

SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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Reprinted 1980

THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

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

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

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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

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Editorial

Bird-watching in Sutherland. A large part of the present number of *Scottish Birds* consists of a study by our Vice-President, Dr Ian D. Pennie, of changes during the past 100 years in the breeding birds of Sutherland—a wild and relatively unspoilt county with a strong lure for bird-watchers. This sort of paper has a special interest when considered against the background of the changes which have come with the gradual amelioration of the northern climate: the retreat northward of the Little Auk, or the advance of other species into the Arctic. A recent issue of *Sterna* (5; 80-88), for instance, gives the first breeding records of Wheatears on Spitsbergen, in 1959, and records Starlings with a nest that summer on Bear Island—the most northerly breeding record in the world for this species.

Aberlady Bay. Towards the end of June, impressive pictures appeared in the press of members of the University Federation for Animal Welfare up to their middles in the mud of the Marl Loch at Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve. The loch had become overgrown with weeds, and by clearing them away it was hoped to attract birds to it again. The task was organised by the Conservation Corps of the Council for Nature and carried out by U.F.A.W. members from the Royal Dick Veterinary College led by Eric Millar. In a quiet way various improvements have been made for the birds at Aberlady in the past few years, and this latest effort will undoubtedly make the area more attractive for them.

Sparrowhawks. In many parts of Scotland, if not everywhere, the Sparrowhawk seems to have become very scarce. This could be a natural decline, even though it is the only hawk which does not enjoy protection under the Protection of Birds Act, 1954. As we write, there is a proposal to put it on the protected list in Scotland. Apart from any benefit to the Sparrowhawk, this would be a good thing in another way: it would make it that much easier to enforce the Pro-

tection of Birds Act against those who destroy Hen Harriers, Kestrels, Buzzards and other hawks. No longer could they plead in mitigation that they mistook the birds for Sparrow-hawks.

Nightjars. The June 1962 issue of *Bird Study* (9: 104-115) contains a report on the "Nightjar enquiry, 1957-58" by J. Stafford. This is a very scarce and local bird in Scotland, but such information as was available has been summarised here, though it is hardly possible that it can represent a true picture—when one considers the nocturnal ways of the bird and the very thin cover of bird-watchers over great areas of suitable country in Scotland.

Toxic Chemicals. Everyone with an interest in the countryside should read the second report of the Joint Committee of the B.T.O. and the R.S.P.B. on toxic chemicals (*Deaths of birds and mammals from toxic chemicals, January-June 1961*). Here is the evidence of the catastrophic damage that can be done to wild life by the unwitting misuse of chemicals in agriculture. Mercury and organo-chlorine compounds—the chemicals which have done most of the damage—linger in the corpses and a chain reaction may be set up, so that birds die from eating poisoned insects, and animals die from eating the birds. The possibilities are fearful, and some of the instances of which we have heard—not simply concerned with birds—are very serious. One can only hope that everyone involved realises the seriousness and urgency of the problem, and that effective control will be achieved over the use of dangerous chemicals in agriculture. Copies of the report can be had from the R.S.P.B. at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh.

WITHOUT COMMENT

"Sea-Gulls in the Meadows: A good deal of curiosity was excited on Sunday last, by the appearance of a flock of sea-gulls in the Meadow Parks, where they have remained ever since, picking up any odds and ends which fall their way, and apparently living on the most friendly terms with the crows from the adjoining rookeries at Lady Lawson's Wynd and the trees near East Lauriston Lane, frequently rubbing shoulders with one another without showing fight. They are probably on the return from the south country, where great numbers congregate in the summer months, to head-quarters on the sea-coast, where they generally spend the winter."

—From *The Scotsman*, Edinburgh,
Saturday, 8th October 1836.

A CENTURY OF BIRD-WATCHING IN SUTHERLAND*

IAN D. PENNIE

The "Century" referred to in the title of this paper is merely a round figure, and should more exactly be 127 years, as the first proper study and published account of the birds of Sutherland was that of P. J. Selby (1836) who made his bird-watching tour of the county in 1834 along with Sir William Jardine, and left a valuable record which has been the basis for all subsequent work on the county's birds.

The only work of any significance prior to Selby's is Sir Robert Gordon's well known list of the beasts and birds made in 1630: "... All these forrests and schases are verie profitable for feiding of bestiall, and delectable for hunting. They are full of reid deer and roes, woulffs, foxes, wyld catts, brocks, skuyrrells, whittrets, weasels, otters, martrixes, hares and fumarts. In these forrests, and in all this province, there is a great store of partriges, pluivers, capercalegs, blackwaks, murefowls, heth hens, swanes, bewters, turtledoves, herons, dowes, steares or stirlings, lair-igigh or knag, (which is a foull lyk vnto a paroket, or parret, which maks place for her nest with her bek, in the oak trie), duke, draig, widgeon, teale, wildgouse, ringouse, routs, whaips, shot-whaips, wood-cok, larkes, sparrows, snyps, blackburds or osills, meweis, thrushes, and all other kinds of wild-foule and birds, which ar to be had in any part of this kingdome..."

