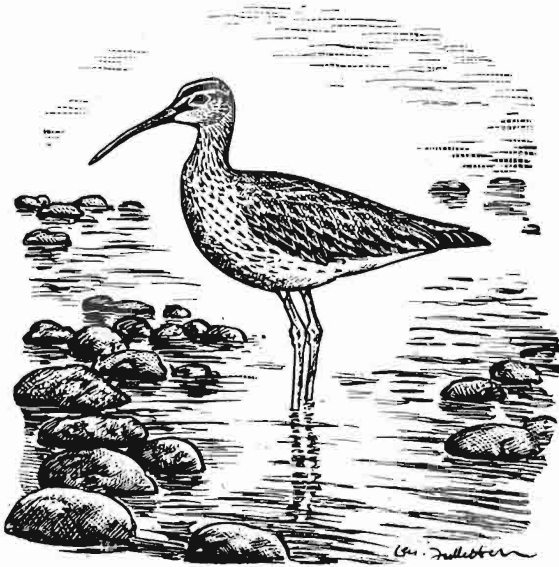


SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

Vol. 2 No. 2

Summer 1962

FIVE SHILLINGS

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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, Dumfries, 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.

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BIRD MIGRATION Twice-yearly, subscription 7s per annum.

The forthcoming issue contains an analysis of the spring migration of 1962 over the British Isles; also papers on Falls of Night Migrants on the English East Coast (D. Lack and J. L. F. Parslow), and the Nature of 'Leading-line' Behaviour (Kenneth Williamson).

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No. 7: *Identification for Ringers*, 1: *Acrocephalus*, *Hippolais* and *Locustella*, by Kenneth Williamson, 3s 6d (post free).

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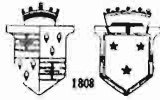
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You are invited to send small advertisements for inclusion in this feature, which will appear when space allows.

SCOTTISH BIRDS



THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Vol. 2 No. 2

Summer 1962

Edited by A. T. MACMILLAN with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and T. C. SMOUT. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Whimbrel) by LEN FULLERTON.

Published quarterly.

Editorial

TWO extra items are being sent out with this issue of *Scottish Birds*. One is the long-awaited Index to Volume 1. Readers who want to have the volume bound should carefully fill up the form on the cover of the index and send off the various parts, with payment for the binding, as soon as possible.

The other is a Special Supplement on The Birds of Tentsmuir by J. Grierson. The birds of this area have been noted for many years by Mr Grierson, and before him by the Berrys of Tayfield and others, and it is most valuable to have a record of these observations from such an interesting area. The face of Tentsmuir is changing still, and it will be very interesting in future years to be able to compare the birdlife with what is presently recorded.

To some it may seem dull and unimaginative to visit the same place every weekend, but it is not so. Little things take on a meaning which one misses on a single visit; the more often one goes back the more one gets from each visit, so that the value of a series of records is far more than the sum of the individual records. After many visits, over several years, one can talk with conviction about what happens in a normal year—"Swallows seem scarce this year," "Whimbrel should be here soon," "Why have the Moorhens not nested this year?"—then, after a few years more, one realises that there is hardly such a thing as a normal year.

One final thought. Do not get so engrossed in your chosen haunts that you grow old and die without ever writing them up. Though years of further study are needed you could at least send a progress report—*The first 50 years*—to be filed in the S.O.C. Library, even if you are not ready for publication in *Scottish Birds*.

AUTUMN MIGRATION AT ST KILDA IN 1961

W. E. WATERS

Introduction

There is a long history of ornithological observations from St Kilda, which because of its geographical position as the most westerly of the Western Isles of Scotland is of especial interest in the study of bird migration. Many of the old accounts mention migrants but there are only a few studies throughout a season of bird movement. Dr W. Eagle Clarke visited the island during the autumn migrations of 1910 and 1911 (Clarke 1912). Since 1957 the Armed Forces have been on the island and this has facilitated communications and hence the study of its natural history. K. Williamson and Dr J. Morton Boyd made records in 1957 and there have been others since from Service personnel—particularly Dr D. G. Boddington in 1958-59—as well as from visiting naturalists. The purpose of this article is to describe the autumn migration of 1961 and relate it to previous knowledge. Movements which may be in the nature of dispersal or accidental arrival on strong easterly winds of local birds from the Scottish mainland or Hebrides, are included, but mention of breeding species is made only where there is augmentation by migratory movement (*e.g.* Meadow Pipit).

Five new birds are added to the St Kilda list: Goldeneye, Velvet Scoter, phalarope sp., Goldcrest and Pied Flycatcher.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

I was on Hirta, the main island in the archipelago, from the end of May until 20th October 1961. Regular observations were confined to Village Glen, which was covered at least once and usually twice each day in August and September; other parts of the island were visited when time permitted. Village Glen is unquestionably the best place on the island to see migrants, in particular the area behind the Village Street, the valley of the Amhuinn Mhor and the boulder beach area. Migrant waders were seen on the sandy beach and on the rocks below the Manse in August and early September, while later in the autumn, and with strong southerly winds, they occurred on the grassland around the old crofts. Day to day observations of these areas gave a good indication of migration and the numbers involved.

Other areas that produced some migrants were the plantago sward of Ruaival (waders), Amhuinn Ruaival (Redwing and Redstart), the heights of Mullach Sgar and Mullach Geal (Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Lapland and Snow Buntings), and sheltered places in the steep gulleys on the east side of

Oiseval (White Wagtail). As noticed by previous observers, Gleann Mor and the Cambir held few migrants. Sometimes Meadow Pipits, and occasionally White Wagtails and Wheatears, were numerous there for a day or so after arrival, before moving over the ridge into Village Glen. The few warblers that arrived seemed to find most of their insect food along the dry stone walls, particularly that above the boulder beach.

The main migrants passing through St Kilda are on their way to or from the far north-west—Iceland, Greenland and even the arctic islands of northern Canada. Less common in a station situated so far west, and on the "blind side" of the Scottish mainland and the Hebrides, are migrants from continental Europe and Scandinavia. Of the main passerine migrants from the north-west in autumn 1961, the Wheatear had an average strong passage through St Kilda, with a maximum of about 20 in any day, whereas Meadow Pipits and White Wagtails were less common than in some previous years, with maximum counts of about 60 and 10 respectively. This may have been due to the stronger than normal winds which occurred over the sea area between Iceland and north-west Scotland. In September the wind was about twice its average speed and mainly south-westerly, and this may have resulted in more birds making landfall to the north and east of St Kilda than in an average year.

Many of the rarities on Fair Isle and the east coast of Britain arrive from continental Europe and Scandinavia. In 1910, and to a lesser extent in 1911, Clarke had an impressive list of such migrants at St Kilda. That these were exceptional years has been shown by Williamson and Boyd (1960), and confirmed by subsequent observations. One of the striking features of St Kilda, to one who is familiar with other west coast island observatories, is the scarcity of migrants, especially in the early autumn. Despite the regular searches in Village Glen I saw only eleven species of passerine migrants during the whole of August and September. Excluding the Wheatear, Meadow Pipit and White Wagtail only about 20 individual passerines were seen in these two months. Although this period has produced interesting migrants in past years their paucity in 1961 was probably not very exceptional. On an island so high and conspicuous as St Kilda (Conachair towers 1,397 feet above the sea), and fifty miles from the nearest land, this must indicate little migration in the area. My general impression, backed by observations of individual birds, was that most migrants remained on the island for some time—almost always twenty-four hours and often up to a week and more. They would move around until they found a suitable area, and they could be seen there regularly on subsequent days. A Knot, ringed in arctic Canada six years

ago, remained on the island for at least 18 days, and this seemed the general rule for waders and ducks, and to some extent for the common passerines, though this was not so for the Wheatear, White Wagtail and Meadow Pipit in 1957 (Williamson—personal communication).

The wader migration, involving 13 species, started in early July and was fairly continuous until at least mid October, though never heavy. Turnstone and Golden Plover were the most numerous species, each reaching a maximum of about 35 in October. All the waders involved had Icelandic or high-arctic breeding distributions except the Jack Snipe which arrived with other Scandinavian birds in early October. The scarcity in autumn of Purple Sandpiper (none) and Whimbrel (one only) is confirmed by my 1961 observations. Merlins also were uncommon, but this is a species which is frequent at this season on Fair Isle and it seems clear that these birds use different routes in spring and autumn (Williamson 1954, Williamson and Boyd 1960). The gulls recorded in autumn are probably mainly local birds blown out from the Hebrides by easterly winds. The Slavonian Grebe and Arctic Tern are probable Icelandic migrants but records are not numerous at St Kilda.

MONTHLY MOVEMENTS

July. Wader migration started early in the month; there were two Swifts on 2nd and a Great Skua on 26th.

August. This month saw the main passage of Meadow Pipits and White Wagtails and more waders but otherwise there was little movement. The wind over the Iceland/Hebrides sea area was more westerly and appreciably stronger than normal.

September. An unidentified warbler was seen on 2nd; the 3rd produced a Curlew, c. 10 large Wheatears, a Redstart and c. 15 Meadow Pipits. A Goldcrest and a Lapland Bunting, not seen until 5th, may well have arrived with the same movement. Although the Curlew, Goldcrest, Redstart and warbler must have come from more easterly longitudes, the Wheatears and Meadow Pipits were probably Icelandic in origin. Their simultaneous arrival on St Kilda can be accounted for by the high pressure system between Iceland and north-west Scotland giving light winds and even calm conditions on 2nd for the Iceland/Hebrides crossing, and moderate north-east winds over the Hebrides (Stornoway) drifting the species from the east. Alternatively the Icelandic migrants could have followed the inter-island route by the Faeroes, Shetland and Orkney, for which conditions were good, and been drifted to St Kilda with the other species.

Strong east winds produced one Rook, one Swallow, one House Martin and two Lapwings on the 17th.

October. The main migration of the autumn was from 4th to 11th October. The origin of much of this was the continent of Europe, and the birds probably arrived in the light easterly airstream to the north of a low pressure area which passed over the British Isles on the 7th. The majority of species occurring were obviously from east of St Kilda—Pied Flycatcher (5th), Song Thrush (6th), Willow Warbler and Chiffchaff (7th), and Blackbird (8th). Two were definitely Scandinavian—the Red-throated Pipit on 7th and Jack Snipe on 8th. During this rush there were arrivals also of possibly Icelandic birds such as Merlin, Redwing, Wheatear, Meadow Pipit and White Wagtail, but their appearance does not fit with good conditions for the direct crossing from Iceland.* The occurrence on St Kilda of Icelandic migrants with an easterly wind has been noted before (Clarke 1912, Williamson & Boyd 1960). It has been suggested that some birds from the far north-west may make their first landfall in the British Isles to the north and east of St Kilda, arriving on the latter with easterly winds as they migrate down the west coast. This is probably what happened to the Icelandic migrants during the period 4th to 11th. Arrivals at St Kilda during easterly winds do not however necessarily mean that this has been their route, as a direct crossing may also have been possible, as is shown by the early September movement described above.

A depression over the southern part of the North Sea on 13th October produced the first easterly winds over Shetland (Lerwick) and the Hebrides (Stornoway) since the 8th, and probably brought the Bluethroat caught on the evening of the 13th.

SPECIES LIST

The following list includes all migrants seen between 1st June and 20th October 1961.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER. Two which summered in Village Bay were joined by a third on 1st and 2nd Sept; one irregularly from 12th Sept until 8th Oct.

SLAVONIAN GREBE. A small grebe, probably of this species, on 12th, 13th and 17th Sept; one from 4th to 14th Oct.

HERON. One seen by R. Harding on 7th Aug.

TEAL. Five in Gleann Mor on 23rd Aug; one in Village Bay on 30th Sept.

TUFTED DUCK. One drake on 17th Sept after easterly winds the previous day. First autumn record.

*It is worth noting the correlation of arrivals of Redwings at St Kilda (5th October), Skerryvore (6th and 7th), and the Bass Rock (5th to 8th) revealed by the various articles in this issue of *Scottish Birds*. (See also *Bird Migration* 2: 80-81 and 130-131). Ed.

LONG-TAILED DUCK. A drake on 10th Oct; a female or immature on 20th Oct. Previous records indicate that this species can be expected during the second week of October.

COMMON SCOTER. One on 28th-29th Sept; three on 1st Oct; thereafter one or two on most days until I left on 20th Oct. All in Village Bay, and none adult drakes.

VELVET SCOTER. A drake in Village Bay on 27th July remained until 1st Aug. First record.

GOLDENEYE. Two in Village Bay on 10th Oct, one remaining until at least 18th Oct. No previous record.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER. A female or immature in Village Bay from 7th to 10th Oct.

PEREGRINE. There are many past breeding records but my only observations for 1961 were of an adult over Na h-Eagan on 2nd Aug and an immature chasing Golden Plovers on Mullach Sgar on 8th Oct. Soay and Boreray were not visited, so breeding there is not excluded and my records may have been of local birds.

MERLIN. Two on 21st Sept; one on 4th Oct. One most days from 10th to 15th Oct was probably the same bird.

OYSTERCATCHER. Breeding birds had all left the island by 5th Sept. Three on 17th Sept and single birds on 9th and 14th Oct were all preceded by easterly winds.

LAPWING. Two on 17th Sept; one on 6th Oct (remaining until 10th). Both arrivals followed easterly winds the previous day.

RINGED PLOVER. Two in Village Bay on 24th June; an immature from 15th July for four days; one or two on many days in Aug and Sept with a maximum of three on 5th Sept. Last recorded on 10th Oct.

