

SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

Vol. 1 No. 9

Autumn 1960

FIVE SHILLINGS

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 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 16s 9d post extra. 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).

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.

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, 16 Athole Gardens, 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. SMYTH. Cover design (Leach's Petrel) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly.*

Editorial

READERS of the present number of *Scottish Birds* will notice such details as a number of records of the Chiffchaff from the northern Highlands or a report on the increase of the newly established Cormorant colony in the Forth, and we feel that information on alterations in the range or populations of birds in Scotland is of special interest and, in the long run, of more importance than isolated records of very rare vagrants. The first recorded nesting (in 1958) of the Green and Wood Sandpipers in Scotland, the re-establishment of the Osprey, and colonisation by the Collared Dove are of course sensational, but the spread into the north and west of such species as the Carrion Crow, Garden Warbler and Chiffchaff needs to be as fully documented, as does the spread over the Border of southern species like the Turtle Dove, Little Owl and Green Woodpecker, or the spread of such a well-known bird as the Eider. Several of these problems are already in capable hands, but there is a lot still to be investigated: does the Nuthatch, as rumoured, really breed in Scotland—and so on? These few words are, in short, a plea for less attention to rarities and for more attention to distribution and changes in distribution.

REVIEW OF ORNITHOLOGICAL CHANGES IN SCOTLAND IN 1959

JAMES W. CAMPBELL

Introduction

In 1954 the Council of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club appointed a Scottish Bird Records Committee to review annually the records of importance to Scottish Ornithology. This committee was under the Chairmanship of the late Dr E. V. Baxter; in January 1960 I was invited by the Council to act as Chairman and to prepare a report on the findings of the

Committee relating to records *published* during 1959.

The members of this committee at the present time are: D. G. Andrew, A. G. S. Bryson, A. B. Duncan, Dr W. J. Eggeling, Commander Sir Geoffrey Hughes-Onslow, Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Dr Ian D. Pennie, George Waterston, Kenneth Williamson and Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards. This is the seventh report to be published; it is concerned primarily with records *published* during 1959. The following journals have been searched: *Scottish Birds* (S.B.), *British Birds* (B.B.), *Bird Migration* (B.M.), *Bird Study* (B.S.), *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* (F.I.B.O.B.), *Ibis*, *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* and *Scottish Field*. The abbreviations used in this report are shown in brackets; in addition, S.N. refers to *The Scottish Naturalist*.

Records published in *Country Life*, *The Field* and *Bird Notes* have been considered in the past, but are not included in the present report; any relevant observations, however, for 1959 will be included in the 1960 report. A certain number of 1959 records not referred to here are being held over for further consideration.

Previous Reports by this Committee were published in *The Scottish Naturalist* 1955:98, 1956:1, 1957:37, 1957:170, and *Scottish Birds* 1958:30, 1959:117.

BIRDS NEW TO SCOTLAND

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER *Calidris acuminata*. One near Hamilton, Lanark, 13th-21st October 1956 (S.B. 1:94).

GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO *Clamator glandarius*. One at Tingwall, Orkney, 14th-30th August 1959 (S.B. 1:152).

GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*. One Loch Brow, Shetland, 4th-5th June 1958 (F.I.B.O.B. 4:61). See also caveat B.B. 53:168.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*. One Isle of May, Forth, 30th September-3rd October 1959; trapped and photographed (S.B. 1:153). The possibility of earlier records has been suggested in S.B. 1:195, but in our opinion these cannot be accepted on the information available.

SONG SPARROW *Melospiza melodia*. One Fair Isle, Shetland, 27th April-10th May 1959; trapped and photographed (B.B. 52:419). There appears to be no previous European record of this American species; the closely allied *M. lincolni* has occurred once, in Germany.

NEW BREEDING RECORDS FOR SCOTLAND

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. A pair, with one chick, found in Inverness-shire 29th May, 1959 (B.B. 52:430).

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. Adult, with two flying young still with traces of down, found in Sutherland 23rd July 1959, and subsequently until 5th August (S.B. 1:150).

BIRDS NEW TO AREAS AND COUNTIES

WHITE-BILLED DIVER *Gavia adamsii*. Two near Avoch Harbour, 4th February 1959 (S.B. 1:91); first for East Ross.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*. One on Loch Fyne, 11th December 1955 (S.B. 1:100); first for South Argyll.

MANX SHEARWATER *Procellaria puffinus*. In the Review for 1957 (S.B. 1:30), the Committee rejected a record of one seen, Loch Leven, 25th July 1957 (Field 1957:279). Further information has been published showing that G. T. Jamieson also observed a Manx Shearwater on Loch Leven on 26th July 1957 (S.B. 1:73). We now accept both these records as the first for Kinross.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*. A pair east of Endrick Mouth, 19th April 1959 (S.B. 1:100); first for West Stirling.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*. A pair with young on Loch Ghuilbinn, north of Loch Ossian, 29th July 1957 (S.B. 1:92); first for South Inverness.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*. One at St Kilda, 19th May 1957 (S.B. 1:56); first for island.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*. One at St Kilda, 11th May 1958 (S.B. 1:56); first for island.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. Four on Lake of Menteith, 16th November 1957 (S.B. 1:64); first for South Perth.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*. One on Loch Leven, 15th March 1959 (S.B. 1:92); first for Kinross.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*. One at St Kilda, 19th May 1957 (S.B. 1:56); first for island.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*. One on Loch Macanrie, 1st March 1959 (S.B. 1:99); first for South Perth.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*. One at St Kilda, 11th July 1959 (B.M. 1:143); first for island.

EUROPEAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons albifrons*. One, sometimes two, in a locality in Kirkcudbrightshire, 18th December 1955 (B.B. 49:227); first definite record of the eastern race for Solway and Kirkcudbright.

GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons flavirostris*. One at Hamilton, 29th October 1957 (S.B. 1:65) is the first record of the western race for Clyde and Lanark.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser arvensis*. One at St Kilda, 15th September 1957 (S.B. 1:56); first for island.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*. At least 110 at St Kilda, 25th April 1957 (S.B. 1:58); first for island.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*. One shot near Errol, about 30th November 1957, was identified as "of the Lesser form *A.c. hyperboreus*", now *A.c. caerulescens* (S.B. 1:121); first for North Perth. Three Loch of Strathbeg, 22nd October 1958 (S.B. 1:68); first for Dee and Aberdeen. One Appin, 6th November 1958 (S.B. 1:67); first for Argyll and North Argyll.

Four near South Queensferry, 30th November 1958 (S.B. 1:121); first for West Lothian. One between Pityoulish and Tulloch, 5th April 1959 (S.B. 1:122); first for East Inverness. It has been reported (B.B. 53:162) that three Snow Geese, two of them of the blue phase, wandered from a collection near Dumfries early in 1958.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*. Twenty-six at St Kilda, 24th April 1957 (S.B. 1:58); first for island. One at Auldhouse, mid-November 1958 (S.B. 1:77); first for Lanark.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*. One at St Kilda, 24th August 1958 (S.B. 1:58); first for island.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*. One at St Kilda, 20th May 1959 (B.M. 1:73); first for island.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*. One at St Kilda, 13th May 1957 (S.B. 1:58); first for island.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Charadrius d. domenicus*. One at Fair Isle, 14th September 1956 (S.B. 1:68); first for Scotland and Fair Isle.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. One east of Endrick Mouth, 19th May 1957, and two in Clyde Valley above Hamilton, 11th August 1957 (S.B. 1:65); first for West Stirling and Lanark respectively.

DOWITCHER *Linnodromus* sp. One at Hule Moss, 20th September 1958 (S.B. 1:34 & 76); first for Tweed and Berwick. Two species of Dowitcher are recognised, but there is insufficient detail for specific determination.

JACK SNIBE *Lymnocyptes minimus*. One at St Kilda, 21st September 1957 (S.B. 1:59); first for island.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. One at St Kilda, 26th July 1959 (B.M. 1:143); first for island.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. One at St Kilda, 25th May 1958, caught and ringed (S.B. 1:59); first for island. One at Hamilton Low Parks, 30th May 1959 (S.B. 1:124); first for Lanark. One in the Isle of Skye, 3rd June 1959 (S.B. 1:151); first for North West Highlands and Skye.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*. One between Grange-mouth and Kincardine, 31st August 1958 (S.B. 1:71); first for East Stirling. One at Hule Moss, 16th September 1958 (S.B. 1:71); first for Tweed and Berwick. One on Isle of May, 17th September 1958 (B.M. 1:5); first for island.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa melanoleuca*. One at Newburgh, Ythan Estuary, 25th October 1957, subsequently found dead (S.B. 1:94); first for Scottish Mainland, Dee and Aberdeen.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*. One at St Kilda, 3rd August 1957 (S.B. 1:59); first for island.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris maritima*. One at St Kilda, 13th September 1957 (S.B. 1:59); first for island.

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER *Calidris acuminata*. (See Birds New

to Scotland); first for Clyde and Lanark.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*. One at Fair Isle, 18th September 1958 (B.M. 1:3); first for island and second Scottish record.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus fuscus*. Three at Milngavie Reservoir, 11th January 1958 (S.B. 1:65); first record of Scandinavian race for Dumbarton.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*. One at Craigmaddie, 8th February 1959 (S.B. 1:100); first for West Stirling.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Three in Ayrshire, 26th May 1959; may have been present since 1957 (S.B. 1:125); first for Clyde and Ayr.

GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO *Clamator glandarius*. (See Birds New to Scotland); first for Orkney.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*. One at St Kilda, 10th August 1958 (S.B. 1:60); first for island.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. One at St Kilda, 22nd May 1957 (S.B. 1:60); first for island.

BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*. One near mouth of Halladale, 14th August 1959 (S.B. 1:153); first for North Sutherland.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*. One at West Loch Tarbert, 28th March 1959, and one at Blanefield, 9th May 1959 (S.B. 1:132); first for Argyll and North Argyll, and West Stirling respectively.

SHORT-TOED LARK *Calendrella cinerea*. One, "probably of the race *brachydactyla*" at St Kilda, 29th May 1957 (S.B. 1:60); first for island.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*. One at St Kilda, 27th May 1958 (S.B. 1:61); first for island.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone corone*. One at St Kilda, 30th August 1959 (B.M. 1:143); first for island.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*. One at St Kilda, 28th April 1959 (B.M. 1:72); first for island.

