

# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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*Vol. I. No. 6*

*Winter 1959*

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Reprinted 1977

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**T**HE 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 at 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 in 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 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, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

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### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. (except the Wednesdays of Branch Meetings). Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

Informal meetings for Junior members will be held in the Club-room on the first Friday of each month from October to April at 7.30 p.m.

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### 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 (red-breasted Merganser) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly*

## Editorial

ALL members of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club will have been very sorry to read, at the beginning of October, of the death of Dr E. V. Baxter. Everyone at this year's annual Conference must have felt our loss when they realised that, for the first time, she was absent. It is not given to many to remain so active, mentally and physically, up to the end of a long life (even in her last year she saw a bird she had not seen before in Scotland, the Black Tern), nor to be admired and liked by a whole generation younger than herself. We hope to publish an account of her life and achievements in our next issue, and in this number we are including both her photograph and that of her friend and colleague, the late Miss L. J. Rintoul.

Dr Baxter lived to know of the future installation of the Scottish Ornithological Centre at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, and it must not be forgotten how much her inspiration, as the leader of Scottish ornithology, was behind this venture. The premises were opened, on 26th October, with a delightfully informal ceremony, by the Earl of Wemyss and March. The arrangement, with the living quarters for Mr and Mrs Waterston, offices for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and library and meeting premises for the members of the Club, seems ideal. With such headquarters Scottish ornithology may look forward to a bright future, and again we must thank the anonymous donor who made the purchase of the house possible. Since he is anonymous, we cannot thank him face to face, but we can assure him that that is what we would like to do.

## MIGRANTS ON NORTH SEA CROSSINGS 1951 - 1953

C. K. MYLNE

In the autumn of 1951, 1952 and 1953 records of migrants, mostly hawks and passerines, were collected on eight crossings of the North Sea from Newcastle to Norway. Most of these journeys were made by members of the Cambridge Bird Club on their way to and from Lista, where a five year study of migration was being undertaken. It had been hoped to collect further records in subsequent years before publishing any results, but, as none of any significance occurred after 1953, it seems worth while publishing these, partly in the hope that they might induce other observers with similar records to put them into print.

I am grateful to Mrs M. I. Waterston for notes on the first 1951 crossing, to M. K. Swales for those on the last crossing in 1952 and to M. R. K. Plaxton for 1953. The distances given are only approximate and have been worked out from the times of the various observations presuming a constant speed of the ship over the 400 mile journey. All times given are G.M.T.

### 1. Newcastle to Stavanger, 19th August 1951 (M.I.W.)

Left on the evening of the 18th. At 1000 hours on 19th a Pied Flycatcher *Muscicapa hypoleuca* came on board, about 200 miles from land. Another, possibly the same bird, was still about the ship at 1600 hours. The weather was stormy and wet and it seems unlikely that in these conditions a small passerine would readily leave the ship. If this was the same bird it was carried about 100 miles to the north-east. Two single Dunlin *Calidris alpina* were encountered during the morning about 150 miles from Norway, and about 100 miles from shore, two or three small passerines probably of the genus *Saxicola*.

### 2. Newcastle to Bergen, 5th September 1951 (C.K.M.)

Left on the evening of the 5th. At 2030 hours, about eighty miles out, a Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* flew into a lighted saloon, where it was caught and ringed. It weighed 16.0 gms. The bird was very lively and full of energy and so was released. After sitting on the deck for about five minutes, it perched on the rail and then flew strongly alongside for a while before it dropped astern into the darkness.

### 3. Stavanger to Newcastle, 3rd October 1951 (C.K.M. et al.)

Left just before midnight on the 2nd in calm cool weather. The 3rd was bright with patches of sunshine and some cloud.

This crossing was made at the height of one of the most spectacular autumn passerine movements in recent years, a full account of which has been written by Jenkins (1953) who was one of the party on board. Anticyclonic weather and bird movements had both been building up over Scandinavia in the last days of September, and on 1st and 2nd October large numbers of night migrants, especially Robins *Erithacus rubecula*, were reported both in south Norway and at all the British east coast observatories.

From the time our observations started at 0630 hours there were always some small passerine birds to be seen, mostly keeping up with the ship and landing on it from time to time. Several birds flew on ahead of the ship, which was probably moving at about fifteen knots, and then turned back in a wide circle to come in astern again. For this reason it was hard to tell how long individuals stayed with us, but the impression was that they were using the ship to help them on their way. The species involved were:

Song Thrush *Turdus ericetorum*. One at 0630 hours, not seen again.

Redwing *T. musicus*. One early, joined by two others at noon. One was still with the ship at 1715 hours, 100 miles further on.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*. A redstart was with the ship most of the day, but unidentified until cornered in the 1st Class lavatory at 1630 hours.

Phylloscopus. One, probably *collybita*, at 1430 hours.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*. One bird (or more) seen all morning until noon.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. One from 1000 to 1530 hours.

Pied Flycatcher *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. One seen on board, 1500 hours.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. One, seen first at 1100 hours, was captured at 1740 hours in an exhausted state.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*. Two from early morning until noon, after which they were not seen again.

Both the Black Redstart and the Chaffinch after capture were kept overnight and released in Newcastle on the morning of 4th October. Both flew off fairly strongly over the docks from the ship, but it is interesting that both were recovered dead shortly afterwards—the Black Redstart (Ring No. NF 0149) at North Shields on 5th October 1951, and the Chaffinch (Ring No. NF 0147) at Dunson, Gateshead, on 5th February, 1952.

4. Newcastle to Kristiansand, 24th August 1952 (C.K.M., M.R.K.P.)

One Redshank *Tringa totanus* was seen at midday about fifty miles off the Norwegian coast, flying round the ship in company with Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis*.

5. *Kristiansand to Newcastle, 11th September 1952 (C.K.M., M.R.K.P.)*

Left at 0130 hours after a spell of fine weather on the Norwegian south coasts during which many day and night migrants had been recorded passing. On the sea, which was quite rough, there was a fresh east or north-east breeze following the ship. The only passerine species seen were one White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*, that remained with the ship all afternoon until dusk, and a Meadow Pipit flying about the upper deck and settling frequently. Both birds would often fly out astern, but always returned. In complete contrast to this behaviour was that of a remarkable number of hawks seen during the day which paid little or no attention to the ship, but seemed to be heading south-west. The first sighted was a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* at 0945, then a Merlin *Falco columbarius* at 1130 hours. Later, however, in half an hour between 1430 and 1500 hours, when we were over 200 miles from Norway and over 150 from England, we watched three Buzzards *Buteo buteo*, two Sparrowhawks and eight Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* fly past. The Buzzards were soaring in circles, presumably using thermals, but it was noted that in the half hour during which they were in sight they had moved a considerable distance towards the south-west, being finally lost to sight astern. The smaller hawks, flying at between fifty and a hundred feet above the sea, appeared to catch us up from astern, fly alongside for a short while and then head out over the sea at an angle to our west-south-west course which must have taken them south-south-west. Some were watched following this line of flight until they could no longer be seen through x8 binoculars. The impression we got from these hawks was that we were passing through a broad front movement of birds, all flying singly except two "pairs" of Kestrels, i.e. two birds flying at least within sight of each other, and moving faster than we were, carrying on, with very slight regard for the ship, in their preferred direction.