GOLDEN PLOVER. Occasional birds in June, July and Aug. on Mullach Sgar and Oiseval but breeding was not suspected. Fifteen migrants on 5th Sept, passage continuing at least until 17th Oct. Maximum count c. 35 on 10th Oct.

TURNSTONE. A few throughout the summer. Migrants started to arrive during the last week in Aug; largest flock 35 on 11th Oct.

SNIPE. There was a decrease in the breeding population about mid-Sept, with probably less than 10 birds in Village Glen until 8th Oct, when there was a marked increase, to perhaps 25 birds—this number being maintained until I left the island.

JACK SNIPE. Three in Village Glen from 8th until 14th Oct frequented the marshy area above the boulder beach and Tobar Childa. The only previous definite record is of one seen by Brownlow and Williamson on 21st Sept 1957.

CURLEW. One on 7th Sept; one heard on 3rd and 14th Sept.

WHIMBREL. Two remained in Gleann Mor until 2nd July but breeding not established. One on 18th Aug was the only record for the autumn.

REDSHANK. Single birds on 20th and 24th July, 7th Aug and 4th-5th Oct. The previous latest autumn record was 10th Sept 1911.

KNOT. Two on 22nd July (one remaining until 28th July, one to 2nd Aug). One in partial red plumage on 19th Aug was trapped on 22nd and found to have an American ring. It had been ringed as a chick on 9th July 1955 at Slidre Fjord, Ellesmere Island, Canada. The bird remained on the island until 5th Sept. If this bird had left Ellesmere Island with an anti-cyclone on 16th Aug it would have met westerly winds over Davis Strait on 17th and could have arrived with an easterly-moving depression on 18th-19th. Another Knot, which arrived on 29th Aug, stayed four days.

DUNLIN. One on 12th June. Autumn passage very slight with three on 26th Aug and single birds thereafter on several days until 10th Oct.

SANDERLING. Autumn passage started with a single bird on 1st Aug and reached its peak in the first half of Sept with a maximum of five on 3rd Sept. One on 5th and 7th Oct.

PHALAROPE Sp. Two in Village Bay from 12th to 14th Oct were probably Grey Phalaropes *P. fulicarius* but identification is not certain. There are no previous records of phalaropes.

GREAT SKUA. One off Oiseval on 26th July, the month to which the great majority of St Kilda records refer.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL. The breeding population started to leave in mid-Aug and all were gone by 6th Sept. One bird of the British race on 10th Oct.

COMMON GULL. One immature 15th-18th July, two adults 17th July, one 19th-21st Aug and 4th, 9th and 10th Oct.

BLACK-HEADED GULL. More frequent than the Common Gull; highest numbers, seven on 20th July and 10th Oct. With 14 out of the 29 arrivals the wind had been from an easterly direction in the previous 48 hours.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN. Single terns, thought to be Arctic, seen over Village Bay on 30th Sept, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th and 10th Oct and at least two on 12th, 14th and 15th Oct.

SWIFT. Two on 2nd July, a month of many previous Swift records.

SWALLOW. Single birds on several days in June and July. One on 17th and two on 20th Sept probably came with the easterly gale on 16th. Only one previous record later than July.

HOUSE MARTIN. Up to four in early June; one 17th Sept. Like the Swallow, rare in autumn; no previous Sept record.

ROOK. An adult on Ruaival on 17th Sept. There appears to

be only one other record this century—in May 1957 (Williamson).

FIELDFARE. Three on 8th Oct.

SONG THRUSH. One on 6th Oct. Recent records are rare although this species bred on St Kilda last century.

REDWING. First seen on 5th Oct when there were at least 100 in Village Glen and the surrounding hills. This number soon dropped, but a further 30 or more arrived on 8th. Only about ten remained when I left on 20th.

BLACKBIRD. Female on 8th Oct; first winter male on 11th.

WHEATEAR. Many of the local birds left in the last week of Aug. Marked increase of larger Wheatears on 8th Sept and perhaps again on 23rd. No Wheatears seen in early Oct but six noted on 8th, and one still present on 14th.

REDSTART. Single females or immatures on 3rd Sept and 8th Oct. There are several previous autumn records.

BLUETHROAT. A first winter male was caught and ringed when it flew into a lighted building on the evening of 13th Oct. The race could not be determined with certainty. It weighed 14.6 grams. Seen again on 17th. The only previous record is of one in May 1959 recorded by Boddington.

WILLOW WARBLER. Two on 7th Oct; one still present on 8th was a very pale bird showing the characteristics of the northern form—*P. t. acredula*.

CHIFFCHAFF. One on the boulder beach on 7th Oct.

Unidentified warblers were also seen on 2nd and 23rd Sept.

GOLDCREST. One on 5th Sept. No previous records although the species has occurred on the Flannan Isles and recently on North Rona.

PIED FLYCATCHER. One behind Village Street on 5th Oct. Another new species for St Kilda but likewise recorded from both the Flannans and North Rona.

MEADOW PIPIT. The first obvious migrants arrived on 7th Aug and further arrivals were suspected on 14th, 19th, 22nd, 23rd Aug and 3rd, 8th, 23rd, 26th Sept and 9th Oct. On only two occasions was there an easterly wind during the previous 24 hours. Passage was not as heavy as in some previous years, with a maximum count of c. 60 on 23rd Aug. Up to 30-35 were present on many days in Sept.

RED-THROATED PIPIT. One above the boulder beach from 7th to 10th Oct has been accepted by the Rarity Records Committee. It was easily separated from the Meadow Pipits by its call. There are two previous records by Clarke for the autumns of 1910 and 1911. Further details appear elsewhere in this issue.

WHITE WAGTAIL. Two on 2nd Aug with further arrivals on

6th, 10th, 19th, 23rd, 27th Aug, 8th and 26th Sept, and 7th Oct. Two of these nine arrivals followed winds with an easterly component within 24 hours, and four of them coincided with arrivals of Meadow Pipits.

REDPOLL. Eight on 8th Sept, two on 6th Oct. Race not known.

LAPLAND BUNTING. One on Mullach Sgar on 5th Sept, and another on 14th Sept, and c. 6 on 8th Oct.

SNOW BUNTING. One on 23rd Sept, seven or more on 1st Oct, and c. 12 on 8th Oct. Mullach Geal was their favourite haunt but single birds were seen flying over Village Glen.

I am indebted to K. Williamson and Dr W. J. Eggeling for help in preparing this paper and to the Meteorological Office for information and the loan of weather maps.

PRINCIPAL REFERENCES

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Captain Waters' notes cover the autumn migration and arrival of winter visitors up to 20th October 1961. We have also received details from P. J. Fullagar of observations which he made on Hirta during the following month, from 8th to 17th November. The notes below have been selected from a complete list of observations kindly supplied by Mr Fullagar. The weather was clear, except on the 15th and 16th when it was cloudy with occasional drizzle. The Village Bay area was well covered, and the rest of the island was covered several times during work on the Soay sheep.—Ed.

SLAVONIAN GREBE. One from 11th to 17th.

HERON. One over Village Bay, calling and circling, flew off NW on 13th.

MALLARD. A drake on 16th.

LONG-TAILED DUCK. A duck from 11th to 17th.

TEAL. A duck on the tarn in Gleann Mor on 12th and 14th.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER. One on 16th and 17th

GOOSE Sp. One, possibly a Grey Lag, on 14th.

MERLIN. Single birds, possibly only one, on 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th.

LAPWING. One on 14th and 15th, and five on 16th and 17th.

GOLDEN PLOVER. One on 10th, two on 15th.

SNIFE. Frequently seen all over the island.

WOODCOCK. Two on 9th, three on 11th, three on 13th, four on 14th, and one on 15th. These may refer to a small movement

as the birds were noted in different parts of the island.

COMMON GULL. Most seen was five on 15th.

BLACK-HEADED GULL. Two on 15th.

SHORT-EARED OWL. One on 10th.

SKYLARK. One on 10th.

FIELDFARE. Small parties of about ten present throughout in three different areas.

REDWING. Probably over 100 throughout; flocks of 10/20 commonly seen.

BLACKBIRD. First seen on 11th. Census on 12th gave total of 17 on Hirta, mostly first winter cocks.

WAXWING. One on 14th. First record.

GOLDFINCH. Two on 9th. First record (see *antea* 2: 54).

SISKIN. One in two places on 12th. First record (see *antea* 2: 54).

CHAFFINCH. One on 11th, and a cock and hen on 13th.

SNOW BUNTING. Seen from 9th; Hirta population about 50.

SOME NOTES FROM SKERRYVORE LIGHTHOUSE*

W. A. CAMERON

*Because of the remoteness of the place very few ornithologists have been able to visit Skerryvore. It lies in what is potentially a most interesting position from which to watch for migrants—12 miles out to sea on a line drawn SW through the islands of Coll and Tiree, and also more or less clear of any blanketing effect from the southern end of the Outer Hebrides some 30 to 40 miles NNW. A few notes from Skerryvore have appeared from time to time, but the only series of detailed observations which we have been able to trace was published over 50 years ago by James Tomison, Principal Lightkeeper of the time, based on his observations from 1903 to 1906 (*Ann. Scot. Nat. Hist* 1907: 20-31). His paper is well worth reading again, both for a description of the rock and for details of the birds seen, the great autumn rushes of migrants, and the appalling number of birds killed by striking the lighthouse and falling into the sea on dark misty nights. In 1958 Dr J. Morton Boyd, writing of "The Birds of Tiree and Coll," included published and unpublished records from Skerryvore, and his paper has a useful list of references to the literature (*Brit. Birds* 51: 41-56, 103-118). We are indebted to Dr J. W. Campbell for drawing our attention to this valuable summary.—ED.

The observations which follow were made at Skerryvore Lighthouse, 12 miles south-west of Tiree, between 3rd and 23rd October 1961.

MANX SHEARWATER. Three on the 15th.

EIDER. Flocks continuously present off the rock, except for a three day period of very heavy seas when number dwindled to less than ten. Numbers tended to increase, from 160 on the 4th to 398 on the 21st. This was the largest number seen in a day. The great majority were always drakes (*e.g.* 180 drakes

in a flock of 205 on the 5th, and 225 in a flock of 253 on the 7th).

WHOOPER SWAN. On the 14th three came from the direction of Tíree and flew close past the rock towards the south-west. It was foggy at times that day.

KESTREL. One arrived early on the 14th and stayed until just after 7 a.m. on the 15th.

WATER RAIL. One killed at the lantern on the night of the 4th, and one there the next night.

GOLDEN PLOVER. Single birds on the 3rd, 7th and 16th, and three on the 10th.

TURNSTONE. Small parties of less than ten fairly regular.

SNIFE. A single bird on the 10th.

JACK SNIFE. Two on the 5th, one on the 6th, and five on the 7th. All were killed at the lantern.

REDSHANK. One caught early on the 8th, and a few others seen circling the tower.

PURPLE SANDPIPER. Fourteen on the 7th, and 23 during stormy weather on the 23rd, were the highest numbers; up to eight on several other days.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL. A single bird on the 3rd.

BLACK-HEADED GULL. A single bird on the 8th.

KITTIWAKE. The most numerous bird seen, with many hundreds in the vicinity on some days.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN. One killed on the 4th; two seen on the 8th.

SKYLARK. One at the lantern on the night of the 6th, and several early next morning.

WREN. Single birds on the rock on the 6th, 7th and 8th.

SONG THRUSH. Two at the lantern early on the 7th, and single birds on the rock twice later that day.

REDWING. Considerable night passage noted; fairly heavy on the nights of the 6th and 7th, and a large passage of hundreds of birds at 1 a.m. on the 14th at a time of poor visibility and fresh SSW wind. No other species were seen with this last movement. There were a good many casualties.

RING OUZEL. On the 5th one spent the night perched on the television aerial.

WHEATEAR. Light passage noted up to the 10th, with many birds involved on the nights of the 5th and 7th. Like the Redwing this species also suffered quite a number of casualties.

BLACK REDSTART. On the 14th at 1600 hours with poor visibility and a fresh SW wind a single bird was observed flitting about on the rock. The day was dull at times but the bird was watched at eight to ten yards range with binoculars. Size as

Redstart; dull slaty grey overall with the underparts very slightly lighter; rusty on sides of tail and rump, with the centre tail feathers very dark; legs black. It was constantly flitting about on the rock. I checked the *Field Guide* immediately afterwards and the bird appeared to match exactly the illustration of a female there.

BLACKCAP. One found dead on the 7th.

MEADOW PIPIT. One at the lantern on the 5th, a few early on the 7th, and two on the rock during the afternoon of the 8th.

ROCK PIPIT. One during the afternoon of the 6th.

STARLING. Single birds on the nights of the 5th, 19th and 21st.

NOTES FROM THE BASS ROCK

J. B. NELSON

While living on the Bass Rock, East Lothian, during 1961 to study the Gannets there, I was able to make some notes on the breeding birds and migrants.

BREEDING BIRDS

The following passerines bred on the Bass Rock in 1961:

WREN. Four to six pairs.

HEDGE SPARROW. About five pairs.

ROCK PIPIT. An estimated ten pairs.

PIED WAGTAIL. Two pairs.

STARLING. Three or four pairs.

LINNET. A pair reared at least one brood below the castle in tree mallow.

HOUSE SPARROW. Three or four pairs around the battlements.

MIGRANTS AND VISITORS

HERON. Two immatures flying up Forth on 5th August.

COMMON SCOTER. Twenty to thirty off the rock on 2nd October.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE. More than 100 flew over on 12th and 13th October (cf. *antea* 1: 500).

SPARROWHAWK. A female on 26th April.

PEREGRINE. Single birds several times throughout the year. Used to nest at one time.

