

SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

Vol. I. No. 5

Autumn 1959

Reprinted 1974

THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

THE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time of which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland".

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2, at a cost of 13s 9d post free. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Hon. Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mr George Waterston, 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh 2.

CLUB LIBRARY

The Club Library is now housed in the Secretary's Office at 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, 2. The collection has recently been augmented by several gifts, and the Council appeals to Members to donate books and periodicals which they may wish to dispose of. We have no volumes of the "Ibis" prior to 1944. The Library is open during office hours for reference. Books or magazines, of which we have duplicate copies, can be obtained on loan.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 20 Falkland Street, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN, Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Leach's Petrel) by LEN FULLERTON. Published quarterly

Editorial

WITH the present fifth number of *Scottish Birds* all the material which had been left unpublished from past years and that which we have received during the past year is now in print, with a few minor exceptions. By the time Number 5 appears, however, the breeding season of 1959 will be over the autumn migration well on its way, most members of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club will have had their holidays and will (let us hope) have accumulated a large number of interesting notes. Many of these will deserve publication and we would like to have them. Scottish ornithologists have a deplorable tendency to sit on their notes, and they often begin to do so in September. *The Handbook* does not record broodiness in the Crested Tit in autumn, but so it is. The proportion of members of such a large club as the S.O.C. who send in their notes to *Scottish Birds* may be gauged by the number of times the names of regular contributors appears there. Some are withheld by shyness and modesty, others (dare we say it?) by sheer idleness. But *Scottish Birds* is the journal of the Club and it is the members who must write it. We are now in a position to publish not only field notes and regular reports of different areas, but also discursive and more entertaining articles. The contribution of photographs will also be welcomed, both of birds themselves and of bird habitats, or of anything else of ornithological interest. We would also like to receive, for a Personalities Column, notes on the activities of members, on their expeditions or on any line of work on which they may be engaged. All localities of the breeding of rare species will, as hitherto, be kept confidential and will not be published unless the observer himself is perfectly sure that publication will not adversely affect the welfare of the bird. Very often the Editors learn by hearsay of some important occurrence which has not been reported to them and have to write to the observer for details: this very greatly increases their work, whereas the work of the observer is not increased if he sends in his record straight away

instead of waiting to be asked for it. The ribald layman will often ask: "What is the point of bird-watching?" and one answer is that there is very little point in bird-watching unless the bird-watcher makes his discoveries known. If your records are published, you will have the satisfaction of having added to knowledge, and *Scottish Birds* is the medium especially created for you to do so. You will also, human nature being what it is, have an even greater satisfaction—that of seeing your name in print.

BIRDS OF THE FLANNAN ISLES

MICHAEL ROBSON AND PETER WILLS

(See Plate on p. 114)

THE following notes describe the bird population of the Flannan Isles in the summer of 1957. We spent eight days out in the islands, from 26th June to 4th July, and were fortunate in that calm sunny weather prevailed most of the time. Reference is made to the notes published by D. G. Andrew and G. L. Sandeman in *The Scottish Naturalist* (65: 157-166), "On the Birds of the Flannan Isles," which combine earlier observations with the results of a visit made in 1951. We landed first on Eilean Tighe, then on Eilean Mor and lastly on Roareim.

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. In the summer nights, wet or fine, the Flannans belong to Leach's Petrels.

On Eilean Tighe the petrels were breeding in several places. They were in and around the little summit cairn of stones and turf, along the northern edge of Geodh' an Truillich, in the stone-heap ruin of a monk's cell at the head of Geodha, under stones along the southern peninsula, and, in greatest numbers, among the Puffin burrows beside and just above our tent site on the slope north of the island summit. In 1951 there was only an unconfirmed report that they were breeding on the island.

On Eilean Mor the position seemed to be a little different from that in 1951. The birds were most numerous in the area of the lighthouse flagpole and in and around the bothies at the other tip of the island. Along the northern cliffs the burrows were more scattered, but there were many on Meall Meadhonach. We found petrels along the eastern cliff-top, as far as the East Landing railway, but not as yet beyond.

On Roareim, one of the western group of the Flannans, we found, after a long search, a colony of petrels on the southern slope facing Eilean a' Ghobha.

No previous report of petrels, or other species, seems to exist for the islands of the western and southern groups.

Leach's Petrels prefer soft soil and hollows beneath stones for their burrows. Thus they were most frequent in the ruined cells, and mixed up among the Puffins, as, for example, on Roareim. There were no birds in Beannachadh, the chapel on Eilean Mor. On Eilean Tighe we had two wet and windy nights out, watching the birds for the first time, but thereafter our vigils in the dark hours were fine and calm. Recording one night in the bothies, we heard a sound coming from a cranny which we did not hear again, a rasping wheeze that might have been a unique instance of bad temper; for otherwise the petrels filled the island tops with their purrs of joy and their searching twitter. We saw Puffins on all the islands, and it is probable that Leach's Petrels are on all too.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*. In 1951 it was reckoned that the breeding population of Eilean Mor was between ten and forty pairs. We found no Storm Petrels on any of the islands we visited, though it is possible that a few remain somewhere. Perhaps Leach's Petrels have in fact taken over.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*. The birds were in considerable numbers on all the islands, though by far the largest colonies were on Eilean Mor and Eilean Tighe. As with the petrels, the burrows contained eggs about to hatch, and new-born chicks; but the Puffins were slightly ahead. On occasion the island would be well-nigh empty of Puffins, and there was a strange stillness, until they came soaring back with beakfuls of tiny fish or sand-eels. The chorus of groans which echoes across the turf in the twilight is the unforgettable conversation of the islands.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*. We found scattered groups all round the islands. On Eilean Tighe there were no large colonies. Guillemots mingled with Razorbills and Puffins in the boulders and weeds above the north-west facing cliffs; elsewhere they lined the ledges—at the entrance to Geodh' an Truillich, on the cliffs round the south coast as far as the deep gullies opposite the west tip of Hamasgeir; while a few shared a ledge on the inner, north side of the stack.

On Eilean Mor the biggest colony was on the stack off the western headland, a rock called the Sgarr. The top of the stack slopes to the south, and was very popular with the birds. A few nested at the back of Skiobageo and on the tall cliffs which form the west side of Tom na Geodha, most westerly of the northern creeks. The only other birds occupied a long ledge at the back of the wide steep slabs which curve up at the foot of the crags north of the flagpole. There were no Guillemots in the eastern geos.

Between Eilean Mor and Eilean Tighe are two great rocks,

capped with tussocks of weeds and thrift, over which the sea pours in winter storms. These, Lamh a' Sgeir Beg and Lamh a' Sgeir Mor, had small numbers of Guillemots on ledges facing south to Eilean Tighe, from which island the birds could be seen.

Looking at Eilean a' Ghobha from the sea we made out birds on the cliffs to the south and at the east tip; there seemed to be none on the remaining sides of the island.

