4	2		
BLUETHROAT <i>Luscinia svecica</i>				3	4	2	2		1	4	2			
KESTREL <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		2	4	17	17	10	10	7	10	10	10		5	6
HERON <i>Ardea cinerea</i>	2	1	5	7	11	4	6	2	1	3	5	3	1	
MALLARD <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	4	2	1	4	9	4	5	1	6	2	2			
TEAL <i>Anas crecca</i>			2	1	3			6	7	14	1	2		
WIGEON <i>Anas penelope</i>	6		1	2	14		7	4	6	16	1	2	2	
SNIPE <i>Capella gallinago</i>	3	7	15	12	2	5	1	1	4	3	2	2	1	
JACK SNIPE <i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>			1	1	2		2	2	10	10	2	1	3	
TURNSTONE <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	26	8	4	2		2	6	18		15	3	45	31	
DUNLIN <i>Calidris alpina</i>							2		1	7	4		2	
COMMON SANDPIPER <i>Tringa hypoleucos</i>							1	2	6					
REDSHANK <i>Tringa totanus</i>	21	10	20	25	16	12	20	50	55	27	15	23	55	
RINGED PLOVER <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	9	9	5	9	1	12	11	1		7	2	2	3	
GOLDEN PLOVER <i>Charadrius apricarius</i>			21		1	1			1	1	6	3	27	
LAPWING <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	3	3	3	6	4		4	8	8	16	8	24	5	
COMMON GULL <i>Larus canus</i>	20	3	10	4	2	2		4	8	40	2	8	3	

20 and 21 gm. respectively, - suggesting a long trek to the island. Single STONECHATS Saxicola torquata were recorded on 17th and 21st. There was a Redstart at Dunrossness on 15th.

BLUETHROAT. There was passage at Lista from 13th. The 4 at Fair Isle on 22nd were all at Setter croft, so there may well have been others on the isle. Birds were trapped on 18th (1st-winter ♂, weight 16 gm.) and 22nd (1st-winter ♀, weight 15.63 gm. at 0945 hrs., and 16.07 gm. at 1620 hrs.

HIRUNDINES. There were 4 SWALLOWS Hirundo rustica each day from 18th to 21st, and 2 on 22nd. On 23rd we had 4 Swallows, 2 MARTINS Delichon urbica and a SWIFT Apus apus.

PIED WOODPECKER Dendrocopos major. A young ♂ caught by hand on the Brae of Lerness on 18th was so busy digging for grubs that it paid no attention as I crept up on all fours behind it! It was perhaps the same bird as had been seen at Easter Lothar the previous day. It had wing 140 mm., tail 93 mm., bill 26 x 9.5 mm., tarsus 27 mm. and weighed 74.55 gm. It flew well when released. Another 1st-winter ♂ was taken in Vaadal early on 24th: wing 142 mm., tail 95 mm., bill 30 x 11 mm., tarsus 30 mm. and weight 84.56 gm. It will be noted that there is a big difference in the size of bill in the two birds, and in fact the first has the length and width at nostrils less than the minimum of 28 x 10 mm. given for the Northern race D.m. major in "Handbook of British Birds," ii, p. 283. The latter bird agrees well with the Northern race, but if the earlier one was a Continental immigrant (and there seems no reason to doubt this) its affinity would seem to be with the Central European D.m. pinetorum rather than the typical race.

RAPTORS. Four Merlins on 23rd may indicate an

influx of Scandinavian birds. Kestrels were commoner in the first phase of this migration than we have ever known them at Fair Isle, there being many along the west cliffs. A Buzzard Buteo buteo first seen on 16th was joined by another on 19th. Single Sparrow-hawks Accipiter nisus were present between 15th and 19th, and there were ♂ and ♀ on 22nd and 23rd respectively.

GEESE and DUCKS. A lone Barnacle Goose Branta leucopsis arrived on 17th and remained till 23rd, consorting with Greater Blackbacks Larus marinus at their resting-place on Malcolm's Head. There were 17 geese (unidentified) on 20th and 3 on 24th; a ♂ Pintail on 21st, and 2 Shelducks Tadorna tadorna on 23rd.

CORMORANT Phalacrocorax carbo. Passage south from Shetland began with a few birds on 15th and grew in strength during the next few days.

PIGEONS. There was a Turtle Dove Streptopelia turtur and an unusually early Wood Pigeon Columba palumbus on 14th, and another Turtle Dove on 23rd.

SNIPES. Jack Snipe were a full week earlier than usual: the first, trapped in a ditch at Field with the Yeoman Net on 16th, weighed 55.1 gm. Not all the C. gallinago were Continental: one which blundered into a Potter Trap on 18th (and which weighed more than double the Jack Snipe, 112.26 gm.) was C. g. faeroeensis.