MERLIN. One on 23rd April. An immature bird caught a cock House Sparrow on 13th October.

REDSHANK. Single birds visited the rock in August, September and October.

PURPLE SANDPIPER. Two on 6th March.

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL. Over 200 roost on the Bass during the winter, arriving in October and dispersing in March. They come on to the flat parts of the rock at this season but never at other times.

LITTLE AUK. An oiled specimen brought to the rock on 28th February 1962 by a Herring Gull.

SKYLARK. Many passed over on 2nd and 5th October and occasional birds on other dates in October.

BLUE TIT. Following south-easterly wind there was a small invasion on 28th September and up to six were counted on the rock. Some remained, or were newcomers, on 2nd October.

LONG-TAILED TIT. A party of eight passed over on 1st November (cf. *antea* 1: 506).

FIELDFARE. Five or six on 23rd April. Six or more on 31st October, and several on 2nd November.

SONG THRUSH. One on 7th March. Apart from one on 8th August none appeared in the autumn until 30th September. From then until 14th October there were always up to six on the rock.

REDWING. One on 11th and 26th April. First large autumn movements overhead on 5th October, continuing on the next three days.

RING OUZEL. Hen on 6th and 7th April; cock on 23rd, 27th and 30th April. One on 2nd October.

BLACKBIRD. One on 4th March, three on the 7th, one on 11th April, and one on 4th May. Two on 18th September. Main autumn arrival started on 3rd October, and at least six present until the 7th when about 50 were counted.

WHEATEAR. On April 11th (2), 13th (1), 26th (2), 27th (3), 28th (5+), 30th (5+), May 6th (2), 7th (2) and 12th (2). Undoubted large Wheatears on April 23rd (2) and 24th (1). First of the autumn seen on 9th August; then on 22nd, 31st, September 3rd (2), 5th (2), 18th (2), and 19th.

WHINCHAT. One cock on 27th April.

REDSTART. Single cocks on 17th, 21st and 23rd April.

ROBIN. One on 9th March and 11th April. First of the autumn on 3rd September. On 3rd October several came to the rock, and on the 4th and 5th there were up to a dozen.

BLACKCAP. At least two hens and a cock on 3rd and 4th October.

GARDEN WARBLER. One trapped near chapel on 3rd October.

WHITETHROAT. One trapped on 5th September.

WILLOW WARBLER. Five on 11th April, including a lovely cream-headed bird with darker superciliary stripe and ear-coverts; then two on 17th, several on 21st, 23rd, 24th and 30th, at least twelve on 6th May, several next day and on 12th May and 5th June. About four on 10th August, 20/30 on 5th September, several on 5th October, and one or two on the 6th.

GOLDCREST. Single birds on 7th and 16th March, "scores" on the 17th, decreasing daily to one on 23rd, and a similar but smaller influx on the 27th. Started passing through in the autumn on 2nd September; odd birds throughout this month, then many on 8th October, and a trickle thereafter.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER. Single birds on 5th and 18th September.

PIED FLYCATCHER. Noted on September 1st (hen), 3rd (4), 4th (2), 5th (3), 6th (2), 19th (1), and October 3rd (1). An adult female and three juveniles were trapped.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER. One trapped and ringed on 3rd October. It was a female or immature bird.

MEADOW PIPIT. There was a strong passage starting on 5th September and continuing until 10th October. The resident Rock Pipits showed much aggression.

GREENFINCH. One on 8th October.

SISKIN. Quite an invasion starting with a dozen on 3rd October, and continuing till the 14th, when we left the rock for a period (*cf. antea* 1: 500, 508; 2: 54). After the 3rd there were never more than about six.

LINNET. Small parties of up to six birds frequently on the rock in March and April (see Breeding Birds section). Several small flocks throughout the first half of October.

CHAFFINCH. A cock on 2nd October, and single hens on the 5th and 8th.

BRAMBLING. One on 7th October, five or six next day, and one on the 10th.

REED BUNTING. A female or immature on 5th October.

SNOW BUNTING. One on 27th September, and two on 31st October. One or two may often be seen on the rock during the winter.

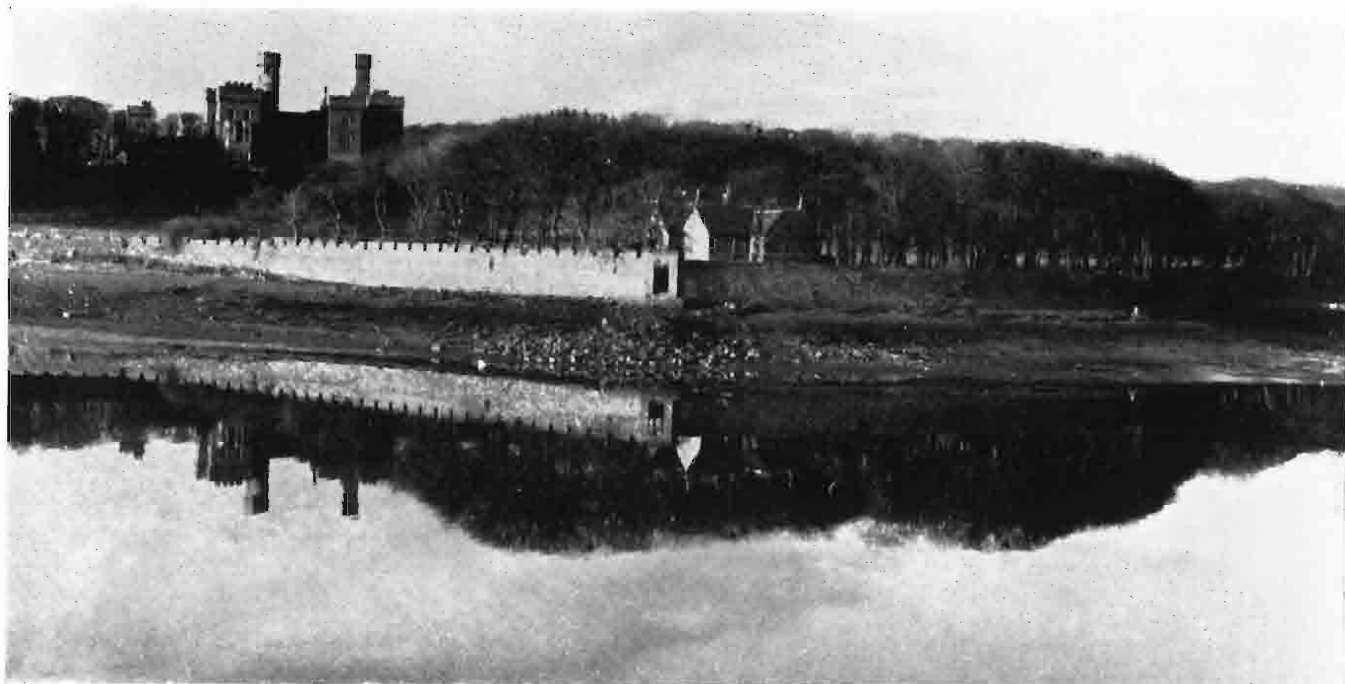


PLATE 4. STORNOWAY CASTLE and part of Stornoway Woods (see page 89).

Photograph by W. A. J. Cunningham.



PLATE 5. Aggressive cock CAPERCAILLIE, Angus, 1961. Note the characteristic display attitude with beak up and chin feathers standing out like a beard, and the white "headlamp" on the carpal joint of the wing (see page 81).

Photograph by C. E. Palmat.

AGGRESSIVE CAPERCAILLIES

The cock Capercaillie so excellently photographed by C. E. Palmar (Plate 5) lived in a small wood at the top of Glen Lethnot, Angus, for at least four years. It may have been older than this but it attacked human beings and other animals whenever they entered its territory in spring throughout this period. It probably owed its survival to the quietness of the area and to the close proximity of the keeper's house, since it many times attacked vehicles, including land-rovers and Post Office and other vans, sometimes landing on them, and if traffic had been frequent it might have perished sooner. It disappeared in June 1961 and presumably is now dead. In 1961 it jumped on top of Mrs Palmar when she tripped and fell in the wood, and it also attacked sheep in the wood and a horse in the meadow outside the wood, frightening the horse so that it confined its movements to the far end of the field. In 1961 this Capercaillie was trapped against a tree by a ewe with a lamb, and lost some of its tail feathers. It never attacked a dog, but with natural predators such as foxes, or lynx in Scandinavia, such a very aggressive bird would probably get killed quickly. It was more aggressive in 1961 than in 1960, when I was first shown it by C. Crystal, the head-keeper, and delivered quite hard blows with wings and beak, pecking viciously and often holding on. I felt its nip through my rubber boots. It was so aggressive in 1961 that it was necessary to hold the bird off with a forked stick in order to photograph it.

It was most aggressive within the wood, but readily came out of the wood on to the road or neighbouring grass field, except whenever Chris Mylne arrived with cine-camera to photograph it. Perhaps he looked too much like another Capercaillie. On other occasions Mr Crystal could often summon the bird by calling to it or by sounding the horn of his land-rover. It was aggressive between late February and the end of June and in all daylight hours. There was no obvious resurgence of aggression in the autumn; and this was the only cock Capercaillie in the wood of 35-40 acres.

Scandinavian biologists with whom I have discussed this bird have not recorded Capercaillie attacking men there, but there are at least two other records in the Scottish literature. Seton Gordon described a bird in Rothiemurchus Forest that attacked children going to school and ladies with silk stockings (*The Highlands of Scotland*, 1951); and a bird in Glen Lyon was documented by W. Kenneth Richmond (1958) in the *Annual Report of the Scottish Field Studies Association*. Except for A. Walker, the other members of the Grouse and

Moorland Ecology Unit have not heard of any other aggressive Capercaillie ; but Mr Walker recalls one that attacked people near Corroul Station, Inverness-shire, in the springs of 1940-43, and tells me that when he shot a cock Capercaillie in August 1926 in Glen Tanar the wounded bird attacked him. A hen Capercaillie with young attacked a farmer near Ban-chory in June 1961 when he approached her brood. These last three records, however, are from a lifetime's experience of keepkeeping in Scotland, and probably should not be interpreted as suggesting that aggressive Capercaillie are frequent. In most of these cases the birds lived near roads and they saw people frequently, and under these conditions Capercaillie may overcome their usual fear of men. Moreover in Scotland, where predators are usually destroyed, Capercaillie are less important gamebirds than in Scandinavia and are less frequently shot, and this may partly explain differences in behaviour.

It is often possible to approach Capercaillie in Scotland fairly easily and I have several times stood below trees containing cock and hen Capercaillie, not only in spring but also in winter. I have driven a car within seven feet of a cock in a birch tree in January, and have watched Capercaillie from the road near the Burn House at the foot of Glen Esk in Angus. During their song-display they periodically point their beaks skywards with their long chin feathers standing out like a beard, and this is traditionally an opportunity to stalk them. This display is sometimes given by birds in trees as well as on the ground, though the communal display sometimes recorded among Capercaillie may be confined to the ground. This can sometimes be seen in Scotland and Roy H. Dennis watched a lek in Upper Speyside in 1961. A very good account of display and territorial behaviour was published in 1961 in *British Birds* (54: 257-72) by H. G. Lumsden.

Captive cock Red Grouse frequently become very aggressive, striking and pecking at human beings ; and they will occasionally attack people in the wild. I do not know of any case of a Blackcock attacking people ; presumably they are teetotal and have not yet learned the bad habits of the Capercaillie (see D. G. Andrew (1958) *British Birds* 51: 191—last line).

DAVID JENKINS.

In attributing my failure to film the Glen Lethnot Capercaillie to my close resemblance to this handsome and magnificent bird, Dr David Jenkins does me an honour and gives a clue to its strange behaviour. It would appear that isolation from rival males of the species may explain the aberrant behaviour of these "rogues."* With no rivals to attack or display against, any other large moving object seems to release

the very strong aggressive drive which these birds develop and which normally finds expression in the lek type of display against other cocks. In spring 1961, through the good offices of Dr Bruce Campbell of the B.B.C. Natural History Unit, the R.S.P.B. Film Unit succeeded in filming the displays of a similarly aggressive Capercaillie near Dunkeld in Perthshire. This bird lived in an extensive larch wood but was supposed to be the only cock Capercaillie in the area. Its territory was smaller than that of the Glen Lethnot bird, but it would still attack fifty yards or so from the mound which appeared to be the chief display ground. Its mate had a nest with eggs about the same distance away. It appears that the aggressive displays stop as soon as the hen moves away from the vicinity of the nest with the chicks, as observed by Mr Crystal. Unfortunately the nest of the Dunkeld bird was destroyed the day before our visit, but this did not appear to affect the aggressiveness of the cock in any way.

This cock Capercaillie had been recorded in the area for at least five years and was quite notorious in the district. It attacked any vehicle or person intruding into its territory but was apparently easily scared by a dog. I had first-hand experience of the attacks of both birds. Although I did not succeed in enticing the Glen Lethnot bird out into the open to record it on film, I was on one occasion driven backwards by it down the hill through the wood. It battered so hard at my tripod that I was prevented from taking super close-ups by "camera-shake." The Dunkeld bird was even more persistently aggressive. It was necessary, for personal safety, to hold the bird off with a forked stick against which it made persistent rushes, attempting to outflank the opposition. These attacks were kept up with no sign of flagging for over an hour on one occasion while David E. Bradley and I secured sound recordings at very close quarters of the complete repertoire of burps, gurgles, wheezes, hisses, rasps, clicks and pops which make up the cock Capercaillie's "song."