6. *Stavanger to Newcastle, 5th October 1952 (M.K.S.)*

Left Stavanger just before midnight on the 4th. A Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* was seen about 140 miles out and flew off to the north. Between 1030 and 1230 a number of passerines were watched, mostly flying parallel to the ship: two Song Thrushes, five Robins, two Meadow Pipits and one Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*. One Song Thrush which lagged behind the ship almost certainly fell into the sea about 200 yards astern. On this trip Common Scoters *Melanitta nigra*, seven at 1000 and two at 1600 hours, were also seen, flying south-west.

7. *Newcastle to Stavanger, 2nd October 1953 (M.R.K.P.)*

The only bird seen was a single Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*, seventy-five miles off the Norwegian coast.

8. *Stavanger to Newcastle*, 18th October, 1953 (M.R.K.P.)

Forty miles out from Stavanger two Meadow Pipits were seen going south-west.

*Discussion.*

Although sporadic observations of this type are too few to be of much significance in themselves, they give useful evidence of what happens to migrants on their way from the mainland of Europe to Britain. As a good many naturalists presumably cross to Scandinavia nowadays, it should be possible to collect some useful information to supplement and support the observations collected by the British east coast observatories, and also the new work being done on North Sea migration by radar detection. (Lack 1959). Records of land birds actually moving over the sea sometimes have a special value, as coastal observations are affected, especially in the recording of direction, by the local configuration of the land. Owen (1953) on the Kentish Knock Lightship, twenty-two miles out from the Essex coast, noted that a stationary vessel does not deflect migrants unless they are exhausted. Our records confirm this with the larger species, but most of the small passerines seemed to be influenced by the presence of a moving ship at sea with something of the same effect as that of geographical features over land, the course of the ship becoming a form of diversion-line (as defined by Lack and Williamson, 1959). This may happen for long distances often over 100 miles on a journey which, as a direct crossing, would not be more than 400 miles at the most. This happened even with following winds, so that the speed of the ship was probably at the most half of the ground speed of which the birds were capable if they had gone on ahead. However, as is shown below, most of the small birds thus affected were probably disoriented and tired anyway.

Larger species to which the sea crossing is presumably not such a hazard may not be affected in this way. The hawks seen on 11th September 1952 confirm the normal south-west migration postulated for all four species by Rudebeck (1950) who observed them leaving south Sweden at Falsterbo. It is interesting too that the only hawks recorded by Owen at the Kentish Knock were a Sparrowhawk heading west-south-west and a Kestrel heading south-west. The behaviour of the Buzzards seen is of special interest: Rudebeck has shown a striking correlation between high pressure weather and Buzzard movements, because the species makes extensive use of thermal up-currents of wind. More than ninety per cent of the Buzzards passing Falsterbo were recorded migrating in this manner, gaining height by "thermic" soaring and then



LEONORA JEFFREY RINTOUL, 1878-1953



EVELYN VIDA BAXTER, 1879-1959

An appreciation of Dr E. V. Baxter, who died recently, and of her friend and colleague, the late Miss L. J. Rintoul, will appear in the next number of "Scottish Birds."  
(Photographs by J. Moffat, Edinburgh).



gliding forward till the next thermal was met. Thermal currents over the sea are likely to be very slight at the best by comparison with those over land, yet the Buzzards observed from the ship appeared to spend much of their time soaring in wide circles. With the wind north-east these soaring movements would result in slow but steady progress to the south-west, which was exactly what was observed. It was noticeable, however, that this method of progression, with no gliding flight between spells of soaring observed, was much slower than the direct flight of the Sparrowhawks and Kestrels. As a result the Buzzards were left behind by the ship and the impression gained was that they were employing a method of flight learned overland where it is efficient and which they could not adapt to the unusual conditions of flying over an unfamiliar element like the sea. Rudebeck estimates that only 15 to 30 per cent of the Sparrowhawks passing Falsterbo, where the thermals would be much stronger, use this method of progression, and also that they have no obvious aversion to flying over the sea (*op. cit.* p. 47). The impression which these birds and the Kestrels gave in mid North Sea was of being on a normal migration flight, *Normalzurichtung* as defined by Geyr von Schweppenburg (1933), at a speed which, with a following wind, was probably between thirty and forty m.p.h., enabling them to cross from Scandinavia to Britain in about ten hours. The height of flight of the birds observed was not more than 100 or 200 feet, which is contrary to our own experience of birds flying with the wind on the coast at Lista (Hyatt and Mylne 1952) and to the records at Falsterbo (Rudebeck 1950). But of course one may only be seeing those individuals flying low enough to be visible out of a much larger movement proceeding overhead out of sight.

The three days on which any numbers of birds were recorded over the North Sea (3rd October 1951, 11th September 1952 and 5th October 1952) were all preceded by several days of fine anticyclonic weather, when migrants would be expected to be on the move. The south-west heading of almost all the birds for which a direction was recorded agrees with the records obtained by radar of arrivals on the Norfolk coast in autumn (Lack 1959) and suggests a direct crossing from Scandinavia to England, at any rate for the diurnal migrants. Among the passerines recorded by day, however, were several species normally regarded as nocturnal migrants e.g. thrushes, warblers, flycatchers. This feature was also noted by Owen at the Kentish Knock at the southern end of the North Sea. If these species left at dusk, as one would expect, they would clearly not still be only 120 or 200 miles out from Norway at 0630 hours, still less so at noon, when many of the birds on 3rd October 1951 were first seen. Of the passerines observed that day only the Chaffinch and Brambling

are diurnal migrants. As these species were normally observed leaving Lista from dawn until about 1100 hours (Hyatt and Mylne 1951), the Bramblings observed over 100 miles out at 0630 were not likely to have left that day. All nine species had been recorded by us in the movement through south Norway during the previous days (Hyatt and Mylne 1952), but it would appear that neither the diurnal nor nocturnal migrants seen in mid North Sea are likely to have started their sea crossing in Scandinavia. The times of our records are therefore interesting confirmation that such species were involved in the extensive drift caused by bad visibility in the sea crossings to Denmark or Germany. They had presumably left on the night of 2nd October, lost their way in poor weather and been subject during the following day to either down-wind or disoriented drift on the south-east winds which prevailed across the North Sea exactly as described by Jenkins (*op. cit.* p. 98). It is not surprising in these conditions that birds such as the tiny Goldcrests were making full use of the ship to rest after flying possibly for anything from twelve to eighteen hours over the sea.