OTHER WADERS. There was a Little Stint Calidris minuta on 22nd and 2 next day; and a Reeve Philomachus pugnax on 26th. Water Rails Rallus aquaticus were seen on 18th, 22nd and 24th.

GULLS. There were 7 Black-headed L. ridibundus with the peak passage of Common Gulls on 23rd.

## The Meteorological Situation

September 14th. During the night an anticyclone situated over the North Sea and adjacent Continental coasts gave cloudless skies between Holland and S.W. Norway and very light winds, SE. on the Dutch coast, southerly along the eastern side of Britain.

September 15th. During 14th this high moved to eastward, over southern Scandinavia and Central Europe. A big depression covered the N.E. Atlantic between Iceland and Ireland and the complementary airstream between the two systems was moderate S.SE. in the North Sea between the Low Countries and the northern isles. Clear skies prevailed all along the Continental coasts and within the area covered by the high.

September 16th and 17th. The situation showed very little change: skies were still cloudless on the night of 15/16th but during 16/17th there was cloud at Dutch coastal stations. North Sea winds backed somewhat during the first night to SE., the centre of low pressure in the Atlantic moving to S.W. Britain.

September 18th. With low pressure now developing to west of the Hebrides and the high moving away east, the only easterly airflow remaining was between the Skagerrak and northern Scotland, the wind veering to SW. in the southern part of the North Sea.

September 19th. There was drizzle, with little wind, in southern Norway during the night, and heavy cloud in the Shetland area was followed by fog at dawn. There was fairly extensive fog in N.W. Germany also.

September 20th. With a low centred over the Hebrides, North Sea winds were SE. off the Dutch and N.W. German coasts ahead of an occluded front moving to the north-east.

September 21st. A new low coming in rapidly from the Atlantic reached the west of Ireland during the night. Winds were generally southerly in the North Sea except in the northern part, where the airstream was more SE. ahead of the old occlusion.

September 22nd. The new low was centred over east Yorkshire, with a cyclonic SE. airstream between the Skagerrak and the northern isles, and heavy cloud all over the area.

September 23rd. The low, now filling rapidly, moved slowly northwards over Scotland, giving SE. wind off S.W. Norway and a due easterly airstream in the Shetland area: heavy cloud overnight in the whole area.

September 24th. The centre of the filling low was situated west of Denmark, with a direct moderate east wind flowing from the Skagerrak and western Norway across to Scotland and the northern isles, where the wind was more NE. Skies still clouded on the Continent, but clear (and calm) in Faeroe; fog overnight in Shetland.

September 25th-26th. Winds SW. in the northern isles ahead of the warm front of a depression north of Iceland, veering westerly on 26th.

#### Summary.

September 14th-17th saw the development of the first phase of the migration, beginning slowly, and up to 16th a period of continuous arrivals of new species, with the 17th a day of increase in number among those already present. In the early days, with the wind E.SE, a number of the birds concerned suggest a southern or south-eastern rather than Scandinavian origin, arriving

by downwind drift off the Dutch and N.W. German coasts. Such are the Paddyfield Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher, Turtle Dove (not breeding in Norway), Wood Warbler (which has a SE. orientated migration), and perhaps the small-billed Dendrocopos major. Also, we have found that Chaffinch arrivals at Fair Isle in the autumn are usually associated with this type of weather, and it is worth noting that the early Siskin movement had no parallel at Ottenby (S.E. Sweden), as the later one had. Several other species concerned are birds which customarily make the short sea-crossing to East Anglia from the Low Countries.

Most of the birds present at Fair Isle showed a reduction in numbers on 18th, but there were more ducks, and day-migrant Swallows appeared: this, together with the heavy Cormorant movement, suggests passage out of Shetland. Birds arrived in bigger numbers than previously on 19th, despite the fact that North Sea winds were perhaps less conducive to drift, and this movement may have been influenced by the bad sky conditions on the Continent.

The second phase saw the development of a cyclonic as opposed to anticyclonic type of drift, caused by the SE. airflow on the north-east flank of the depressions. At first (21st) the arrivals probably originated in the southern part of the North Sea (Chaffinches preponderated) but on later days the drift was from the Skagerrak region with fairly big movements of typical Scandinavian winter immigrants (Turdidae). There is interesting confirmation in the link mentioned above between the Siskin passage at Ottenby and the peak at Fair Isle. With the change to a westerly type of weather on 25th-26th decreases took place, and the few increases (Golden Plover, Redshank, Lapwing) suggest arrival from the north-west. During both phases, falls of migrants were heaviest when there was dense cloud, or fog or drizzle, on the Continent.