This would indicate that there was still pine forest in Sutherland in the seventeenth century, but by the middle of the eighteenth century the pines had gone, and with them went the wolves, squirrels and Capercaillies, but the "martrixes" have survived, even to this day, by adapting themselves to live in cairns and to hunt rabbits instead of chasing squirrels through the pine tops. A minute fragment of original pine remains in Glen Einig, which is just over the boundary into Ross-shire, but in Sutherland even the ancient pines in Strath Oyke are almost certainly the remains of early plantations, only those on the shore and islands of Loch Assynt having any possible claim to be descended from other than plantations (Steven & Carlisle 1959).

On the other hand, eighteenth century Sutherland was by no means barren and devoid of trees; birchwoods were much more extensive than they are today, as were the oaks in the valleys, of which only a few isolated patches remain, such as those at Aberscross in Strathfleet, and there were alders

*Read to The Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Aberdeen Branch, 30th October 1961.

on the river sides. Added to this, coniferous plantations had already begun to be established in the latter half of the eighteenth century in the south and east (Sinclair 1793), among the earliest and most notable being those at Rosehall where Kites flourished in the early nineteenth century (Harvie-Brown & Buckley 1887) and which had all the appearance of natural pine forest when they were clear felled during the last war.

Little had been done in the way of land improvement by the close of the eighteenth century other than the establishment of these first plantations. Access was by sea only, for the bridge at Bonar was not constructed until 1813; there were virtually no roads except on the east coast between Dornoch and Wick, and even on this a dangerous ferry intervened at the mouth of Loch Fleet, for the road by the Mound was not built until 1816—previously the lower half of Strath Fleet was a great fjord with the tide running inland as far as Pittentrail. It is difficult to realise that the alder swamp at the Mound has appeared only since the Mound itself was built, and the alders must have grown very quickly, as the *New Statistical Account*, written in 1840, records that “400 acres of beach above the Mound, which may in time become arable, are gradually assuming a coating partly of herbage, and partly of alder trees” and refers to the River Fleet which “enters an extensive plain, once covered by every tide from the Moray Firth, but now encroached upon only by this stream... in this place, where it is not confined by the... agriculturist, it appears almost completely lost among rapidly growing alders.”

Vast undrained bogs lay over much of the lower ground—Sir Robert Gordon had Bitterns on his list, and even as late at 1848 St John heard them in the Shinness marshes, which were not drained until much later—but malaria, which was endemic and widespread in Scotland until late in the eighteenth century (Creighton 1891, 1894), was prevalent as far north as Tongue (Sinclair 1792; Ritchie 1920), and in 1793 (Sinclair) there is a complaint from Dornoch of the nuisance caused by a large morass “extending upwards of two miles westwards of the town.”

This was the Sutherland of the days before the improvements of the early nineteenth century, but for our particular interest almost completely undocumented. The events of the first quarter of the nineteenth century were cataclysmic, and their effects far-reaching, for the reverberations of that great social upheaval have not yet died down. It is not my purpose here to dissert on the Highland Clearances except in so far as they affected the wild life, but with the coming of the sheep began the persecution of the eagles. Previously the

small tenants had few sheep and little reason to destroy eagles; their firearms were of a poor sort and, as Evander MacIver has pointed out (1905), the banning of firearms in the Highlands after the Forty-five was probably conducive in a big way to the increase in the birds of prey. With the sheep came the necessity to destroy eagles, and it happened that about the same time the parish minister of Belhelvie was conducting his diabolical experiments which gave us the percussion cap and small arms of immensely increased efficiency. The effect of the resultant onslaught on the birds of prey can be judged by the list which Selby has given of vermin destroyed on the Sutherland Estates alone in three years from March 1831 to March 1834—171 adult eagles, 53 young eagles and eggs, 936 Ravens, 1055 hawks, 1739 crows and Magpies, 548 Dippers—then known as “kingfishers.” Such lists must however be accepted only with great caution. Selby does not give the source of his information, which presumably was derived from a list of bounties paid during the period, and as such must be regarded as liable to all sorts of inaccuracies and falsifications. The same applies to the figure given for bounties paid for eagles killed in Norway and referred to below.

Sheep farming had become really profitable by about 1830, and about the middle of the century shootings in the north began to have a commercial value and to be a valuable source of income; consequently the combined efforts of the grazing sheep and the heather-burning of the shepherd and the grouse-moor keeper have so militated against the birch and oak woods as to reduce them to the few pitiable remnants we have today. In many places the only minute fragments of woodland surviving are on the islands in lochs, where they have remained immune from tooth and fire. This has of course had a tremendous effect on the fauna; even the parish minister of Tongue noticed it when he was compiling his chapter for the *New Statistical Account* in 1845, for he says that “game is not so abundant as formerly owing to the extensive moor burnings upon the sheep farms.” An intensification of the onslaught on the predatory birds no doubt accompanied the commercialisation of the sporting rights, but on the other hand the arrest of the decline of the Golden Eagle was almost certainly assisted by the partial failure of sheep farming in the 1870's and 1880's when several of the large farms of west Sutherland were turned into deer forests where eagles are regarded with greater tolerance.