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## SHORT NOTES

### EXTRAORDINARY NUMBERS OF SOOTY SHEARWATERS IN THE FORTH

Our week on the Isle of May was enjoyable, but unspectacular for birds, except for the astonishing number of Sooty Shearwaters *Procellaria grisea*, at least 500 at one time,

on 25th September 1959, with an equal number of Manx Shearwaters *P. puffinus*. On that day there were three great rafts of shearwaters sitting on a glassy calm sea not more than a quarter of a mile off the east side of the May—a sight surely more appropriate to the south Pacific than the North Sea. Probably there were thousands of Sooties in all, as many appeared to be drifting past on other days in a southerly direction.

A. DONALD WATSON.

(Other observers on the Isle of May this autumn have seen unusual numbers of Sooty Shearwaters, of which details will be published in the Isle of May report, but none have seen such a huge total as Mr Watson and his companions, a total which must be unequalled in the history of British ornithology.—ED.)

#### WHITE STORKS IN FIFE

On 2nd October 1959 not very far from Cameron Reservoir, Fife, I saw two White Storks *Ciconia ciconia* flying very high indeed in a southerly direction. I was in my car driving north and unfortunately had not my binoculars with me. I saw them first through the sunshine roof and thought they were swans. I quickly realised, however, that there was something wrong. The wing-beat was slow and laboured, the neck and head stuck out in front, the legs were only just visible owing to the angle of vision, but the most striking thing was the wings. I pulled up and did the best I could with the naked eye. The wings appeared to be "dome-shaped"; they were white with, not a black tip, but a broad black band deeply covering the tip and continuing tapering right round the trailing edge. Owing to the height I was not able to see any other colour at all; they must have been flying at well over 700 feet. They were immensely large, much larger than Gannets *Sula bassana* (which I know well) or geese.

A. M. WILSON.

(Mrs Wilson has sent a sketch which leaves no doubt of the correctness of her identification. On 2nd October there was also a large influx of continental species on the Isle of May.—ED.)

#### SURF SCOTER IN OUTER HEBRIDES

During a visit to south Harris, Outer Hebrides from 28th August to 10th September 1959, I spent some time examining with a stand telescope (x40) the flock of scoters which summer in the Sound of Taransay and West Loch Tarbert. On the

afternoon of 4th September, when spying from Traigh Nisabost, I found an adult drake Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata* swimming among the Common Scoters *M. nigra* some 300 yards offshore. The white patches on forehead and on nape showed up conspicuously in the excellent lighting conditions. There were often Common Scoters with the Surf Scoter in the field of the telescope together, so that the marked differences in shape and colouring of the bill were apparent. The Surf seemed overall rather larger than that Commons, and the shape of its head more like that of the Velvet Scoter *M. fusca*, with which it was subsequently seen.

This bird was also viewed by my wife and sons. I watched it first of all for about forty-five minutes. The Common Scoters, with which it mixed unconcernedly, were predominantly adult drakes, in a constant state of excitement over the few ducks that were with them; there was much display, with chasings, short flights and diving. In these the Surf took no part, nor was it ever molested in any way, or any sign of resentment shown over its presence. Although much less restless than the Commons, the Surf Scoter took wing on several occasions by itself, showing the absence of any white on the wing.

Later, after a break of about half an hour, I found the Surf Scoter again in the same area, swimming this time with fifty or sixty Velvet Scoters, again predominantly adult drakes. It made several short flights and after about ten minutes was last seen flying westward, alone. Although specially searched for on several other days, it could not be found, nor incidentally were any Velvets, perhaps of some significance in view of J. G. Millais' remarks (*British Diving Ducks II*: 79) that "where (the Surf Scoter) comes as an accidental visitor, it nearly always associates with the Velvet Scoter."

The capabilities of my stand telescope of naval pattern are well known to some members of the S.O.C.; it is a somewhat bulky item of equipment, but the decision to take it to Harris to study scoter flocks could not have been better justified

The only previous recorded occurrence from the Outer Hebrides is of one shot, in the winter of 1865, at Holm, near Stornoway, Lewis. It was preserved in the Castle collection (R. Gray, *Birds of the West of Scotland*, p. 383).

JAMES W. CAMPBELL.

#### DRAKE EIDER SITTING ON A SINGLE EGG

On 7th June 1957, when we were crossing the Moor of Forvie, Aberdeenshire, looking out for subjects to photograph, we saw a drake Eider *Somateria mollissima* sitting on the moor. A cautious approach took us to a point within ten yards of the sitting bird. When we stood up, the bird flapped away

in the manner of a duck Eider leaving a nest and we saw that the bird had indeed left a down-filled nest containing one egg much soiled by newly voided foul-smelling droppings. On a return visit we found this nest empty, no doubt on account of the activity of numerous egg-collectors.

R. MAXWELL.  
ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

### HYBRID GEESE IN KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE, LANARKSHIRE AND RENFREWSHIRE

During recent years I have twice noted dark, apparently hybrid, geese among Grey-lag Geese *Anser anser* in the vicinity of Loch Ken. Both birds showed some similarity with that described below by L. A. Urquhart.

The first occurred on 20th October and during November 1955. It was of Grey-lag size with pale flesh-coloured bill and legs; the bill was rather large. The white cheek-patch extended on to the fore crown and just over the eye, continuing also for about one third of the way down the front of the neck, the whole patch untidily edged. There was no black on the lores. The rest of the head, neck and upper breast were black, merging into dark sooty grey on the body generally, except for a white area from abdomen to under tail-coverts and black tail. At close range and specially in flight the back and wings were seen to be patterned by slightly lighter feather edgings. In flight the bird was not unlike a large dark Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*.

A description and sketch of this bird were shown to Peter Scott and in his view it was probably a hybrid between the Grey-lag and one of the *Branta* geese.

The second bird was seen briefly at the same spot, resting on the water with Grey-lags and a Barnacle Goose on 8th March 1958. Again size was as Grey-lag, but bill bright reddish pink; an untidy white dirty patch on the cheeks only; rest of head and neck black, body otherwise sooty tinged brownish except for white from abdomen to under tail-coverts. I have no note of the colour of legs or tail, which were not clearly seen. It was an ugly-looking creature.

It may be worth pointing out that the 1955 bird in particular was not so very unlike a Blue Snow Goose *Anser c. caerulescens* in its general colour pattern. The black tail, of course, was a strong indication of *Branta*.

A. DONALD WATSON.

On 9th November 1959, near Auldhouse, Lanarkshire, I was making a count of Grey-lag Geese *Anser anser* when I discovered with them, first a Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

and then an unusual looking goose of the following description:

About the size of a Grey-lag Goose, very dark, but not black, over the crown and the whole neck, breast and belly. On each cheek a rounded white patch, as in the Barnacle, but not extending above the eyes. The back was darkish grey, but not so dark as the underparts. Vent and tail-coverts white. The bill was a dullish indeterminate shade and the legs were, I thought, pink; pale anyway, not black. It had a more rapid feed-rate than the Grey-lags. Unfortunately, before I had time to get down to a more detailed study of this bird, two youths came into the field and put all the geese up. I did not see the strange goose's flight pattern, as about 350 birds rose *en masse*.

The flock was eventually located at Dunwan Dam across the border into Renfrewshire. The Barnacle and the strange goose were quickly picked out and I noted a further important feature of the latter as it swam directly away from me—it had a black tail.