[PIED WHEATEAR *Oenanthe leucomela*. One Dunrossness, 30th March 1958 (F.I.B.O.B. 4:62); we consider the published evidence insufficient for acceptance.]

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*. One at St Kilda, 26th October 1958 (B.M. 1:25); first for island.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*. One trapped at St Kilda, 12th May 1958 (S.B. 1:61); first for Outer Hebrides and St Kilda.

BLUETHROAT *Cyanosylvia svecica*. One, "race", at St Kilda, 15th May 1959 (B.M. 1:73); first for island. One, *C.s. cyaneacula*, caught at St Ola, 31st March 1958 (F.I.B.O.B. 4:65); first for Orkney.

GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*. (See Birds New to Scotland); first for Shetland.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. One at St Kilda, 4th August 1957 (S.B. 1:61); first for island.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One at St Kilda, 20th September 1957 (S.B. 1:62); first for Outer Hebrides and St Kilda.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*. (See Birds New to Scotland); first for Forth and Isle of May.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Moscicapa striata*. One at St Kilda, 10th May 1957 (S.B. 1:62); first for island.

HEDGE SPARROW *Prunella modularis*. One at St Kilda, 10th May 1958 (S.B. 1:62); first for island.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta petrosus*. One at Loch Leven, 16th November 1958 (S.B. 1:97); first for Kintross.

"BLUE-HEADED" WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*. One, resembling the race *flava*, west of Grangemouth, 22nd June 1959 (S.B. 1:129); first for East Stirling.

NORTHERN BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula pyrrhula*. One, northern foothills of Cairngorms, 23th October 1958 (S.B. 1:98); first for Moray and East Inverness. In accepting this record the Committee were not influenced by the moorland habitat in which this bird was reported.

TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL *Loxia leucoptera bifasciata*. One found dead at Newtonmore, 21st August 1959 (S.B. 1:154); this is the first record for Moray and East Inverness.

RED-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza bruniceps*. One at North Rona, 25th June 1958 (B.S. 6:168); first for Outer Hebrides other than St Kilda (See S.B. 1:119).

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniculus*. One at St Kilda, 5th May 1957 (S.B. 1:62); first for island.

SONG SPARROW *Melospiza melodia*. (See Birds New to Scotland); first for Shetland and Fair Isle.

HOTSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*. One at St Kilda, 11th May 1958 (S.B. 1:63); first for island.

FIRST BREEDING RECORDS FOR AREAS AND COUNTIES

GADWALL *Anas strepera*. (See Birds New to Areas and Counties); first breeding for South Inverness.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*. The finding of a nest near Navidale in 1915 or 1916, hitherto unpublished, is the earliest record of breeding in South-East Sutherland (S.B. 1:66). First bred in Caithness 1931 (B.B. 36:114). First evidence of breeding for Banff obtained June 1950 (S.N. 1952:178).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*. Pair with five newly hatched chicks seen near Balmaha, 19th May 1957 (S.B. 1:65); first breeding for West Stirling.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. (See New Breeding Records for Scotland); bred Inverness-shire 1959, area not disclosed.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. (See New Breeding Rec-

ords for Scotland); bred Sutherland 1959, area not disclosed.

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*. First confirmation of breeding in Outer Hebrides obtained June 1955 when nests and eggs found; reports suggest breeding at least ten years earlier (S.B. 1:156).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Bred in Ayrshire, 1959 (S.B. 1:125); first breeding record for Clyde and Ayr, and second breeding locality for Scotland.

BIRDS AT NORTH RONA, OCTOBER 1959

J. MORTON BOYD

Nature Conservancy, Edinburgh

AN expedition from the Nature Conservancy visited the North Rona National Nature Reserve from 1st to 26th October 1959 to study the seal herd. A daily record of the birds was maintained by the author, including observations made by the other members of the party, H. R. Hewer, J. D. Lockie and J. MacGeoch. A general analysis of the migration is given elsewhere (Boyd 1959) and these notes cover the remainder of the observations.

North Rona has been described by Bagenal and Baird (1959) who also supply a sketch map showing the places referred to here. All times are G.M.T.

The party was based on the ruined village and the fank at Fianuis was our advance post for seal study. Each day the author made a circuit of the island, usually starting at 0930 hours. The route was to the cliff edge about Gaedha Blatha Mor, round the north and west cliffs to Sceapull, along the south coast to the southern slopes of Toa Rona, over the summit down to Geodha Mairi and across the slope to Geodha Leis, Sgeildige and the Tunnel Cave. The chasms at Geodha Mairi and Geodha Leis were the main refuges for small migrants. At about 1600 hours another partial circuit was made from fank to village, usually by way of the north-west cliff edges in easterly winds, and by Toa Rona in westerlies. On a few days the route and times were modified by bad weather. The recording of the birds on Fianuis was not systematic due to restrictions on movements caused by the seal study, but a large part of the peninsula was visited daily.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

(*new records for the island are marked with an asterisk*)

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*. One on 10th and 12th.

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. The party was living in the village, which possesses a dense breeding colony

in July and August (Atkinson 1949: Bagenal and Baird 1959): the author was sleeping in the "Manse" under a tarpaulin roof and the others in tents nearby. No young was heard calling from the walls during the occupation and no adult attempted to enter under the tarpaulin canopy during the first week—later the canopy completely covered the chamber and entry was impossible; nor were young heard calling elsewhere in the village. One chick was discovered on 1st October under a stone on the south side of the Manse. It had moulted about three quarters of its infant plumage when first seen and the burrow was inspected every other day. It was last seen on the 12th.

Adults were heard flight-calling over the village on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 9th and 13th, but not thereafter. The cessation of flight-calling coincided with the departure of the chick. It was dark by 1800 hours, but flight-calling did not occur until 2300, 2320, 0130, 0230, 0400 and 0415 hours approximately. On the 2nd and 3rd flight-calling was heard twice on the same night, at 0230 and 0430 hours. On all occasions the calling lasted for a few moments and each time the impression was of a single bird flighting. No further evidence of the presence of the species was found after the early hours of the 13th.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*. Young were heard calling from the walls of the fank on the 1st and at the storm beach on the 5th. Cheeping similar to calls of young were heard at about 2100 hours on the 20th in St Ronan's Cell.

Sooty Shearwater *Procellaria grisea*. Three seen during the voyage to the island on the 1st.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*. Large numbers were present on the cliffs, but none inland. They left the cliffs daily and formed rafts on the water to the lee-side of the island.

Gannet *Sula bassana*. Small flights of mature birds were seen flying past the island daily in the direction of Sula Sgeir; solitary birds were common.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Small number present, particularly on Lisgeir Mhor.

Heron *Ardea cinerea*. One on the 4th and 5th.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*. One to four on the 3rd, 7th, 8th and 14th.

*Teal *A. crecca*. One to six on the 3rd and 22nd.

†Wigeon *A. penelope*. One to four on the 3rd, 7th, 17th and 22nd.

*Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*. One on the 9th.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*. Four on the 3rd.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*. Probably more than 100 between the 1st and 26th.

[White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*. Four, probably of this species, on the 24th.]

*Pink-footed Goose *A. brachyrhynchus*. Forty-two on the 16th, as well as one immature on the island. They appeared from the north-east in full cry at about 1630 hours, flew across the island to Scepull and altered course sharply. Climbing, they disappeared in the direction of Sutherland which was visible on the horizon.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*. Eleven to twenty-three on 24th to 26th.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*. One found dead on the 7th.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*. One on the 3rd and 18th.

Merlin *F. columbarius*. One to three each day from the 2nd to 25th.

*Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*. One on the 11th.

*Corncrake *Crex crex*. One on the 17th.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*. Two on the 3rd and one on the 14th.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. One from the 14th to the 17th.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*. One to ten between the 3rd and 12th.

Golden Plover *C. apricarius*. One to fifteen between the 4th and 12th; thirty on the 16th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*. More than twenty among seal wallows and along shore, 1st to 26th.

Snipe *Capella gallinago*. One to eleven daily between the 1st and 26th, but at least twenty on the 15th and 16th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*. One to eleven daily between the 1st and 26th, but at least twenty on the 11th and 12th.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*. One to three on the 11th, 13th, 18th and 19th.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*. One to five daily between the 1st and 26th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*. One to ten daily between the 1st and 26th, but thirty on the 15th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*. One on the 14th and 19th.

Purple Sandpiper *C. maritima*. One to twelve, 9th to 11th; one to twenty, 18th to 26th.

Little Stint *C. minuta*. Single birds on the 6th, 7th and 20th.

Dunlin *C. alpina*. One to three daily between the 6th and 20th.

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*. Flocks, including a small number of Herring Gulls, of up to 200 birds from the 1st to 26th, but about 500 on the 11th. They were concentrated on the fringes of the seal grounds of Fianuis (see plate on p. 263) and Scepull.

During the period 4th to 24th about 1962 seal pups were born on the island, and about 280 pups died. The afterbirths and carcasses provided food. If the pup died lying on its ventral side they were only able to pick out the eyes; if on the

dorsal side they found access to the body cavity by tearing open the umbilicus. The hole was small owing to the toughness of the skin and the connective tissues, and evisceration was difficult. Even in the case of a two year old bull, of which the abdomen was dissected and the carcass left with viscera fully exposed, the gulls made little impression on the tough musculature of the body wall and diaphragm. Only occasionally were gulls seen picking at a carcass, though they were quick to discover and squabble over the placenta. Several were killed or maimed by the seals while feeding on after-births or molesting pups.

The newly born pup is vulnerable to attack by gulls. Immediately a birth takes place the birds gather in the vicinity and, depending on how tightly packed the seals are, fly in to feed. At this stage, though the umbilical cord is severed, the pup is still attached or close to the placenta. On wriggling free of the membranes it rolls over on its back flexing its body and exposing the ruptured umbilical cord. If a gull gets hold of the cord at this stage it could probably eviscerate the pup fairly easily, but this can seldom happen owing to the aggressive behaviour of the dam. Pups of more than two weeks old, except when ailing, are capable of warding off gulls without parental help.

Despite the great amount of carrion littering the seal grounds, therefore, very little of it appeared to be accessible to the gulls.