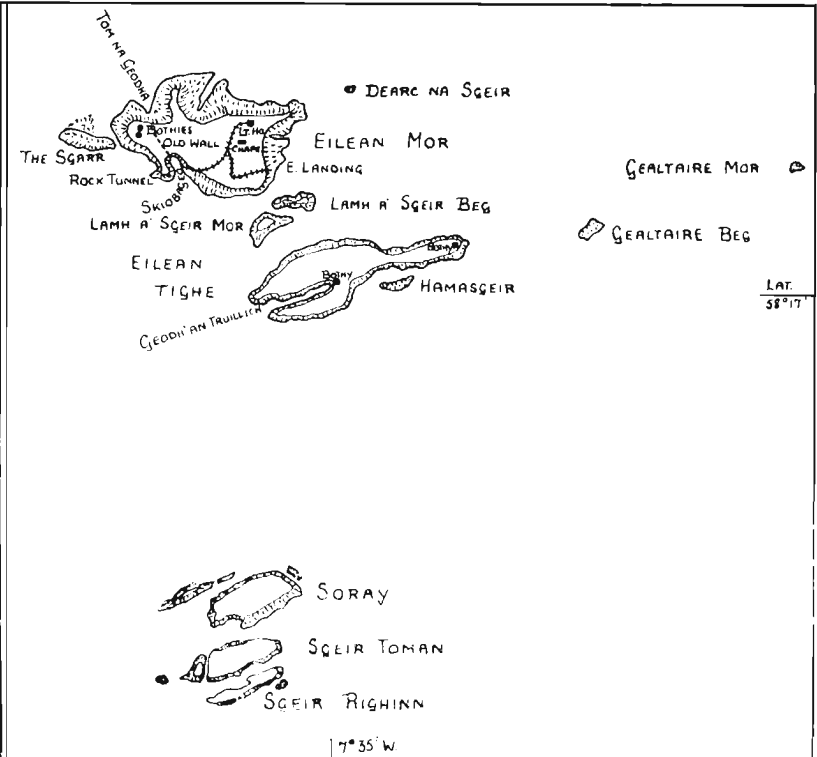
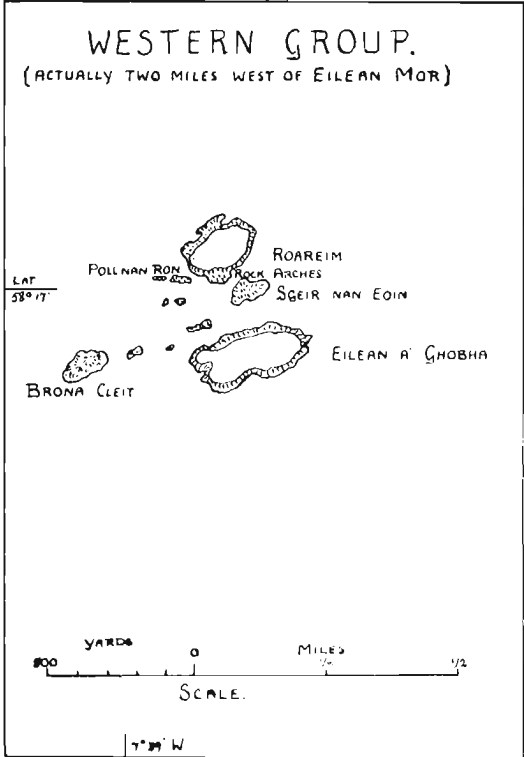
On Bronna Cleit, the huge stack which is the westernmost part of the Flannans, we saw no Guillemots, nor any other bird, but it is possible that Guillemots do nest there from time to time. The exposure to the full force of the Atlantic is particularly great.

Roareim was a different matter. It is a roundish island, cliff-bound as are all the rest; from its southern side jut out two stacks in a line at right angles to Roareim, to which they are connected by a wedged rock forming a birdge. They have been made into fine arches by sea-erosion. Across a narrow deep channel from the outer arch is a low-lying skerry, covered with thrift and other plants. This we called Sgeir nan Eoin, the Rock of the Birds, to distinguish it from other skerries. We landed first on this Sgeir and came on Guillemots scattered among the stones and plants; but from there we had the best view of the great multitude of birds on the arches. This colony we had seen from some way off, and now we reckoned it numbered at least 1,500 pairs, probably more than 2,000. The cliffs were white with guano and the noise was very loud. Causing some disturbance, we crossed into the settlement by way of the narrow greasy bridge, which itself was laden with young chicks. Most of the eggs had recently hatched, as in the colonies on other islands, but here we noticed one or two young in the water.

Small numbers of Guillemots nested in the westerly creek on the north side of Roareim, and at the north-eastern end of the island.

Razorbill *Alca torda*. Birds were in good numbers on all the isles. Where the Guillemots bred so also did the Razorbills, but there were none on the Roareim arches. They also nested in the eastern geos of Eilean Mor and at the entrance to the cavern where the sea washes through a tunnel into Skiobageo. Nests were generally in holes made by jumbled boulders or in the more inaccessible niches of a cliff.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*. We found three birds frequenting the north side of Eilean Mor, usually in the region of Tom na Geodha, where they often flew down from the cliff near the back of the creek. It is probable that a pair nested there. This species was not observed by Andrew and Sandeman in 1951.



MAP OF THE FLANNAN ISLANDS.



FLANNAN ISLES. Looking south from Eilean Mor with, from left to right beyond the railway line, Lamh a' Sgeir Mor, Eilean Tighe and the Soray group (looking like a single island from this angle. (D. G. Andrew)

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. This bird was common and nested on each of the islands we visited. The young scabbled and slept in the boulder recesses and on the cliff ledges beloved by the Razorbills. On Eilean Tighe Shags were found on the stony cliffs opposite Lamh a' Sgeir Mor, on the south side of the island and on the broken top of the long eastern peninsula. Not many lived on Eilean Mor*, which had only a few nesting about Skiobageo, though some may have been hidden away at the back of Tom na Geodha. A small colony was scattered along the north side of Roareim and one or two birds were seen on Eilean a' Ghobha.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. It may be that this species is more widely spread than in 1951 and that the colonies have increased. At any rate, each island was well supplied with them, nearly every geo being occupied by at least fifteen or twenty pairs. We found them on Eilean Tighe in Geodh' an Truillich, the geos by Hamasgeir, on the southern cliffs and on the inner side of Hamasgeir itself. The north face of Lamh a' Sgeir Beg, which overhangs slightly, also had a few pairs. As for Eilean Mor, every geo had its Kittiwakes—the two northern creeks, all those on the east, Skiobageo and the cavern to the west of it. They nested, too, on the "slab ledge" below the flagpole. Most of the eggs had hatched, some of the chicks being well grown. Roareim had three colonies.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*. Fulmars bred on Eilean Tighe around Geodh' an Truillich and right along the east peninsula to the hump at the end, as well as above the Hamasgeir geos and on the northern cliff-top. They were on Lamh a' Sgeir Beg but not on Lamh a' Sgeir Mor. There were small numbers on one of the east geos of Eilean Mor, on the east side of the Meall Meadhonach, at the entrance to Skiobageo, below the summit of the western headland, and on the top of the Sgarr. The largest colony was on Sgeir nan Eoin and on the crest of the inner arch of Roareim, where we could scarcely move without putting a foot on a coughing adult or chick. Some pairs nested on Roareim itself.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*. In 1951 it was confirmed that a marked decrease in numbers had taken place since Harvie-Brown and Eagle Clarke made their visits to the Flannans. R. Atkinson saw none in 1937 and only four birds were seen in 1951. However out along the east peninsula of Eilean Tighe, we discovered one group of four very young Eiders crouching in the thrift and on the hump at the end were two nests, each having four eggs. Unfortunately, before the startled duck had

*This is an early nesting species. Andrew and Sandeman saw a few on Eilean Mor, but were told that a good many broods had already fledged.—ED.

time to return to the first of these clutches, the gulls descended. The Eider, then, is still on the Flannans, and perhaps other nests lay hidden somewhere, though we came on no more.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*. The status of the gull population on the Flannans has been somewhat uncertain. In 1951 it was thought that gulls were scarce and indeed this was so with regard to Eilean Mor, where no gulls were breeding. In 1957, on Eilean Mor, gulls did no more than rest in the sunshine. None bred on that island. Yet on the east point of Eilean Tighe about twenty pairs of Herring Gulls had their nests and the young birds scampered away over the boulders at our approach. This was the largest number, but two more pairs at least were nesting on Roareim. There did not seem to be any on Eilean a' Ghobha.