L. A. URQUHART.

Mr Watson comments: "It can be seen that the three dark geese had common features and it is worth noting that all occurred with Grey-lags, two of them when a Barnacle was also in the flock." Both observers are agreed that the three birds are most likely to be hybrids between Barnacle and Grey-lag Geese.—Ed.)

### HONEY BUZZARD IN MULL

During the morning of 13th September 1959, while we were bird-watching on the coast at Langamull, north Mull, we had the good fortune to observe and independently identify a Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*. The bird was flying due west along the short-line at a height of about twenty feet and passed within fifty yards of all the observers. The light was fairly good, strong binoculars being used.

The following points were those on which we based our identification:

(a) *Shape*. 1. The long neck, which made the head prominent and pigeon-like, quite unlike that of a common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, was an immediate and striking character. 2. The long narrow tail, shaped like a folded fan, was equally conspicuous and unlike that of a common Buzzard. 3. The wings were narrower and proportionately longer than those of a common Buzzard. 4. The general impression was of a smaller and lighter built raptor than the other species.

(b) *Plumage*. 1. Grey-brown head, with conspicuously white throat. 2. Rest of upperparts uniform dark brown. 3. Under-

parts not seen clearly, but lightish. Under tail not seen at all. (Despite the insistence of the books on the barring of the tail being a striking character, I have always found it most difficult to see in ordinary conditions.—T.C.S.). 4. Under wings a striking pattern of two or three heavy black bars apparently running most of the length of the wing, with black patch at the carpal joint and greyish underwing-coverts.

(c) *Flight*. This was extremely characteristic and in our experience one of the best ways of distinguishing *Pernis* from *Buteo*. It is, nevertheless, not easy to describe. The wings, in the glide, are held so that the proximal half, from the body to the carpal joint, is raised a little and held a little back: the wing beyond the carpal joint is depressed and held much more back, while the tips of the primaries are raised again and twist over, while still being held back. (Diagrams attached).

Identifications took place quite independently; E. K. shouted her suspicions to T.C.S., who failed to hear. All three observers are well acquainted with the Honey Buzzard, E.K. at Gibraltar, A.M.S. in Denmark and Sweden, and T.C.S. in Denmark, Sweden and Turkey. There were also plenty of common Buzzards on Mull with which to compare our impressions, including one seen a moment before the Honey Buzzard was lost to view at Langamull, and thereafter watched for some time.

ELLA KNIGHT.

ANNE-MARIE SMOUT.

T. C. SMOUT.

(This is the first record of the Honey Buzzard from Mull. We are informed by P. E. Davis that a bird of this species occurred in June at Voe, Shetland, its remains being picked up about the end of July—Ed.)

#### SUCCESSFUL BREEDING OF OSPREYS ON SPEYSIDE

Last summer a pair of Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* attempted to nest at any eyrie on a dead pine in the marsh at the south end of Loch Garten, Inverness-shire. Halfway through the incubation period the nest was raided by an egg-collector in the early hours of the morning under cover of darkness. The eggs were smashed. The birds later built another eyrie on a fifty foot living Scots Pine about a mile east of the north end of Loch Garten. It was now, however, too late for breeding success and, after completing the nest, the birds left the area.

This year the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, supported by the Nature Conservancy, organised special measures to safeguard the birds. The male arrived first on 18th April and began displaying over the new eyrie. We went

into action at once; the lower branches of the tree were sawn off and the trunk and base smothered in barbed Dannaert wire. A section wooden hide to which there was a covered approach was erected. These preparations were completed when the female arrived on 22nd April, and courtship and nest-building began at once.

A rotation of three teams each of two watchers guarded the eyrie day and night through the entire incubation period of thirty-five days. Eggs were laid towards the end of April and hatched early in June. We are glad to report that there was no disturbance of the birds this year.

When we were satisfied that the young had hatched safely and were being fed regularly, we established an observation post for the public, about 200 yards from the eyrie. Access to this was by a peat road leading off from the Tulloch road, close to Loch Garten, and the track was screened from the birds by pine trees. At this O.P. through a pair of binoculars mounted on a tripod over 12,000 visitors were able to watch the young being fed by the female, and got excellent views of the male flying in to the eyrie with trout.

On several occasions the pair at the eyrie were visited by an apparently unmated adult which frequented the district.

The watchers kept a log of the movements and behaviour of the birds, night and day throughout the whole period, forming what must be a unique record of the breeding biology of any pair of birds.

On 2nd August the first young bird flew from the eyrie, to be followed a few days later by the other two. For the first few days they returned to the eyrie to feed and roost, but now (early August) the three young birds are away and strong on the wing.

GEORGE WATERSTON.

(Mr Waterston and his helpers have earned the gratitude of all ornithologists by the success of their operation. For a more detailed, and highly entertaining, account of the proceedings, you are referred to *Bird Notes* 28: 494-500.—ED.)

#### WOOD SANDPIPER BREEDING IN SUTHERLAND

On 18th July 1959 we were walking round the edge of a marsh in Sutherland when a Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* flew up from the marsh about fifty yards away and flew round out heads "chipping" continuously. Once it broke into a long trill on the same note, and its whole manner was agitated.

On the 23rd I.D. went alone to the marsh and sat in the open, there being no cover near. It took 55 minutes for the



bird to settle down and feed which it eventually did within about 40 yards. During this time it "chipped" from the ground, or flew towards him and then back again. It also bobbed, as Redshanks *T. totanus* do when alarmed. He could see it frequently for the next half hour, but it appeared to be feeding alone. Then he waded over and flushed the bird, which started "chipping" again. Within about fifteen yards of where it had been, he flushed two others which behaved entirely differently, flying about twenty yards and dropping down again. One was followed and close views were obtained, since it preferred to run several yards before getting up. Patches of down on the head and along the neck were clearly visible, particularly when the light was behind the bird. It did not call.

The same afternoon we both returned and watched another (or the same) juvenile-type bird. The back was spottier than in the adult and in flight the wings appeared darker. One of the presumed juveniles was also seen on the 25th, when it gave a rather sweeter version of the typical *chiff-if-if* call heard on migration. This was also the only occasion on which the dirty yellowish legs were noticed.

On the 26th both the young birds were seen by Dr I. D. Pennie, who fully confirmed our identification. We are familiar with Wood and Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus* on migration, and with their call-notes. The young birds were last seen on 5th August, the day before our departure.

IAN DOWNHILL.  
G. HALLAS.

(H. P. Medhurst informs us that on 3rd June 1959 P. R. Colston and R. E. Emmett watched a Wood Sandpiper feeding in the Isle of Skye, where it does not appear to have occurred previously. Both observers are familiar with the species and provided Mr Medhurst with a good description.—Ed.)