Herring Gull *L. argentatus*. A few were present with the Greater Black-backs.

Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus*. One on the 16th.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. Two seen during the voyage to the island on the 1st; one found dead on the 17th.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*. One in East Bay on the 1st.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*. One to ten daily at Poll Thothaton and elsewhere between the 1st and 26th.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*. One on the 18th.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*. One to five on the 3rd, 7th, 11th-14th, and 17th.

Raven *Corvus corax*. Two to four seen daily, 1st to 26th.

Hooded Crow *C. cornix cornix*. A single bird on sixteen occasions between 7th and 25th.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. One on the 4th, 13th, 15th, 16th and 18th, and two on the 22nd. The Wren has not been recorded as a breeding species and is absent from the summer and autumn lists of Harrison (1932), Atkinson and Ainslie (1937), Darling (1940) and Bagenal and Baird (1959). The birds seen were probably migrants.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*. Passage occurred between the 5th and 23rd, heavy between the 13th and 18th, and particularly



North Rona, 1959. A grey seal wallow on Fiannis showing a bull in the wallow and a large number of cows and calves around it. (Photograph by James MacGeoch).

so on the 17th and 18th, when probably more than 200 were present each day.

Redwing *T. musicus*. Passage occurred from the 1st to 26th, heavy between the 5th and 18th, and very heavy on the 17th and 18th when up to 1,000 were present each day.

Song Thrush *T. ericetorum*. Light passage from the 6th to 18th; odd birds with Redwings.

*Ring Ouzel *T. torquatus*. Two on the 10th, one on the 12th and 14th.

Blackbird *T. merula*. A few present daily from the 5th to 26th. They were frequently seen in the chasm of Geodha Mairi, usually foraging in Kittiwakes' nests and fighting among the rank Scurvy Grass on the north slope of Toa Rona.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*. Passage between the 1st and 26th, heavy from the 1st to 8th, when probably more than fifty were present daily.

*Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. One on the 8th.

*Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. One from the 14th to 18th.

*Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*. One on the 6th and 16th; ten on the 7th.

*Garden Warbler *S. borin*. One on the 7th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*. One on the 7th, 8th and 20th.

*Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. One on the 1st, and one to six on nine of the days between the 7th and 18th.

Pied Flycatcher *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. Two on the 6th and one on the 14th and 15th.

*Red-breasted Flycatcher *M. parva*. One from the 10th to 13th.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*. Passage between the 1st and 26th, heavy between the 1st and 10th and very heavy from the 16th to 18th when about 500 were present daily.

Rock Pipit *A. spinoletta petrosus*. Present in small numbers on the coast, sometimes mixing with Meadow Pipits.

Alba Wagtail *Motacilla alba*. An immature on the 2nd.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. About 200 daily from the 1st to 26th associating with a flock of about 170 sheep.

*Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*. One on the 20th and 22nd.

*Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. Two on the 15th, one to twelve from the 17th to 25th.

*Brambling *F. montifringilla*. One to fifty from the 7th to 24th, but more than fifty on the 17th.

*Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*. One or two on the 4th, 5th, 14th, 20th and 24th.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*. Passage from the 3rd to 26th, usually more than fifty daily and more than 100 from the 10th to 14th and on the 18th.

*House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. One to six daily from the 3rd to 26th at the fank and village.

According to the literature 106 species of bird have now been recorded at or around North Rona. Of the seventy species recorded here (White-fronted Goose being discounted) twenty are new to the list.

WRECK OF THRUSHES AND PIPITS

From the 14th to 17th large numbers of thrushes and pipits arrived on light to moderate SE winds. From the 14th to 16th the visibility was less than fifteen miles—Sula Sgeir just visible—and there were probably about 300 Redwings, 50 Fieldfares and 100 Meadow Pipits on the island daily. On the 17th the wind veered from ESE to SSE and the visibility increased to more than fifty miles—hills of Sutherland clearly visible—and the numbers on the island increased dramatically to not far short of 1,000 Redwings, 200 Fieldfares and 500 Meadow Pipits daily. With the island thus heavily stocked the wind veered to west Force 4 on the 18th and NW Force 9, with visibility of less than twelve miles, on the 19th.

On the morning of the 19th the island was strewn with dead Redwings and Meadow Pipits. Six corpses were found in a direct walk in the gale from the village to the fank, and later the entire island was seen to have a similar scattering. Many others were probably out of sight in rocky crevices. A few dead Fieldfares and one Song Thrush were also found. The carcasses had very reduced flight muscles and seemed much underweight.

During the period 1st to 16th visibility had been less than twelve miles and probably no more than three, except during the night of the 12th when the Cape Wrath light could be seen forty miles away. Late in the afternoon of the 16th a change was evident; the hills of Sutherland were just visible and the first flight of geese arrived. On the 17th the air was crystal clear with the distant mountains standing out vividly on the horizon. There was an immediate movement of birds different from any which had been seen up till then. Large flocks of thrushes and pipits were leaving the SE corner of the island directly into the light wind and towards the mountains. Following the departure of one flock with binoculars the author could see beyond it other flocks in line ahead and the mountains beyond. The only detectable difference in the day from the many other bright days with similar winds during the period was the visibility. The appearance of the mountains to the SE, with continuous sunny but hazy weather, was accompanied by large scale movement. This movement continued on the 18th, when the wind went into the west, and by the 19th the wreck had begun.

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A LANDING ON SULE STACK

KENNETH WILLIAMSON

British Trust for Ornithology

AND

JEFFERY BOSWALL

B.B.C. Natural History Unit

THROUGH the kind co-operation of Captain Knut Maurer, of the Norwegian M.S. *Meteor* and the skill of his coxswain and boat's crew, we were able to land on Sule Stack late on 20th May 1960, during the National Trust for Scotland's "Islands Cruise" and to make recordings for B.B.C. sound radio programmes.

Sule Stack is a twin hump of hornblende gneiss, divided by a narrow cleft, at latitude 59°02' N, and longitude 4°30' W, some forty miles NNE of Cape Wrath and an equal distance west of Orkney. It is the site of a well-known gannetry estimated to number 3,500 pairs in 1939, and 2,010 pairs in 1949. Owing to the almost constant swell, aggravated by the flow through the narrow channel separating the two rocks, landing is extremely difficult and defeated Harvie-Brown in 1887 and 1889 and the Duchess of Bedford in 1914. Apart from the gannet-raiders from Ness the only previous landings have been by Malcolm Stewart on the northern half on 31st July 1937, and Dr Ian D. Pennie and Francis Huxley on the southern half on 17th July 1949 from H. G. Haslar's yawl *Petula*.

We got ashore on the eastern side of the northern rock, probably at the same spot as Malcolm Stewart, at 2225 hours, and on the eastern side of the southern rock at 2240 hours. There was little swell and the climb up a narrow chimney to a wide shelf on the East Ledges (see sketch-map in Fisher and Vevers 1943, p. 194) was not difficult, though the rock was treacherously slippery with guano. For this reason and because of the rapidly failing light and the great unrest among the breeding birds, we did not climb to the summit:

nor were we able, in the half darkness and the brief time ashore, to make any assessment of the strength of the gannetry. Rapid counting done by James Fisher and Dr W. J. Eggeling from the bridge of M.S. *Meteor* while she was hove to, and later circumnavigating, suggests that the total breeding strength may be of the order of 2,800 pairs.

The Duchess of Bedford, who rowed round Sule Stack in her dinghy, stated that only the upper third of the northern rock, from the main eastside ledge upwards to the summit (see her Plate IV and Fisher's sketch-map) was occupied by nesting Gannets. Both Stewart, and Fisher and Vevers, showed that nesting birds extended much lower down than this, and such was also the case on our visit. There were at least a score of nests on a broad shelf some fifty feet above our landing point, and scattered among them we were interested to find a number of Guillemots' eggs lying on the bare platform, suggesting that these birds occupied the "dead ground" between individual Gannet territories—if one may regard the Gannet's "territory" as an approximate circle of about two feet radius around its egg. At the northern side of this shelf a three foot wide gully between the main wall and a bastion of rock was so crowded with Guillemots that they seemed to roll back along it like a carpet as we approached, leaving green and blue eggs spinning everywhere: probably this cleft was too deep and narrow to find favour with nesting Gannets. Stewart found "only a few Guillemots", but our impression was that they were very common and widely dispersed among the Gannets, at least on the lower section of the rock; there may have been an increase since his visit.

The smaller southern rock was much less interesting. We found we could not reach the summit from our landing-point, a steep initial pitch taking us to the inner part above the channel between the stacks, where a near-vertical wall barred our way to the top. No nests were seen and from the ship it was obvious that the southern sloping face of this section accommodated largely non-breeders, as has been remarked by previous parties.

Eight Grey Seals were counted quite close to the lesser rock on the western side of the channel. When we approached the main northern section to make our first landing a seal about four feet long, in a white or greyish white coat, slipped into the water. These seals are probably from North Rona.

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REVIEWS

D. A. BANNERMAN. THE BIRDS OF THE BRITISH ISLES, Vol. VIII. Illustrated by G. E. Lodge. Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1959. pp. 397. 26 coloured plates. £3, 3/-.

This volume covers the cormorants, gannet, petrels, shearwaters, grebes, divers, doves and sandgrouse. By now the pattern of this monumental work will have become familiar to all serious bird-watchers. The discursive essays on each species are a far cry from the highly condensed treatment in such modern textbooks as *The Handbook* and this may well prove to be the last book of its kind that can be recommended as reading for pleasure. There are occasional inaccuracies and omissions, but these are relatively insignificant and do not detract from the work's value as a major contribution to our knowledge of British birds. Perhaps its strongest point is Dr Bannerman's immense industry as an editor in tapping unfamiliar sources of information, often from abroad, and the result is refreshingly original and particularly valuable in throwing the status of British birds into true perspective against a wider background.