43. The Autumn Migration of 1953 at Lista,  
South-west Norway.

MICHAEL K. SWALES.

The Cambridge University Expedition to Lista in SW. Norway in 1953 maintained a migration watch at the light-house and at Eigvaag as in former years, its aim being to continue direct observation of diurnal migration in the general SE. direction, and discover more about the NW. passage which has been noted in previous seasons. A full report will be published in the Sterna series of the Stavanger Museum, and this brief account deals only with selected items of special interest. For a general description of the area and fuller accounts of the work in former years see Bulletins nos. 5 (48) and 9 (105).

The following observers took part: F.M. Boston, P. V. le Neve Foster, D.K. Putnam, T.C. Smout, M.K. Plaxton, L. Salmon and M.K. Swales. Dr. Holger Holgersen of the Stavanger Museum, who is in charge of the investigations, was present from October 18th to 24th.

Five main peaks of migration were noted in the period, each apparently associated with the approach or presence of anticyclonic conditions in the vicinity of south Scandinavia. Barometric pressure at the time of each wave varied from 1000 to 1035 mb. and winds were easterly and never in excess of force 5. Diurnal movements also occurred with good visibility.

Crossbills Loxia curvirostra were seen regularly throughout the period in parties of under 25, with a maximum at Eigvaag of 265 birds on September 19th. In all, 342 were counted at Eigvaag and 323 elsewhere in the peninsula. A flock of 18 flew to sea SW. at Eigvaag on October 2nd.



There was an "irruption" of Coal Tits Parus ater, more than 1,700 being seen in all. At Lista Fyr they were in flocks of up to 300, passing either NW. or SW. out to sea. The peak was September 25th when 430 passed at Eigvaag. A flock of 8 white-headed Long-tailed Tits Aegithalos c. caudatus was caught in the Heliogoland trap on October 23rd, and Great and Blue Tits were also on the move in greater numbers than in previous years.

Siskins Carduelis spinus were also regular at Eigvaag, almost all going SE. They were in smaller numbers at Lista Fyr, passing NW., with a maximum of 265 on September 27th. Five Tree Creepers Certhia familiaris were caught in the Heligoland trap during October and up to 3 were seen daily on several successive days in mid-month.

There was also a Waxwing Bombycilla garrulus movement: 13 appeared on October 19th and 9 next day, and there was a peak on 21st-22nd with over 100 in the area on the first day. This "irruption" was noted in other parts of southern Norway, particularly the Stavanger neighbourhood. There was no "preferred direction" of migration at Lista.

Three Great Spotted Woodpeckers Dendrocopos major appeared on each of October 6th-7th and there was a Grey Woodpecker Picus canus on the same two days. A Great Spotted was seen on October 12th and 15th, and White-backed Woodpeckers D. leucotos were identified in the area on September 25th (one) and 26th (two).

During September a single Lapland Bunting Calcar-  
ius lapponicus was seen on each of seven days, but there was a continuous rise in number to over 30 in October. There was slight movement of Jays Garrulus glandarius and Northern Bullfinches Pyrrhula p. pyrrhula, the latter on October 15th-16th and (a minor one) 22nd.

A Little Bunting Emberiza pusilla was caught and ringed in the Heligoland in the lighthouse garden on September 15th, and another was identified on 19th. A Reed Warbler Acrocephalus scirpaceus was trapped on September 25th and a Crested Lark Galerida cristata spent the two days October 20th-21st at Borhaug. Five Shorelarks Eremophila alpestris were noted on September 30th and 20 appeared next day. There were single Ortolan Buntings Emberiza hortulana on three occasions and once 3 birds were present. Larger numbers of Reed Buntings E. schoeniclus were at the lighthouse than in previous years.

A careful description of a British Yellow Wagtail Motacilla lutea flavissima was obtained on September 14th in the lighthouse area, and a Grey Wagtail M. cinerea flew NW. over the lighthouse on October 7th. Great Grey Shrikes Lanius excubitor were seen singly on October 6th, 7th and 22nd, and Bluethroats Luscinia svecica were flushed singly from roots between September 13th and 27th and on October 16th. Passage of Wrens Troglodytes troglodytes reached a maximum of 15 (of which 7 were trapped) on September 25th. A Golden Oriole O. oriolus flew over Borhaug on October 15th.

An Eagle Owl Bubo bubo was flushed from a freshly killed Mallard on October 13th. A flock of a dozen Shelducks at Steinodden was eliminated between September 16th and 29th by one or two Gyr Falcons Falco rusticolus. Other carcasses found in the neighbourhood were Curlew and Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Fieldfares Turdus pilaris were first heard in the early morning of September 10th and occurred regularly and in increasing numbers from October 7th. Song Thrush T. ericetorum was a regular species from September 17th. The first Redwings T. musicus were heard early on Sept. 13th and were regular from 20th, the maximum number being 96 on 26th.