#### IVORY GULL IN FIFE

On 4th October 1959, on the flats close to the Paper Mill at Guardbridge, Fife, we saw an unusual gull together with a large mixed collection of other gulls and waders. It was perhaps a little larger than a Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*, completely white and rather "fluffy"—for want of a better word. The legs were black and the bill yellowish, and it had the look to a certain extent of a pigeon. The bird was on the ground, not on the wing, and there was no colour other than white in its plumage. We puzzled over it for some time, knowing that it was none of the gulls which usually

frequent this coast. We concluded that it was an Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea*.

A. M. WILSON.  
DORIS WILSON.

#### FEEDING FLIGHT OF INLAND NESTING TERNS

Several times during the past two nesting seasons I have seen Common Terns *Sterna hirundo* from the colony at Loch Leven, Kinross, flying overland back from the sea carrying sand-eels. To find out if this habit were general I watched on 8th July 1959 from a point on the sluice road at a time when there was a rising tide in the Forth. Between 1400 and 1630 hours I counted twenty-five terns flying in and fifteen of them were carrying sand-eels. This was a good proportion of the birds involved, as there were only thirty nests in the colony on 14th June. Considering that observations were limited to a shallow valley north of Findatie Farm, it may be supposed that other birds, flying in elsewhere, were missed. The round trip would involve a flight of eighteen to twenty miles.

GEORGE DICK.

#### GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO IN ORKNEY

On the afternoon of 21st August 1959 I was informed by telephone that a strange, long-tailed, crested bird had been frequenting several of the farms on the North End district of Rendall for about a week and that it was then in the vicinity of a certain cabbage patch. On arrival I found that it had gone, but interviewed several of the people who had seen it and concluded that it must be a Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*. However, as the Great Spotted Cuckoo had never previously been recorded in Scotland, I was very anxious to make certain of its identity. Though I visited all its known haunts that afternoon and evening, and on the following day, I failed to find it. Then, shortly after 10 p.m. on the 22nd, Mr Tulloch of Tingwall rang up to say that the bird was roosting in a neighbouring garden. As it was then quite dark I decided to wait until the morning, but, before I had finished dressing, the 'phone rang and Mrs Tulloch announced: "the bird is here at Tingwall in the garden." I grabbed binoculars and camera and, without breakfasting, did the three and a half miles in record time. I was rewarded by seeing at very close range and being able to identify positively an immature Great Spotted Cuckoo.

Slightly bigger looking than the common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, its most striking feature was its very long, magpie-like, graduated tail, the central feathers of which were

blackish with a metallic sheen—other feathers brownish, all with small amount of white at tips. The head was black, with the suggestion of a crest. The rest of the upperparts were brown with whitish or creamy spots on the back, wing coverts and secondaries. The primaries were bright chestnut, except for the outer quarter which was brown with whitish or creamy tips to the feathers: the chestnut showed up well when the bird was at rest, or in flight. The underparts from the chin were pale creamy buff, forming a half collar to the neck. The legs and feet were blackish, with creamy feathers to the tarsal joint. Iris blackish with a rather indistinct orbital ring of pale brown.

The flight resembled that of the common Cuckoo or of a hawk, and other birds—Lapwings and Blackbirds—mobbed it. It would readily perch on any fence, post, tree, bush, overhead wire or building, often flicking its long tail. Quite tame, it could be approached to about four or five yards. When on the ground it hopped about in an ungainly manner with legs wide apart. It visited cabbage-patches at several farms in the district and fed avidly on the caterpillars of the Cabbage White Butterfly, which were very numerous this season. Its chin was stained green as a result of this feeding.

I succeeded in taking a reasonably good colour photograph. The bird was first seen at Tingwall on 14th August and last seen on 30th August.

E. BALFOUR.

#### BEE-EATER IN SUTHERLAND

About 1400 hours BST on 14th August 1959, when I was by a burn near the mouth of the Halladale River in north Sutherland, an unusual bird flew by me. The light was excellent and the bird passed the small valley at about eye-level heading south. The most arresting thing about it was the brilliant colour. It was about the size of a Blackbird *Turdus merula* with a swift, swooping flight like a Swallow's. On the back it was a bright golden yellow and tawny, with a pointed tail and pointed green-blue wings, and as it flew it called repeatedly *prui*. The only name that occurred to me was Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*.

There had been a strong, probably gale-force wind from the south or south-east since the previous evening, with heavy rain in the morning,

MARY HENDERSON.

#### FIRECREST ON THE ISLE OF MAY

On 30th September 1959 on the Isle of May I found a Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus* feeding among nettles near the

Bain Trap. It flew from there into an abandoned naval hut, where it fed busily among the rafters, but was later coaxed back into the trap, where it was captured.

Since the bird appeared tired and its identity was evident, a detailed plumage examination was not made, but the following details, distinguishing it from the Goldcrest *R. regulus*, were noted: bright orange crest, indicating a male, surrounded by a black border; conspicuous white eyebrow; black line through eye; white patch under eye; bright grass green back and greenish gold patch at side of neck; throat buffish, but rest of underparts white; wing pattern much as in Goldcrest. Opinions differed as to whether its call-note could be distinguished from that of the Goldcrest.

The bird was photographed, and seen by M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Eileen and Dennis Munns, R. W. J. Smith and W. Watt. It remained on the island until 3rd October, when it was also seen by W. J. Eggeling and J. Hoy. On the 2nd the Firecrest, two Goldcrests and a Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus irornatus* were feeding simultaneously in Mr Watt's garden. Strong south-east winds had been blowing since the afternoon of the 29th September.

The species is new to Scotland, although there are records from Holy Island, Northumberland, and the Faeroes.

D. R. GRANT.

#### HAWFINCH IN TIREE

On 25th October 1959, after a period of strong west and south-west winds, a dead Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* was picked up by one of my pupils at Kenovay, Tiree.

ALLAN C. MCDUGALL.

#### TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL IN INVERNESS-SHIRE

On 21st August 1959, at Newtonmore, I was handed a newly dead adult male Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera bifasciata* with fresh blood at the nostrils a slenderer, more Chaffinch-like bird, with its boldly pied wings, than the Scottish Crossbill, and with thinner and more delicately twisted mandibles. Even in death its colouring was an exquisitely mottled blood-red—a brighter hue than the apple-and-brick-red of our own Crossbill. The skin is at Aberdeen University, where Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards checked the measurements against the unlikely contingency of it proving to belong to the American race. The only previous record from the interior of the Highlands seems to be of one that George Bolam

found in an Inverness taxidermist's, said to have been obtained locally.

RICHARD PERRY.

(We are informed that another bird of this species occurred on Foula on 21st August 1959, but have not received details.—ED.)

### CHAFFINCH NESTING ON GROUND

On 16th May 1959, as I was walking through a wood near Saline, Fife, a hen Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* rose from a patch of Wood Anemone *A. nemorosa*, fluttering away from underfoot in the manner of a ground-nesting bird trying to draw me away from the area. It grounded without calling. The nest was on the open ground with no cover other than the foliage of the anemone, and contained four eggs. The hen Chaffinch returned after a short interval, flying in about a foot above the ground and walking the last six feet or so like a lark in an open field. The bird's behaviour and choice of nesting-place were all the more unusual in view of the number of conventional sites available in the area.