The calls are an integral part of the display and are of three main types:

(a) a repeated slow clicking made with the bill pointed up at an angle of 45°. This is often the first clue to the presence of the bird in the forest and seems to be a kind of warning note. It is made in the throat but the bill is opened at the same time. It is delivered either from a tree perch or on the ground and is usually the prelude to an attack.

(b) a bubbling tri-syllabic bellow, delivered only on the

*It is possible that this isolation might be due to the resident cock's extreme aggression in the first place.—Ed.

ground during an aggressive forward run. The head and neck are held low to the ground, with the neck feathers fluffed out and the throat distended. The call and its delivery are similar to the bubbling of Blackcock on the lek ground, and it is definitely aggressive.

(c) the "song," where the clicking notes accelerate in a crescendo which ends in a loud pop, followed by a rhythmic gurgling in the throat and a quiet wheezing rasp which appears to originate in the chest. This latter sound is only audible at very close quarters. In fact the whole song is delivered as a muted performance, much effort producing a surprisingly small effect. The bill is pointed upwards almost vertically with the throat feathers erected like a beard.

A 16 mm film was obtained of the bird attacking first a car and its occupants, then its own reflection in a mirror, and finally a stuffed cock Capercaillie. The attacks were made mostly with the wings, one wing at a time being used to deliver a hard blow with the carpal joint. The bill was also used but not as the primary method of attack. When attacking the "rival" in the mirror, the bird hit the glass so hard with its wing that the carpal joint was bleeding after three or four blows and the mirror had to be withdrawn to prevent the bird injuring itself. During this fighting it was noted that the tail was lowered and used in the normal way to balance while positioning for an attack.

As an experiment the bird was presented with stuffed Capercaillies of both sexes. It found the stuffed cock an even stronger stimulus than Dr Bruce Campbell, who valiantly placed it in position, and to his dishonour it at once attacked the rival bird. When the bird and its stand had been knocked over, the attack consisted of treading and pecking at the head and eye, the red wattle appearing to stimulate the most vicious pecking. Some of the movements during this attack were very similar to sexual treading during coition. However the reaction of the bird to the stuffed hen was strikingly different. This skin, being unmounted, was presented in a prone position, and the cock at once approached from behind, mounted and several times attempted to mate with the stuffed hen. During this performance as well as treading on the back, it gripped the head of the hen with its bill at the nape of the neck, holding on but not pecking aggressively as it had done the head of the stuffed cock.

It has recently been reported by Col. A. M. Lyle, who kindly gave us permission to film the bird on his estate, that this bird also is now presumed to be dead.

C. K. MYLNE.

THE WAXWING INVASION OF NOVEMBER 1961

ANDREW T. MACMILLAN

Introduction

November 1961 brought a widespread invasion of Waxwings to Scotland, but the numbers were less spectacular than in recent years. The previous invasion, in October and November 1959, has been described in *Scottish Birds* (*antea* 1: 241-251), and an analysis of the remarkable series of four invasions in that and the previous three winters has been made by R. K. Cornwallis (*British Birds* 54: 1-30). No large influx of Waxwings was noted during the winter of 1960/61.

When comparing the 1961/62 figures with those for 1959/60 it should be realised that the majority of records for the earlier invasion were received from the general public in response to appeals published in the *Glasgow Herald* and *Scotsman*. No such appeals were made in 1961/62, although some of the same people again sent in records. The sample is thus a much smaller one. Even so, it is clear that the invasion of November 1961 was on a smaller scale in Scotland than the 1959 one, though the reluctance of the Editors of *British Birds* (54: 442) to admit that the numbers merit the use of the term "irruption" is surprising. Perhaps after so many Waxwings in recent winters we are becoming a little blasé.

THE INVASION

A few Waxwings are reported from Orkney and Shetland early in October 1961 (*British Birds* 54: 442), but details have not been received. In any event these birds cannot be considered as part of the main invasion. There is one rather vaguely dated record from Levenhall "in October," and a "bevy" of Waxwings was seen on the 29th at Barcaldine. These are the only reports prior to 7th November.

In *British Birds* (*loc. cit.*) it is stated that Waxwings began to arrive in Denmark on 4th November, and in Britain on the 5th and 6th. The Scottish records detailed below indicate a fairly steady arrival of birds from 7th to 28th November with no obvious peak—unless perhaps from Tuesday 14th to Thursday 16th when a few larger flocks were noted. Below are listed all available November records, but there are also many observations which cannot be fitted into this list because they are not precisely dated. Against each date are noted first reports, or increases reported in localities where birds were already present. There is of course no guarantee that the birds had not been present for some time before they were noted.

- 7th—Burnmouth (7)
 8th—Invergowrie (2)
 9th—Gullane (4), Burnmouth (+2)
 10th—Nairn (5)
 11th—Dundeugh (6)
 12th—St Andrews (9)
 13th—
 14th—Golspie (2), Stonehaven (14), Aberdeen (1), Broughton (2), Lockerbie (2), St Kilda (1)
 15th—Aviemore (2), Newburgh (Aberdeen) (13), Manderston (25)
 16th—Invergowrie (+14), Longannet (1)
 17th—Golspie (+3), Kirknewton (1).
 18th—
 19th—Blair Atholl (24), Eyemouth (6), Coldingham (4).
 20th—
 21st—Inverness (2)
 22nd—
 23rd—Invergowrie (+4)
 24th—Nairn (+9), High Valleyfield (2), Castle Douglas (1)
 25th—Dornoch (4)
 26th—Bonar Bridge (12), High Valleyfield (+2)
 27th—Rosyth (2)
 28th—Fort Augustus (2), Rosyth (+4), North Berwick (1)

There is very little evidence of fresh arrivals after the end of November. Subsequent records could all refer to birds that had been present in the country since November.

NUMBERS

It is difficult to arrive at exact figures, but the list at the end of this paper covers some 80 reports referring to approximately 375 birds. These figures should be compared with 400 reports referring to more than 2,100 birds two years earlier. Not too much should be made of the differences, however, because of the much more intensive collecting of records in 1959/60.

FOOD

Only a few observers gave details of the food taken by the birds which they recorded. Once again cotoneaster (18 reports) was top favourite, but berberis (7) and hips (7) were also popular, and juniper (2) and haws (1) were mentioned. A flock of Waxwings in St Andrews ate first *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, then *C. simonsii*, and finally rose hips when the cotoneaster was finished.

DETAILED RECORDS

Below are given details of the various reports received. The single Waxwing at St Kilda on 14th November 1961 is the first

to be recorded there. Waxwings have now been noted in every division of every Faunal Area of Scotland (see *antea* 1: 244 for further details).

ORKNEY & SHETLAND

A few early in October ("British Birds" 54: 442).

MORAY BASIN

Sutherland

Golspie—2 on 14th Nov, 5 on 17th, 2's and 3's to 8th Dec (Dr I. D. Pennie).

Bonar Bridge—12 (2 killed by car) on 26th Nov (Dr I. D. Pennie).

Dornoch—3/4 from 25th to 30th Nov, and 1 on 14th Jan (D. Macdonald).

Inverness

Inverness—2 on 21st Nov (Dr M. Rusk), and 1 found dead on 13th Dec (Mrs U. Pennell).

Boat of Garten—1 on 1st Jan (R. H. Dennis)

Aviemore—2 on 15th Nov (Lt-Col. J. P. Grant), and 3 on 16th Dec (R. H. Dennis).

Fort Augustus—2 on 28th Nov ("Inverness Courier" per Dr M. Rusk).

Nairn

Nairn—4/5 from 10th to 12th Nov (per Dr M. Rusk), and on 23rd (6), 24th (15), 25th/27th (2), Dec 3rd (9), 6th (14), declining to 2 on 10th (C. MacLaverly).

Moray

Forres—"There have been quite a number of Waxwings in this area" (D. B. Cowie, 6th Dec); 4 on 7th Dec (Mrs M. G. Michie).

DEE

Aberdeen

Newburgh—13 on 15th Nov (Miss E. A. Garden)

Aberdeen—1 on 14th Nov (per E.A.G.).

Kincardine

Banchory—a small party (under 6) sometime before 9th Dec (W. Bain).

Stonehaven—14 on 14th Nov, and small parties daily to at least 9th Dec (W. Bain).

Inverbervie/Auchinblae—small parties (under 6) at each place some time before 9th Dec (W. Bain).

N.B.—These localities are not in Dee as marked on the map in "The Birds of Scotland." For an accurate map, based on the watershed, see "A Fauna of the Tay Basin and Strathmore."

Angus

Edzell—noted in mid-Nov ("Dundee Courier" 23rd Nov).

Coupar Angus—1 on 4th, and 2 from 5th to 10th Dec (Miss M. W. Forson).

Perth

Blair Atholl—24 on 19th Nov (Miss N. C. Wilson).

Comrie—3 on 7th Jan (Miss G. S. Somerville).

Invergowrie—in Nov on 8th (2), 16th (16), 20th (1), 22nd (7), 23rd (20) and some later (H. Boase).

Fife

St Andrews—7/9 on 12th Nov (Dr D. Douglas), 9 on 20th (Miss D. Miller), 8 on 22nd decreasing to 2 on 26th (Mrs W. Low).

FORTH**Fife**

- Kirkcaldy—2 on 19th Dec (J. B. Bease).
 Rosyth—2 on 27th Nov, and 6 on 28th (Lt. P. J. Gayfer, R.N.).
 High Valleyfield—2 on 24th Nov, and 4 on 26th (J. Hoy).
 Longannet—1 on 16th Nov (J. Hoy).

West Lothian

- Reported at Bathgate ("Edinburgh Evening News" 2nd Dec).

Midlothian

- Levenhall—10 "in October" (Mrs Harrison).
 Musselburgh—Reported in "Edinburgh Evening News" (2nd Dec)—possibly same as Levenhall record.
 Pathhead—Reported in "Edinburgh Evening News" (2nd Dec).
 Ratho—1 on 4th Dec (D. Cunningham), and 1 on 12th Dec (Miss J. U. Smith).
 Kirknewton—1 from 17th to 19th Nov (Dr J. Young).

Edinburgh (Midlothian)

- First reported at Hillend ("Edinburgh Evening News" 18th Nov), then 2 in Niddrie Road ("E.E. News" 2nd Dec). Subsequently 5 in Barnton on 9th Dec (Miss K. Bews), 3 in Greenhill Park, Morningside, on 30th (H. A. Maxwell), single birds in Swanston Avenue on 11th Jan (H. A. Ford), and Stirling Road, Trinity, on 14th (C. Waterston), 3 in Arden Street during the first week of February (per K. S. Macgregor), single birds in Suffolk Road from 10th to 12th Feb (Mrs Ewing), and Mortonhall Road on 14th (Mrs I. Brotherston), and 4 in Inverleith Terrace on 21st and 22nd (Miss J. M. Fraser). It will be seen that there are more late records from Edinburgh than from other places.

East Lothian

- North Berwick—1 on 28th Nov (Mrs M. Meyer).
 Gullane—4 in the usual garden on 9th Nov (Miss O. T. Thompson), 4 on 10th Dec, 7 on 14th, and 8 on 17th (W. K. Birrell), and about 40 reported on nearby Muirfield Golf Course early in Dec (per W.K.B.). Finally 1 in the accustomed garden from 4th to 6th April (O.T.T.).
 Aberlady—small flock on 19th Dec (per W. K. Birrell).
 Tranent—reported in "Edinburgh Evening News" (18th Dec).
 Ormiston—reported in "Edinburgh Evening News" (2nd Dec).

Berwick

- Cockburnspath—1 on 2nd January (W. G. Macmillan).

TWEED**Berwick**

- Burnmouth—7 arrived on 7th Nov, increasing to 10 on 9th and 10th (Mrs J. B. M. Graham).
 Eyemouth—6 on 19th Nov (per Lt-Col. W. M. Logan-Home).
 Coldingham—4 at Silverwells on 19th Nov (per Lt-Col. W. M. Logan-Home), and 3 at Coldingham on 3rd Dec (S. J. Clarke).
 Manderston, Duns—25 stayed for half an hour on 15th Nov (S. J. Clarke).

Selkirk

- Galashiels—2 on 16th Jan (Mrs A. B. Murray).
 Selkirk—1 on 30th Nov, but others evidently there earlier in the month (A. J. Smith).
 Yarrow Feus—1 on 25th Dec (J. Ballantyne).

Peebles

Walkerburn—4 on 24th and 25th Dec (J. Ballantyne).
Broughton—2 on 14th Nov (Mrs M. Howitt).

Roxburgh

At least 10 in mid-Nov ("British Birds" 54:442).

OUTER HEBRIDES**Harris**

A single bird—no details (per W. A. J. Cunningham, 21st Nov).

St Kilda

A single bird—the first record—on 14th Nov (P. J. Fullagar).

NORTH-WEST HIGHLANDS

One at Ullapool, Ross, on 4th Dec (W. S. Caie).

ARGYLL

A "bevy" at Barcaldine, Argyll, on 29th Oct (Miss M. Davidson).

CLYDE

One at Old Kilpatrick, Dunbarton, on 11th Jan (Mrs J. Brooks).
Three in town of Ayr on 3rd Mar (R. M. Ramage).

SOLWAY**Dumfries**

Lockerbie—2 on 14th Nov, and one found dead on 16th (R. T. Smith).
Unconfirmed rumours of birds at Thornhill and Moffat about this time.

Kirkcudbright

Dundeugh (near Carsphairn)—6 from 11th to 18th Nov (A. D. Watson).

Castle Douglas—1 on 24th Nov (Rev. M. D. Walker).