There have, no doubt, been other factors affecting the condition of the woodlands, and just as an alteration in climate appears to have been responsible for the disappearance of the pine forest in earlier times, there is evidence, from contemporary accounts, of a deterioration in climate at the close

of the eighteenth century which had a deleterious effect on the deciduous woods of the valleys of Sutherland (Henderson 1812). The deterioration of the birchwoods continues, and some of the finest, such as those at Loch a'Choire, Loch Naver and Strath Beg are doomed unless some regeneration is permitted. The immediate and profuse growth of young birch in a strip fenced against sheep and deer is well seen at Loch a'Choire where the regeneration is strictly limited to the small area fenced. The 150 acres of oak copse at Creich, which was referred to by Henderson (1812), fortunately still remains, and is a favourite haunt of Wood Warblers and Tree Pipits, but the magnificent oaks at Aberscross are unfenced and on heavily grazed land, with consequently no young growth at all. These northern oaks appear to fruit about once in ten years.

As the development of forestry schemes has an obvious influence on the spread of woodland birds it is of importance to give some indication of the area and distribution of coniferous plantations. The sources of information are the *Old Statistical Account* (Sinclair 1791-99), Henderson (1812), the *New Statistical Account* (1845), also personal communications (1961) from the Director (Scotland) of the Forestry Commission, and from J. P. Whittet, Estates Office, Clashmore, William Ross, Dunrobin, and John D. Murray, Achfary, to all of whom my thanks are due. The distributions here given are roughly in accordance with the three Faunal Areas into which Sutherland falls, and are in all cases approximate only, as no attempt has been made to list every small block of timber in the county.

SOUTH-EAST. 1793: plantations of fir "of no great extent" in Dornoch Parish; "considerable plantations" of firs in different parts of Creich Parish, the largest being at Rosehall; and under Golspie reference is made to deer raiding the plantations at Dunrobin. 1812: "several hundred acres" between Dornoch and Rosehall; 300 acres of Scots fir at Dunrobin besides smaller blocks at Uppat, Strathbrora, and Kintradwell. 1845: at least 5,500 acres in all, increasing annually. 1961: over 18,000 acres.

WEST. 1845 and earlier: none. 1961: 2,500 acres.

NORTH. 1812: a plantation of Scots fir at Tongue. 1845: "with a trifling exception, all the trees in the parish (Farr) are indigenous, hazel, alders, rowans, willows and birch." 1961: 4,000 acres.

The early nineteenth century saw the opening up of Sutherland by roads and bridges. A parliamentary road having been made from Lairg to Tongue and thence to Thurso, the Sutherland family constructed a road from Bonar Bridge to Assynt, by way of Strath Oyke and Loch Assynt, and

continued this programme by building in 1829 a road from Skiag Bridge to Kylesku Ferry, thence to Scourie, Rhiconich, Durness, and finally over the Moine to Tongue to join the parliamentary road. All this cost about £35,000. The road from Lairg to Laxford Bridge was not added until 1850, this too being made by the Sutherland family. The Highland Clearances had removed much of the old population from the inland valleys to the seaboard, where most of the crofting communities are today, but the potato disease of 1846 and the following years brought about hardship and consequent emigration on a large scale. This is where serious depopulation really commenced, and I mention this principally to give an opportunity of noting that it was in 1848 that the eight small tenants left the island of Handa (MacIver 1905), famous for its sea-bird colonies, which then became a sheep run tenanted by the Scourie factor.

The social history of Sutherland is of such absorbing interest that it is only too easy to digress far from the title and purpose of this paper, and it is necessary at this point to revert to the construction of the west coast roads in 1829, along which were to travel in a very few years the first ornithological tourists. In 1834, almost as soon as the road from Kylesku to Durness was completed, the first party of bird-watchers arrived. How many were in the party we are not told, but the principal members were Prideaux John Selby, author of one of the standard text-books on British ornithology, and Sir William Jardine, who is perhaps best known as editor of Jardine's *Naturalists' Library*. Among the party was James Wilson, who in 1841 made the voyage round Scotland and wrote a book about it (Wilson 1842). Selby and Jardine quite obviously knew their business and left an excellent record of their observations (Selby 1836). They recorded 94 species, and added two more seen by James Wilson but not by themselves—a pair of Goldfinches and a Nightjar.

Selby's list reflects very much the primitive and undeveloped state of the county at a time when the larger raptors were still abundant, although every measure and every device, fair and foul, was being used to destroy the two species of eagle and the Raven. The White-tailed Eagle in particular seems to have welcomed the addition of mutton to his diet. An old sheep farmer in Caithness once told me that there had been a saying in the north at the time when sheep were first introduced, that all would be well in the world "but for the erne and Buonaparte."