GEORGE DICK.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### *Appeal for information on bird migration.*

A year's investigation of bird migration with radar on the east coast of Scotland has shown that while it is usually easy to detect high-flying birds by this means, most movements take place either by night or too high to be seen from the ground by day, so that it is frequently difficult to identify the species involved by direct observation. It has proved possible, however, to identify the constitution of most of the important passages observed through a study of (1) general arrival and departure dates, (2) the occurrence of drifted migrants at the Bird Observatories, and especially (3) the appearance of grounded migrants with a local deterioration of the weather. For instance, the identity of one large arrival from the direction of Scandinavia was indicated by a note from Tom Weir in your last issue (1: 97) concerning Redwings *Turdus musicus* and a few Fieldfares *T. pilaris* in the Rannoch area on 18th and 19th October 1958. I have received several other reports of precipitations of rushes of winter visitors which came in high over the coast, but descended where they met bad weather inland. It seems likely that other observers must from time to time make casual observations of this sort which would be of great value for identifying the movements

seen with radar. I would thus be very grateful for information concerning the time of arrival and departure of migrants, or observations of visible migration, in Scotland from the late summer of 1958 until further notice.

W. R. P. BOURNE.

Edward Grey Institute,  
Botanic Garden, Oxford.

### *Great Skua nesting in Outer Hebrides*

As W. A. J. Cunningham's note under the above heading (*antea* 1: 124) is the first published reference to the breeding of the Great Skua *Catharacta skua* in this faunal area in recent times, it seems desirable to record some additional information which I have. Earlier publication was withheld in order to avoid risk of embarrassment to this species in a "new" area.

The first intimation I had of breeding in the Outer Isles was received in August 1945 from a correspondent, Gilbert Holmes, who stated that a few pairs nested in a certain district. I was unable to pay a visit until June 1955, when on the 30th, with Donald MacDonald, I found two nests, one containing two eggs. From the condition of the vegetation beside the nests and at the prominent nesting hummocks, it appeared that the site must have been occupied for some years, although Greater Black-backs *Larus marinus*, which were using similar terrain, might have been responsible for the original manuring and vegetation changes. Four pairs of Great Skuas were present here. Later a single bird was seen, from a distance, settled in another locality less than two miles from the first; unfortunately there was no time to look for a nest. On 4th June 1956 there were three single birds here, and three pairs on 3rd June 1957, but on neither occasion did the behaviour of the birds suggest that nesting had progressed very far. W.A.J.C.'s 1959 nests were found here, I believe.

In June 1956 and 1957 the first locality where nests had been found in 1955 was also revisited: on 3rd June 1956 two, or perhaps three, pairs were present and one nest was found. on 2nd June 1957 there were three single birds, which behaved as if nesting had not started.

Unfortunately it is impossible to give a reliable date for the first colonisation. This may have occurred much earlier than the available information suggests, for the locality where the skuas nest is one which, until recent years, has been almost entirely avoided by ornithologists. There is no record of the Great Skua in the Outer Hebrides at any season until 1893; Harvie-Brown (*Vertebrate Fauna of Argyll and Inner Hebrides* 1892, p. 194) referred to a report of breeding in the

Outer Isles received by Graham, but this was never verified and has never been taken seriously.

JAMES W. CAMPBELL.

### *National Wildfowl Counts*

Regular monthly counts of wildfowl are made on lochs, estuaries, coastal waters, etc. from September to March. Counters are required in Scotland. Anyone interested in helping should write to Miss E. A. Garden, Eider Cottage, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, who will supply full details.

### CORRIGENDA

Dr W. J. Eggeling has asked us to make the following corrections to earlier Isle of May Observatory reports:

In the 1956 report (*Scottish Naturalist* 69: 137) under "Cross-bill" for "1st-9th June" read "1st-9th July."

In the 1957 report (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: Special number) on p. 41 5th line from foot, for "17th" read "19th". On p. 43, line 6, for "31st June" read "30th June."

*Antea* 1:88, line 6, for "de los Gagules" read "de los Gazules." Line 10, altogether six Gannets (not five) have been ringed on the May.

*Antea* 1:94, 7th line from foot, for "18th October" read "13th October."

*Antea* 1:99. The late House Martin at Dunbar was seen on 1st November, not 4th November.

*Antea* 1:99. Under "Bewick's Swan" for "28th November" read "28th December."

*Antea* 1:100. The early Sandwich Tern seen at Fort George occurred on 23rd March 1957, not in 1959.

## REVIEW

BRUCE CAMPBELL. *Bird Watching for Beginners*. Puffin Books, 1959, pp. 240, 2/6.

This useful little book has been brought sufficiently up to date to include the Golden Eagle nesting in England and the disaster to the Ospreys' nest in 1958, though not their success in 1959. Though intended for schoolchildren and sometimes talking down to them a little ("I shall not be popular with your parents if I make you too interested in the Nightjar"), it is a book from which nearly all adult bird-watchers can profit, especially with regard to the lines of useful investigation suggested for amateurs. Mr R. A. Richardson's pictures are still a delight, but the sketch of a Dunlin ("Can you identify the bird?") from the author's own

notebook was mistaken by us for an aberrant Water Rail. We congratulate Dr Campbell on this new and improved edition and are only sorry that he has been so long in England that he now considers that the Glaucous and Iceland Gull are "very hard to tell apart."

M.F.M.M.

## CURRENT NOTES

[The Current Notes section is held over to the following number.—Ed.]

### The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

#### TWELFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

When I travelled north on Friday, October 23rd, it was with pleasurable anticipation of an enjoyable weekend ahead, for this was the second time I had attended an S.O.C. Conference and I knew that if Stirling 1959 was as good as North Berwick 1957, I was in for a good time.

The Conference headquarters were the Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling. By 7 p.m. on the Friday evening it was wet and dismal in the streets of Stirling, but within the "Golden Lion" an atmosphere of warmth and great friendliness prevailed amongst the Scottish ornithologists and their guests. It was good to find oneself amongst ornithologists who, for the time being at any rate, did not take themselves too seriously all the time.

Friday evening was a time for registration and informal business and discussions. A programme of films was ably introduced by Mr C. E. Palmar. Iain Thomson showed some of his remarkable colour films with notable sequences of Black-throated Divers and Slavonian Grebe (as good as any I have seen of this species) following which Mr Palmar exhibited some of his own colour films, which included brilliant shots of duck.

The lecture by Professor Niko Tinbergen on Saturday morning, which followed the formal opening by the Provost of Stirling, was one of the most stimulating and interesting ornithological talks I have ever been privileged to hear. His subject, "New Field Studies of the Behaviour of Gulls," was illustrated by slides and a film, most of the shots being taken at Ravenglass in Cumberland. If one had not already been aware from his books and his world-wide reputation that Dr Tinbergen was a master of his subject, this must have been apparent to anybody listening to his lecture. I have seen many thousands of feet of bird film of one kind and another, but I have never seen a bird so completely unaware of the camera and of the presence of human beings as in the close-up shot of a sleeping Black-headed Gull that Dr Tinbergen showed us. If proof were needed that these studies of gulls were indicative of completely natural reactions in the field, one had it here.