The first Bramblings Fringilla montifringilla came on September 13th and the maximum numbers at the lighthouse were 1,300 on 27th and 3,000 on October 6th. There was steady diurnal migration of Chaffinches F. coelebs and Yellow-hammers Emberiza citrinella, the largest number of the latter being 200 on October 6th.

A Redstart Ph. phoenicurus ringed at the lighthouse on September 12th 1952 was recovered at Crigny in Marne, FRANCE, on September 15th 1953. A Dunlin Calidris alpina ringed at Tjörve Bay on October 5th 1953 was found dead at Langstone Harbour, HAMPSHIRE, in early February.

#### 44. Birds on a North Sea Crossing.

JOHN BUXTON.

We sailed on the "Saga" from Gothenburg, Sweden, at 2015 hrs. on September 26th and reached Tilbury at 0700 hrs. on 28th. The notes below refer to birds seen on 27th, when we were out of sight of land all day.

A ♀ or juv. Brambling came up at 0855 hrs. and flew along close to the water in the lee of the ship. It was still using us as a "guiding-line" at 1120 hrs. Slight low haze but good visibility, sun in a cloudless sky, sea calm, wind S.S.W. force 1.

At 1520 hrs. an Oyster-catcher flew round the ship a few times, calling. Now cloudy, spots of rain at 1615 hrs. A Fieldfare appeared and flew to west or NW. at mast-height at 1645 hrs. Another, and a second thrush, flew high over an hour later. A Garden Warbler which I first saw aboard, preening, at 1745 hrs. was still in the same place, preening, at 1900 hrs. At this time a small greenish-yellow warbler (? Willow) was flitting about the ship.

#### 45. Recoveries of Blackbirds Ringed at Fair Isle.

There is a further interesting crop of recoveries of Blackbirds Turdus merula ringed on migration at Fair Isle, as follows:

Adult ♀, October 20th 1953, at the Gully Trap, - found at Harray, ORKNEY, December 28th. It had been dead for some time.

A ♂ ringed on March 10th 1952 was found dead near Oban, ARGYLLSHIRE, on February 2nd 1954.

Adult ♀ from the Double Dyke, November 2nd 1953; found dead in a rabbit-trap near Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, EIRE, on February 20th 1954 (520 miles S.W.). At Fair Isle migrant Blackbirds sometimes roost in the mouths of rabbit burrows.

This bird reached Fair Isle by drift in a S.S.E. airstream, probably from Holland or N.W. Germany, ahead of the occluded front of a depression centred on the Outer Hebrides. The weather at Fair Isle at the time was described on pp. 75-6. It seems likely that this bird re-orientated its migration and eventually gained its wintering-area in Ireland.

1st-winter ♂ from the Double Dyke trap on October 22nd 1953; recovered at Barra, Co. Galway, EIRE (about 520 miles S.W.), in mid-January 1954.

There was anticyclonic weather over the Continent from Scandinavia south to France at this time, with east winds in Denmark and the Skagerrak gradually veering in the North Sea to become S.W. at Fair Isle. Again it seems likely that a successful re-orientation was made.

Adult ♂ from Vaadal Trap on October 20th 1952, a day of big Blackbird drift. It was caught on Vaagsø, a small isle near Maloy, Nordfjord, NORWAY, on February 20th 1954, and released. "It is very tame and still going about here," the finder reported when returning the ring to the British Museum. (Lat. 61 58' N., Long. 5 5' E., 280 miles NE.).

This immense drift of Turdidae at Fair Isle (ca. 2,000 each of Fieldfare and Redwing, and 1,000 Blackbird) was stimulated by a pronounced anticyclonic development over Scandinavia, and effected by E.NE. wind in the Skagerrak veering over the North Sea to become SE. at Fair Isle.

This is the fourth bird ringed as a migrant at Fair Isle in one autumn season to be recovered at what is presumably the home area in Scandinavia in a later autumn or winter.

#### CORRIGENDA.

##### The Height of the Sheep Craig.

The Editor apologises to Mr. W.G. Harper and to his readers for three vital omissions which occurred in typing the above article (pp. 78-9) on to the transfer sheets. Square root signs should be inserted as below:

- p. 78 last line, over "hD"
- p. 79 line 5, over "4h / D"
- p. 79 line 13, over "4h / D"

##### Autumn Migration (1953) at Great Saltee.

Please note that CHIFFCHAFF passage in October was concentrated on 4th-5th, the second bird being trapped on 5th and not 25th as stated.