The present volume is a worthy successor to the earlier ones, and among the more valuable personal contributions are several most readable accounts from Dr Bannerman himself on the tropical Atlantic petrel colonies. The text is always commendably up-to-date and includes accounts, but unfortunately no illustrations, of such recent additions to the British List as the Magnificent Frigate-bird and Collared Dove, and also the Cape Pigeon, which Dr Bannerman would add to the List on the strength of three old records which appear perfectly convincing. Equally convincing is his rejection of the two single British records of the Kermadec and Collared Petrels, both being species which breed in the Pacific on the side of the world diametrically opposite from Britain. One further reason, not mentioned by Dr Bannerman, for suspecting the British specimen of the Collared Petrel is the fact of its being in full moult when shot in November or December 1889, which is inconsistent with our other information on the yearly cycle of this species—young in down in February, adults in full moult in June. Of particular interest to our own members

are the breeding accounts of Slavonian Grebe and Turtle Dove in Scotland, while on a broader scale the essays on the White-billed Diver and Pallas' Sandgrouse make the most superbly thrilling reading.

The general effect of the plates is pleasing but they are all too often lacking in accuracy to serve as definitive bird portraits. The strained attitude and dishevelled appearance which characterise so many of Lodge's birds presumably represent his attempt to break away from the lifeless "museum" representations that were prevalent when he started painting, but the result is often so exaggerated as to destroy the semblance of reality.

The production is of the high standard we have come to associate with the name of Oliver & Boyd, and even at three guineas it represents remarkably good value.

D. G. A.

FRANK D. HAMILTON and KEITH S. MACGREGOR. THE BIRDS OF ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE. Reprinted from the Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society, Vol. VIII, by the Scottish Ornithologists' Club. pp. 33. 6 plates and map. 5/- (postage 4d extra).

Aberlady Bay contains more bird-watchers per acre than any other part of Scotland and this booklet will be of the greatest use in telling them what birds they may expect to see there, as well as what birds have not been recorded. Copies can be got from the Secretary of the S.O.C., 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, and those who do so will find they have excellent value for their money.

This is a model of local ornithology and shows how much can be achieved by industry and regular (though perhaps often tiresome) routine visits to the same locality. The bulk of this paper is in the form of a check-list, in which it is not so much the rarities that are of interest—there are, indeed, listed only eight "top rarities"—as "the definite patterns to the migrations of several species", patterns which would not have emerged without conscientious census work by the authors.

One small point: full details of the Dowitcher reported in November 1959 will *not* be published in *Scottish Birds* for the simple reason that they have not been submitted to that journal. We understand also that this record has not been accepted by *British Birds*.

M. F. M. M.

CORRIGENDUM

Antea 1:65. Dr J. W. Campbell points out that the record of the San-

derling thought to be the first for Lanarkshire is not so. See "Scot. Nat." 1957:41.

SHORT NOTES

NOTES ON PLUMAGE VARIATION IN THE COMMON EIDER

The white bird, swimming near the Steller's Eider described *antea* 234, was a common Eider in very unusual plumage. It was creamy white all over, except for a light brown patch on the forehead and around the eye, and two other light brown patches, one on the side of the lower breast and the other on the flanks. The lightness was also patchy, some parts being very creamy, others almost pure white and others a diffused mixture of the two. The third duck alongside the leucistic bird had a prominent purple speculum edged with white bars as in the Steller's Eider, but in every other respect was a typical common Eider *Somateria mollissima*.

When we looked at the other common Eiders on the estuary, we saw that many of them also had a prominent speculum. In some it was a very clear purplish blue, edged with conspicuous white bands as in the Steller's Eider, while others had white bands but only a speculum of very dark brown without any blue or purple. Others again had a speculum and only one white wing bar, and in others the white bars were narrower, sometimes so narrow as to be almost invisible except in very good light. Excluding adult drakes, roughly a third of the Eiders had this character developed to some extent, though not many had a speculum as clear as in the Steller's or the third duck along with it.

The same day we passed the Ythan estuary in Aberdeenshire and here also about one common Eider in every three (excluding adult drakes) in a flock of about two hundred had specula, though again there was a lot of variation.

An interesting plumage character that we noticed in many of the duck common Eiders at both places was the occurrence of a clear light stripe extending from behind the bill to above and behind the eye. Some had the stripe fairly broad and white, others had a narrower, merely lightish, stripe, and most had no trace of a stripe at all.

Reference to many books on bird identification showed that the occurrence of a speculum in the common Eider is not mentioned, though this character sometimes figures in illustrations. For example it is neither illustrated nor mentioned in the text by Coward (*The Birds of the British Isles and their*

Eggs 1920), Witherby, Jourdain, Ticehurst and Tucker (*The Handbook of British Birds* vol. 3 1939) or Bannerman (*The Birds of the British Isles* vol. 7 1958). The speculum, however, or one or more of the wing bars, is illustrated in some of the pictures in Kirkman (*The British Bird Book* 1913), Fitter and Richardson (*The Pocket Guide to British Birds* 1952), Peterson, Mountfort and Hollom (*A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* 1954), Durango (*Faglarna i färg* 1952) and the Annual Report of the Wildfowl Trust (1951-52). Fisher (*Bird Recognition* vol. 2 1951) is the only author so far as we know to mention the two light bars on the wing, writing that the duck has "two obscure light wing-bars." It seems to us misleading that identification books should not give such distinct plumage variations in either text or plates, and misleading that other books should show them in the plates without mention in the text, thus giving the impression that all duck common Eiders have these characters.

DAVID JENKINS.

ADAM WATSON.

LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE IN WIGTOWNSHIRE AND CLACKMANNAN

On 27th March 1960 the Merse below and northward from Wigtown was packed with geese, something like two thousand Pink-feet and some hundreds of Grey-lags. Looking through a powerful binocular telescope within minutes I was focussed on a small goose with a white front and came to the conclusion that it was a Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*. It was at long range, over half a mile, so even with the powerful magnification (60x) I could not possibly see the colour of eyelids or even bill colour for sure; but the following points seemed to me convincing and Miss Mary McKinna and Mr Duncan Griffiths agreed with me on them.

1. Small size: looked distinctly smaller than Pink-feet with which it was feeding, though possibly not much smaller than some first winter Pink-feet.

2. Very striking white "front," as with previous Lessers I have seen—not very noticeable side-on, but standing out face-on, coming well up on to top of head.

3. Upper parts darker than in Pink-foot, breast and belly rather light with no detectable barring; small bars such as a Lesser Whitefront might have in, say, its second year would probably have been impossible to see at the range.

4. Very noticeable, much faster feeding rate than Pink-foot.

The bill was presumably small as I could not make out any details and it did not appear to have a larger bill than the Pink-feet. The association with Pink-feet is recognised as unusual.

Incidentally the number of Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* appears to be much greater than any previously recorded for Wigtownshire.

DONALD WATSON.

On 20th January 1960 a Lesser White-fronted Goose was shot at the mouth of the R. Devon at Cambus, Clackmannanshire. I did not see the bird, but the description, given by the man who shot it, and later verified by my brother-in-law, who plucked it, leaves no doubt. The bird was about the size of a Shelduck, very dark, with the white reaching well back on the head like the yellow on a Wigeon drake. At the side the white almost touched the eye, and my brother-in-law, when asked about the eye, said without any hesitation that it was ringed with yellow.

T. PATERSON.

SNOW GEESE IN LANARKSHIRE

During the early months of 1960 three Snow Geese were discovered one by one with a flock of Pink-feet at Libberton, near Carnwath. None of them was ever seen to associate with either of the others and they seemed to move about quite independently. This is a most puzzling feature, as it is hard to believe that three birds of such rarity can each have found its own way to this one flock of Pink-feet. The birds were all dissimilar and are worth describing in detail.

(?Greater) *Snow Goose*: white bird. On 4th March Sir Robert Erskine-Hill, Bt., learned from a local farmer that a white goose had been seen with the Pink-feet in the area for at least one month, and probably since December 1959. He was able to locate it and identify it as a Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens* and subsequently it was admired by many people including Andrew T. Macmillan, W. K. Richmond, G. and M. I. Waterston. This was a magnificent pure white bird substantially bigger and standing higher than the Pink-feet and locally it was known as the "gret white yin". It was a burly bird, somewhat thick-necked, and with a massive pinkish Grey-lag type bill and pink legs. W.K.R. got the impression that it was comparatively short in the leg. The tips of the wings were black on the trailing edge and greyish on the leading edge so that it looked extremely like a Gannet as it circled over the fields, visible to the naked eye at an enormous distance. W.K.R. noted that in flight its wing action was much slower and more stately than the Pink-feet's, though in

fact its air-speed was greater and it forged ahead of the gaggles.

Size is a rather unreliable distinction between Greater and Lesser Snow Geese, but the description points strongly to this bird being a Greater Snow Goose *A.c. atlanticus*. The snag about this is that the other two birds must have been Lesser Snow Geese *A.c. caerulescens* as they were of the blue phase, which is not known to occur in the Greater. Blue and white birds may be found in the same brood of Lessers. The Greaters and Lessers, however, neither breed in the same areas nor migrate in the same direction, so that if the white bird was a wild Greater it must have travelled to join the Pink-feet independently of the two blue birds. There is, though, as will be seen, the possibility that it was an unusually large Lesser.

Adult Lesser Snow Goose: blue phase. On 8th March Miss R. S. Hunter discovered a second strange goose with the Pink-feet. This bird also was seen by many people and it proved to be a Blue Goose, or, more correctly, a blue phase Lesser Snow Goose. On the ground it was about the same size as the Pink-feet, but in flight it seemed a shade larger and A.T.M. noted that it had a greater wingspan as it flew directly away from him. The forewing showed paler than the Pink-feet's, the tail was white with a grey terminal band, and there was a very striking wedge of white extending well up the rump and back. There appeared to be at least one white stripe across each wing, close to and parallel with the body. G.W. obtained very good views of the bird on the ground, and noted its pure white head setting off the dark eye; white neck with dark line running down back of neck from rear of crown; pink legs and bill; mantle darker and not so slaty as the Pink-feet's; breast dark but flanks white (W.K.R. describes the underparts in flight as pure white with darker markings on the sides of the body); striped appearance of folded wings towards tail; bill and forehead different shape from Pink-feet's. Of the Blue Geese shown in *Wildfowl of the British Isles* (Scott and Boyd 1957) it most nearly resembled the adult (darkest form) on Plate IV except that the flanks were white. The striped markings on the folded wings are well shown in this plate.