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*. Roareim was the stronghold of this species, although two pairs nested on Lamh a' Sgeir Beg, and two on Eilean Tighe. From fifteen to twenty pairs were on Roareim and this colony may account for the small number of Puffins and petrels on the island.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*. At least one pair bred on Eilean Mor in 1951 and the situation seemed unaltered in 1957. The position was similar on the other islands. On Eilean Tighe there may have been four nests, but probably only three; our movements in the night there never failed to draw mournful warnings from Oystercatchers and gulls. Over on Roareim we found two more pairs in amongst the gulls.

Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*. We found two nests, each with five eggs, one on Eilean Tighe and one on Roareim. The former island contained about three pairs, as did Eilean Mor, but Roareim had only one or two. Sgeir nan Eoin held a pair as well, and no doubt the numbers on other islands were much the same. It is easy, however, to underestimate the populations of these little birds.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. Numbers seemed to be unchanged since 1951. A large flock of about fifty lived on Eilean Mor, nesting under boulders, in cracks in the concrete steps leading down to the landings, and perhaps round the lighthouse. The only other birds we saw were a party of five on Roareim; they were probably out on an excursion.

Raven *Corvus corax*. On our first day we disturbed four from Geodh an Truillich and they flew off towards Eilean Mor. They were not seen again.

During our stay on the Flannans three other species visited the islands. A Dunlin *Calidris alpine* spent a few hours on the edge of the southern cliffs of Eilean Mor, three Curlews *Numenius arquata* came one morning and left the following night, and for two days five Swifts *Apus apus* hunted insects and

flew dangerously near the lighthouse tower when the light had just come on. We saw no signs of any other of the birds mentioned in the 1951 list as possibly breeding on the Flannans.

REVIEW OF ORNITHOLOGICAL CHANGES IN SCOTLAND IN 1958

EVELYN V. BAXTER

THE Scottish Bird Records Committee have reviewed the records published in 1958 and present their report. As implied in their name it is only the records which are included. There must be many occurrences which have not been recorded and these obviously cannot be considered. As the "Recent Reports and News" published in *British Birds* (51: 39, etc.) are largely unchecked and must not be regarded as authenticated records, we do not include them in this review. Two new birds have been added to the Scottish List and there are a good many additions to areas and counties.

BIRDS NEW TO SCOTLAND

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*. One near Hamilton, Lanark, 27th to 30th October 1957. Habitat Arctic America. (*British Birds* 51: 193).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Larus melanocephalus*. Two Fair Isle, on 31st August and 14th October 1957. Habitat Mediterranean, Black Sea and Hungary. (*Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* 4: 3).

BIRDS NEW TO AREAS AND COUNTIES

CORY'S SHEARWATER *Procellaria diomedea*. One Firth of Forth 20th September 1957. One Firth of Forth 3rd November 1957. (*Scottish Birds* 1: 8-10). New to Forth.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas crecca carolinensis*. One Aberdeenshire 31st March to 20th April 1957. (*Scottish Birds* 1: 10). New to Dee.

[RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta ruffina*. A female seen on Cauldshiels Loch from 22nd to 25th December 1957 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 26) and a male at Portmore Reservoir on 19th October 1958 and at Gladhouse the same day (*ibid.* 8: 108) may have been escapes.]

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. One shot on St Mary's Loch on 5th November 1957 is the first for Selkirk (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 82).

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*. A pair at Portmore Loch on 6th April 1958 is the first record for Peebles-shire (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 67).

KITE *Milvus milvus*. One seen at Aberdeen on 13th February 1958 is the first recent record for Dee (*Scottish Birds* 1: 11).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*. An early record of this species from Braemore, Wester Ross, will be found in Harvie-Brown and Macpherson, *A Fauna of the North-west Highlands and Skye*, p. 278. (Cf. *Scottish Birds* 1: 27).

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticlwa*. One at St Mary's Loch on 5th June 1935 is the first record for Selkirk (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 84).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. One, at St Mary's Loch, 10th May 1936 and Akermoor Loch, 11th May 1958. New to Selkirk (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 84).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis*. One at Tynninghame estuary on 12th October 1958. New to East Lothian (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 112).

SEMPALMATED SANDPIPER *Calidris pusilla*. One, Isle of May, on 19th September 1957 is the first record for that island and for Forth (*Scottish Birds* 1: 35 and *Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 114).

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*. Five seen 6th April 1958, Aberlady, two staying till 11th April. First for East Lothian. (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 85).

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*. One near Kenmore, 15th August 1957. First for North Perth (*Scottish Birds* 1: 15).

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*. One near Grangemouth, 31st August 1958. First for East Stirling (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 114).

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*. One at Carsebreck, 11th June 1958. First for South Perth (*Scottish Birds* 1: 16).

ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii*. One seen at Tiree in June 1955. First for Inner Hebrides (*British Birds* 51: 104).

ALPINE SWIFT *Apus melba*. One at Dunbar, 11th October 1958, is the first for Forth and East Lothian (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 116).

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*. Single birds up Glenloy, 11th October 1958; Loch Treig area, 29th September 1958; and Strone area, 2nd to 4th October 1958. All in West Inverness, whence the species has not previously been recorded (*Scottish Birds* 1: 38).

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*. One at Dornoch, 3rd September 1958, is the first record for South-east Sutherland (*Scottish Birds* 1: 39).

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*. In our report for 1956 we accepted the record of this species from the Hermitage of Braid as new to Midlothian (*Scottish Naturalist* 69: 174). A. T. Macmillan has since pointed out that one of the birds concerned was close-ringed (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 4: 45 and 7: 46).

Since it is clear that one, if not both, had escaped from captivity, the record cannot stand.

BLACK-THROATED THRUSH *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis*. A male from 8th December 1957 to about 22nd January 1958 on Fair Isle is new to that island and Shetland (*Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* 4: 6).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*. One, Skye, 3rd June 1957, is the first for Skye (*Scottish Birds* 1: 41).

ARCTIC WARBLER *Phylloscopus borealis*. One on the Sands of Forvie, 2nd September 1958, is the first record for the Scottish mainland, for Dee and for Aberdeen (*Scottish Birds* 1: 42).

LESSER GREY SHRIKE *Lanius minor*. One at Wormiston, 8th June 1958, is the first record for Tay and for North Fife (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 92).

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Sturnus roseus*. One at Wigtown, 14th to 18th August 1958, is the first for Wigtownshire (*Scottish Birds* 1: 43).

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*. Three at Gartmorn Dam on 28th December 1957 are the first for Clackmannan (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 40).

RED-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza bruniceps*. A male on St Kilda from 14th to 22nd May 1957 is the first record for the Outer Hebrides (*Nature Conservancy Annual Report* 1957: 54).

LITTLE BUNTING *Emberiza pusilla*. One on Rhum, 8th October 1957, is the first record for the Inner Hebrides (*Scottish Birds* 1: 20).