46. Ticks Parasitic upon Birds.

The commonest tick parasitic upon birds captured at Fair Isle is the Sheep Tick Ixodes reduvius Linnaeus (= ricinus Linn.). It has been taken, either as larva or nymph, from migrants only, and has not so far been found on any of the island's resident passerines, many hundreds of which have been examined since 1948.

The host with which it is most commonly associated is the Blackbird Turdus merula: its incidence varies much, some drift-migrant populations being rather heavily infested whilst others - arriving perhaps only a few days later - are apparently free from the parasite. A number of Redwings Turdus musicus have been recorded as hosts, including a Scandinavian T.m. musicus and an Icelandic T.m. coburni trapped on the same day, April 25th 1950.

Perhaps the most interesting occurrence is that of 10 larvae and 4 nymphs around the eye-rims and at the fleshy parts of the gape of an adult ♀ Lapland Bunting Calcarius lapponicus, on September 5th 1953. This was the first Lapland Bunting seen in the autumn of 1953, though one was heard on the hill on 3rd, and it was a very tired bird, - so tired, indeed, that it allowed itself to be caught in a clap-net. We believe it was just arrived and on the meteorological evidence consider that it had come from Greenland; so the ticks may have originated in the extensive sheep-farming region of the interior fjord country of the south-west.

Other species from which I. reduvius has been taken are: Greenland Wheatear Oenanthe oe. leucorrhoa (1st s. ♂, wing 103 mm., May 24th 1952) a nymph; Robin Erithacus r. rubecula (October 17th 1953), a nymph; a Whinchat Saxicola rubetra (Juv. ♀, August 31st 1953),

a nymph; and a Common Whitethroat Sylvia communis (Aug. 31st 1953), a nymph. We also have records for Pied Flycatcher Muscicapa hypoleuca (September 12th 1950).

Two new British records made at Fair Isle, of an Asiatic and an American species respectively, were a nymph of Hyalomma marginatum var. balkanicum Schulze & Scholtke from a Rose-coloured Pastor Sturnus roseus on August 6th 1948, and a larva of Haemophysalis leporis-palustris Packard from the Gray-cheeked Thrush Hylocichla minima on October 6th 1953.

In conclusion, a few notes are given concerning the ticks found infesting Crossbills Loxia curvirostra trapped during the "irruption" of 1953. An adult ♀ on Aug. 22nd was the only one carrying a larva of I. reduvius, and a juvenile trapped on July 4th had a nymph of I. caledonicus Nuttall. Two other birds were afflicted with Ceratiixodes uriae (White), which has been previously reported from sea-birds only: as its name implies, the true host is the Guillemot Uria aalge and other auks. The Crossbills were a juvenile and adult ♀ on July 6th, a day on which a big movement reached the island from the north-west, and in the former case the tick, a ♀ of large size, was attached to the lower part of the back. It seems likely that the Crossbills must have become infested as a result of roosting on the cliffs.

The only other bird we have found with C. uriae (again a ♀ specimen) is a juvenile Wheatear, probably a local bird, since the date of capture, July 20th, is too early for passage.

We are glad to take this opportunity of thanking Dr. G. Owen Evans and Mr. E. Browning of the British Museum (Natural History), and also in the past Dr. F.A. Turk, for identifying material sent to them.

K.W.

47. American Visitors to Ireland in Autumn  
and Winter 1953-4.

ROBERT F. RUTLEDGE.

The following five species of undoubted American origin occurred in Ireland during the autumn and winter of 1953-4. All sight-records have been fully substantiated by detailed notes made at the time and submitted to me by the observers, and I am fully satisfied of the correctness of the identification in each case.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL Anas crecca carolinensis. Two ♂♂ were clearly identified by Mrs. R. Hall-Watt near Ballycolla, Leix, at the end of November.

BALDPATE Anas americana. A ♂ and ♀ were closely observed by Mr. Frank King off the North Bull Island, Co. Dublin, on February 23rd and 27th.

BLACK DUCK Anas fulvigula (= rubripes). One was shot at Mulinavat, Co. Kilkenny, about February 13th. It was found in a Waterford poulterer's shop on February 16th and sent to the National Museum, where the specimen is preserved. The internal organs were unfit to allow of sex determination.

SNOW GOOSE Anser hyperboreus (= caerulescens). An immature bird was seen on the Downpatrick marshes, Co. Down, on November 8th. An adult arrived at the North Slob, Co. Wexford, during the first week of November and remained all winter. I had excellent views of this bird, which from its "leg-formula" I considered to be a LESSER SNOW GOOSE Anser h. hyperboreus.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER Tryngites subruficollis. One was closely watched by Mr. S. Penney on the estuary of the River Bann, Co. Derry, on September 12th 1953.