Immature Lesser Snow Goose: blue phase. This was the third to be discovered and was overlooked by everyone except W.K.R., who saw it several times. On the ground it could be picked out, but in the air it was rapidly lost among the Pink-feet. It was a dusky, thick-set goose with blackish—or at any rate dark—bill and legs, and the typical pale wing-linings; light-edged black scapulars very prominent. It had less white on the head than the immature figured in *Wildfowl*

of the *British Isles*: indeed, apart from a few lighter flecks on the face, the only touch of white feathering was on the chin. It resembled rather the illustration in black and white in Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds* (Eastern).

The adult Blue Goose was last seen on 25th April by R.E.-H. and the white Snow Goose two days later with some 2,000 Pink-feet. They were all very restless and had gone by the evening of 28th April.

There is a possibility that one or more of these birds may have been escapes from Mr Walter Duncan's collection at Newlands, near Dumfries. Mrs Duncan has kindly supplied the following details. In August 1954 a pair of Blue Geese was obtained from Slimbridge and in May 1957 this pair reared five blue and one white young. These birds were unringed and full-winged and on 11th February 1958 after severe frost and a SW gale the white bird and two of the blue disappeared (see *British Birds* 53:162). Subsequently all three were seen feeding by the Solway near Glencaple on various occasions until the end of February. They were presumed to have left the country in April 1958. It should be noted that these were Lesser Snow Geese but that the white one was larger than normal; they also associated with Pink-feet but, unlike the Carnwath birds, were always together. If any of the Newlands birds were involved two winters later at Carnwath it is interesting to speculate whether they had made the double migration each summer with the Pink-feet.

The immature Blue Goose is really the key to the problem as it was almost certainly a wild bird; being in immature plumage, it could not have been one of the Newlands birds. This raises the probability of the wild status of the other two, especially when we consider the possibility of the white bird being a Greater Snow Goose and the fact that in recent winters increasing numbers of Snow Geese have been reported, far more than can be accounted for by known escapes.

A. T. MACMILLAN.

SMALL RACE OF CANADA GOOSE IN ISLAY

On 5th April 1958 at Laggan Point, Islay, I noticed, among about a thousand Barnacle Geese, a goose with the head pattern of a Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* (black head and neck with white cheek and throat patch), but slightly, though distinctly, smaller than the surrounding Barnacles. It was also comparatively short-necked and, when lifting its head in alarm, had not the long slim-necked appearance of the typical Canada. Also striking was the general dark colour of the body: feathers of the back dark grey-brown (almost as dark as in the Greenland Whitefront), edged noticeably with lighter colour; whole of underparts slightly lighter, including breast,

and with distinctly rufous tinge; this colouring very dark in area next to white under tail-coverts; tail-coverts white; tail, beak and legs black as in typical *canadensis*. The bird was not seen afterwards.

J. SHEPPERD.

(This bird has been accepted by the Rarities Committee of *British Birds* as belonging to "one of the small races of Canada Goose from the North American Arctic." The description closely resembles that of the Cackling Goose *B. c. minima* from the extreme north-west of America and Mr Peter Scott says: "I would almost have thought it safe to say it was *minima*," adding that he does not consider that the bird could have been an escape.—Ed.)

GOSHAWK IN KIRKCUDBRIGHT

On 1st March 1958, together with Charles Cowper, we saw a Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* over Loch Ken in Kirkcudbright. The first indication of its presence came from a Coal Tit which started to chitter excitedly above us and made us look around for the cause. We saw the bird almost overhead about 100 feet up gliding along the slope of a pine-covered hill, giving an occasional wing-beat. The first thought was of the *size* of the bird and of its *shape* which was definitely like that of a Sparrowhawk on a large scale. It had large rounded wings and a long tail, with prominent barring on the underparts, especially on the under wing-coverts. C.C. saw the barring at the end of the tail.

F. D. HAMILTON.

K. S. MACGREGOR.

HOBBY IN INVERNESS

At 2010 hours on 15th May 1960 I was watching the Ospreys from the forward R.S.P.B. hide near Loch Garten, Inverness. The weather was fine and still, with no cloud.

A falcon, which I identified as a Hobby *Falco subbuteo* flew on to a branch of a small dead pine about 75 yards off. For about forty minutes it preened itself and I watched it through a x 60 telescope. In addition to the dark slaty upperparts, the white underparts with black streaks, rusty red thighs and under tail-coverts, broad black moustachial stripe and long pointed wings, I saw the full wing-shape as it flew off towards me overhead at a low altitude.

R. C. DAWKINS.

GREENLAND FALCON IN PERTSHIRE

On 13th April 1960, after climbing Stuchd an Lochan, Perthshire, we stopped for about twenty minutes to watch a pair of Peregrine Falcons through binoculars before we de-

scended towards Loch Giorra. A few minutes later a bird flew across the slopes above the loch making up the valley. It was obviously a falcon, but different from the pair we had just been watching. The wing-beats were heavier and more deliberate, giving the impression that this bird was finding the going much harder than the others. It was also very much paler and this almost whitish appearance struck us both most forcibly. Despite the high wind and snow and the few seconds we were able to watch it, it was quite definitely a falcon of a type we had not previously seen.

DOREEN KNIPE.
HARRY KNIPE.

At the time of Mr and Mrs Knipe's observations I was some 500 feet higher up the mountain and directly above them. From this position the falcon's upperparts appeared to be uniformly white, virtually pure white, with darker pinions. I, too, was struck by the heavy deliberate wing-beats. In the squally conditions (gale-force winds and sleet showers) it was impossible to gain anything like a satisfactory view of the bird, which was heading NW in the direction of Rannoch Moor, but, after comparing notes, the three of us concluded that it was a Greenland Falcon *Falco rusticolus candicans*.

W. KENNETH RICHMOND.

HOOPOES IN PERTH, FIFE, ROXBURGH AND ARRAN

On 15th May 1960 I saw a Hoopoe *Upupa epops* at Mill of Keir near Dunblane. I was driving to visit a patient when I saw a bird of a light horn colour probing zealously with a long beak in the grassy strip in the middle of the little used road. He allowed me to bring the car to within fifteen feet of him and continued feeding, though he appeared to be alerted and occasionally raised and lowered his beautiful crest. When I opened the car door he flew off at once, with a brilliant display of black and white barred wings. I saw the bird twice more on the same day. I am familiar with Hoopoes in India.

J. N. M. FAIRLEY.

On 16th May 1960 I watched a Hoopoe feeding and resting in the long grass of the sand-dunes at Elie Golf Course. In flight its rounded wings and its tail were boldly barred with black and white. When it settled to pick in the grass with its long curved beak I could see the pale cinnamon front and underparts. It flew off after fifteen minutes when some Lapwings mobbed it.

PATRICIA G. BAXTER.

On 17th May 1960 Col. M. Johnson reported a Hoopoe about

a mile south of Riccarton Junction, Roxburgh. He saw the crest raised several times, and as he has lived in India for many years the Hoopoe is a familiar bird to him.

W. S. MEDLICOTT.

On 22nd May 1960 my wife and I saw a Hoopoe at the point at which the Arran west coast road crosses the Dougarry Water. It was less than the width of the bridge away and we had binoculars. It gave a display of hammer-like strokes on the grass verge; it did not hop, but moved with a running gait.

DAVID ORR.

(Dr Orr has attached a detailed description of the bird's plumage. We have also received satisfactory details of a Hoopoe at Dirleton, E. Lothian, on 2nd May (reported in *The Scotsman* on 4/5/60). Others, of which we have not had details, include three from about 5th to 12th May at Denholm, near Hawick, reported in *The Scotsman*: also one near Gordonstoun, Moray, about 18th May (C. J. A. Baker). Unusual numbers of Hoopoes have been seen in England this spring (see *British Birds* 53: 318-9.)—ED.)

EARLY NESTING OF CORN BUNTING

While watching Corn Buntings *Emberiza calandra* a few miles west of Dornoch, Sutherland, on 3rd June 1960, I was surprised to see a female Corn Bunting drop into a hay crop with food her bill. Having seen her make two further visits to the same place, each time carrying food, I went to the spot and, after a short search, found a nest containing five down-clad nestlings. Egg-laying at this nest must have begun not later than 16th May, possibly one or two days earlier.

The Handbook (I:111) states that breeding "begins late May but often not till well in June." Ryves and Ryves, who made an intensive study of the species in north Cornwall (*British Birds* 28:2-26) found that it was futile to search for nests until early June. Even in southern England eggs by mid-May are an exception, as Walpole-Bond (*A History of Sussex Birds* I:130) gives the beginning of nesting in Sussex as from 20th May onwards.

D. MACDONALD.

CURRENT NOTES

(The observers denoted below by their initials are: A. Ablett, D. R. Anderson, D. G. Andrew, W. Austin, J. Ballantyne (J.B.), P. Barraud, Miss P. G. Baxter, T. H. Bell, Dr J. Berry (J.By.), H. Boase, W. Q. Brown, J. Cameron, Dr J. W. Campbell, G. M. T. Conacher, A. Cowieson, E. Cowieson, S. Cramp, R. H. Dennis, Dr W. J. Eggeling, H. F. D.

Elder, M. Forrester, G. Fraser, D. A. Holmes, The Hon. H. Douglas Home, D. Hope, J. Hoy, E. N. Hunter, P. Kerr, R. Logan, Dr A. Lyell, A. Macdonald (A.M.), A. MacEachern (A. MacE.), K. S. Macgregor, A. T. Macmillan, Col. W. S. Medicott, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, R. I. Milne, W. Murray, B. Neath, J. Oliver, L. J. Reed, W. K. Richmond, E. L. Roberts, R. W. J. Smith, T. C. Smout, D. Stalker, J. D. Stewart, J. W. Taylor, Dr R. S. Weir, T. Weir, W. H. Wild. Dates apply to 1960 unless otherwise stated).

LATE WINTER VISITORS

A slightly oiled **Black-throated Diver** was seen at Peppermill Dam, Fife, on 18th March (J.H.). A very large concourse of fifty **Red-throated Divers** off Gullane on 29th April is noteworthy (T.C.S.).

Two ♂♂ and one ♀ **Scaup** were at the mouth of the Esk at Musselburgh on 24th May (J.B.) and a ♂ at Gullane Point on 16th June (D.H.). Eight **Velvet Scoter** ♂♂ were seen flying north past Arbroath on 25th May (M.F.M.M.), and a long dead **Common Scoter** ♂ was found at the edge of St Helen's Loch, Bonnybirdge, on 8th May (R.L.).