By way of complete contrast, the second half of Saturday morning was devoted to a lecture on Falconry by Dr James Robertson Justice. He gave a fascinating account of how falcons are trained, much enlivened by the presence of two live falcons, with whom Dr Justice carried on private conversations from time to time.

The climax of the Conference came on Saturday night, when something approaching 200 people attended the Club's Annual Dinner in the large





The Official Opening of the new Centre at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, on Monday, 26th October, 1959. Left to right: Sir Charles G. Connell, President of the Club; the Right Hon. the Earl of Wemyss and March, Chairman of the National Trust for Scotland; the Right Hon. Lord Hurcomb, Chairman of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and Mrs George Waterston, Secretary of the Club. ("Scotsman" photograph).

ballroom of the Golden Lion Hotel. Distinguished guests were the Rt. Hon. Lord Hurcomb, chairman of the Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Dr Niko Tinbergen and Dr James Robertson Justice. When an excellent dinner had been eaten and the Loyal Toast proposed by the chairman, Sir Charles Connell, had been drunk, we sat back expectantly to await the after-dinner speeches. The toast of the S.O.C. was proposed most ably by Dr Tinbergen, and fittingly replied to by Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards. Both speakers referred to the recent death of Dr Evelyn Baxter and paid tribute to the great contribution she had made during her lifetime to Scottish ornithology. Mr Donald Watson then proposed the toast of the guests with an easy and gracious turn of wit, which was replied to by Dr James Robertson Justice.

But if this brought the formal dinner to a close, let no one think that the evening was over. Conviviality was the order of the night, indicative of the happy atmosphere which is such a remarkable feature of S.O.C. conferences.

The last session of the Conference on Sunday morning consisted of a programme of films, "Ospreys Return" and "Reed Warblers", shown by courtesy of the R.S.P.B., and "Journey into Spring," by courtesy of British Transport Films. "Ospreys Return" was of special interest, as it showed the Osprey family successfully reared in Speyside this summer. At the conclusion of the films, Colonel J. P. Grant made a very strong appeal for practical support for the work of the R.S.P.B. Votes of thanks to speakers and those responsible for the organisation of the Conference followed, and this, sadly enough, brought the official programme of the Conference to an end.

As a visitor, it seemed to me that everything had gone smoothly, but this is the secret of good organisation. Mrs Irene Waterston is to be congratulated most warmly on carrying through the Conference with such conspicuous success at the outset of her secretaryship of the Club. I have now attended two S.O.C. Conferences as a fledgling guest. I look forward to attending the Thirteenth Conference as a free-flying member of the S.O.C.

GWEN DAVIES.

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## Report of Council - Session XXIII, 1958-59

The Council have the honour to submit the following Report for the past year :—

**MEMBERSHIP** : It is satisfactory to be able to report that the Membership of the Club has maintained its high level in spite of the increase in the subscription. During the Session, 150 members resigned or were removed from the books as having unpaid subscriptions, and 147 new members were enrolled. Comparative figures are as follows :

	31/8/55	31/8/56	31/8/57	31/8/58	31/8/59
Ordinary	842	755	723	738	747
Junior	121	132	132	148	140
Honorary	11	11	11	11	7
Total	<u>974</u>	<u>898</u>	<u>866</u>	<u>897</u>	<u>894</u>

**COUNCIL MEETINGS** : Five Meetings of Council were held during the Session, when much important business was transacted.

**GENERAL MEETINGS** : A full programme of Lectures was carried out during the winter in five Branches. The Council wishes to express its

thanks to all the Lecturers who gave so freely of their services, and would also like to thank Branch Officials for arrangements and hospitality.

**EXCURSIONS** : Apart from Excursions organised by the Branches to various places of interest during the summer months, the Club also organised a weekend Excursion to Aviemore in May, and joined with the British Trust for Ornithology in a weekend Conference at Dumfries in February.

**"SCOTTISH BIRDS"**: Four numbers of the Club's new Journal have appeared during the Session and it is gratifying to report that it has been well received, and has gained support not only from members of the Club but also from additional subscribers, including many Libraries. The Council are confident that the publication of the Journal has contributed materially to the steady recruitment of new members, and wishes to congratulate Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn and his Assistant Editors on the high standard already reached by the Journal.

**SCOTTISH BIRDS RECORDS COMMITTEE** : This Committee, hitherto under the Chairmanship of our Hon. President, the late Dr E. V. Baxter, meets regularly each year to adjudicate on all records published annually. The Review for 1958 is published in "Scottish Birds."

**SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR ORNITHOLOGY AND BIRD PROTECTION** : As already reported in "Scottish Birds", the Council agreed to accept a donation of £4,000 from an anonymous donor to establish a Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection in Edinburgh. The Office and Library were removed to the new premises on 7th July 1959. The Club has been greatly indebted to the National Trust for Scotland for providing an office for the Club rent free for the past five years. The premises are to be officially opened by the Earl of Wemyss and March on Monday, 26th October, when representatives of various ornithological organisations will be invited. While all members of the Club are warmly invited to visit the new Centre, limited accommodation prevents the Council from extending a general invitation on this occasion.

**CLUB LIBRARY** : During the year we received a number of books from the Library of the late Professor James Ritchie which have been a valuable addition to the Reference Library of the Club. The donation of a handsome oak bookcase has been received from Dr and Mrs R. E. McIntyre of Edinburgh.

**APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY** : In early March the Council accepted with regret the resignation of Mr George Waterston as Secretary of the Club, a position he has held since its inception in 1937. At a Council meeting on 1st April it was decided to appoint Mrs George Waterston as Secretary and Treasurer of the Club. Mr Robert Hillcoat remains as Hon. Treasurer.

For the Council,

CHARLES G. CONNELL, President.

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### CLUB LIBRARY AND MEETING FOR JUNIOR MEMBERS

Members are asked to refer to the inside front cover of this Journal for information on alterations to the opening hours of the Club Library, and in the evenings reserved for Junior members.

### 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, or to Branch Secretaries.

Members 25s; Junior Members 7s 6d; Non-Members (Scottish Birds only) 20s.

## TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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The Twenty-Third Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling, on Saturday 24th October 1959, at 6.15 p.m. An attendance of over 100 members was presided over by Sir Charles G. Connell, President of the Club.

**DEATH OF DR E. V. BAXTER:** After paying tribute to the late Dr E. V. Baxter, the Chairman asked the company to stand for a minute, in respect to her memory.

**MINUTES:** The Minutes of the Twenty-Second Annual General Meeting, held in Perth on 25th October 1958, were read and approved.