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*. The first record of this species for Clyde comes from Lecket Hill, West Stirling, on 28th January 1956 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 8).

The British Records Subcommittee recommends the admission of the following races of species already on the British List:

Falco columbarius columbarius. A male, South Uist, 11th November 1920.

Falco columbarius subaesalon. Winter visitor.

Limosa limosa islandica. A male, North Uist, 24th April 1951.

Stercorarius longicaudus pallescens. A male, Sound of Harris, 19th August 1941.

Eremophila alpestris alpestris. A male, South Uist, 29th September 1953.

Emberiza citrinella citrinella. Winter visitor.

Plectrophenax nivalis insulae. Occasional visitor. See *Ibis* 100: 300.

BREEDING RECORDS

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*. Seton Gordon (*Country Life* 1958: 1341) states that this diver does not now breed in Skye.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps caspicus*. Bred Clyde area 1956, the first recorded breeding in Clyde (*Scottish Birds* 1: 5).

SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*. First breeding record for West Stirling is 12th June 1954, not 1955 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 5).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*. Breeding Ayr and Renfrew 1953 (*Bird Study* 5: 218).

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*. Breeding Banff, Moray, Nairn, Caithness (*Bird Study* 5: 54).

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*. Attempted to breed Scotland in 1955 and later (*British Birds* 51: 406).

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*. Nest and eggs on Flanders Moss, East Stirling, in 1956 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 7).

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*. First breeding in Wigtown recorded 1957 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 16).

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*. Two nests found Longniddry 1958, one brood hatched. First breeding record for East Lothian (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 88).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Bred again in Moray 1958 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 37).

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*. Bred near Edrom, Berwickshire, in 1958 (*Scot. Birds* 1: 37). First breeding record for Scotland.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. Though there appears to be no previous published breeding record, we are informed that this species breeds regularly in upper Morayshire and Banff (*Scottish Birds* 1: 74).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. The first record of the Chiffchaff breeding in South Fife comes from High Valleyfield on 2nd May 1958 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 91).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. Bred in Dollar Glen, Clackmannan, in 1957 and 1958; first breeding record for the county (*Scottish Birds* 1: 19).

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*. Bred probably near Stornoway 1957; adults and fully fledged young seen (*Scottish Birds* 1: 19).

[WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*. The Committee does not consider that a satisfactory identification can be reached on the clutch of eggs found in Renfrewshire in 1904 (*Glasgow Bird Bulletin* 7: 1).]

SHORT NOTES

GOOSANDER PROSPECTING FOR NEST-SITE

On 30th April 1959 Mr Parkinson caught a female Goosander *Mergus merganser* in the stoke-hole of Carsfad Power Station, Kirkcudbrightshire. It had laid an egg (rather soft-shelled, perhaps laid premature from shock!) on the floor in front of the empty furnace. No fires had been lit for a fortnight and all entrances at ground level were locked and barred. The bird obviously came down the sixty foot chimney. The top of

the chimney is a hole about two feet in diameter, flush with the flat roof of the power station. Clearly the bird had alighted on the roof and presumably started to investigate the chimney as a possible nesting-site. When it was found it was very lively, though rather sooty, and, although the stoke-hole had not been visited for some days the bird must have come down very recently. On 4th May with Mr Parkinson I looked at the roof, chimney and stoke-hole; there seemed no possibility of a nest-site from which the Goosander could have made regular exit.

This record is perhaps of special interest for the height at which a Goosander was prepared to investigate a hole, and a man-made one at that. I am very grateful to Mr Parkinson for his interest and help in bringing to light this rather quaint episode.

DONALD WATSON.

SNOW GEESE IN NORTH PERTH, WEST LOTHIAN AND INVERNESS

On 16th November 1958 I was watching some grey geese on the flats at Kingoodie, Perthshire, where they were grounded by thick mist. Among them was a white bird which I at first assumed was a swan. However when it started to move I was able to see its short neck, heavy deep-based bill and the pale colour of the bill and legs. The tips of the wings seemed to be dark and there was little doubt that it was a Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*. Two days later, at Invergowrie Bay, a short distance away on the Perth-Angus boundary, I had much better views of the bird standing 200 yards out on the flats. In sunshine this time the black primaries and grey major coverts were clearly seen, as well as the pink bill and legs.

On 12th and 13th January 1959 I saw a Snow Goose in flight and feeding in some fields south of Longforgan, Perthshire, and other observers also reported seeing it about this time.

One of two Snow Geese was shot near Errol, Perthshire, about 30th November 1957 and I was asked to identify it. Measurements indicated that it was of the Lesser form *A. c. hyperboreus*. The bird was sent to Slimbridge and I understand that the skin is preserved.

HENRY BOASE.

On 30th November 1958 A. M. B. Maclean one of my pupils, was visiting a farm near South Queensferry when four white geese landed very close to him in a field. He is not an ornithologist but knows the difference between ducks and geese. When I asked for a fuller description he mentioned that the birds had black wing-tips. I am satisfied that he saw four

Snow Geese *Anser caerulescens*. Although the farmer reported that they had been about for a few days they were not seen by anyone else as they were disturbed shortly afterwards by shooting.

JOHN KING.

On 5th April 1959 I saw a solitary white goose between Pit-youlish and Tulloch, Inverness-shire. It was flying north, appropriately enough in a snow shower, and did not alight. Though viewed at a distance of more than 440 yards, the identification was unmistakable. The black ends to the wings were clearly visible and there were a few darker markings on the back, indicating an immature bird.

W. KENNETH RICHMOND.

MARSH HARRIERS IN KIRKCUDBRIGHT, WEST STIRLING AND ABERDEEN

On 28th December 1958 Robert Smith, Lochmaben, discovered a first winter Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* hunting the marshes bordering the R. Dee, on the Livingston estate. I joined him that afternoon and we had good views of the bird together, and on the following morning I watched it for about two hours at close range from below Balmaghie church. Later it was seen by many others on a number of dates up to 15th February, ranging over marshland from Hensol to the Gelston lane, a distance of about seven miles. The possibility of a second bird cannot be excluded, as a bird or birds were seen six miles apart on successive days (4th and 5th February) and the bird seen on 1st February was thought by some of the B.T.O. members to have slight grey on the wings, which was emphatically not present when I and others had close views in late December and early January. General impression was of a large dark long-tailed predator with wavering, apparently slow flight which belied the speed at which it quartered the marshes. The long yellow legs were often held dangling as it almost stalled and dropped into the marsh, sometimes also landing on a grassy bank and on the top of small trees and bushes. The upperparts were dark brown, crown and forehead to nape pale creamy grey (very conspicuous), slightly flecked darker. There was no trace of a light leading edge to the wings. The underparts were rich chocolate brown. It was frequently attended by a crowd of Jackdaws, Rooks and sometimes Black-headed and Common Gulls. Both duck and geese feeding in marsh and field rose and made off as it approached. Once it appeared to make a half-hearted dive at some Teal which it surprised.

DONALD WATSON.

On 7th and 12th May 1959 at a locality in West Stirling I saw a Male Marsh Harrier, a rather streaky bird with grey

sleeve in wings. A female spent ten days in late May on a neighbouring marsh—a very distinctive individual, uniformly gingery brown (including tail) with no trace of yellow on shoulders or forewing. Head and chin creamy yellow.