Five **Grey-lag Geese** were still at Kingoodie, S. Perth, on 21st June (H.B.), a **Pink-footed Geese** near St Fergus, Aberdeenshire, from 20th to 26th June (W.Q.B.), and a **Barnacle Goose** on a football pitch at Musselburgh on 14th June (J.B.).

The **Bewick's Swan** at Musselburgh (*antea* 1:229) was last seen on 26th April (A.M.) and there were five of this species at Harperrig Reservoir on 25th April (J.By.).

A single **Coot** was at the mouth of the Esk at Musselburgh on 8th May, an unusual date for a bird in such a situation (J.B.).

A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** of the Scandinavian race was seen, together with a bird of the British race, at Seafield, Leith on 7th March (A.A.) and a **Glaucous Gull**, the first occurrence in the locality, paid a short visit to Duddingston Loch on 7th May (D.R.A.).

Late **Waxwings**, not reported in A.T.M.'s paper (*antea* 1: 241-251) were seen at Invergowrie, one on 14th February and three about 18th March (H.B.): four at Dundee on 19th February (S.C.): one at Dumfries on 25th February (W.A.): one near Udney, Aberdeenshire, for three weeks up till 24th April (E.C.): two at Aberdeen from 1st to 5th March and one there from 22nd to 27th March (A.L.).

A **Great Grey Shrike** was seen being chased by Meadow Pipits between Loch Mallachie and Loch Garten, Inverness, on 6th April (R.H.D.): full plumage details have been received of this bird.

Sixteen **Crossbills** were at Manderston, Duns, on 28th February (W.M.) and a female at Yellowcraig Wood, Dirleton, E. Lothian, on 3rd May (A.M.).

SPRING MIGRATION

A **Marsh Harrier**, probably immature, flew over Kingoodie on 22nd May: it had a pale crown (H.B.). Another, also creamy-headed, bird was at the mouth of the R. Endrick on 1st and 4th July (M.F., W.K.R., T.W.).

An **Osprey** visited Peppermill Dam, where it was mobbed by Carrion Crows, on 15th May and again on 29th May (J.H.) and about the middle of May a pair were at Loch Lossit, Islay, for several days (J.C.). Another Osprey turned up on 4th July at the mouth of the R. Endrick, where it was seen with a fish in its claws (M.F., T.W.).

A **Grey Plover** was seen near the Butt of Lewis in mid-May (A.MacE.), a **Dotterel** was watched at short range at Aberlady on 8th May (J.O.), nine Dotterel were seen on Elie Golf Course on 10th May and seven there on the 11th (P.G.B., R.S.W.). Those seen on the 8th and 11th were accompanied by a single fine Northern Golden Plover.

There was a **Black-tailed Godwit** at Aberlady on 9th March (A.A.), nineteen at Glencaple, Dumfries, on 17th April (E.L.R.) and two on the Eden estuary on 24th May (R.I.M.). A **Wood Sandpiper** stayed at Gladhouse Reservoir from 29th April to 1st May and from 3rd to 5th May (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.) and another stayed for a short time at the Endrick mouth on 5th June (M.F.).

Only one **Curlew Sandpiper** has been reported—at Aberlady on 28th May (T.C.S.) and on 10th June (A.C., W.M., R.W.J.S.). A **Sanderling** at Longannet, Fife, on 14th May was the first seen there by the observer (J.H.) and a **Reeve** was seen at Gladhouse on 17th May (R.W.J.S.).

A ♀ **Red-necked Phalarope** on Unst, where the species is no longer known to breed, on 11th June, may have been on passage (J.D.S.).

Numerous **Little Gulls** are reported from the Tay estuary area: on 9th April one immature at Tentsmuir Point (B.N.) and eight immature at Kingoodie on the 14th (H.B.). On the 25th there were no fewer than 64 at the mouth of the Buddon Burn, Monifieth, of which eighteen were adults: all were restless and noisy (B.N.). On 27th April there were seven, mostly immature, at Barnhill, Broughty Ferry (H.B.), and on 1st May thirty (including two adults) at Morton Lochs and eight on the Eden estuary (B.N.). On 6th May there were 25 immature birds at Monifieth (B.N.), there were eight at Morton Lochs on 17th (R.I.M.) and two at the Buddon Burn on the 26th (B.N.). A more unusual record of the Little Gull, since it is from the west, is of an immature bird at the Endrick mouth—seen both in Stirling and Dunbarton—from 29th May to 5th June (T.W. and others). At the Buddon Burn

there were nineteen immatures on 6th June, at least one nearby on the 29th, and thirty with one adult on 2nd July (B.N.). A single adult on the 19th carries these records through the summer to the week in which the first autumn birds were noted in 1959 (*antea* 1:133) (H.B.).

A **Black Tern** at Peppermill Dam on 15th May was still partly in winter plumage (J.H.), but one at the Endrick mouth on the same day was in complete summer dress (M.F., D.S., T.W.). At the Endrick mouth have also been observed an **Arctic Tern** on 29th May (M.F., T.W.) and a **Little Tern** on 5th June (M.F.M.M.), both interesting records for W. Stirling.

At Fife Ness on 26th May about 75 **Roseate Terns** were counted, a large congregation for this locality (R.S.W.).

A **Turtle Dove**, doubtless on passage, was seen feeding in a field near Elie on 17th May (P.G.B., R.S.W.).

The arrival of the **Swift** was unusually early in 1960. First records are: 26th April, one at Carter Bar, Roxburgh (W.S.M.) and six at Maddy Moss, near Dollar (J.H.); 28th April, six at Duddingston (D.R.A.), and five or six at Strathtay, Perth (J.W.C.); 30th April, sixteen at Bardowie, W. Stirling (J.W.T.). Two at Bonnybridge, Stirling, on 29th April and by 4th May they had arrived in numbers, a flock of 150 to 200 being present at Carron Reservoir (R.L.).

March records of the **Chiffchaff** not previously reported (*cf. antea* 1:233) are of one on Rhum on 15th (W.J.E.) and one heard at Fife Ness on the 27th (R.S.W.).

A **Yellow Wagtail** ♂ (*flavissima*) was at the same place at Skinflats, west of Grangemouth, as in 1959, on 1st June: again no ♀ was seen. (J.H.).

A **Siskin** ♂ heard singing at Valleyfield, Fife, on 21st April is the observer's first spring record for the area (J.H.).

BREEDING AND DISTRIBUTION

Single **Black-necked Grebes** were seen at their breeding haunt in the Clyde area on 29th May and 19th June (J.W.T.).

The only breeding colony of **Cormorants** in the Forth, on the Lamb, has increased from 44 nests in 1959 to 65 in 1960 (R.W.J.S.).

At least five broods of **Common Scoter** were seen at their Hebridean breeding haunt in early June (K.S.M.).

On 23rd April two **Canada Geese** were seen disputing with Carrion Crows on an island in Marlee Loch, near Blairgowrie (H.B.), and one was at Gladhouse on 19th June (D.G.A.).

A **Quail** was both heard and seen near Stevenston, Ayr, on 3rd June, and on 7th July was again heard calling at a spot about a mile distant from the first (G.F.).

On 29th May an unusual nest of the **Common Gull** was shown

by H.D.H. to about thirty members of the S.O.C. returning from an excursion. It was in the middle of a large field of young wheat at Houdslow, between Greenlaw and Lauder, and contained four eggs. It seems to be the first occurrence of this species breeding in Berwickshire.

The colony of **Black-headed Gulls** at the Crane Loch in the Pentlands, Lanarkshire, is reduced to about 250 birds, about a quarter of the 1959 population (A.T.M.). The colony of **Kittiwakes** on the Lamb (Forth) has increased to 38 nests as opposed to sixteen in 1959, and a nest of this species has been found for the first time on Inchkeith (R.W.J.S.).

A pair of **Stonechats** with two young were seen at Buddon Ness, Angus, on 26th May (B.N.), while on Tulliallan Moor, Fife, two pairs fledged young and there may have been a third pair (J.H.).

Six nestling **Redstarts** were ringed on 13th June at Peppermill Dam: the first local breeding record (J.H.).

The **Grasshopper Warbler** is a scarce and local species in east Scotland and the following records are therefore of interest.

Haddington to Humbie road: two on 7th May, singing all day (H.F.D.E.).

Near Cameron Reservoir, Fife: one seen and heard on 11th May (P.G.B., R.S.W.).

Penicuik, Midlothian: one on 20th May (R.W.J.S.).

Upper Dalhousie, Midlothian: one on 30th May (A.T.M.).

Tulliallan: heard from 31st May (J.H.).

Gladhouse: two singing on 3rd June (R.W.J.S.).

One mile NW of Gladhouse: one on 30th June (A.T.M.).

Temple, Midlothian: three singing in spring (per R.W.J.S.).

In addition Grasshopper Warblers have been reported from places where they are scarce, at Caerlaverock, Dumfries, on 21st April (E.L.R.) and at Bowmore, Islay, on 5th July (M.F.M.M., L.J.R.).

A nest of the **Blackcap** (a rare breeding species in south Fife) was found near Culross on 14th May, the young fledging successfully by 12th June (J.H.).

Both the **Garden Warbler** and **Chiffchaff** are extending their range in the north of Scotland. A Garden Warbler was seen and heard at Dingwall in mid-May and another seen at Garve (H.B.). Records of the Chiffchaff from Ross-shire are all of birds singing: one at Loch Maree, late May 1959 (T.H.B.), one at Glenshiel on 5th April (D.A.H.), one at Inverewe throughout June (E.N.H., P.B.) and one at Kerrysdale, near Gairloch, on 10th June (E.N.H.). Mr Hunter comments that these are the first Chiffchaffs he has heard in ten years' acquaintance with the district.

Other northern records of the Chiffchaff come from Boat of Garten on 9th April (A.L.) and Loch Morlich on 15th June



Parent Song Thrushes at nest, Stirling, July 1960. The nest contains four young birds which were successfully reared. (Photograph by Arthur Eccles).

(B.N.), while the following occurrences are indicative of its increasing frequency in the Forth area:

Near Crail, Fife: one on 26th April (R.S.W.).

Tulliallan: one on 7th April (J.H.).