THE STORNOWAY WOODS

W. A. J. CUNNINGHAM

Once upon a time, it is said, the Island of Lewis was covered with trees. The rolling hills and flat moorland of what is now known in Gaelic as the Isle of Heather were once clothed with hazel and oak, alder, birch and ash. "Once upon a time" was perhaps 7,000 years ago, for then came climatic changes which encouraged the growth of the present prevailing blanket of peat and encompassed the destruction of tree and shrub. Residual pockets of woodland were probably wiped out by gales, being now deprived of natural shelter, and by fire at the hand of Viking to facilitate the subjugation of the Island about 1000 A.D.

For the next 800 years or so the surviving trees and shrubs would have been found only on islets in loch and sea where they were protected from fire and, the modern scourge, sheep. In many parts of the island these isolated pockets are now the only trees to be seen, in their season verdant oases in which flourish flowers and bird-life little seen elsewhere.

About 1850, however, a Mr James Sutherland Matheson, having amassed a considerable fortune as a merchant in the

Far East, purchased the Island of Lewis and commenced planting the grounds surrounding the castle he was building close by Stornoway. Soil had to be imported from the mainland to supplement the exiguous layer of peat overlying the rocky declivities and rounded hills of most of the area. In the course of time and with considerable foresight and planning a magnificent collection of native and exotic trees and shrubs grew up around the castle, so distributed that no part of the woodlands seem ever without leaf or colour. Plantations of spruce, fir, cypress and pine, are interspersed with copper and common beech, wych and common elm, sycamore, ash, oak, and, indeed, most of the deciduous trees one would scarcely expect to find in the Outer Hebrides: everywhere, for example, one comes with surprise upon laburnum, white-beam, plum and maple. In the former private gardens were planted berberis, azalea, fuschia and hybrid rhododendrons, *Tropaeolum speciosum* flinging its scarlet blossoms over the latter and *Gunnera marcata* filling up the damp corners. Skillfully contrived paths revealed all this wealth of vegetation to the best advantage.

Nowadays the castle and woods are the property of the people of Stornoway and, though not kept in their pristine formality and tidiness, are maintained as well as possible. A feature of the present policies is a luxuriant growth of *Rhododendron ponticum* whose impenetrable spread is scarcely made up for by its short but beautiful flowering season.

The Castle Grounds, as they are now known locally, embrace an area of about $1\frac{1}{4}$ square miles and include four main types of habitat as far as birds are concerned. These are (1) the woodlands themselves, (2) the parkland now used as a golf-course, (3) the two water-courses of the River Creed and the Bayhead Burn, and (4) the foreshore of Loch Stornoway, facing the town and consisting mainly of rock and mud.

Such a variety of vegetation as is found in the first habitat in so small a compass and in such an isolated position—the nearest woods comparable in size being 40 miles away eastwards across the Minch at Lochinver—must attract many different types of bird-life, especially as the island lies on one of the principal paths of migration.

In this connection, the present status of the smaller passerines gives food for thought, and one is inclined to the opinion that gradual colonization has taken place, either as part of a general northward spread or as a result of drift migration. The Chiffchaff and Whitethroat are slowly colonizing the Highlands of Scotland and have now reached at Stornoway the culmination of their north-westerly advance, while the Goldcrest and probably the Chaffinch were perhaps accidental visitors who, like the writer, arrived on the winds of chance

and liked the place so much that they stayed for good! Willow Warblers arrive in considerable numbers about the middle of April and a single Sedge Warbler appears occasionally in May or June in the same group of trees and bushes before passing on to its breeding haunt elsewhere in Lewis. The writer has seen Garden Warblers only once—two in May 1955—but later sightings of this species and of Wood Warblers, although not confirmed, may nevertheless be credible in the light of what has already been written. A Blackcap was seen by S. L. B. Lee in November 1961. The first record of the Goldfinch in Lewis was in January and February 1958 when one was seen in Stornoway. In November 1961, however, a small party was seen in the Castle Grounds and again in the following month in Stornoway. Bramblings have also been seen from time to time in the winter, when flocks of Greenfinches frequent the area—a few pairs remaining to breed.

One will normally look in vain for tits here as elsewhere in the Grounds, though the place seems ideally suited for such birds. At least two Blue Tits were, however, seen in the woods, and another on the outskirts, in November 1961, and these probably remained for the winter, as three or four were watched in the rhododendron bushes near the castle on 28th March 1962. Only four days later, on 1st April, one (probably two) Great Tits were seen in the same spot, feeding with Blue Tits, and occasionally chasing them through the trees. These birds had been reported on 25th March by W. Matheson, and seem to be the first recorded in the Outer Hebrides. Instead of tits the needle-sharp piping of Goldcrests may be heard almost everywhere amongst the conifer plantations, for an extraordinary number of these tiny birds are native to the woods.

But the most numerous bird in the woods is without doubt the Rook, and the story of his occupation is worth repeating as it is given in *The Birds of Scotland* (Baxter & Rintoul, 1953). "Following the great westerly movement in October 1893, numbers of Rooks landed on the west side of Lewis and hundreds were found floating dead along the shore; the survivors found their way to the Castle Woods, in Stornoway, to a number estimated at 4000; they stayed there during the winter of 1893 and about 200 remained there during the next summer but did not breed. In 1895 they nested there for the first time, and in 1902 there were over 100 nests. When we visited that rookery in 1932 we found it a large one, we have never seen trees more packed with nests; the trees are small and stunted and the nests were crowded together, in some cases actually touching each other. By 1934 the rookery was extending and there were nests in the trees fringing the shore, and in 1945 the census showed 170 nests."

Nowadays, it is not thought possible to estimate, even ap-

proximately, the number of occupied nests in the two main rookeries. They tower like avian tenements in the tall conifers of Gallows Hill and spread in ribbon development through the tops of elm and beech below the castle. Groups of nests and single ones of pioneers are reaching out along the trees fronting the town and almost every group of trees in the town itself is steadily being colonized. The sky above the town is darkened on summer evenings as a stream of countless Rooks home from the fields beyond to their slums in the tree-tops.

In winter remarkable numbers of Ravens are to be seen on the wing over the woods. The writer has counted over 40 in the air at once. The odd pair has been found breeding but the remainder probably represent most of the island's population which has come to roost there.

Similarly, only an odd pair of Jackdaws nest in the castle itself, many more preferring the warmer chimneys of the town. It is not known whether more than one pair of Hooded Crows is resident though many are seen on the scrounge and, again, may be incomers from the neighbouring sea-cliffs and moorland. So far, that other dark intruder, the Carrion Crow, has not found his way to the island.

The Cuckoo is a regular summer visitor to the whole of the Outer Hebrides, where it is a common sight and sound on the moor, and is also frequently to be seen and heard in the woods. A part of the Castle Grounds is, in fact, called *Buaile na Chuthaig* (Cuckoo Park). One May morning at 3.35 a.m., when the writer was living in a bachelor flat overlooking the woods, he counted an unbroken series of 182 calls, a feat which he, perhaps unwisely, divulged to the local press. At his wedding the following July he was not surprised to receive a telegram allegedly from *A' Chuthaig* (The Cuckoo) saying, *Meal bhur naigneachd; an duil an cluinn thu nochd mi!* which, being translated, means "Congratulations; do you think you will hear me to-night!"

In 1961 a Buzzard's nest was reported by a gamekeeper's son, and it is believed that other hawks or falcons may nest though proof is not available. Golfers on what used to be the parkland are often diverted by the sight of a Buzzard on the hunt or a glimpse of a Peregrine or Merlin in pursuit of a hapless victim.

The writer has so far been disappointed in his search for an owl in the woods though he is inclined to agree with the Misses Baxter and Rintoul that the Tawny Owl almost certainly nests in the more inaccessible parts of the woods. At least one Long-eared Owl has been seen in the island, furth of the woods, and the Short-eared Owl is to be found on the remoter moors but there are no records for the Castle Grounds.

The two main water-courses through the Grounds are

roughly similar, differing only in size, and somewhat the same pattern of bird-life is seen in each. Grey Wagtails frequent both streams but have been proved to breed on the smaller only, the Bayhead Burn, where two pairs were seen with young in 1961. A young *alba* Wagtail was recorded in the same year in the same place, but the Pied Wagtail is much rarer than the Grey, while the White Wagtail is to be seen only on migration. Spotted Flycatchers have brought up families close to the banks of both the River Creed and the Bayhead Burn and there is at least one pair of Dippers to each stream, their cheerful song enlivening a winter's afternoon when all else is silent save for the rush of wind and water. Treecreepers have occurred occasionally during the winter and early spring in different parts of the woods adjacent to the castle but principally in a certain group of trees hard by the Bayhead Burn. Not until 1961 was a pair seen in the summer, and in May 1962 a pair nested in a painfully obvious hole, four feet from the ground in a small tree, but the nest was robbed and destroyed just as the eggs were on the point of hatching. This is the first breeding record for the species in the Outer Hebrides.

In February 1956 two immature Moorhens occupied the lower reaches of the Bayhead Burn but were not seen thereafter, occasional sightings in the following years of single birds being the only recurrence of this species.

Spring and autumn bring their quota of Swallows and House Martins, filling the air above the flowing waters for a few days each season. As a result probably of exceptionally severe gales they occurred in September 1961 in such unprecedented numbers that reports of sightings came from the most unlikely sources amongst the townsfolk.

The first recorded Collared Dove in the Outer Hebrides was encountered on the fringes of the woods near the head of the Burn in 1960 and at least two were seen and heard in May 1962. This seems to be the westernmost occurrence of this rapidly spreading species. The only other member of the Columbidae in residence is the prolific Woodpigeon, although Rock Doves from the neighbouring sea caves may occasionally be seen.

Generally speaking, the Castle Grounds are a natural haven to all birds seeking cover and rest in an otherwise barren landscape and are, as a result, full of interest when birds are on the move. When strong winds blow from the east Scandinavian visitors reach the islands in strength, but are usually picked up dead unless they happen to find these woods where they can rest and feed in sheltered surroundings. Waxwings feed hungrily in the town, and probably also in the Castle Grounds, on an abundance of berries, mostly cotoneaster and

berberis, and Crossbills fill the tree-tops, showering passers-by with empty fir cones, while Redwing and Fieldfare chatter nearby. In a day or two, however, they are gone. From November through the winter one may be lucky enough to flush a solitary Woodcock from the rhododendron thickets and a Jack Snipe from the bogs and rushes near the Creed.

Again, a walk along the foreshore is often interrupted by the clacking of a Song Thrush at work on his anvil as he smashes the shells of common periwinkle and dog whelk, and almost every suitable stone bordering the path is surrounded by a litter of broken shells.

The Iceland Gull has been a regular winter visitor to the harbour area ever since the writer started keeping records in 1951. Between November and March there seem always to be at least one or two immature birds about and at times these may be seen on the tidal waters of the Bayhead Burn. Only rarely have pure white birds been seen, and never yet a fully adult one. Glaucous Gulls also occur from time to time during the same period, but not so frequently, and none has so far been noted within the limits of the Castle Grounds.

Heron, Turnstone, Purple and Common Sandpipers, Red-shank, Oystercatcher, as well as many other of the wader tribe, frequent the muddy and rocky shore, while a variety of sea-birds can be seen fishing in the sea loch, including, principally, Red-breasted Merganser, Black and Common Guillemots (the former, oddly, being the commoner), Shag, and even the occasional Little Grebe and Great Northern Diver.

With such a wealth of bird-life under their very eyes, the people of Stornoway should indeed be grateful to the planter of these gracious woods and to the Providence which directed the fruits of the East to benefit so wisely a little part of the West.

“Iram indeed is gone with all its Rose,
And Jamshyd’s Seven-ring’d Cup where no one knows;
But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,
And still a Garden by the Water blows.”

CHECK-LIST

This list covers birds noted in the Castle Grounds, bounded by the statutory boundaries on the landward side and by the low water mark on the foreshore. This is a more restricted area than is covered in the article, and excludes sea-birds which may be seen from the shore, but outside the area on the sea loch and in the harbour. With a few exceptions it is a personal list, and it does not pretend to be complete. Amendments and additions would be welcomed. Many other species, such as Rock Pipit, Waxwing and Linnet, are to be found in and around Stornoway, and may occur, so far unseen by me, in the Castle Grounds. Unless otherwise stated, the term “resident” means also that the species breeds within the Castle Grounds.

- Heron.** Common, not proved to breed.
Teal. Occasional visitor.
Buzzard. Resident.
Peregrine. Occasional visitor, not proved to breed.
Merlin. Occasional visitor, not proved to breed.
Kestrel. Occasional visitor, not proved to breed.
Water Rail. Rare vagrant; one found dead on 4th March 1962.
Corncrake. Summer visitor, probably breeds.
Moorhen. Vagrant.
Oystercatcher. Common visitor.
Lapwing. Summer visitor, probably breeds.
Golden Plover. Summer visitor, not proved to breed.
Turnstone. Occasional visitor.
Snipe. Resident, probably breeds.
Jack Snipe. Winter visitor.
Woodcock. Winter visitor.
Curlew. Spring and autumn passage migrant.
Common Sandpiper. Occasional visitor, may breed.
Redshank. Common visitor.
Greenshank. Occasional visitor.
Greater Black-backed Gull. Common visitor, does not breed.
Lesser Black-backed Gull. Summer visitor, does not breed.
Herring Gull. Very common visitor.
Common Gull. Occasional visitor.
Iceland Gull. Regular winter visitor.
Black-headed Gull. Common visitor, not known to breed.
Rock Dove. Common visitor, does not breed.
Woodpigeon. Resident.
Collared Dove. Rare visitor since 1960, breeding not proved.
Cuckoo. Summer visitor, breeds.
Tawny Owl. See text; one noted by Dr E. V. Baxter on 5th April 1934.
Skylark. Resident.
Swallow. Spring and autumn passage migrant.
House Martin. Spring and autumn passage migrant.
Raven. Resident and common winter visitor.
Hooded Crow. Common visitor, not known to breed.
Rook. Very common resident.
Jackdaw. Resident.
Great Tit. First recorded on 25th March 1962.
Blue Tit. Rare visitor.
Treecreeper. Resident, bred 1962.
Wren. Resident.
Dipper. Resident.
Mistle Thrush. Resident.
Fieldfare. Winter visitor.
Song Thrush. Resident.
Redwing. Winter visitor.
Blackbird. Resident.
Whinchat. Summer visitor, not proved to breed.
Robin. Resident.
Sedge Warbler. Summer visitor, not proved to breed.
Blackcap. Vagrant; one on 7th November 1961.
Garden Warbler. Vagrant; two in May 1955.
Whitethroat. Summer visitor, not proved to breed.
Willow Warbler. Summer visitor, breeds.
Chiffchaff. Summer visitor, breeds.
Goldcrest. Resident.
Spotted Flycatcher. Summer visitor, breeds.
Hedge Sparrow. Resident.