"Ospreys," says Selby, "are most abundant in the west," and they saw three or four together on the wing at the mouth of the Laxford River: "they remain unmolested by hunters, as they never attack lambs, their food being entirely restric-

ted to fish." That was in 1834, when the first ornithologists arrived, and the subsequent story is so well known that it scarcely requires repetition: by the time Harvie-Brown made his first visit to the north in 1867 the Osprey was extinct. James Wilson, as we know, visited Sutherland again in 1841 during the course of his voyage, but on this occasion he seems to have been more interested in the fishing than in the bird-watching. He did however note an Osprey on the Laxford River, but makes the ominous comment that he was informed that "these birds are destructive, to an almost incalculable extent, to the sea-trout." It is not possible here to go through the whole of Selby's list, but I might mention his records of geese and ducks. He recorded geese breeding on several lochs, including 30-40 pairs on Loch Loyal, but he called them Bean Geese. He had the first breeding record of Wigeon in the British Isles, and almost did the same for Scaup; he shot a female which had a single duckling with it, but the duckling escaped and so its parentage was never proven.

In 1847 the rush really started; in that year Sir William Milner and his brother Henry travelled through Sutherland from Bonar Bridge to the north coast "shooting and collecting everything" (Milner 1848). They shot a Golden Eagle and took the eggs on Ben Stomino; they recorded Grey Lag Geese (and harried their nests) on Loch Shin, Loch Assynt and Loch Naver, but they still listed the Loch Loyal geese as Bean Geese—and harried their nests too, commenting that they are "so constantly robbed that they are leaving Loch Loyal and are betaking themselves to smaller lochs." This disturbance has continued ever since, so it is quite astonishing to find that two or three pairs of geese still nest on Loch Loyal.

The following year, 1848, was the year of St John who, along with William Dunbar and a friend referred to as "Mr J.", covered a great part of the county that summer, travelling in a boat on wheels, pulled by a highland pony. When they came to a loch which they wished to explore they simply removed the wheels and launched the boat. St John's depredations of the Ospreys are too notorious to be worthy of further mention, but a few of his records warrant another look. He arrived in time to see the last Choughs in the north, which strangely enough he did not shoot; and in all fairness it should be pointed out that it was Dunbar and not St John who shot the only pair of Red-necked Phalaropes ever known to have bred in Sutherland. He tells us that "the Dotterel breeds on Clibreck," but he did not see them himself as he was caught in thick mist and rain on the one climb he made. It is possible that the Dotterel bred there in former times, and there is a specimen in the Dunrobin museum labelled

"Clibreck 1846." St John's records however are not anything like so valuable as those of Selby and Jardine: he did not know his birds well at all, and many of his statements and identifications are quite untrustworthy and inaccurate. "Mr J." was evidently Thomas Jeans of Bath, an old school friend of St John's who joined him for at least part of the visit to Sutherland in 1848. St John resided at Rosehall for a time about 1834 but was living in Morayshire when he made his 1848 tour; he seems to have revisited Sutherland subsequently, as John Hancock of Newcastle (1874) says that in 1849 he "accompanied Mr St John to Sutherlandshire on an ornithological tour," referring to the neighbourhood of Dunrobin.

John Wolley was a friend of the younger Milner, who no doubt gave him an enthusiastic account of his Sutherland exploits, so much so that Wolley was next in the field, in 1849, and did the round of the Osprey sites once again, almost killing himself in the effort of taking one particular clutch of eggs, but that did not chill his enthusiasm in the slightest. Wolley was not only an energetic egg-collector, but was an accurate and painstaking diarist; he died at an early age, but his note-books were edited and published by Alfred Newton (1864-1907) under the title of *Ootheca Wolleyana*, a valuable and much neglected book of reference. Wolley was worried about the incessant persecution of eagles by collectors, farmers, and grouse-moor owners, and it is interesting to note that in 1849 the Golden Eagle was the rarer of the two, and he was quite certain it would be exterminated before the White-tailed Eagle, which lasted out until the end of the century. They were exterminated at Cape Wrath in 1879, but Jourdain had a clutch which was taken in Sutherland in 1901 (Baxter & Rintoul 1953) though it is not recorded where.

Another great Osprey hunter was Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming, who took Ospreys' eggs in Sutherland about the same time, but all his letters and records were destroyed after his death, so comparatively little is known of his exploits.

J. A. Harvie-Brown was in Sutherland in 1867 and 1868: by this time the Osprey was extinct, but he saw a White-tailed Eagle and heard of several eyries, but still had not exploded the theory of the Bean Geese. Harvie-Brown's most remarkable record was of a pair of Great Northern Divers which had all the appearance of breeding in Assynt on an isolated loch with a small green island in it. Unfortunately it was impossible to bring a boat to the loch and the supposition of breeding remains unconfirmed (Harvie-Brown 1868).