Two terns were picked up dead on the shore of North Bull, one by Lt.-Col. C.F. Scroope on November 29th; the other, in a very fragmentary state, by Mr. R. G. Wheeler on March 24th. The former bird has been set up, and the remains of the latter are also preserved in the National Museum of Ireland. Both specimens were submitted to Mr. Kenneth Williamson for identification. The first-mentioned he found to be a BRIDLED TERN S. anaetheta, a ♀ in adult plumage referable to Sterna a. melanoptera. The other he identified as a ROYAL TERN Sterna maxima, a species hitherto unrecorded in Britain. These birds also may have had their origin in America, as they breed in the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico.

48. American Birds at Hamilton, Lanarkshire,  
in March and April 1954.

American birds additional to those noted above by R.F. Ruttledge, and those recorded previously in the Bulletin (pp. 1-13 and 57-8), were seen by a number of Scottish bird-watchers in the Hamilton district, near Glasgow, during March and April of this year. Mr. Pat Sandeman and I were fortunate enough to find an immature SNOW GOOSE in the middle of some 500 Grey Lag Geese on March 6th, and close views of it were obtained on later dates by Mr. W. Kenneth Richmond and Professor M.F.M. Meiklejohn, among others.

A week later Mr. H. Mayer-Gross, in company with M.F.M.M., picked out a BALDPATE or AMERICAN WIGEON ♂ as it was swimming with a party of European Wigeon on the pool at the Hamilton rubbish-dump, - one of the most rewarding wildfowl haunts in the west of Scotland. I had the pleasure of seeing this handsome bird, with its bronze plumage, white forehead and green-glossed head, in late March, and it was still there a month later. Notes on these two occurrences will appear in The Scottish Naturalist.

K.W.

49. Changes of Status in Some Scandinavian Birds.

CARL-FREDERIK LUNDEVALL.

JACKDAW Corvus monedula. The typical race is on the increase in northern Scandinavia, and probably also C. m. soemmerringii in eastern Scandinavia and Finland.

COUES' REDPOLL Carduelis hornemanni exilipes. This bird seems to have been overlooked, but since 1938 has been found breeding in many places in northern Scandinavia (see Lundevall, "The Bird Fauna in the Abisko National Park, 1952, pp. 23-6). It shows considerable variation in numbers from year to year.

CORN BUNTING Emberiza calandra. Showed an increase in southern Scandinavia between 1850 and 1900 and is now probably increasing in southern Finland; but it has declined at its northern boundary in Sweden in recent years.

CRESTED LARK Galerida cristata. From about 1800 it increased in southern Scandinavia but it is now on the decline.

GREY WAGTAIL Motacilla cinerea. Increasing in the south, and has been found breeding in Sweden for the first time since 1916, Norway 1919, and Denmark 1923.

CRESTED TIT Parus cristatus. The Northern race P. c. cristatus is extending its range in north Scandinavia, and P. c. mitratus is spreading in Denmark. The MARSH TIT P. palustris occupied southern Finland in 1942.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE Lanius excubitor. This species is possibly spreading into Denmark from Germany.

BARRED WARBLER Sylvia nisoria. Came to south Finland in 1944. One was trapped at Lista (S.W. Norway) on September 1st 1952.

SONG THRUSH Turdus e. philomelos. BLACKBIRD Turdus merula. Both have shown increase in northern Scandinavia and Finland and have occupied new ecological niches in the south.

STONECHAT Saxicola t. rubicola. Increasing in Denmark and found breeding since 1942, having come from the south-west.

LITTLE OWL Athene noctua. Reached south Sweden in 1939.

GOLDEN EAGLE Aquila c. chrysaetos. Has decreased since about 1850, but is now being recruited somewhat by immigration from the south-west.

SPOONBILL Platalea l. leucorodia. Has bred in Denmark since 1928.

LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE Anser erythropus. Has markedly extended its range from the north-east since about 1850 and has now been recorded on 25 occasions in Denmark on migration, 7 times since 1930.

WOOD PIGEON Columba palumbus. Has increased in northern Scandinavia, and occupied new ecological niches in the south.

CURLEW Numenius arquata. Now more abundant in Denmark, increasing in north Scandinavia, and occupying drier ground than formerly.

KENTISH PLOVER Leucopoliis a. alexandrinus. It may have increased somewhat in Skane, southern Sweden.

50. Notes on Birds, mainly Migrants, at  
Haroldswick, Unst, in 1953.

MAGNUS SINCLAIR.