- Meadow Pipit.** Resident.
Pied Wagtail. Spring and autumn passage migrant; rare summer visitor, breeds.
White Wagtail. Spring and autumn passage migrant.
Grey Wagtail. Summer visitor, breeds.
Starling. Resident.
Greenfinch. Resident.
Goldfinch. Winter visitor.
Crossbill. Winter visitor.
Chaffinch. Resident.
Brambling. Winter visitor
House Sparrow. Resident
Tree Sparrow. First noted in May 1962, possibly breeding.

SHORT NOTES

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGES IN PERTHSHIRE

On 28th October 1961 Mrs E. J. Lines and D. Stark, on an excursion from the S.O.C. Conference to Blair Drummond, observed a covey of 17 partridges for some time. They were not convinced that the birds were common Partridges *P. perdix*, and noted a badger-like appearance about the head. I went with them and Dr and Mrs K. C. R. Halliday, Miss J. McFarlane and Miss Rogerson, and we found the birds in the same large partly-ploughed stubble field, and were able to observe them at ranges down to about 30 yards. The white eyestripe was seen by everyone, and red legs and bill were also noted. There was no horseshoe mark on the breast, and the white gorget was outlined in black. The barred lavender-coloured flanks were also seen. The birds were moving uphill into a wood and we watched them running about there and giving the typical "*chuck chuck-er*" call which, combined with the other features, confirmed that they were Red-legged Partridges *Alectoris rufa*.

I learned from Sir John Muir that the only introduction of these birds known to him was at his mother's estate, Braco Castle, in 1960, when eggs were hatched and the chicks released. Braco Castle is about nine miles NE of Blair Drummond and the ground between is heavily shot over.

B. E. WELD.

(These must be regarded as introduced birds. There are no records of Red-legged Partridges, other than introduced birds, in Scotland, and the species has apparently never succeeded in establishing itself where it has been introduced.—Ed.).

ICELAND FALCON IN MIDLOTHIAN

On 15th November 1961 I arrived at the "car-park" at Fala Moor. On the short heather at the back of the Pond was a

bird coloured like an immature Common or Herring Gull above and with a white or near-white breast starting high up on the body. There were no special head markings, the head blending in with the body plumage. The size seemed to lie somewhere between Common and Herring Gull.

The bird was clearly a falcon, but the colour was wrong for a Peregrine and the position was horizontal or crouching and not erect. The tail and folded wings projected well astern and I could not make out where the wings finished and the tail alone began. When the bird swivelled round, the almost pure white breast contrasted with the light grey-brown upper-parts. The lower breast was not really visible because of the horizontal position as it stood in the heather—appearing almost to lie in it—but it did seem as if the lower breast was beginning to be darker than the upper.

I turned my attention to the duck on the Pond, meaning to come back to this bird in a few moments, but shortly afterwards I realised that a large falcon was flying out from the back of the Pond towards the East. It flew almost like a Peregrine but was fully bigger than the biggest female Peregrine I have ever seen. The flight seemed more powerful and less winnowing than that of the Peregrine and the wings seemed relatively broader and less pointed. The wings had a light grey and almost white scaly or tessellated effect—like a slate roof with light and slightly darker slates seen in good sunshine—and this had the effect of paling the whole, making the darker slates light grey and making the lighter slates appear translucent or almost white.

At the time I thought the bird had probably been crouching on some prey, but when I was able to examine the spot three days later there was no sign of a kill. On the 16th I examined the skins at the Royal Scottish Museum and there was one skin of a male Iceland Falcon which I consider very closely resembled the bird I had seen at Fala the previous day.

WILLIAM BROTHERSTON.

PINK-COLOURED BLACK-HEADED GULLS

On 1st January 1962, while looking at a flock of about 30 Black-headed Gulls standing on a snow covered field near Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, I noticed that one had its head, back and breast suffused with a pale rosy pink colour. It was snowing at the time and the pink colour was very noticeable against the white background. I realise that of all possible dates 1st January is not the one on which to see pink gulls. *The Handbook* mentions that some pink suffusion occurs at times, but more often in summer than in winter. I was unable to



PLATE 6. SNOWY OWL captured in Aberdeenshire about December 1952 (see page 99).

make it into a Ross's Gull. A few days later, with Douglas Willis, I saw another pink Black-headed Gull, but this time in flight.

E. A. GARDEN.

SNOWY OWLS IN ANGUS, ABERDEENSHIRE AND BANFFSHIRE

In July 1961 a holiday-maker saw a large white bird hunting over the lower slopes of Craig Soales, Glen Esk, Angus, and this bird was later noted by shooting parties in August as a "white Buzzard." It was caught by the head-keeper and subsequently sent to the Edinburgh Zoo. I heard about this bird second-hand and was told it was a Snowy Owl.

Sim in *A Vertebrate Fauna of Dee* (1903) records only four Snowy Owls between 1824 and 1903, and it may therefore be of interest to note some other recent occurrences that I have heard of second-hand. A. Watson Sr., an experienced observer who watched a Snowy Owl on the Cairngorm plateau in 1952, saw another at the summit of the road at Corse Maul between Dufftown and Huntly in Banffshire on 7th January 1953. In February or March 1958 Dr W. Dally with D. Miles watched a large white owl from their land-rover near Cornescorn, Glen Esk. It was sitting on a fence and Dr Dally records that it was a large bird about the size of a Buzzard with quite a lot of black on it. They watched the bird for some minutes until it "spread its wings and flapped them at us" before flying away. Dr A. Watson Jr. has questioned Dr Dally independently and agrees that this is a reliable record, and in fact quite a good description of a first-winter bird. Dr Dally has practised in the Angus glens for several years and is familiar with Short-eared and other common owls. On some date between 1953 and 1955 a cock Snowy Owl was photographed alive at Culterty House, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire and this photograph was published in the press. Dr Watson is satisfied that this is a reliable record though I have no details. There are three additional published records from the Dee area recently, of one bird on the Cairngorm plateau in each of the two summers 1952 and 1953, but apparently not in between (*Scot. Nat.* 64: 176, 65: 129 and 69: 57), which may refer to the same bird, and of another on the Cairn O' Mount, Kin-cardineshire, on 3rd March 1960 (*Scot. Birds* 1: 238, *Brit. Birds* 54: 188). Thus during the last nine years there have been some five or six Snowy Owls reported in an area corresponding roughly to that in which Sim recorded only four in 79 years. There have been more observers recently but, even so, a number of these observations have only come to light fortuitously.

DAVID JENKINS.

(On receipt of Dr Jenkins' notes we made extensive enquiries about these various records.

G. D. Fisher, Director-Secretary of The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, confirmed the identity of the 1961 bird and suggested that it was probably an immature female though its age was not known with certainty. It was captured on 18th October in a rather tired condition and sent to the Zoo. It died on 8th January 1962, and the post mortem finding was that it died of pneumonia and nephritis.

Adam Watson Sr. describes the bird which he saw on 7th January 1953 as being little if at all different in plumage from the one which he had seen in the Cairngorms the previous summer. There is a possibility that it was the same bird. At the time he assumed that it was the same Snowy Owl which he had recently heard had been caught in the Cabrach area and taken to the late Dr Edgar Smith at Culterty, Newburgh. A photograph of the bird had appeared in the local press.

After considerable amateur detective work by several people a copy of this photograph was eventually traced to Miss E. A. Garden's photograph album. It is reproduced in this issue of *Scottish Birds*. Miss Garden writes that a farmer in the Cabrach area, near Rhynie, Aberdeenshire, was puzzled as to why every rabbit in his snares had its head removed, until he came on the Snowy Owl in a snare, caught by its foot but otherwise unhurt. He took the bird home and got in touch with Charles Cockburn of Aberdeen who took it to Dr Smith at Culterty. There it was kept in a dirty little shed for a week (hence the dark primaries in the photograph) before being ringed and released. It was a magnificent bird, despite its miserable surroundings, with striking large golden eyes. Dr G. Swapp took a ciné film of it being released, and this was the last that was seen of it.

We rather admire people who simply pick up huge birds of prey and carry them home with them, as seems to have been the ignominious fate of two of these birds.

Dr W. Dally has sent us details of his bird—it was seen on 22nd February 1958.

It is at least possible that the Snowy Owls seen in the Cairngorms during the summers of 1952 and 1953, the one captured on the Cabrach about December 1952, and the one seen at Corse Maul in January 1953, were all the same bird—an adult male. On this reckoning the score would be reduced to a minimum of four birds in the area in recent years.—Ed.).

RED-THROATED PIPIT AT ST KILDA

At 1500 hours on 7th October 1961 my attention was drawn to an apparently largish dark pipit, very heavily streaked be-

low and with a faintly pink throat. It alighted on a stone just above the boulder beach of Village Bay, St Kilda, but soon flew uttering a characteristic call-note I had not heard before and quite distinct from the calls of Meadow, Tree and Rock Pipits—it was a low buzz 'psssss' uttered singly. For the next 45 minutes I followed the pipit as it moved round in a party of Meadow Pipits. Though at first sight it had looked a large pipit, alongside the Meadow Pipits it was virtually the same size. It was easily distinguished from them at rest by its darker and more streaked back, completely lacking any brown or greenish colouration, and by the much heavier and very numerous wide black streaks below. The pinkish throat was not conspicuous but a lot depended on the angle of the light. The legs were a light flesh colour. When flushed the bird usually called, and in flight it looked darker and the white outer tail feathers whiter (probably by contrast) than in the Meadow Pipit. Once I noted the streaks of the back extending onto the rump as it flew up, but this was difficult to see clearly.

The bird remained until 10th October, and subsequent views confirmed all these points. It always perched on the ground and inhabited the wetter areas of mixed grassland. Usually it was to be seen in company with a few Meadow Pipits. I am satisfied that it was a Red-throated Pipit.

W. E. WATERS.

(This record has been accepted by the Rarity Records Committee of *British Birds*. Red-throated Pipits have previously been recorded at St Kilda on 21st September 1910 and 8th October 1911 (WILLIAMSON, K. & BOYD, J.M. 1960. *St Kilda Summer* p. 206).—Ed.).

FOOD OF PIED WAGTAIL

At about 2000 hours B.S.T. on 20th May 1961 Patrick Banks, Kenneth Williamson and I were driving south between Calander and Doune, Perthshire, when we saw a male Pied Wagtail killed by a car in front of us as it was trying to fly across the road to its nest in the stone breastwork. We picked it up with the contents of its bill intact, and these were subsequently identified at the Hope Department, University of Oxford, as follows:—

- Diptera: *Hilara* sp. male. Family Empididae.
Platychirus sp. male. Family Syrphidae.
Syrphus sp. (wing only). Family Syrphidae.
? sp. (wing only). Family Muscidae; subfamily Anthomyiinae.

Lepidoptera: Larva ?sp. ?Family Noctuidae.
Epirrhoe tristata (L.). Family Hydrimeni-
 dae.

Ephemeroptera: Wing of unidentified May-fly.

E. tristata, the Small Argent and Sable, is a common Scot-
 tish moth which begins to fly in late May.

The nest of the wagtail contained five young, about five
 days old, and an unhatched egg. The female settled on the
 road close to the male after he had fallen; we could only
 hope she would continue to feed the brood.

BRUCE CAMPBELL.

UNSEASONABLE BREEDING OF HOUSE SPARROWS

Following a report I visited a farm at Auldgirth, Dumfries-
 shire, and confirmed that some five pairs of House Sparrows
 had entered and attempted to breed in a heated turkey house
 in the middle of November 1961. Most of the time they seemed
 quite content to feed and drink inside, along with the turkeys,
 although they carried nesting material from outside. The first
 nests were destroyed because the birds were spoiling the
 turkeys' food. The sparrows then rebuilt, and were sitting on
 eggs by Christmas, when the houses were cleaned out and the
 nests unfortunately destroyed. It seems that the constant heat
 and plentiful food supply stimulated the birds to breed out of
 season.