T. E. Buckley lived in Sutherland for several years, first at Balnacoil in Strath Brora, and later at Glen Rossal at the lower end of Glen Cassley. Buckley wrote several papers on the birds of Sutherland (1882, 1892) and collaborated with

Harvie-Brown in the volume on Sutherland in the Vertebrate Fauna series (1887).

E. T. Booth, who is best known for his great book of *Rough Notes* (1881-87), was in Sutherland in 1868, 1869 and 1877. He made some interesting and original observations and has been credited by the Misses Baxter and Rintoul (1953) with finding Kites breeding in Sutherland in 1877 in Glendhu on the north-west coast. This is however a mistake. Booth was in west Sutherland in 1877, but he was also in the Spey Valley. Careful study of the chapter on the Kite in *Rough Notes* shows that not only is Booth's description of Glendhu inapplicable to the Sutherland glen of that name, but it appears that he invented the "Glendhu" to conceal the true name of a glen in the Spey Valley where Kites were nesting. Reference to Booth's original field note-books in the Dyke Road Museum, Brighton, confirms this, and also reveals a record of a possible Kite's nest, not given in *Rough Notes*, which was shot out at Loch Sionascaig on the borders of Ross and Sutherland in 1877. My thanks are due to Dr W. R. P. Bourne for extracting records from Booth's note-books with the permission of the Director of Museums, Brighton.

In his chapter on grouse, Booth says that he "watched for some Red-necked Phalaropes that frequented the shores of Loch Craggie, a few miles north of Loch Shin"; he does not state whether he actually saw them himself, and he wrote no chapter on the species. Harvie-Brown and Buckley (1887) simply dismiss this by saying that they know of no loch of that name in the place described. There does however happen to be a Loch Craggie in approximately the situation given by Booth, and what is even more interesting, reference to his note-books shows an entry "Red-necked Phalarope, three on Loch Doula, near Lairg, 15th June 1868, not seen later." Loch Doula is adjacent to Loch Craggie and would be an excellent place for phalaropes.

This brings us to the end of those who may be termed the original explorers of Sutherland birds, and also more or less to the end of the era of the skin collector. The egg-collectors continued, and there were regular visits from such men as Norman Gilroy, who studied Greenshanks at Altnaharra and who published privately a series of papers on their hitherto undescribed nesting habits, but who rather spoiled the story by detailing the state of incubation of the eggs of every nest he found, and another well-known collector who published nothing and was fined in the Dornoch Sheriff Court for stealing Grey Lag Goose eggs from Loch Loyal. The egg-collector has proved more difficult to exterminate than some of the birds, and Caithness and the north coast are still subjected to seasonal visitations from these oophilous kleptomaniacs from the south.

The gradually increasing popularity of summer holidays in the Highlands for persons other than the wealthy few has in more recent years kept a constant trickle of short notes from Sutherland appearing in the journals, but the general use of the motor car really opened up the north for the bird-watching tourist, who so often comes across something exciting purely by chance, such as the Bramblings which nested at Altnaharra in 1920 (Hodgkin & Hodgkin 1920); and it was a chance observation from a car window by a member of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club which last year gave us the first authenticated record of a Whimbrel breeding in the county (Henderson 1961). Ringing was started very early in Sutherland, again principally by the summer visitors, and there are recoveries of Buzzards, Herons, owls and Cormorants—all species likely to be destroyed by keepers—from 1913 onwards; but the first recovery of a bird ringed in Sutherland was much earlier even than these—a Wigeon ringed at Loch Brora with an Aberdeen University ring on 19th June 1909 and recovered in the Netherlands in September of the same year (Thomson 1912).

The number of persons spending their summer holidays bird-watching increases annually; Highland hotel-keepers are now beginning to realise that the bird-watcher forms a recognised section of the annual body of tourists; one Sutherland hotel publishes a brochure advertising the attractions of the district for the bird-watcher, and it is most revealing that the Sutherland Tourist Association should place bird-watching as an attraction second only to the fishing. Live birds mean money, and a pair of Ospreys nesting now on the ruins of Ardvreck Castle would bring more trade to the hotels in the district than all the fish in Loch Assynt.

Some of the changes which have taken place in the County of Sutherland in the past century have been outlined briefly, and at rather greater length some of the changes in the bird-watchers; it is now possible from the records left by the latter to trace a great many changes which have taken place among the birds since Selby crossed the Kyle of Sutherland. In some instances it is possible to correlate them with changes in land use, and other human factors, and in a few with similar changes which have occurred elsewhere in western Europe.

The following list is of those species in which an alteration in numbers or distribution within the county of Sutherland can be traced during the past 130 years: it is not a complete list of the breeding birds of Sutherland. I have not included such species as Redwing, Wood Sandpiper and Whimbrel, whose recent sporadic breeding does not necessarily indicate any true change of status, but I have included others like Gadwall and Great Skua where events elsewhere suggest the possibility of impending colonisation of Sutherland. The full

significance of the changes is often apparent only when compared with corresponding changes elsewhere, such as are detailed by Alexander and Lack (1944) for the British Isles as a whole, Haftorn (1958) for Norway, and Gudmundsson (1951) for Iceland, and it is suggested that these papers should be used as a comparison.