W. KENNETH RICHMOND.

On the afternoon of 26th May 1959 at the south-west boundary of the Sands of Forvie Nature Reserve, Aberdeenshire, we saw a Marsh Harrier patrolling the *Ammophila* sandhills. It appeared larger than the Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* which we saw only an hour previously, and lacked the white rump. This bird was coloured a fairly even deep brown all over, except for several lightish, probably dirty white, markings about the nape and throat. It flew only about ten feet above the marrams, with a slow heavy flap and an occasional short glide. It was mobbed by Carrion Crows and Black-headed Gulls.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

R. MAXWELL.

(Plumage details have been included here since at least three individuals seem to be involved. These are respectively the first recent record for Kirkcudbright, the only one for West Stirling and the third recent record for Aberdeen, cf. *Scottish Naturalist* 66: 41 and 123.—ED.)

KESTREL'S ASSISTED PASSAGE TO NORWAY

On 31st May 1958, when I was crossing from Newcastle to Bergen on the s.s. *Leda*, at about eight o'clock in the evening a female Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* came up astern, overhauled the ship and landed on the gunwale of a lifeboat above the promenade deck. From there it appeared to hop down into the lifeboat, vanishing from sight. Shortly afterwards it reappeared, made a circle or two over the ship and landed on a ventilator set into the side of the funnel. It clung there for several minutes, eventually flying to lifeboats on the opposite side of the ship, and alighting out of sight. Nothing more was seen of it that evening.

Coming on deck about eight the next morning, I was astonished to find a female Kestrel following astern with the gulls, almost certainly the same bird. It remained while we went for breakfast and was last seen about 9.15 a.m., a quarter of an hour after land was sighted, when it left the vicinity of the ship and headed off purposefully for land.

The weather on the evening of 31st May was sunny with light to moderate easterly wind, followed by a fine, warm, rather hazy morning on 1st June.

It may also be of interest to mention that at 9 p.m. on 31st

May three Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* appeared astern, followed the ship for about fifteen minutes, then gradually dropped out of sight again. Ships speed 22 knots.

L. A. URQUHART.

WOOD SANDPIPERS IN EAST INVERNESS, LANARK AND EAST LOTHIAN

On 28th May 1959, with Dr James Campbell, I found a Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* on fresh water pools on the north shore of Loch Inch. The bird was exceedingly tame and we had no difficulty in identifying it at ten to fifteen yards range. All the salient points were noted—mottled plumage, whitish eyestripe and greenish legs. The *chiff-iff-iff* call was heard but no display note.

On 30th May 1959 I saw another Wood Sandpiper at Hamilton Low Parks. This bird was much shyer, but I had some good views and on this occasion the beautiful display notes were heard for a short time during flight. The bird was seen the same evening by M. Forrester and on 1st June by M. F. M. Meiklejohn.

DONALD STALKER.

(K. S. Macgregor also saw a Wood Sandpiper at Aberlady on 25th May, where, however, the species is of more regular occurrence.)

COMMON SANDPIPER CARRYING YOUNG

On 20th June 1959 at Carron, near Aberlour, Banffshire, I saw a Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos* running in front of my car on a private road used as access to a fishing hut. It had one well-grown chick running with it, and two others dived into the long grass. I was going very slowly when suddenly it picked up the chick between its feet and flew off along the track with it. After about fifty yards the chick (which looked as big as its parent!) was dropped and flew happily on.

PHILIP CHRISTISON.

GREAT SKUA NESTING IN OUTER HEBRIDES

On 12th June 1959 I discovered at a locality in the Outer Hebrides three nests of the Great Skua *Catharacta skua* and suspected the presence of a fourth. The nests were wide shallow scrapes lined with dead grass and the eggs unmistakable, being three inches long and proportionately broad. Great Skuas have been seen in this locality for some years, but this is the first time that a nest has been found.

W. A. J. CUNNINGHAM.

LONG-TAILED SKUA IN LEWIS

On 25th May 1959, when I was visiting a colony of Arctic Skuas *Stercorarius parasiticus* in Lewis, my attention was drawn to a skua on account of its much lighter colour on cheeks, neck and breast, and its clearly defined cap of dark brown, narrowing to a point on the nape. When it rose from the ground, having let me approach much closer than is usual with Arctic Skuas, its very long slender tail was conspicuous: it appeared almost as long as the body, proportionately much longer than in the Arctic. It remained in the company of a dark phase Arctic, as if paired to it, and it may be significant that it called frequently with a distinctive shrill kind of bark, for it is supposed to be silent except on the breeding grounds. By 6th June, however, when I was next able to visit the place, the bird had departed.

W. A. J. CUNNINGHAM.

(There is a similar record by Kenneth Williamson of a Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* appearing among the breeding Arctic Skuas on Fair Isle in the *Scottish Naturalist* 69: 195.—ED.)

COLLARED DOVES IN AYRSHIRE

In May 1959 the presence of "turtle doves" was reported to me from a locality in Ayrshire and on 26th May I identified them as Collared Doves *Streptopelia decaocto*. There were three birds present, a pair and a bird which was not so brilliant in colour as the mated male, but which nevertheless cooed and so was probably a young male. One of the gardeners has reported that birds of the same kind had been present in the locality since 1957. I have also been given a description of two birds which were almost certainly Collared Doves and which spent the winter of 1958-59 in gardens in a neighbouring town.

The pair at the first locality built a nest in a cedar of Lebanon, but it came to grief in a storm, when one egg was discovered on the ground below. Thereafter the pair haunted a silver fir about a quarter of a mile away, where they probably had a nest. The birds came to feed on grain and bread put out in front of the drawing-room window, where it was possible to obtain excellent views and full descriptions. The male could readily be distinguished by his brighter, more blue-grey colouring. The birds were seen on several occasions in July by M. F. M. Meiklejohn and were photographed and filmed by C. E. Palmar on 26th July (see Plate on p. 131). Much gratitude is due to the lady on whose land the doves are for her help and co-operation with the observers.

This is the second record of the Collared Dove nesting in

Scotland and the farthest point west that the species has so far reached.

G. HUGHES-ONSLow.

HOOPOES IN INVERNESS AND MID-LOTHIAN

On 11th May 1959 at 8.30 a.m. Mr Hugh F. Mackenzie, driver of the school bus from Glen Urquhart to Inverness, saw a Hoopoe *Upupa epops* near Corrimony, about five miles from Glen Urquhart House and south-west of Inverness. It was about ten yards away and flew about five yards above the ground from one tree to another along what is called Prince Charlie's Avenue. Mr Mackenzie has given an unmistakable description of the bird and both he and Edward Girvan, a schoolboy who was a passenger on the bus, have independently identified it from pictures.

G. H. WILKINSON.

On 13th May 1959 a Hoopoe *Upupa epops* spent the entire day in my garden at Stow, Mid-lothian. It was in very beautiful plumage and condition, but seemed very hungry as it never ceased to prod out worms, grubs, beetles etc. from the grass, eating them in that characteristic way of throwing back the head to get them back on its tongue and so swallow them. It had surprisingly short legs on which it walked in a very purposeful manner while feeding. When a crow (we have quite a lot of Carrion Crows here) passed over the Hoopoe, up shot the crest fan-like to a height of about two inches, almost rose-pink coloured and tipped with big black spots. The bird was here so long, and so near—about four yards away from me—that while looking at it I could compare it with illustrations in the books which I looked up.

HUGH N. MACLACHLAN.

(Dr MacLachlan has attached a full and detailed description to his record.—ED.)