Valleyfield: three singing birds, of which two apparently remained mateless, while the third fledged six young (J.H.).

Turnhouse Golf Course, Edinburgh: 24th to 27th April (P.K.).

Polton Glen, Midlothian: 17th April (R.W.J.S.).

Dalhousie Castle, Midlothian: 28th and 30th May (A.T.M.).

Two broods of **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen in late June in a garden at Melvich, north Sutherland (T.W.). On 6th May a ♂ **Pied Flycatcher** was seen in two different gardens at Bridge of Weir (G.M.T.C., W.H.), and another at Tulliallan on 12th May (J.H.). One was singing (close to a known breeding site) near Temple Bridge, Midlothian, on 28th and 30th May (A.T.M.).

A ♂ **Grey Wagtail**, a rare species in Shetland, was seen at the Burn of Shaw, Unst, on 12th June (J.D.S.).

HABITS

An interesting letter from John Peterson in *The Scotsman* (13th May 1960) describes the nesting of the **Starling** in rabbit burrows in Orkney: "disused rabbit warrens had become colonies of nesting Starlings. Two which I observed had over a dozen pairs each, and several were seen using the same entrances. That Orkney has neither stoats nor weasels makes nesting in this manner less precarious."

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CAPERCAILLIE

JEANETTE HARRIS

The following observations on the Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* were made in Central Perthshire during the 1958 breeding season. The area in which the birds were studied consisted of small blocks of middle-aged coniferous woodland, mainly Scots pine, with open patches of birch scrub, heather and bilberry in between.

Nests were found within this area in the following situations:

Nest 1. On the edge of a sixty year old mixed plantation of Scots pine, larch and Norway spruce, with open ground nearby. The nest was at the foot of a Scots pine and under a light covering of dead branches. It was lined with pine needles and "decorated" with a pine cone. Altitude 350 feet.

Nest 2. In a Scots pine plantation thirty-five years old, about forty yards from the edge, hidden in thick, recently cut branches with open ground nearby. Altitude 350 feet.

Nest 3. On the side of a rocky knoll above plantations of Scots pine, larch and Douglas fir, forty years old. In grass under heather bush. Altitude 400 feet.

Nest 4. On the edge of a thick untouched plantation of Scots pine, twenty-five years old. Altitude 700 feet.

Nest 5. On an open ride in a pure Scots pine plantation, fifty years old, under a light covering of dead branches. Altitude 1,000 feet.

The smallest full clutch recorded was four (Nest 5) and the largest nine (Nest 2). The intensity of the egg markings, as well as the shape of the eggs, varied between clutches. In spite of this variation individual hens seemed unable to distinguish their own eggs. In one nest, over half the clutch was replaced by the eggs of another, but the strange eggs were readily accepted.

At the lower altitudes clutches were completed and incubation begun within the first fortnight of May. The chicks hatched within the first fortnight of June. At Nest 5, and in two other nests at 1,000 feet in another area fifteen miles to the west, incubation began in the last fortnight of May with a corresponding delay of hatching until the end of June.

From the beginning of incubation the hen birds sat very closely, relying on their colour to keep them effectively concealed. When flushed (at about twenty feet) they always made off in the same direction, irrespective of the direction of the approach of danger. The hen at Nest 1 invariably left the nest, even early in incubation, "injury feigning," running thus for thirty or forty yards along a path before taking flight into the open. The hen at Nest 2, on the other hand, was never observed to "injury-feign" even after the eggs had hatched. She always took flight as soon as she was clear of the nest, downhill into a plantation. At this nest and at Nest 4 the cock bird was usually in attendance nearby, and also after hatching. The cocks of Nests 1 and 3, however, showed little interest in their mates' activities.

The eggs chip at least twenty-four hours before hatching. One chick examined in the egg fifteen hours after chipping began still had a considerable portion of the yolk sac to absorb. In one clutch the first egg began to chip one evening and the other three eggs the following day. The first chick emerged about twenty-four hours after first chipping the egg, followed by the other three within twelve hours. As soon as the egg is chipped the bird can be heard calling strongly within.

Once dry the chicks are remarkably vigorous and active.

A chick a few hours old was seen to snap up a fly. They run, scatter and crouch in the undergrowth if disturbed, and are very difficult to find. The chicks are very soon taken away from the area of the nest to more open ground, and as a rule can be found in quite a restricted area during the fledging period. The hen scratches the ground for them like a domestic fowl. Although the chicks are thought to be mainly insectivorous in the early stages (*British Birds* 51:189), droppings, at about fourteen days old, contained a high proportion of grasses, especially *Festuca ovina*, and bracken fronds. The young birds grow rapidly and at three weeks were the size of a Song Thrush and fluttering strongly.

Once they are able to fly the chicks no longer scatter into the undergrowth when the hen gives the warning guttural *kok kok* at the approach of danger. Instead they flutter up into the trees, where they assume a peculiar attitude like that of a Bittern when concealing itself. The body appears to elongate and the neck is extended with the bill pointing obliquely to the sky. The young bird remains immobile in this manner as long as the hen is giving the danger call. The chicks are difficult to pick out in this attitude unless they have been observed flying into the trees. As long as danger threatens the hen bird walks about in the trees nearby, calling *kok kok* all the time, with head and neck extended, and jerking her body and tail.

The hen and young continue to roost on the ground after the young can fly. One brood, when about four weeks old, was disturbed at dusk. The chicks flew silently up into the trees and, after they were safely out of reach, the hen bird rose and flew noisily away, calling loudly as she went. This particular bird "injury-feigned" to a dog when she had chicks, but not to a human being.

In one area a mixed covey was recorded. Two hens had joined up with broods of different ages, one about three weeks and the other about five weeks old, with the birds nearly twice as big.

On 9th September the brood from Nest 4 was still being guarded by the hen. They were then thirteen weeks old and the hen still "injury-feigned" to a dog on this occasion. At this age they were difficult to distinguish from the mother and were still in the area they had moved to from the nest.

In *The Handbook* it is stated that the Capercaillie is found "mainly on the ground in summer and autumn." With the birds studied this certainly applied to the females and young, but the males did not appear to be on the ground any more than usual. One interesting item of food taken by the adults was the seed of Scots pine. The scales were completely strip-

ped off the cone and the seeds nipped from the seed wing. Cones attacked by Capercaillie are readily distinguished from those damaged by Crossbills and squirrels.

HOODED CROW AND RED-NECKED GREBE AS PREDATORS OF SALMON

D. H. MILLS

1. On 24th May 1959 a Hooded Crow *Corvus c. cornix* was observed taking and killing smolts of the Salmon *Salmo salar* at a salmon trap on the River Meig, a tributary of the Conon, Ross-shire. The smolt migration was at its peak, 2,807 smolts having passed over the trap in the preceding seven days, and it is possible that the fish had been taken unobserved on other occasions. The weather was bright at the time and the flashing of the fish as they were washed on to the grid of the trap probably attracted the birds in the first instance. When the observation was made the bird was hopping across the top of the trap and catching smolts as they came over. It was seen to kill a number of fish by catching them crosswise between its beak, apparently breaking their backs, and then dropping them. It eventually flew off with one fish held crosswise in its beak. Seven smolts with beak marks on their flanks were found dead on the grid of the trap. A bird, presumably the same one, was shot a short while later on the same day at the trap, and a stomach examination revealed smolt remains. The bird's beak was encased in smolt scales. After this bird was shot no further visits from other birds were noticed.

2. On 23rd March 1960 a Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps gris-eigena* was shot by mistake during a drive for Mergansers and Cormorants on the lower reaches of the River Beauly, Inverness-shire. The bird weighed 32 ounces and was acquiring its summer dress. Examination of the stomach contents revealed: salmon smolts (2), salmon parr (2), salmon fry (3) and fish remains. The following invertebrates were also present: Plecoptera *Taeniopteryx nebulosa*, nymph; Ephemeroptera *Ecdyonurus* sp. and *Rithrogena* sp., nymphs; Trichoptera *Hydroptila* sp. and *Limnophilus* sp., larvae; Gasteropoda *Hydrobia jenkinsi*. A large number of feathers, from the back and underparts of the bird, were intermingled with the food and it is probable that it swallowed these while preening.

(Mr Mills has included a plumage description of this bird, which, incidentally, appears to be the first recorded from East Inverness.—Ed.)

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Marine Hotel, North Berwick, 28th/30th October, 1960

PROGRAMME

Friday, 28th October :

- 5 to 7.30 p.m., and
8.30 to 9.30 p.m. Conference Office in the Marine 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 Lounges reserved for informal discussions and refreshments, and the showing of films and slides. Exhibition of original paintings by Archibald Thorburn in the Neptune Suite. Also an exhibit arranged by Dr David Jenkins of the Red Grouse Enquiry.
- 9.30 p.m. Excursion Leaders will describe the places of interest to be visited on Saturday and Sunday afternoons; in the Main Lounge of the Marine Hotel.

Saturday, 29th October :

- 8.45 to 9.15 a.m. Conference Office opens for registrations.
- 9.20 a.m. Official Opening of the Conference in the Dining-room of the Royal Hotel (near the Station, 6 mins. walk from the Marine Hotel).
ADDRESS OF WELCOME by James R. Wishart, Esq., J.P., Provost of North Berwick.
- 9.30 a.m. ADDRESS on "Birds in Literature", by Sir Charles G. Connell, retiring President of the Club.
- 9.45 a.m. LECTURE on "Ornithology in Europe", by E. Max Nicholson, Esq., Director of the Nature Conservancy.
- 10.45 a.m. INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.
- 11.15 a.m. LECTURE on "Ornithology in America", by Dr L. C. T. Nisbet, Kings College, Cambridge.
- 12.15 p.m. DISCUSSION on Lectures.
- 12.30 p.m. CONFERENCE GROUP PHOTOGRAPH outside the Royal Hotel.
- 1 to 2 p.m. INTERVAL for informal lunches (Hotels must be informed).
- 2 to 5.45 p.m. EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving the Marine Hotel Car Park. Details of the Excursions will be

posted on the Conference Notice Board.

6.15 p.m.