LIST OF SPECIES

- SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus*. First found breeding in the centre of the county in 1929, when there were four pairs (Baxter and Rintoul 1929). Has bred more or less regularly since then, but appears to have missed some years and there have never been as many as four pairs again.
- FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis*. First recorded at the Clo Mor in 1897 (Clarke 1897), and in 1902 a pair was seen on Handa and about a dozen pairs on the Clo Mor (Tait 1902): even in 1912 no further breeding site was known (Harvie-Brown 1912). On the east they bred at Strathstevan, near Brora, in 1939 (Fisher and Waterston 1941), and appeared on the roof of Dunrobin Castle in 1947 (Darling and Morley 1947). Eggs were laid on the castle roof in 1954 though it was not known if young were reared, but at least one was reared in 1955. From occupying almost the whole coastline the Fulmar is now spreading inland in a most remarkable manner to such places as the Mound Rock, Torboll Rock, Morvich Rock and Carrol Rock, which is right at the top end of Loch Brora; on 8th July 1961 one was flying over the north end of Loch Loyal below Ben Stomino.
- GADWALL** *Anas strepera*. Has bred sporadically since 1913 (Baxter and Rintoul 1922), but is still extremely scarce. A pair was seen in the Tongue district in June 1958 (*Scot. Birds* 1: 197) and I have had a report of a breeding pair in the south-east in 1961. In view of this, and the fact that it is a species which has increased greatly in Iceland (Gudmundsson 1951), the Gadwall will be worth watching for in Sutherland.
- WIGEON** *Anas penelope*. Had never been recorded breeding in Britain before 1834 when Selby saw several pairs near Lairg and took a clutch of eggs at Loch Loyal. In 1848 St John said it was breeding in a few localities, and in 1867 it was "scattered sparingly over the county" (Harvie-Brown 1867); in 1887 they were common in the centre, north and east, but not in the west (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1887); and from 1901 onwards they have bred sparingly near Inchnadamph (Harvie-Brown and Macpherson 1904), but are still very scarce as breeding birds in the west.
- TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula*. Up to 1935 was never known to breed, but in that year nested at Loch Caladail, Durness

(Oldham 1935 (3)). Has nested regularly since and has increased to about twenty pairs, restricted to the limestone lochs of the Durness district. Baxter and Rintoul (1953) say that it nests in the south-east, but if in fact it does, it is neither widespread nor plentiful, although there were two drakes on a loch near Lairg on 10th June 1961, and Ian Downhill saw four drakes and a duck at the same place on 16th July 1961.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*. Was breeding on the Rabbit Islands, Tongue, in 1848 (St John); spread to Loch Eriboll in 1881 (Harvie-Brown 1904), and by 1902 was plentiful from Cape Wrath to the Badcall Islands (Harvie-Brown and Macpherson 1904), appearing in Lochinver Bay in 1904. In 1935, 50 females with broods were seen off Farraid Head (Oldham 1935 (2)). In the east the first nest was found in 1915 or 1916 near Navidale, and as far down as Loch Fleet broods of ducklings were seen in 1956 (Pennie 1959). On 10th July 1961 there were about a dozen ducklings between Cambusmore and Skelbo. One interesting feature of the increase of Eiders is the build up of a pack at the bar of Loch Fleet in autumn. The birds gather in September, and the maximum is reached by the beginning of October. In 1961 there was a pack of over 500 in the ratio of about three drakes to two ducks.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*. First bred in the south-east in 1875 and in the west in 1878 (Harvie-Brown 1887). A clutch of nine eggs in the Chance collection was taken on the Vagastie Burn, Altnaharra, on 25th April 1914, and I was told by The Hon. G. L. Charteris in 1958 that Goosanders used to be quite common around Altnaharra but were regularly shot on the nest by the keepers. They are still found on the rivers of the centre, west and north, but the numbers are severely kept down. Being much more a bird of the rivers than the Red-breasted Merganser it is much more open to persecution than the latter.