**REPORT OF COUNCIL:** In moving the adoption of the Report, the Chairman said that the Council hoped to be able to provide more funds for the development of "Scottish Birds" in the future. The Council also welcomed the opportunity provided by the new Scottish Centre for developing the Club's association with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, particularly at a time when the extending tourist season made it imperative that our birds should be protected. He paid tribute to Mr George Waterston, who had relinquished the position of Secretary of the Club during the Session, for the work he had done both in building up the Club, and for ornithology in general. The Report was adopted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** In the absence, due to illness, of the Hon. Treasurer, the Chairman reported briefly on the present finances of the Club. He drew attention to the good surplus for the year, but pointed out that this could not be a ground for complaisance as there would in future be more calls upon the Club's income. The capital position, he felt, was good for a Club of only 26 years' standing. The Council had received intimation that the late Dr E. V. Baxter had bequeathed the very generous sum of £1,000 to the Club. The Accounts were approved.

**APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:** Mr Arthur Walker, C.A., was re-elected Auditor for the ensuing Session.

**HON. PRESIDENT:** In moving the election of Dr David A. Bannerman, M.B.E., Sc.D., F.R.S.E., as an Hon. President of the Club, the Chairman spoke of the encouragement he had given to the Club by his interest and support since he came to live in Scotland. His election was unanimously approved.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:** The Council's recommendation that Mr George Waterston and Mr Donald Watson be elected to Council to replace Dr David Bannerman and Dr W. J. Eggeling who were due to retire by rotation, was approved, and warm appreciation was expressed by the Chairman to the retiring Members for their services.

**FAMILY MEMBERSHIP:** The Chairman stated that, arising out of a discussion at the last Annual General Meeting, the Council had considered a suggestion for a Family Membership subscription. As this involved a change in the Constitution, no definite proposal could be made to the Club until the next Annual General Meeting. They recommended, however, a subscription of 40/- for married couples who would receive one copy only of "Scottish Birds" unless otherwise requested; this subscription would not include children as it was felt that they would prefer, and should be encouraged to receive their own copies of the Journal. Members were invited to submit to the Council their observations on this recommendation, which would then be taken into further consideration and laid before the Club as a definite proposal.

**COUNCIL FOR NATURE:** At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr R. S. R. Fitter, Secretary of the Council for Nature, drew the attention of members of the Club to the various aspects of the work of his Council, and invited their assistance in finding suitable tasks of a scientific nature

for the Conservation Corps to carry out in Scotland; in encouraging support for planned courses in amateur cine photography; and in forming a comprehensive list of Natural History films which would be available to Societies.

**PROFESSOR V. C. WYNNE-EDWARDS:** The Chairman drew attention to the recent honour conferred on Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards, who had been elected a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union in Saskatoon.

**Miss E. A. GARDEN:** The Chairman expressed the Club's gratitude to Miss E. A. Garden for the gift of a clock to use in the Clubroom at the new Scottish Centre in Edinburgh, and also to those who had given their help so generously in various ways.

**VOTE OF THANKS** The Meeting closed with a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman on the motion of Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards.

### THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

#### Revenue Account for Year ended 31st August 1959

INCOME :—	Year to 31/8/59	31/8/58
Subscriptions received during year ... ..	£1000 19 6	£779
Add: Received in advance at 31/8/58 ... ..	10 5 0	10
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Less: Received in advance at 31/8/59 ... ..	£1011 4 6	£789
	0 0 0	10
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Income from Miss L. J. Rintoul's Endowment	£1011 4 6	£779
Savings Bank Interest ... ..	40 5 10	40
Badge Sales ... ..	13 2 5	12
Eric Hosking Exhibition Net Proceeds	5 6 6	6
	0 0 0	10
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1069 19 3	£847
EXPENDITURE :—		
Hire of Lecture Halls and Equipment ... ..	£88 8 9	£78
Lecturers' Expenses ... ..	53 6 10	62
Postages, printing, stationery, sundry expenses	101 9 7	174
Subscriptions to British Council, the Council for Nature, B.T.O., R.S.P.B. and I.C.P.B. ... ..	10 2 0	4
Fee for Secretarial Services ... ..	353 1 2	400
Conference Net Cost ... ..	39 15 8	28
Scottish Birds—Vol. I Nos. 1 to 4—net cost less sales to non-members £35, 11s 6, and advertisement receipts £66 ... ..	171 3 2	0
Removal Expenses to Regent Terrace ... ..	21 1 0	0
Furniture and equipment including carpet, tables chairs and shelving for Library £59, 3s 0d and reconditioned typewriter £36 ... ..	95 4 0	12
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£933 12 2	£758
Surplus for year carried to Balance Sheet ... ..	136 7 1	89
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1069 19 3	£847
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Balance Sheet as at 31st August, 1959</b>	<b>31/8/59</b>	<b>31/8/58</b>
Surplus at 31st August, 1958 ... ..	£681 16 3	£493
Add: Surplus for year per Revenue Account	136 7 1	89
Legacy from J. Bartholomew ... ..	0 0 0	100
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£818 3 4	682

Miss L. J. Rintoul's Endowment (the free annual income is available for the advancement of ornithology) ... ..	1000	0	0	1000
	<u>£1818</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1682</u>
Cash in Edinburgh Savings Bank ... ..	£693	6	1	580
Cash in Royal Bank of Scotland Current Account	100	10	1	112
Cash in hand ... ..	6	7	2	0
Debt due to the Club for adverts. in Scottish Birds	18	0	0	0
	<u>£818</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>692</u>
Less: Subscriptions received in advance ...	0	0	0	10
	<u>£818</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>682</u>
£1151 3¼% War Stock at cost (Endowment) (Market Value at 31/8/59 £760) ... ..	1000	0	0	1000
	<u>£1818</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1682</u>

EDINBURGH, 14th October, 1959.—I have examined the foregoing Revenue Account and Balance Sheet of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club for the year ending 31st August, 1959, and certify that in my opinion they are correctly stated and sufficiently vouched.

ARTHUR WALKER, Chartered Accountant.

### OPERATION OSPREY 1960: Appeal for Volunteers

In the event of the probable return of the Ospreys to the same site at Loch Garten in 1960, the R.S.P.B. will require the help once again of volunteer Wardens to guard the eyrie from disturbance.

Wardens will be required from mid-April until mid-August, preferably for periods of not less than a week at a time. Food, tents, and camp equipment will be provided free, but each person is expected to bring his own sleeping bag and pillow slip. Provided a sufficient number of Wardens are available, each one will have every third day free of duties. A succession of female cook-caterers will also be required for the period.

Anyone wishing to assist should send full details and references as soon as possible to Mr George Waterston, 21 Regent Terr., Edinburgh 7.

### WEEK-END EXCURSION TO DUMFRIES

Arrangements have been made with the County Hotel, Dumfries, for a weekend Excursion to the Solway area to see the geese.

Accommodation has been reserved for the weekend 5th to 7th February 1960 at inclusive terms of £4 per person as follows: Bed on Friday night 5th; breakfast, packed lunch, dinner and bed on Saturday 6th; breakfast and packed lunch on Sunday 7th.

Members wishing to come on this Club Excursion should book direct with the Manager, The County Hotel, Dumfries (Tel. 146), mentioning that they are members of the Club. Members may bring guests. Arrangements for transport by private cars should be made with the Branch Secretaries.