24th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CLUB in the Neptune Suite of the Marine Hotel.
BUSINESS:—

- (1) Apologies for absence.
- (2) Approval of Minutes of 23rd Annual General Meeting held in Stirling on 24th October, 1959.
- (3) Report of Council for Session 23.
- (4) Approval of Accounts for Session 23.
- (5) Appointment of Auditor.
- (6) Election of President of the Club: (Sir Charles G. Connell, having completed three years term of office, is due to retire and is ineligible for re-election). The Council recommend the election of Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn.
- (7) Election of Vice-President: The Council recommend the election of Dr Ian D. Pennie to succeed Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn.
- (8) Election of two Members of Council in place of those who retire.
- (9) Consideration of the following alteration to the Club Constitution under MEMBERSHIP (c):— "Married couples shall be eligible for joint Membership at an annual subscription of 40s and shall enjoy all the usual privileges of Membership with the exception that they shall be entitled to receive only one copy of "Scottish Birds" (Club Journal) between them".
Note: This alteration is recommended by the Council to give effect to the results of the discussion at the last Annual General Meeting.
- (10) Any other competent business.

7.30 for 8 p.m.

ANNUAL DINNER in the Diningroom of the Marine Hotel.

Sunday, 30th October :

9.30 a.m.

EXHIBITION of films in the Diningroom of the Royal Hotel.

10.45 a.m.

INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.

11.15 to 12.30 p.m.

By kind permission of the Town Council, the North Berwick Burgh Museum will be open to Members and Guests.

1 to 2 p.m.

INTERVAL for informal lunches.

2 p.m.

EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving the Marine Hotel Car Park.

INFORMATION

(1) In order to simplify arrangements, it is **essential** that Members intending to be present should complete the enclosed printed post card and send it to the Club Secretary **not later than 24th October**.

(2) Members may invite Guests; and are particularly asked to provide private cars where possible for the Excursions. Petrol expenses should be shared. Leaflets will be available in the Conference Office giving information on the Excursions. Members are urged to bring maps of the area (Ordnance Survey 1" maps; old Edition, Nos. 68 and 75; new Edition, Nos. 62 and 63). Members who wish to go out on their own are particularly asked not to go in advance of led Excursions to avoid disturbing the birds.

(3) Everyone attending the Conference must register (7s 6d each) on arrival at the Conference Office (opening times—see Programme). 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.

(4) Tickets for the Annual Dinner (price 12s 6d inclusive of tips) should be purchased when registering on arrival. Members and Guests staying in the Marine Hotel and the Royal Hotel will be charged for the Annual Dinner in their inclusive Hotel bill, but **MUST** obtain a ticket from the Conference Office. All tickets will be collected at the Dinner. **NO PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN ADVANCE TO THE OFFICE IN EDINBURGH.**

(5) **Booking for the Marine Hotel should be made through the Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, 7.** Booking for ALL OTHER HOTELS must be made direct with the Hotel in which you wish to stay. Owing to the shortage of single rooms, Members are urged to make arrangements to share a room with a friend (Single rooms at the Marine Hotel are now fully booked). Private arrangements must be made with your Hotel for lunches each day.

As the Conference Lectures are to be held in the Royal Hotel, it has now been arranged that accommodation will be available there at the inclusive charge of £1, 15s. All meals except breakfast will be taken at the Marine Hotel. The cost of the Annual Dinner will be included in the Hotel bill (see 4).

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN NORTH BERWICK

MARINE HOTEL (Tel. 2406) Special Conference charge: Dinner and bed on Friday, 28th; breakfast, lunch, Annual Dinner and bed on Saturday, 29th; breakfast and lunch on Sunday, 30th—£4, 15s.

ROYAL HOTEL, Station Road (Tel. 2401) Special Conference charge as above, all meals except breakfast taken at the Marine Hotel—£1, 15s.

DALRYMPLE ARMS HOTEL (Tel. 2969) Bed and breakfast from 25s.
COUNTY HOTEL, 17 High Street (Tel. 2989) Bed and breakfast from 21s.

IMPERIAL HOTEL, Quality Street (Tel. 2381) Bed and breakfast from 21s.

BRAMERTON HOTEL, 27 Dirleton Avenue (Tel. 2228) Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

SEABANK PRIVATE HOTEL, 12 Marine Parade (Tel. 2479) Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

The above terms are quoted as a guide **ONLY**, and prices should be confirmed.

S.O.C. PUBLICATION

"**The Birds of Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve**", by F. D. Hamilton and K. S. Macgregor. This article, which has been reprinted in booklet form by the Club from the "Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society", Vol. VIII, is now available to Members for 5s (postage 4d extra) and may be obtained from the Club Secretary or from Branch Secretaries. (See Review on p. 209).

DEEDS OF COVENANT AND BANKER'S ORDERS

The Club has now obtained permission from H.M. Inspector of Taxes to reclaim Income Tax on subscriptions paid under Deed of Covenant. This will be of great benefit to the Club as it will almost double subscriptions paid in this way. The Council therefore invites Members who pay Income Tax at the full rate to undertake a seven-year Deed of Covenant for their subscriptions (this does not apply to subscriptions to the Journal only). Full details, with a suitable form, are enclosed with this issue. Completed Forms should be returned to the Secretary, who will forward a Certificate for the Deduction of Tax for signature each year.

Members who wish to pay their subscriptions by Banker's Order may conveniently do so by using the form enclosed with this issue. This form should be returned to the Secretary and not to the Bank.

LIBRARY AND CLUB ROOM

Members are reminded that books are available in the Club Library for borrowing. It is regretted that meantime it is not possible to publish a list of the books available, owing to the amount of work this would entail, but the Secretary will be glad to supply a short list of books on a particular subject for any Member who is making a specific study. Details of Library opening hours are printed on the front cover of this Journal. The Library is normally open to Members on Saturday mornings between 9 a.m. and 12 noon; there are occasions however when the office is unavoidably closed. If Members wish to visit the office on Saturday, they would be advised to telephone beforehand to avoid disappointment.

JUNIOR MEETINGS

It has been decided that owing to homework and other ties in termtime, the Meetings arranged for Junior Members in the Scottish Centre on the first Friday of each month should be discontinued this winter. Instead, it is proposed to hold two Meetings in the Club Room, one in the Christmas holidays and the other at Easter. Dates and further details will be published in the December issue of "Scottish Birds".

CHANGES IN TIMES OF BRANCH LECTURES

Members of the St Andrews Branch are particularly asked to note that the October Meeting will be held on Monday, 31st October instead of the usual Friday, due to the dates fixed for the Annual Conference.

Members in the Edinburgh area are asked to note a change in the time of the last two lectures of the winter Session. As quite a number are unable to attend lectures at 5.30 p.m., the Branch Committee feel that they should be given an opportunity of hearing two of the Lecturers this winter. The Meetings in March and April therefore, will commence at 7.30 p.m. and **not** at 5.30 p.m. The later hour will also ensure that black-out arrangements for slides and films will be more effective at this time of the year.

WHOOPEL SWAN ENQUIRY

The British Trust for Ornithology and the Wildfowl Trust have agreed to sponsor an Enquiry on the Whooper Swans in Great Britain this coming winter.

The purpose of the Enquiry is to ascertain (a) status and distribution of the species; (b) proportion of young in the wintering herds; (c) dates of arrival and departure; and (d) general feeding habits especially in relation to agricultural crops.

To supplement the regular Wildfowl Counts, observers in Scotland and Northern England are asked to make counts of Whoopers as frequently and in as many places as possible. Careful observations of feeding habits are particularly wanted in the Spring.

The Organiser is Miss Betty Garden, Eider Cottage, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, from whom copies of a Questionnaire may be obtained. It is hoped that as many Members of the Club as possible will co-operate.

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.

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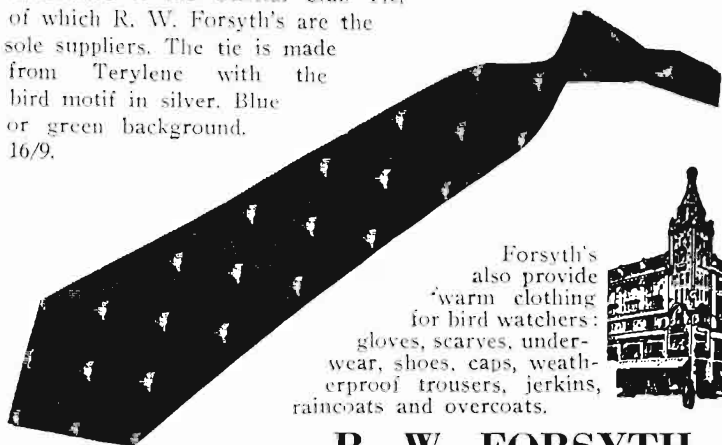
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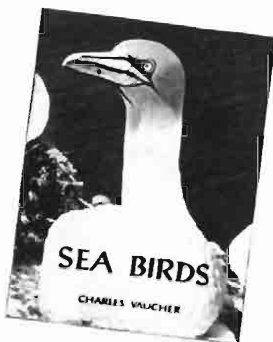


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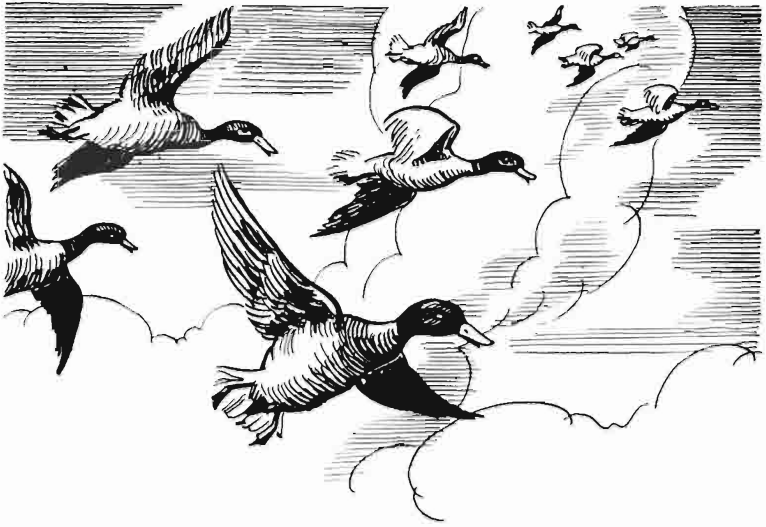
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