GREY LAG GOOSE *Anser anser*. In 1834 the Grey Lag bred on Loch Shin and Loch Naver, and there were 30-40 pairs on Loch Loyal (Selby), but by 1848 they were deserting Loch Loyal (Milner), and were down to one pair in 1886 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). Loch Shin was deserted by 1890, but they were still plentiful at Badanloch in 1892 (Buckley), although they deserted Loch Brora about this time. Scattered pairs still breed in the west, and there are small colonies in the centre. The Loch Loyal colony came up to about eight or nine pairs in 1940, but has dropped again to two or three. A feral flock of pure Scottish Grey Lags was established on Loch Brora in 1937 and had increased to 200 in 1955, by which time the birds were completely wild. Unfortunately the proprietor has had them reduced in numbers

and there are only 30 or 40 left; there is no doubt that the Loch Brora birds have helped to keep the county's stock going. The general position is bad, but not hopeless, and a lot could be done to help.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*. In St John's time there were said to be immense numbers on most of the inlets of the sea in Sutherland in winter. In 1869 Booth saw parties of 50-100 at the Little Ferry, but in 1882 Buckley said "a few every winter," while in 1896 they were still found in all estuaries from the Little Ferry southwards (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). There has been a great decrease since then, and Brents are now scarcely ever seen on the Sutherland coast. The only recent records are of four Dark-breasted birds on Loch Fleet on 24th-26th February 1956, and one on 2nd December of the same year. D. MacDonald informs me that the only recent record for Dornoch was a flock of about 30 seen by him on 20th October 1951.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*. Up to 1887 the Barnacle was reckoned as occasional only to Handa and Scourie (St John; Harvie-Brown and Buckley). After the human population was evacuated from Island Roan in 1938 Barnacle Geese began to winter there and on the adjacent Eilean Iosal. Now 200-300 winter there annually and a few straggle over to the crofts in Melness and Skerray. I have twice attempted to count them. On 28th March 1949 with a telescope from the mainland I counted at least 300, and on 13th December 1955 I spent a whole day ashore on Island Roan and counted exactly 210 geese.

GOLDEN EAGLE *Aquila chrysaetos*. Eagles were still fairly common in 1834 but, between 1819 and 1826, 295 eagles (both species) and 60 eggs and young were taken in Sutherland and two adjoining estates in Caithness (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1887) and, from 1831 to 1834, 171 adults and 53 eggs and young on the Sutherland estates alone (Selby), that is 466 adults and 113 eggs and young in a total of ten years. Scotland was not alone in this sort of thing, for in the five years ending December 1850 bounties were paid in Norway on 10,715 eagles (Newton 1864). In the face of all this there was such a rapid decrease that in 1849 the Golden Eagle was in grave danger of total extermination, much more so than the White-tailed Eagle (Newton). In 1867 however, Harvie-Brown remarked that the Golden Eagle "still breeds in Sutherland." A nominal protection of the species began on the Sutherland estates in 1875, but there seems to have been little increase before 1900. A great increase took place during the 1939-45 war, and in 1947 there were more Golden Eagles in Sutherland than there had been for a hundred years, but since then there has undoubtedly been a decrease again. This may be partly due to surreptitious

shooting and poisoning, but it is more likely that the myxomatosis of rabbits since 1954 accounts for the great number of empty eyries found in the past few years.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*. Selby saw Buzzards in various places in 1834, but in 1848 St John's report was that, although they had been common a few years previously, they were now completely exterminated except in the wilder parts. In 1867 Harvie-Brown found them "still plentiful," but twenty years later "uncommon in the east: commoner in the west, but less so than formerly." Buckley (1892) refers to their increasing scarcity, and in 1904 they were much rarer in the west and becoming more so (Harvie-Brown and Macpherson). Since then the Buzzard has increased again and is plentiful in the east, probably more so than in the west, although there was some decrease after the myxomatosis came, the previous increase probably being in a great way due to the increase in rabbits. Buzzards are still shot by keepers in many parts of Sutherland.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*. Was said to be common in the south-east in 1848 (St John), and bred in Tongue for the first time in 1867 (Harvie-Brown 1875). In 1887 it was increasing greatly in the south-east and regular in Tongue (Harvie-Brown and Buckley), but it was still unrecorded from the west in 1904 (Harvie-Brown and Macpherson). It now occurs regularly wherever there are plantations, including both the Reay Forest area and Assynt, but is harried so mercilessly everywhere that it is rapidly becoming extremely scarce.

KITE *Milvus milvus*. Was not recorded by Selby in 1834 and must have been rare even then, although Harvie-Brown and Buckley (1884) say it was common in Rosehall in the early years of the century. It was seldom seen in St John's time, and only in wooded areas, but according to Baxter and Rintoul (1953) there are clutches of eggs in the British Museum taken in Sutherland in 1859 and 1860. As already shown, Booth's record does not refer to Sutherland.

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE *Haliaeetus albicilla*. Was common on the east coast in 1840 (*New Statistical Account*) and inland in 1848 (St John) at which time it was more plentiful than the Golden Eagle (Newton 1864). In 1867 it was still not uncommon (Harvie-Brown), but by 1875 it was already less plentiful than the Golden Eagle. In 1877 there were few eyries left, and the last clutch of eggs known to have been taken in Sutherland was taken on 4th April 1901. This clutch was in the possession of the late Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, according to Baxter and Rintoul (1953), but so far my efforts to trace either the clutch or the data have been unsuccessful. There have been no recent authenticated records in the county, but on several occasions I have had