J. G. YOUNG.

CURRENT NOTES

(Key to initials of observers: A. F. Airey, D. G. Andrew, J. Ballantyne,
 Miss P. G. Baxter, H. Boase, W. G. Breed, E. Dicerbo, J. Dicerbo
 (J.Di.), G. Dick, Dr D. Dickson, J. Donnan (J.Do.), I. R. Downhill,
 Dr W. J. Eggeling, Miss E. A. Garden, M. Hamilton, R. Hillcoat,
 Lt.-Col. W. M. Logan Home, J. Hoy, Dr D. Jenkins, Mrs I. M. Kerr,
 M. Larkin, G. Lipscomb, R. McBeath, A. Macdonald, A. T. Macmillan,
 D. Manson, Prof. M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Mr & Mrs J. Melrose,
 T. D. H. Merrie, Rev. R. I. Mitchell, Col. G. Murray, T. Paterson,
 J. Potter, R. M. Ramage, D. Skilling, P. J. B. Slater, G. G. J. Smart,
 R. T. Smith, Dr T. C. Smout, Dr R. S. Weir, T. Weir, B. E. Weld,
 D. R. Wise, J. Young.

Unless otherwise stated, January/April dates refer to 1962 and all others
 to 1961).

Hitherto we have usually attempted to classify notes in this
 section under headings such as "Distribution," "Autumn
 Migration" and "Winter Visitors." In practice this is very
 difficult to achieve, and leads to varying treatment of similar

records in different issues of the journal, making it more troublesome than it need be to look up records which you vaguely recall. You have only to consider an example to see the snags: where would you put a record of a bird, recorded for the first time in a particular area, first seen on autumn migration on a date when others were recorded in other parts of Scotland, and subsequently found, unexpectedly, to be wintering? Should the record appear in three different places? After trying to devise ways round this we have decided that the best solution is to lump all these records together under one heading. Current Notes are very largely concerned with the question of the distribution of birds—whether breeding, migrating or wintering—and the only notes which we have picked out and given separately are the few general observations on such subjects as behaviour and plumage, and observations which do not relate to the current period. In this issue this means that notes dealing with the autumn migration of 1961, and all earlier observations, have been given separately.

No notes on the arrival of summer visitors in 1962 have been included. These will be used in the next issue of *Scottish Birds*, when we have a representative selection of arrival dates. It is, however, already quite clear that the early migrants, such as Sand Martin and Wheatear, were very late this year. Any observations on this subject will be welcomed, especially if they can be related to similar observations in normal years.

Distribution

On 20th February between Gigha and the pier in West Loch Tarbert a **Black-throated Diver**, 38 **Great Northern Divers** and six **Red-throated Divers** were counted, all fishing in one single party (M.F.M.M., T.W.).

A **Red-necked Grebe** at Gosford and three at Aberlady were seen on 4th March (I.R.D., P.J.B.S.), and there was one at Lundin Links on the 10th (P.G.B., R.S.W.). At least 15 **Slavonian Grebes** were seen in West Loch Tarbert, Argyll, on 17th February. That these were probably sheltering from the storm of the previous day is suggested by the fact that on the 20th, with a flat calm, only a single pair was observed (M.F.M.M., T.W.).

A **Fulmar** was found shot, in the upper Forth estuary at Skinflats, Stirlingshire, on 1st April (B.E.W.). A **Cormorant** at St Mary's Loch, Selkirkshire, on 18th February was the first the observer had seen on any of the border lochs in that area (J.B.).

A pair of **Gadwall** was present on the Hightae and Mill Lochs at Lochmaben, Dumfries-shire, from 18th Feb-

ruary to 11th March (D.S., R.T.S.). An indication of the large numbers of **Pintail** in the upper parts of the Forth estuary is given by a count of 480 in the bay north of Grangemouth on 18th February (G.D., J.P.). A female was seen at Cramond on 17th February, but although this was the only one seen on frequent visits during the winter months it seems likely that odd ones will occur there from time to time as they do at Aberlady and Tynninghame (T.C.S.).

In Edinburgh the female **Goosander** seen at Dunsappie on 2nd March (*antea* 2: 46) was at St Margaret's Loch two days later, and at Duddingston on the 14th (D.G.A.). Single drake **Smew** have been noted at Loch Fitty, Kingseat, Fife, on 17th December with Tufted Duck and Pochard (G.D., J.P.), at the mouth of the Endrick, Loch Lomond, on 11th March (T.D.H.M.), and at Peppermill Dam, Fife, on 20th March (J.P.). Two **Shelduck** were at Gartmorn Dam, Clackmannanshire, on 18th March (T.P.).

A **White-fronted Goose** was in a stubble field near Gladhouse, Midlothian, with a small party of Grey Lag Geese on 1st April (D.G.A.). Small parties of **Barnacle Geese** were seen on two islands off Jura and one at the mouth of West Loch Tarbert on 20th February (M.F.M.M.). There were five with Pink-footed Geese near Pathhead, Midlothian, on 17th April (A.M.).

Notes of **Whooper Swans** in fields refer to 88 in a potato field a mile east of Drum, Crook of Devon, Kinross-shire, on 24th February (H.B.), and to 14 sitting and walking about in grass fields five miles west of Kelso by the Hawick road on 9th April (W.M.L.H.). Larger flocks than already recorded (*antea* 2: 48) are reported from the upper part of the Forth estuary. A count of the population on the Forth between the Kincardine Bridge and Cambus and on Gartmorn Dam gave a total of 347 on 11th March, and a week later there were 273 on Gartmorn alone (T.P.). Last winter an immature Whooper Swan spent some months on the Tweed below Walk-erburn (*antea* 1: 433), and this winter an adult was seen there on 14th April. It was with two 1st winter Mute Swans and quite tame. It seems likely that it was the same bird (J.B.). Two adult and one immature **Bewick's Swans** were first seen at Gartmorn Dam, Clackmannanshire, on 17th March and all stayed until at least the 24th (G.D., A.T.M., T.P., J.P.). Three were at Libberton, Lanarkshire, on 27th January (see *antea* 2: 48) (M.L.).

A **Peregrine** was soaring over University Avenue, Glasgow, on 5th March (M.L.).

Snipe were noted as more numerous than usual this winter about Kingoodie, Perthshire (H.B.). A flock of over 1,000 **Curlew** was counted at Baldoon, Wigtown, on 13th February (A.F.A.). Single **Black-tailed Godwits** were seen at Cult Ness,

Fife on 2nd and 12th February (G.D., J.P.), and there were three **Greenshanks** at Tynninghame on 28th January (J.B.). A **Ruff** was seen in a flooded field at Isle Steps, near Dumfries, on 14th January. This is an uncommon bird in the Solway area at any time, and the only one seen last autumn was at Caerlaverock on 14th October 1961. The latest Ruff previously recorded was on 4th November 1956 when I. F. Stewart saw one locally (J.Do., D.M., J.M., R.T.S.).

Immature **Glaucous Gulls** are reported at Longannet, Fife, where one was seen, apparently in its last immature year, on 4th November (G.D., J.P.), and at the sewage outflow at Oban on 23rd March (M.L.). On 9th April an adult **Iceland Gull** followed the M.S. Dunera with other gulls as it made up the Clyde past Wemyss Bay. It was there again in much the same place on the 11th and followed the ship well past Bute (W.J.E.).

On 1st March an exhausted **Kittiwake** was found well inland at Moffat, Dumfries-shire. It was offered sliced fish but refused to eat and died two hours later (E.D.). This marine species is occasionally blown inland, and *The Birds of Scotland* gives several such records, including one for Dumfries-shire.

Great numbers of **Woodpigeons** were moving in the East Neuk of Fife on 30th December, a day of intense cold and north wind. Flocks of 200/300 began to pass eastwards on a broad front over Largo, Kilconquhar, Elie, and further east, from about 10.30 a.m. For about an hour they went on almost without a break and there must have been many thousands. After an interval the birds began returning westwards in the same endless stream, possibly having failed to find sufficient open ground in the East Neuk to sustain such numbers (R.I.M.). There has long been argument whether winter invasions of pigeons are immigrants from the continent. A very interesting paper on "The autumn movements of the Woodpigeon" has just been published by R. K. Murton and M. G. Ridpath (*Bird Study* 9: 7-41). The evidence suggests that winter flocks of pigeons can usually be explained by the appearance of juveniles from November and by the more concerted flights of adults out of their winter roosts in the morning. It may be, however, that the movement on 30th December was not in this category.

The **Kingfisher** is a sadly scarce bird in Scotland now. One was seen on 18th April on the Nith near Sanquhar, Dumfries-shire (R.M.B.).

There is strong evidence that **Shore Larks** wintered in Aberdeenshire on the Ythan estuary; they were seen in different places on 30th December (4 on the shore), 6th January (4

feeding in stubble with Skylarks), and 5th March (3 feeding along the high tide mark) (D.D., E.A.G., G.L.).

Further winter **Blackcaps** are reported (see *antea* 2: 53). Single cocks were in Angus during late December at Barnhill and Brechin, and a third bird at Kinnaber House, near Montrose, on the 27th (G.G.J.S. *per* H.B.). In Edinburgh a cock Blackcap came to feed from a scrap basket in a garden in Trinity on various dates from 23rd January to 28th February (I.M.K.).

A few **Great Grey Shrikes** have already been recorded (*antea* 2: 54). Another was seen near Crathes, but just in Aberden-shire, on 29th March (D.J.), and at Flanders Moss one was watched making sallies from a tree stump on 20th February (M.L.) and another, or perhaps the same bird, seen near Buchlyvie, Stirlingshire, on 8th and 10th April perching on fence posts beside the line of the old railway (T.D.H.M.).

A flock of over 100 **Siskins** was feeding in straw put out for cattle in pasture near Monreith, Wigtownshire, on 17th February (A.F.A.). Eleven **Twite** were at Rosyth Dockyard, Fife, on 8th February (G.D., J.P.).

The flock of **Snow Buntings** in a stubble field near St Mary's Loch (see *antea* 2: 56) had increased to 390 birds by 14th January, and the same day there were 120 in another stubble field at Ashkirk, Selkirkshire (J.B.).

Three **Tree Sparrows** were seen between Drybridge and Gatehead, Ayrshire, on 16th April. Though they have been seen in the area in recent years this is only the second time the observer has noted them in Ayrshire (R.M.R.). Small parties have been seen during the winter about Coatbridge and Airdrie, Lanarkshire, and single birds in various places there during the previous three summers (W.S.). The species is evidently fairly common in north Lanarkshire. In Dumfries-shire they "appear to have increased greatly in recent years" near Lockerbie, and have nested for several years in boxes put up for them, but a flock of 17 there on 11th March was the most yet seen together by the observer (R.T.S.). A flock of 60 Tree Sparrows, 40 Bramblings and a large number of other finches was at Ettrick Bridge End, Selkirkshire, on 14th January (J.B.), and over 150 Tree Sparrows were feeding in a field near Whitekirk, East Lothian, on 28th January. There were apparently as many more in a young wood on the other side of the road (M.H.).

Autumn 1961 and earlier notes

A drake **Scaup** was on Threapland, Morayshire, beside the Elgin to Fochabers road on 12th June. There was no sign of a duck (M.H.).

The first **Little Terns** to be recorded at Longannet were two

on 14th and one on 28th July (J.H.).

A **Turtle Dove** was at Waterside Mains, Thornhill, Dumfries, from 23rd to 26th September (G.M., J.Y.).

Two immature **Cuckoos** were seen at Longannet—another first record—on 14th June (J.H.).

A late **House Martin** was at Aberdeen on 30th October (W.G.B.). A **Maggie** was seen near Bridgend after stormy weather in the winter of 1959/60—only the second occurrence on Islay (M.F.M.M.).

Twenty **Redwings** in the Botanic Gardens, Glasgow, on 10th October are earlier than those already noted (*antea* 1: 500, but see earlier dates in articles in this issue) (D.R.W.). A cock **Black Redstart**, described by the observer, was seen on 22nd October at the mouth of the Don, Aberdeen, at the edge of the sand dunes within 100 yards of the sea (W.G.B.).

General observations on behaviour, plumage, etc.

On 7th January a very pale **Pink-footed Goose** was seen near Caerlaverock. Its bill and legs were the normal colour, but its body, wings, neck and head were a very pale buffish white (J.Di., R.T.S.).

With reference to the apparently adult **Whooper Swan** with pink instead of yellow on the bill (*antea* 2: 56), a similar bird was with a herd of 17 adult Whooper Swans which was at Wigtown during December and January. The observer suggests that such birds which have failed to develop the adult bill colour may be in their second winter (A.F.A.).

An **Oystercatcher** with an almost pure white head was at Barnbogle, West Lothian, on 17th March (T.C.S.).

On 7th April the passengers on M.S. Dunera, anchored off Stornoway, had good views of an unusual gull among the throng of birds round the ship. At a distance it appeared to be pure white, but at close range a very faint brown shadowing could be seen on the wings, corresponding exactly to the black on a **Herring Gull's** wings. Though the mantle and wings appeared to be much more white than grey this may be the bird recorded previously as an albino Herring Gull on 18th February 1961 and 18th November (*antea* 2: 56) (W.J.E.).

In Glasgow the **Common Gull** is a persistent mobber of Kestrels—pursuing them closely with human-sounding screams, and very loathe to leave them alone. Once they were seen to mob a Peregrine, but this time, instead of taking turns to fly after the bird at close range, they remained grouped and flew around the Peregrine at a distance of about 100 feet at the same height as it. Lesser Black-backed Gulls show no interest in Kestrels (M.L.).

An adult male **Great Spotted Woodpecker** at Gargunnoch,

Stirlingshire, visited a window-sill from early January for several months to feed on oatmeal, bread, fat and cake crumbs. It fed like a tit, clinging to a lump of fat hanging on a string. It was not seen to attack any other birds (B.E.W.).

On 8th February in Inverleith Park, Edinburgh, about 100 **Redwings** flew up into the trees, and a large proportion of them sang—the warble or second part of the song only, but quite audible from at least 100 yards away. This presumably should be regarded as more than mere sub-song (M.H.).