BIGAMY AND MULTIPLE NEST-BUILDING OF SONG THRUSH

The unusual occurrence of a Song Thrush *Turdus ericetorum* with two wives and seventeen nests or nest-foundations was noted in April 1958 on a building site near Fairmilehead, Edinburgh. Unfortunately it was some time after the finding of the first nests that the others were discovered. They were built in five adjacent houses of a seven house block, and were built on top of a wall which supported the upstairs joists in each house, the joists being spaced out to leave six eighteen-inch spaces (A to F) on each wall.

House 1. Foundation in A (17th April)

House 2. Foundations in A and E, cup but no foundation in D (17th April).

House 3. Foundations in A, C, E and F, partially mud-lined nest in D (17th April).

House 4. Poorly constructed nest in A, with cup only about one and a half inches high and no mud lining, containing one egg on 31st March and two the next day. As an experiment the eggs were removed to an unlined nest in D on 1st April and the original nest destroyed. Nothing happened until the 7th when the eggs were covered with a lining of dry grass. C contained a foundation and E an unlined nest.

House 5. Complete nest with four eggs in A on 17th April. One hatched next day, but the others were infertile, probably chilled by the cold weather, there having been snow on the 4th. Another complete nest in D held three eggs which hatched on 26th or 27th April. There was a complete nest in C and a foundation in E.

The presumed cock was later watched standing over one sitting bird before going to the other nest to feed the second hen. Though there was a distance of eighty feet between the outermost nests, there was only four feet six inches between the two eventually occupied. Both birds sat very tight and there was no apparent animosity between them, although the poor construction of nest 4 A, when both birds would be laying, suggests that there may have been friction at an earlier period. Two Song Thrushes were seen fighting violently one day in early March.

The difference in temperament of the two hens was most marked. When the nestlings were ringed hen 5 A jumped off the nest while I removed the chick, but sat down again immediately to brood the infertile eggs until the chick was replaced. Hen 5 D, on the other hand, seemed to go berserk on my touching the chicks, and she cursed loudly and dive-bombed continuously until I left the house: she did the same on every subsequent visit. One wonders how much of this behaviour was inherent and how much due to the peculiar circumstances.

R. W. J. SMITH.

UNUSUAL FLAVA WAGTAIL IN FIFE

On 30th April 1959, at Cultnass, near Rosyth, I found a male wagtail which corresponded to descriptions of the Ashy-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava cinereocapilla*. It was in beautiful plumage, with bright yellow underparts and greenish yellow mantle as in the Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*. The cap was dull blue-grey, with no eyestripe. Most important of all, the throat was pure white and very noticeable, a feature which should distinguish it from the Grey-headed Wagtail *M. f. thunbergi*, a race with which I am fam-

iliar (see *Scottish Naturalist* 67: 120). I could detect no difference between the call of this bird and that of the Yellow Wagtail. An Ashy-headed Wagtail in Essex on 7th and 8th April is briefly recorded in *British Birds* 52: 174.

JOHN HOY.

CURRENT NOTES

SPRING MIGRATION

A male Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* was seen near North Berwick on 10th June (J. C. Thomson Shepherd).

Another Garganey *Anas querquedula* record is of a male swimming on the sea together with seven Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* at the mouth of the Esk at Musselburgh on 8th May (P. D. Calder), and a pair of Gadwall *Anas strepera* on 3rd May were seen on Dunsappie Loch, Edinburgh (I. A. Millar, Peter Holt). A single Gadwall was on Gladhouse Reservoir on 31st May (R. W. J. Smith).

Previously unrecorded Smews *Mergus albellus* are a female at Hule Moss, Berwickshire, on 23rd February (J. E. King, C. K. and Margaret Mylne); a male on Cameron Reservoir, Fife, on 8th March (R. S. Weir); and a male on Hoselaw Loch, Roxburgh, on 22nd March (K. S. Macgregor).

Single Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* were observed at Aberlady Bay on 12th April (K. S. Macgregor) and at Gladhouse on 25th April (R. W. J. Smith). A Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* was consorting with a Redshank *T. totanus* and Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponicus* at Aberlady on 6th May (Arthur Ablett). A Knot *Calidris canutus* in winter plumage was seen at Gladhouse on 16th May (R. W. J. Smith) and a similar grey bird at the mouth of the River Endrick (in Dunbartonshire) on 20th May (M. F. M. Meiklejohn). A species not commonly recorded in spring in Scotland is the Little Stint *Calidris minuta* one of which occurred at Aberlady Bay on 25th May (K. S. Macgregor). A Sanderling *Crocebia alba*, just coming into summer plumage, was at Gladhouse on 25th May (R. W. J. Smith).

Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax* wintered in East Lothian. A single bird was seen at Aberlady during October 1958 and during the following months as many as three were seen fairly regularly by a number of observers. Early in April 1959 the number of birds had increased to six and these were found both in the Bay and in growing crops about a mile inland, one bird being seen also on a ploughed field. By 19th April there were three Ruffs and four Reeves, but numbers were down to four on the 26th and these had gone by the end of the month. At the beginning of April all the birds were in a very grey winter plumage but by the time they left one bird

especially (a Ruff) had completed about two thirds of its moult into the breeding plumage and all the others showed various degrees of change (J. Baird, K. S. Macgregor).

A summering Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides* was seen in the bay at Portree, Skye, on 16th June (L. A. Urquhart) and large numbers of Little Gulls *Larus minutus* were seen in the Tay area on 26th April (V. M. T., *The Scotsman*, 2nd May 1959).

After strong south-westerly gales two Swifts *Apus apus* occurred near Stornoway on 6th June; they were hawking over a small loch in company with four House Martins *Delichon urbica* (W. A. J. Cunningham, M. F. M. Meiklejohn). Both these species are unusual in Lewis, but the same evening five House Martins were seen over the woods of Stornoway Castle, and on 7th June more than ten House Martins, together with two Swallows *Hirundo rustica* were feeding under trees behind a farmhouse on the outskirts of Stornoway (M. F. M. Meiklejohn). Six to eight Swifts were also seen in spring at Barrahead Lighthouse (Alec Ross).

An immature male or female Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* turned up at Fife Ness on 26th March (R. S. Weir) and a female was seen in same locality on 17th May (John Hoy).

A Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* (rarish in the east) is recorded from Kincardine, Fife, on 21st April (J. Potter) and another at Cultness, Rosyth, on 23rd and 30th April (John Hoy).

A female Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava* is reported from Gladhouse on 9th May, "having the long and very prominent white eyestripe of the race" (R. W. J. Smith), and a male was seen on the south shore of the Forth just west of Grangemouth (in Stirlingshire) on 22nd June; with it was a male Yellow Wagtail *M. f. flavissima*. Detailed descriptions have been given of both these birds. They were seen together again on 4th July, but on neither occasion were females present (P. G. R. Barbier, John Hoy).

BREEDING AND DISTRIBUTION

On 4th June three Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis* were seen circling high over the south shore of the Forth west of Grangemouth (Stirlingshire) (P. G. R. Barbier).

The colony of Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo*, on the Lamb, the only one in Forth, continues to grow: there were five nests in 1957 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 7: 78), eight in 1958 and 44 this year (R. W. J. Smith).

The Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*, described as "rare in the west of Scotland" (Baxter and Rintoul, *Birds of Scotland* 440), seems to be of fairly regular occurrence in winter at the mouth of West Loch Tarbet: on 28th March 1959 eight were seen there (R. J. Olliver), and previous records are a male on 17th

November and three males on 19th November 1956, and one male on 18th November 1957, a day when even the ship's stewards, but not the observer, were sea-sick (M. F. M. Meiklejohn).