ROOK Corvus frugilegus. One on April 13th. In 1952 numbers were seen from January 14th to May 6th with 20 on March 12th, but only the one bird this year.

JACKDAW Corvus monedula. First seen in June. Attempted to build but did not succeed. Last year (the first year I had seen this species in Unst) the first appeared on February 23rd and the last was seen on 5th July. They nested in the chimney-stack of an old building, but I did not see any young outside with the adults so presume they did not succeed in raising their brood. All through June I saw one, sometimes two birds, hunting for food, and always flying back after a while to the building. The most seen in 1952 was 6 birds and the most in 1953 was 10 on April 29th. (There is a small Jackdaw colony in the Kergord district of Weisdale, on Mainland, but no previous record of nesting on other islands. - Ed.)

CROSSBILL Loxia curvirostra. One in the last week of June, and small parties of from 6 to 9 throughout July. A few remained until the third week of August. There were 11 on 21st, including 3 adult ♂♂, and 8 next day. Only one was seen on 24th, 3 on 25th and 7 on 27th. A single bird was seen on September 7th and 2 on 10th.

SNOW BUNTING Plectrophenax nivalis. There were 3 on the top of Saxavord Hill on June 7th: there is an old record, I think, of breeding there. Two were seen on September 24th, 11 on October 8th and 30 on 20th. In November there was a large flock of between 60-70 on 13th, but none were seen in December, a very mild month.

SKYLARK Alauda arvensis. Song first heard on February 21st (23rd in 1952). Small passage on October 29th and a flock on January 8th 1954.

GOLDCREST Regulus regulus. I had reports of this species in Unst on November 7th and saw my first on 11th. At dusk that day I heard several on the move and there were still birds early on the 12th.

BLACKCAP Sylvia atricapilla. A ♂, October 8th.  
SONG THRUSH Turdus ericetorum. One from 28th to 30th December.

REDWING T. musicus. A party of 11 on October 8th; on 19th a large flock with Fieldfares. November 27th, a flock of ca. 50 flew high to westward at dusk.

BLACKBIRD T. merula. Warbling for the first time on February 27th. Reported to have left the isle of Yell by September 11th, but one or two remained at Unst. A few on October 14th and large numbers on Nov. 12th. Many more than usual at the end of the year, and "invasion" also reported from other parts of Shetland.

ROBIN Erithacus rubecula. One on November 4th. On 11th I caught one and colour-ringed it: the ring was returned to me 19 days later, the bird having been found dead in a garden ca. 330 yards away. Two on Nov. 27th.

WHEATEAR Oenanthe oenanthe. Spring arrival at Baltasound April 19th; many about by 30th. Parents still feeding young (out of nest), July 20th. Passage movement on August 29th; occasional only after September 17th; 4 on 28th; last seen on October 5th.

KESTREL Falco tinnunculus. Far more numerous than usual in autumn 1953: observed throughout September hovering over cornfields and grassland. See p. 123.

WHOOPEE SWAN Cygnus cygnus. Six arrived on Feb. 11th and stayed till 28th. Three were seen on October 2nd, 5 on November 9th. Three adults and an immature arrived on November 19th and left next day.

SNIFE Capella gallinago. Small wisps on the move, September 8th-9th. Parties of up to a dozen flying round, October 12th.

GLAUCOUS GULL Larus hyperboreus. One immature bird seen on November 24th.

ARCTIC TERN Sterna macrura. First arrivals May 13th with light N.NE. wind and bright periods. Late birds on September 17th and 21st (2).

GREAT SKUA Catharacta skua. First seen on April 20th and last seen on September 28th.

ARCTIC SKUA Stercorarius parasiticus. First seen on April 29th, 7 birds all dark phase.

FULMAR Fulmarus glacialis. Only one was seen at the Haroldswick breeding-site on September 15th, and no more till birds returned from sea on November 22nd. The return in 1952 was on December 1st. Fulmars are coming inland increasingly every year: at the end of December they were to be seen gliding and planing over the marshes half-a-mile and more from the coast, and on 28th 2 were cackling together on a chimney-stack of the School.

CORNCRAKE Crex crex. First heard on May 18th.

QUAIL Coturnix coturnix. I heard one calling on June 5th, and birds were also heard on 6th and 11th, and also one on 28th.

51. Birds seen on a Journey to Madeira  
in a Sailing-boat.

ROBIN J. UPTON.