At the Christmas and New Year weekends, with lots of snow and ice 3,600 feet up Cairngorm at the top of the new chair lift, some ten or twenty **Snow Buntings** were feeding in the lee of the building on crumbs dropped by skiers. This is an interesting adaptation to the changing scene on top of Scottish mountains in winter (R.H.).

At Ayton, Berwickshire, a yellow-cinnamon coloured **House Sparrow** was seen on 3rd April. From its behaviour it was probably a female. It had been seen several times earlier in the year, and the other House Sparrows treated it as if it was a normal bird (R.M.).

OBITUARY

DR VERNON D. VAN SOMEREN

The sudden death of Vernon van Someren at Jinja, Uganda, shortly before he was due to retire and return to Scotland, is a sad loss to ornithology. He graduated B.Sc. with first class honours in Zoology at Edinburgh University, and in his student days was an active member of the Midlothian Ornithological Club, taking part in establishing the Isle of May Bird Observatory in 1936. From 1929 to 1936 he contributed notes to the *Scottish Naturalist*, including, in 1936, a paper on "Territory and distributional variation in woodland birds"—a study of territorial behaviour in a wood on Mortonhall Estate near Edinburgh.

He won a post-graduate Carnegie Research Scholarship, and took his Ph.D. at London University in 1938. After the War he served as Salmon Research Officer with the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board, and latterly was Director of the East African Fishery Research Organisation in Uganda.

In 1958 his book *A Bird Watcher in Kenya* was published—a fitting memorial to an enthusiastic ornithologist and first-class bird photographer.

G. WATERSTON.

REVIEWS

CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OF CLEY AND NEIGHBOURING NORFOLK PARISHES. By R. A. Richardson. Cley Bird Observatory, 1962. Pp. 36. 7/6d.

This admirable little book, compiled by a well-known bird artist, who is also one of the most accomplished identifiers of birds in the Kingdom, is a model of local ornithological work. Cley has for long been known as a place to rival the Isle of May or Fair Isle in the number of rare wanderers occurring there, and an account of the birds collected in "the bad old days" has already been published by the local taxidermist, H. N. Pashley (Witherby, 1922); here, by contrast, we have the point of view of the field identifier and the observatory trapper. It is interesting, however, to note that the majority of species on the area's list are not likely to be trapped at all, since 23 pages out of 36 are devoted to non-passerines!

The author has been cautious; he has omitted sight records of the Little Crane and has issued a warning about the possible escape of his Red-headed Buntings from captivity. (It would, incidentally, be helpful to know the sex of these, since far more males are imported than females). And, if the Red-headed Buntings are included at all, why omit the 1931 Flamingo which (seen by the present writer) showed no signs of tameness? Even the Demoiselle Crane at Wiveton in the 1920's could have been afforded a mention.

We disagree with Mr Richardson that the Nuthatch breeds in "very small numbers," having found it common inland wherever there is suitable woodland, nor can we believe that the two rookeries mentioned are the only ones in ten parishes!

And why, pray, should an account of a restricted English locality be reviewed in a Scottish journal? It is that Cley is no longer local, but national. Annually it is visited by more Scots wishing to see birds unknown at home, and several Scots are almost annual migrants there. To them especially this booklet will be of very great use on their periodic migrations.

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

A LIST OF 16 mm. FILMS ON NATURAL HISTORY SUBJECTS. Part I: THE BRITISH ISLES AND EUROPE. By the Intelligence

Unit, Council for Nature, 41 Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7, 1962. Duplicated typescript. Pp. 28. 2/6d.

The Council for Nature has recently produced a most useful list of nature films available in the 16 mm. size used by all clubs and societies. This gathers into convenient form information otherwise scattered through endless film catalogues, many of which would not be readily available to club secretaries and others interested in knowing just what was available. Full details are given and the list should be invaluable to those planning to use films for either education or entertainment.

It is unfortunate, though perhaps inevitable, that no indication is given of the quality of the films listed. Many of these have been reviewed in such periodicals as *Film User*, but it is not likely that many users of nature films will take the trouble to hunt out old reviews of nature films when planning showings. This means that every entry in the list appears to carry the recommendation of the Council for Nature, even though it is specifically stated that no attempt has been made to view any of the films. Those with experience will draw their own conclusions from the names of the producers and the quality of, for instance, films by the British Transport Film Unit will recommend them as much as the fact that such films are loaned out free of charge. But it is, to say the least, a pity that in such a catalogue films produced by experts with the greatest scientific accuracy should merit the same type of entry as some of the older films of very poor quality. As an example, there is nothing to show that the old G.B. Film Library film on the Great Tit includes a shot of young birds sitting side by side on a branch, meant to have sentimental appeal but in fact showing half-fledged birds clearly removed from the nest and placed there, which, moreover, one by one fall off the perch. Such supposedly humorous incidents would only appear sad to the type of audience attracted by member bodies of the Council for Nature. By contrast, such films as Heinz Sielmann's masterpieces on woodpeckers and storks surely merit some label to indicate a quality which is in a completely different class. It would seem that the next service the Council for Nature should undertake for its members is a guide to its own catalogue. Perhaps this would not be so hard to achieve if the catalogue were to be accompanied by an appeal for criticisms from member societies on the films they see and use, so that a body of opinion could be built up and a system of recommendation, at any rate for all the better films, added to the next edition.

C. K. MYLNE.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Pink-footed Goose and Purple Sandpiper. The Norwegian Ornithological Spitsbergen Expedition 1962—N.O.S.E. for short (c/o Zoologisk laboratorium, Universitetet, Blindern, Oslo, Norway)—will ring these species in Spitsbergen this summer and would welcome details of any marked birds seen. Both species will have an aluminium ring on one leg and a coloured one on the other. Additionally the Purple Sandpipers will be dyed on the breast and sides, though this will disappear during the autumn.

Pied Flycatcher. Dr Bruce Campbell has been repeating the enquiry into the breeding distribution of the Pied Flycatcher which he first made in 1952 (*Bird Study* 1: 81). The marginal position of Scotland makes it particularly important to have up to date information, and anyone who can give details of present status and changes since 1952 is asked to write to Dr Campbell at Hordley, Woodstock, Oxfordshire. Questionnaires are available for those who like using them.

OFFICIAL SECTION

THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The fiteenth Annual Conference and twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Club will be held in the Dunblane Hotel Hydro, Dunblane, Perthshire, from 26th to 28th October 1962. The Conference Programme will be printed in the next issue of "Scottish Birds," and this intimation is given in order that members may make their Hotel reservations in good time. All bookings, including those at the Hotel Hydro, should be made with the hotels and **not** with the Secretary.

Hotel Accommodation in Dunblane

DUNBLANE HOTEL HYDRO (Tel. 3161). Special Conference charge: Dinner and bed on Friday 26th; breakfast, lunch, Annual Dinner and bed on Saturday 27th; breakfast and lunch on Sunday 28th—£4, 15s 0d. A 10% gratuity charge will be added to all bills.

STIRLING ARMS HOTEL (Tel. 2156). Bed and breakfast from 22s 6d.

*THE NEUK PRIVATE HOTEL, Doune Road (Tel. 2150). Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

*SCHIEHALLION HOTEL, Doune Road (Tel. 3141). Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

BLAIRALAN, Dargie Terrace (Tel. 3196). Bed and breakfast from 18s 6d.

¶HARDLEIGHTON HOTEL (Tel. 2273). Bed and breakfast from 15s.

*These hotels are some distance from the Conference hotel.

¶Sited near the Hotel Hydro gates.

Hotel Accommodation in Bridge of Allan

ALLAN WATER HOTEL (Tel. Bridge of Allan 2293). Bed and breakfast from 30s.

ROYAL HOTEL (Tel. Bridge of Allan 2284). Bed and breakfast from 27s.

Members with cars who have difficulty in obtaining single rooms in Dunblane should find that the above two hotels in Bridge of Allan have ample single accommodation. The distance from Dunblane is about 3 miles.

The above terms for hotels other than the Conference hotel are quoted as a guide only, and prices should be confirmed.

The Conference registration fee will be 8s 6d. The cost of the Annual Dinner to members not staying in the Hotel Hydro will be 16s 6d. Owing to limited seating accommodation, the Council regrets that Members may invite only one guest each to the Annual Dinner. These items should be paid when you register at the Conference, and **not** now.

"SCOTTISH BIRDS," VOLUME 1.

Copies of the first issue of "Scottish Birds," Volume 1 No. 1 (Autumn 1958) are now unobtainable, while only a few copies of No. 2 (Winter 1958) and No. 5 (Autumn 1959) remain in the office. As overseas libraries subscribing to the journal are asking us for complete sets of back numbers for binding purposes, an urgent appeal is made to members who have these numbers and do not require them, to return them to the office. The full price (5s) will be repaid for each copy received.

CLUB OFFICE

During the summer it is proposed to recondition and furnish a room in the basement of the Scottish Centre for use as additional office and Library accommodation. If members have any spare furniture such as tables, chairs, cupboards, shelves, rugs, etc., which they do not require, the Secretary will be very glad to hear from them. Donations of furniture will be gratefully received, and purchase will be considered.

It will also be necessary for the Club to acquire a second typewriter. Members who may have one for disposal are asked to inform the Secretary.

CLUB LIBRARY

The Council wishes to thank most warmly those members who have, during the past year, donated new and old books and journals to the library, and also those who by purchasing books through the book agency have enabled us to use the profit to obtain scarce books. Recent acquisitions from the Library Fund include both the Old and New Statistical Accounts (1791 and 1845) in addition to other important reference books. Donations of books, and monetary gifts to the Library Fund, are invited and will be much appreciated.

EXCURSION TO THE FARNE ISLANDS

Will members please note that the date of the Edinburgh Branch excursion to the Farnes Islands has been altered from Sunday, 1st July, as previously announced, to Sunday, 8th July. Members who have already applied have been informed of this change.

BIRD CONSERVATION



THE aim of bird conservation is to promote the richest and most varied bird-life possible. Man's commercial developments often threaten species which require highly specialised habitats ; we try to combat this by creating Reserves in such areas.

The Society has assisted with the re-establishment of "lost" indigenous species by creating the right conditions for them to recolonise their old haunts. This was achieved at Havergate by regulating the water-level by artificial means so that Avocets could breed ; and in the case of the Ospreys at Loch Garten by preventing human predation in the form of egg-collecting. Experiments are being carried out with nest-boxes for Golden-eye duck in the hope that we may induce this species to breed in Scotland.

A further example of a positive step in bird conservation was the elimination of rats on Fidra where they had decimated the tern colonies on this island. The Society successfully exterminated the rats, and the terns now breed successfully.

The Society was largely instrumental in persuading the Government to ban the use of aldrin, dieldrin, and heptachlor for dressing spring-sown grain, thus reducing the wide-spread damage to birds and wildlife caused by these toxic chemicals.

In 1961, the Society established Reserves at Horse Island (off Ardrossan) ; and at Inchmickery, Fidra, Lamb, and Eye-broughty in the Firth of Forth. In 1962, further Reserves will be declared.

All these activities cost money. As a bird-watcher we appeal to you to support the work of the Society by becoming a Member at an annual subscription of one guinea (10s if under 21 years of age). This subscription entitles you to copies of the Society's quarterly journal "Bird Notes."

Write now for copy of Prospectus.

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NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All contributions should be sent to Andrew T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh 13. Attention to the following points greatly simplifies production of the journal and is much appreciated.

1. Papers should if possible be typed with double spacing. All contributions should be on one side of the paper only.

2. Topical material for Current Notes should reach the Editors by the end of March, June, September and December, at which time they begin to compile this section. All other notes should be sent promptly but important items can be fitted in until a month or so after these dates.

3. Proofs will normally be sent to authors of papers, but not of shorter items. Such proofs should be returned without delay. If alterations are made at this stage it may be necessary to ask the author to bear the cost.

4. Authors of full-length papers who want copies for their own use MUST ASK FOR THESE when returning the proofs. If requested we will supply 25 free copies of the issue in which the paper is published. Reprints can be obtained but a charge will be made for these.

5. Particular care should be taken to avoid mistakes in lists of references and to lay them out in the following way, italics being indicated where appropriate by underlining.

EGGELING, W. J. 1960. *The Isle of May*. Edinburgh and London.

DICK, G. & POTTER, J. 1960. Goshawk in East Stirling. *Scot. Birds* 1:329.

6. English names should follow *The Handbook of British Birds* with the alterations detailed in *British Birds* in January 1953 (46:2-3) and January 1956 (49:5). Initial capitals are used for names of species (e.g. Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit) but not for group names (e.g. diving ducks, tits). Scientific names should be used sparingly (see editorial *Scottish Birds* 2:1-3) and follow the 1952 B.O.U. *Check-List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland* with the changes recommended in 1956 by the Taxonomic Sub-Committee (*Ibis* 98:158-68), and the 1957 decisions of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (*Ibis* 99:369). When used with the English names they should follow them, underlined to indicate italics, and with no surrounding brackets.

7. Dates should normally be in the form "1st January 1962", with no commas round the year. Old fashioned conventions should be avoided—e.g. use Arabic numerals rather than Roman, and avoid unnecessary full stops after abbreviations such as "Dr" and "St".

8. Tables must be designed to fit into the page, preferably not sideways, and be self-explanatory.

9. Headings and sub-headings should not be underlined as this may lead the printer to use the wrong type.

10. Illustrations of any kind are welcomed. Drawings and figures should be up to twice the size they will finally appear, and on separate sheets from the text. They should be in Indian ink on good quality paper, with neat lettering by a skilled draughtsman. Photographs should either have a Scottish interest or illustrate contributions. They should be sharp and clear, with good contrast, and preferably large glossy prints.



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