The occurrence of Golden Eagles *Aquila chrysaetos* in Peebles-shire has been reported in *The Scotsman*, a young female having been caught in a crow-trap on 8th May at Innerleithen and a young male four days later. It seems that these birds were later released.

It is satisfactory to place on record that in 1959 Hen Harriers *Circus cyaneus* nested in two Scottish counties where they have not nested during the present century. In the first case no male was ever observed and the eggs were subsequently taken by crows, but in the second the young succeeded in flying.

The most sensational ornithological event in Scotland during 1959 was the nesting of a pair of Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* in Inverness-shire, a third bird being present. At the date of writing (3rd August) progress is reported to be satisfactory, and George Waterston and his volunteer helpers deserve all the congratulation we can give them.

The Quail *Coturnix coturnix* has perhaps been more numerous than usual in Scotland in 1959. One was found dead at Biel, East Lothian, on 7th May and examined in the (putrefact) flesh by A. T. Macmillan; this bird was reported by *The Scotsman* and *The Edinburgh Evening News*. On 11th June one was heard near Dornoch: "it was in a field of grass pastures where dairy cows were grazing. I made an effort to stalk the bird but was quite unsuccessful, the note always appearing to come from a spot thirty or forty yards ahead. The field had numerous patches of thick, lush grass which suited the bird's skulking habits." (D. Macdonald). Quails were heard and seen on 14th June near Abbey St Bathans, Berwickshire. On the 16th the observer again heard and saw the old birds when the hay was being topped and also saw one of the chicks. There were several more chicks nearby making a noise, but he did not wish to stand on them and so withdrew. The birds were seen and heard also on the 18th when they were thought to have moved their family into a cornfield (Andrew Dickson per W. M. Logan Home). In addition one is reported calling at Fearn, Easter Ross, in late June or early July (*Ross-shire Journal*, 10th July 1959 per G. H. Wilkinson).

On 18th July a Corncrake *Crex crex* was heard on the golf-course in Pollok Park, Glasgow. Although this area is completely surrounded by houses the birds have been there since 1952 in each year except possibly 1958 when the observer had no chance of recording them. In both 1952 and 1953 a pair was seen (Ian Hay).

A pair of Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* bred at



Collared Dove. Ayrshire, July 1959.

(C. E. Palmar)

THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

MEETINGS FOR JUNIOR MEMBERS: Informal Meetings for discussions, exhibition of slides and films, etc., will be held in the Club-room on the first Wednesday of each month from October to April at 7.30 p.m.

SLIDE PROJECTOR: By arrangement with the Secretary, the Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector may be used by members for the informal showing of slides in the Club-room, at a charge of 2/6 per night to cover the cost of replacement of bulbs.

Gladhouse Reservoir, the first record for the locality, a clutch of four eggs being found on 18th June. There are very few breeding records for Mid-lothian (R. W. J. Smith).

Summer records of the Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*, outside its known breeding area, refer to single birds seen on the Forth between North Queensferry and Inverkeithing, Fife, on 15th June (P. G. R. Barbier, John Hoy) and one, a dark bird, at Ayr on 6th July (M. F. M. Meiklejohn).

Sixteen pairs of Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* nested on the Lamb in 1959, a new colony (R. W. J. Smith).

Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* again frequented Longniddry, East Lothian; one was seen on 28th June (K. S. Macgregor) and two birds were reliably reported to be present.

The Little Owl *Athene noctua* nested in the same hole in a tree in Berwickshire as in 1958 (W. Murray). Cf. *Scottish Birds* 1: 37 and 38.

Records of the Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* continue to accumulate from further north and further west in Scotland. One was both seen and heard on the wooded shore of West Loch Tarbert, Argyll, on 28th March (A. Allen, R. J. Olliver). "From about 8 to 9 a.m. on 9th May 1959 a Green Woodpecker yaffled repeatedly at Blanefield, West Stirling, then gradually moved out of earshot down the valley. I was able to play the Koch records of the Green Woodpecker in between live yaffles, and the sounds were identical. The bird was once briefly seen moving from tree to tree. The only Stirlingshire locality given in *The Birds of Scotland*, Tor Wood, is in East Stirling (K. H. Barr). The record of the Green Woodpecker from Avon Glen, near Larkhall, (*Scottish Birds* 1: 73) is confirmed by George L. A. Patrick, who heard one there on 11th May 1957, a Swedish ornithologist knowing the bird's call also being present, and on 2nd August 1959 excellent views of a pair were had at Thinacres Farm, Quarter, in the same neighbourhood (A. Potter, J. C. Taylor).

A Chough *Coracia pyrrhocorax* was seen near Auchencairn, Kirkcudbrightshire, in the first fortnight of July 1958; "it was flying with a flock of Jackdaws below the cliffs and was conspicuous because of its bright red bill and unusual flight" (Henry L. Martin, *Glasgow Herald*, 13th February 1959).

The Rev. R. I. Mitchell in an article in *The Scotsman* (11th July 1959) records the nesting of a pair of White Wagtails *Motacilla alba* in 1959 in his garden at Kilconquhar, Fife. He only gives a detailed description of the cock bird, but it is clear from this that the male bird at least was of the typical race of this species.

A nest of the Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* was discovered in an apple-tree at Luffness, near Aberlady, on 26th April. It contained five eggs and later when the observer re-

turned from holiday it was empty, but, in view of the short fledgling period of this species, he cannot say whether it was successful (W. Birrell).

Records of the Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* in the south of Scotland during the spring of 1959 seem to have been more numerous than usual. On 1st March eight were seen on the south side of the Big Wood of Menteith, Perthshire (M. F. M. Meiklejohn, L. A. Urquhart); these were certainly continental birds, judging from their call-note, which is readily distinguishable from that of the Scottish race, being much more loud, definite and explosive—a conclusion reached in the summer of 1958 when listening to immigrant Crossbills in the south of England very shortly after hearing the native birds on Deeside (M. F. M. Meiklejohn). On 8th March six were seen near Gladhouse where there was some evidence of nest building and a pair were still present on 5th April when five adults were at Edgelaw, Midlothian, feeding with Siskins and Redpolls (R. W. J. Smith). On 22nd March four were observed in Bowmont Forest, Roxburgh, and 4th April two in Baro Wood, East Lothian (K. S. Macgregor). In Dunfallandy Wood, Strathtay, Perthshire, seventy were seen on 19th April, every second bird being a red male and no young being present (P. G. R. Barbier, John Hoy). Dr James Campbell states that two or three pairs nest regularly in this wood, but considers the others to have been migrants.

AUTUMN MIGRATION

Already at the date of writing (3rd August) reports of the southward passage are beginning to come in. On 19th July at Gladhouse there were a Greenshank, 85 Dunlin and a Sanderling, as well as a big passage of Oystercatchers (R. W. J. Smith); while on the 21st, at the mouth of the River Ythan, Aberdeenshire, Dunlin had much increased, there were two dark phase Arctic Skuas among the terns and at least eleven Red-throated Divers *Gavia stellata* on the sea (A. J. M. Smith). On 1st August there were two Greenshanks at Tynninghame and Whimbrel were heard there (A. T. Macmillan) and on 2nd August four Greenshanks were seen on the Eden estuary and at least three Velvet Scoters, which may have been, however, summering birds, in St Andrews Bay (M. F. M. Meiklejohn, C. E. Palmar).