October 12th 1953. - Great Skuas Catharacta skua and Gannets Sula bassana in quite large numbers, but in the last few days they have been fewer. On the first 2 days, October 8th-9th, Great Skuas were by far the most common bird, closely followed by Gannets, but yesterday I saw only one of each. We were then 120 miles due west of Finisterre. Have seen quite a number of petrels, - they are not easy to get a good view of, but I think are Leach's. Have seen no shearwaters and only one Arctic Skua Stercorarius parasiticus. A Kittiwake Rissa tridactyla was seen 180 miles from the nearest land.

We are constantly seeing the odd migrant. On 10th, when we were 240 miles from Ushant and the same from Finisterre, we saw one Swallow Hirundo rustica and a Wood Pigeon Columba palumbus. There were 3 Arctic or Common Terns, juveniles, and then a couple of Common Redstarts Ph. phoenicurus, and at night a Chiffchaff Phylloscopus collybita arrived with a Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava. These birds are very tame and it is quite surprising what bugs they catch near the boat, - the Redstart caught a most immense something! Easterly winds have been blowing for the past week.

October 14th. - Now a west wind. A number of petrels gathered in our wake, - mostly Storm Hydrobates pelagicus and certainly no Leach's. A Pomarine Skua S. pomarinus, its twisted centre tail-feathers very obvious, kept us company. Two phalaropes sped by when we were 200 miles from Spain. A young Gannet yesterday, at that time about 240 miles off Oporto.

October 15th. - A Short-eared Owl Asio flammeus flying towards Madeira, - but 250 miles or so to go and about 240 miles from Spain! Also a young Herring Gull Larus argentatus.

52. The Mice of Fair Isle.

KENNETH WILLIAMSON.

House Mice Mus musculus are confined to the village area in the south of the island. From houses there I have received only Mus musculus, although the rather isolated croft of Field on the northern edge of the crofting area is an exception. The "red mouse" Apodemus sylvaticus fridariensis is known from the stackyards, together with the House Mouse, in autumn.

At the Bird Observatory, 2 miles north of the main part of the village area, no House Mice are to be found and Apodemus fills this niche, - so much so that we are obliged to control its numbers in the kitchen during much of the season.

All the mice are in their best condition in October, probably because the seed-harvest is then at its height. Field Mice at the North Haven constantly raid Potter Traps baited with mixed seed to catch Snow Buntings, Chaffinches and Bramblings at that time; and they also remove the bread with which similar traps are set on the shore wrack for Starlings and Rock Pipits. They do this, of course, nocturnally, and are seldom seen abroad in daytime.

Weights of adult Apodemus taken in October are sometimes near 40 gm., whilst 2 Mus musculus from the stackyard at Upper Stoneybrake on October 11th, - ad. ♂ and ♀ respectively, - weighed 32.15 gm. and 30.25 gm. The weight of House Mice captured indoors at this time forms an interesting comparison, - two adult ♂♂ from Schooltown on October 20th, 23.17 gm. and 23.11 gm., and one from Midway on 31st, 23.7 gm. On October 16th an adult ♀ Field Mouse caught in the hostel kitchen was 34.65 gm. and a young one taken the same night 16.85 gm.



The adult Apodemus s. fridariensis is a beautiful animal, white below except for an indistinct reddish-buff spot between the forelegs, and the upperside showing some variation from a warm brownish tone to a reddish or tawny brown, - usually obscured somewhat by blackish hairs on the crown and down the middle of the back, extending to the thighs. The skin of the feet is flesh-coloured and has short white hairs, and the tail is both longer and more slender than in the House Mouse (often 100 mm. and over, as against 80-90 mm.). Whereas the tail of the House Mouse is entirely black and naked, that of the Field Mouse is hairy and is black above and white below.

Immatures have none of the reddish coloration of the adults and are blackish-brown dorsally and slightly warmer brown on head and sides. In this respect they agree closely in colour with the House Mouse, except that the latter are more uniform dark brown above, without the dorsal darkening, and have a sleeker, more glossy pelage. The underside of immature Field Mice is whitish as in the adults (in a few specimens, however, quite greyish), and the yellow pectoral spot is indicated.

There is some variation in the colour of the fur in different communities of the Field Mouse. The mice in the North Haven area are very reddish, especially on the sides, whereas those given to me by Mr. George Stout from his house "Field" on the edge of the village area are much darker, having a greater abundance of blackish hairs and practically no reddish on the flanks. Their colour is similar in these respects to that of the young. He believes they come to his house from the nearby cliffs.

Earth burrows of the Field Mouse extend over the moors almost to the summit of Ward Hill (712 ft.), and they must be innumerable on the cliffs. On July 3rd Mr. Jack Peterson and I found small burrows on the Sheep Craig which must belong to an isolated community of the Field Mouse.

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

0 100 yds. 440 yds. 880 yds. 1 mile

Roads == Bird Trap ◀ TRAP Boundaries .....