The most interesting evidences of autumn passage are, however, the following. On 20th July there were eleven adult and two 1st summer Little Gulls on the shore between Leven and Lundin Links, which had not been there on the 17th (R. S. Weir) and fourteen adults and one 1st summer in the same locality on the 21st (A. T. Macmillan, M. I. Waterston). All but one of the adults, which had a white forehead, were in

full summer plumage, their heads being noticeably black compared to those of Black-headed Gulls. They were very approachable. The highest count so far was 31, all adults, on 24th July and the first juvenile was not seen until 1st August when about one third of the adults were in winter plumage (R. S. Weir).

About seventy Crossbills were seen over Earlston, near Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire, on 21st July (F. Dalziel) and three immature birds on 25th July alighted on the tree in Ayrshire in which the Collared Doves had nested (C. E. Palmer). These records are evidence of a new invasion.

BEHAVIOUR AND HABITS

A curious incident of Scottish ornithology is reported by Dr Jolly of the Bristol General Hospital in *The Falconer* (III, No. 3, 1956). The eyrie of a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* was discovered in Scotland containing two falcons a few days old and, with them, a young Common Gull *Larus canus* of about the same age. At the end of three weeks, the Peregrines were taken for falconry purposes and the gull, which had survived, was removed with them. At this stage the gull was much more active than its companions, but would sleep between them and take bits of meat from them. It was the first to fly and, a day or two after doing so, it disappeared. (Information by courtesy of Mr Stephen Frank, who has also sent a photograph of the three birds together).

On 5th July 1959 at Cally Loch, Gatehouse of Fleet, several Moorhens *Gallinula chloropus* were seen climbing up the stalks of Reedmace *Typha latifolia*. Usually they quickly sank out of sight behind the vegetation as the plants collapsed under their weight, but in two cases the plants remained upright and the Moorhens fed greedily on the female flowers of the Reedmace (M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Donald Watson).

On 12th July 1959 two young albino Swallows *Hirundo rustica* were seen near Calderside Farm, East Kilbride. The farmer told the observer that both had come from the same nest, which also contained three normal young ones (David Lawson).

A curious nest of the Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* is reported in 1959 from Colinton, Edinburgh. It was fifteen feet up in a cranny in an old garden wall, where it had a flourishing brood of young (I. V. Balfour-Paul).

On 17th January 1959 a Dunnock *Prunella modularis* was seen in the cage of the Black Vulture at the Edinburgh Zoo feeding upon red raw meat (Peter Holt).

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions for the new Session are now due, and should be paid to the Secretary and Treasurer, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. Members, 25s; Junior Members, 7s 6d; Non-Members (Scottish Birds only) 20s.

TWELFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling, 23rd/25th October, 1959

PROGRAMME

Friday, 23rd October :

- 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. Conference Office in the Golden Lion Hotel opens for Members and Guests to register (7s 6d each). Collect Name Cards and Annual Dinner tickets (12s 6d each).
- 6.15 p.m. Meeting of Council.
- 6.30 p.m. to midnight Lounge and Oakroom reserved for informal discussions and refreshments, and showing of slides and films.

Saturday, 24th October :

- 8.45 a.m. Conference Office opens for Registrations.
- 9.20 a.m. Official Opening of the Conference in the Ballroom of the Golden Lion Hotel.
ADDRESS OF WELCOME by William Macfarlane Gray, Esq., J.P. (Provost of Stirling).
- 9.30 a.m. LECTURE on "New Field Studies of the Behaviour of Gulls", illustrated with slides and film, by Professor Niko Tinbergen (Department of Zoology, University Museum, Oxford).
- 10.45 a.m. INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.
- 11.15 a.m. LECTURE on "Falconry" by Dr James Robertson Justice.
- 12.30 p.m. CONFERENCE GROUP PHOTOGRAPH in the Ballroom.
- 1 to 2 p.m. INTERVAL for informal lunches. (Hotels must be informed).
- 2 to 5.45 p.m. EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving Car Park, Corn Exchange Road.
Excursions are being arranged to various places of interest; details of these will be posted on the Conference notice board.
- 6.15 p.m. 23rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CLUB in the Lounge.
BUSINESS :—
- (1) Apologies for absence.
 - (2) Approval of Minutes of 22nd Annual General Meeting held in Perth on 25th October, 1958.
 - (3) Report of Council for Session XXII.
 - (4) Approval of Accounts for Session XXII.
 - (5) Appointment of Auditor.
 - (6) Election of Hon President. (The Council recommend the election of Dr David A. Bannerman, M.B.E., Sc.D., F.R.S.E., as an Hon. President of the Club in recognition of his services to Ornithology).
 - (7) Election of two new Members of Council. (The Council recommend the election of Mr Donald Watson and Mr George Waterston, to replace

Dr David Bannerman and Dr W. J. Eggeling,
who retire by rotation.

7.30 for 8 p.m. ANNUAL DINNER in the Ballroom. Dress informal. (Price 12s 6d each, inclusive of tip. Drinks extra).

Sunday, 25th October :

9.30 a.m. EXHIBITION OF FILMS in the Ballroom. "The Reed Warbler" and "The Return of the Osprey" (by courtesy of the R.S.P.B.)

10.45 a.m. INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.

11.15 to 12.30 p.m. By kind permission of the Trustees, the SMITH ARTS INSTITUTE, Albert Place, will be open to Members of the Club.

1 to 2 p.m. INTERVAL for informal lunches.

2 p.m. EXCURSIONS (as for Saturday) by private cars leaving Car Park outside Golden Lion Hotel.

INFORMATION

In order to simplify arrangements, it is essential that Members intending to be present should complete the enclosed printed postcard and send it to the Club Secretary **not later than 19th October.**

Members may invite Guests; and are particularly asked to provide private cars where possible for Excursions. Petrol expenses should be shared.

Everyone attending the Conference must register (7s 6d each) on arrival, at the Conference Office. (Open Friday 23rd, 6 to 7 p.m.; and on Saturday, 24th, 8.45 to 9.30 a.m.) Members wishing to attend the Annual General Meeting **ONLY** do not require to pay the Registration fee which covers incidental expenses—hire of rooms, projection equipment, mid-morning coffee, etc.

Payments for tickets for the Annual Dinner (price 12s 6d inclusive of tips) should be made when registering on arrival. **NO PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN ADVANCE.**

All Hotel bookings should be made direct with the Hotel at which you wish to stay. Owing to the general shortage of single rooms, younger members are urged to make arrangements to share a room with a friend. Private arrangements must be made with your Hotel for lunches each day. The Secretary is **NOT** responsible for Hotel bookings.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN STIRLING

GOLDEN LION HOTEL, 10 King Street (Tel. 1950) Conference H.Q.
Bed and Breakfast from 27s 6d.

STATION HOTEL, 56 Murray Place (Tel. 1057)
Bed and Breakfast from 27s 6d.

WAVERLEY HOTEL, King Street (Tel. 1950)
Bed and Breakfast from 27s 6d.

GARFIELD HOTEL, Victoria Square (Tel. 430)
Bed and Breakfast from 19s 6d.

DOUGLAS HOTEL, 4 Arcade (Tel. 286)
Bed and Breakfast from 19s 6d.

ALLAN PARK HOTEL, 20 Allan Park (Tel. 298)
Bed and Breakfast from 18s 6d.