second-hand descriptions of what may have been White-tailed Eagles seen on the north and west coasts.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*. Selby saw a female between Altnaharra and Loyal in 1834, and Milner in 1847 found a nest at the foot of Ben Stomino. Hen Harriers were common in the west until 1877 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1887), but became extinct soon after that. They lasted longer in the east and centre where they were holding their ground well in 1882 (Buckley), but were exterminated throughout the county by the close of the century. Correspondence with the author of a Nature Note in *The Scotsman* of 21st February 1948 disclosed that a male harrier had been seen hunting in the centre of the county in August 1945, and that in May 1946 the keeper there had destroyed two nests and shot the hens. The nests were about 200 yards apart and were attended by a single cock, which escaped. In 1947 a nest escaped the attentions of the keeper and a brood was reared. A few pairs now nest annually in different parts of central and east Sutherland, but Hen Harriers are easily shot and very easily caught on pole-traps, which are permitted and even encouraged by some of the more selfish and single minded proprietors, and consequently these birds do not increase much.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*. The story of the Osprey in Sutherland is already well known. It is now a scarce but almost regular passage migrant, and on several occasions in the last few years single birds have remained for a week or more, but recent rumours of breeding have not been substantiated. It is pleasing to record that these passage Ospreys are no longer shot.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*. Described as "common" in 1867 (Harvie-Brown), and in 1887 as "still common, in spite of persecution, with eight eyries on the coast from Whiten Head to Lochinver, and eight inland in Assynt within a ten mile radius" (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). In 1904 it was said to be still common in the west (Harvie-Brown and Macpherson). There may now quite well be eight eyries on the coast from Whiten Head to Lochinver, but it has greatly decreased inland; in fact, with the exception of a very few sites, the Peregrine is almost exterminated inland, but there is not much change in numbers breeding on the coast.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*. In 1867 the Merlin was "next to the Kestrel, the commonest hawk in the west" (Harvie-Brown). In 1887 it was still common, but less so than formerly, and in 1904 still less common. Now it is the rarest hawk of all, and there is less chance of seeing a Merlin than a Hen Harrier in a day's outing on the Sutherland moors.

PTARMIGAN *Lagopus mutus*. Buckley (1882) records great de-

crease in east Sutherland, extinct on Ben Uarie since 1870, also on the Griams, and becoming scarce on Ben Armine; but in 1892 he still found them occasionally, but not breeding, on both of the former. In 1904 Harvie-Brown and Macpherson record a gradual decrease in the west, particularly in Assynt. The present distribution does not indicate much further change; there are still a few on Ben Armine and they are plentiful on the Assynt Hills, including a few on Canisp; in the north they still breed on Ben Loyal and Ben Stomino, and are said to breed on Fashven at 1400 feet, and probably on Sgribhisbheinn at 1200 feet. A survey of the Scottish distribution would be of great interest.

BLACK GROUSE *Lyrurus tetrix*. Plentiful in 1834 (Selby), 1848 (St John), but by 1880 beginning to decrease on the east (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1887); the decrease continued steadily throughout the county, but blackgame were still plentiful in the Tongue area in the late 1920's, although they eventually disappeared until a few were again seen in the 1940's. During the past two or three years there has been a reappearance and increase near Altnaharra, near Syre, in parts of Rogart, and in the Birichen-Spinningdale region of the south-east. The growth of new plantations may have helped this.

CAPERCALLIE *Tetrao urogallus*. Was listed by Sir Robert Gordon in 1630. There was an unsuccessful attempt at re-introduction at Skibo in 1870 (Harvie-Brown 1879). The spread and distribution are described by Pennie (1950-51); appeared at Skibo in 1910, Balblair (Golspie) 1912, Dunrobin 1922, Ben Bhraggie 1928, Uppat about 1935, and Rosehall prior to 1920. The habitat has now been somewhat restricted by tree felling during the 1939-45 war; there are more Caper in the Skibo woods than anywhere else and there are still a few in the Balblair Wood, Golspie.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*. Until 1896 all records state that it is common wherever there is sufficient cultivation, but in that year it was "said by some people to be scarcer than formerly" (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). Since then the Corncrake has gradually but steadily disappeared; it is now very scarce in the south and east where numbers have diminished even in the last ten years; still reasonably plentiful in Strathnaver and in the north and west but is decreasing in these areas also.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*. In 1834 Selby said it "breeds on Loch Shin and on all salt water lochs." In 1871—"never comes inland to breed" (Harvie-Brown 1875). In 1882 Buckley had once or twice seen Oystercatchers seven or eight miles up the Brora River but they stayed only a day or two, and in 1896 he had once seen one up the Cassley

(Harvie-Brown and Buckley). The Oystercatcher now breeds inland in many parts including such places as Loch Stack, Loch Assynt, Alnaharra, Loch Loyal, Strath Naver, and Rhilochan, and in some instances far from water.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*. A specimen in the Dunrobin Museum is labelled "Clibreck 18th June 1846," and nests are said to have been found frequently on Clibreck about 1855 (Harvie-Brown 1875). In 1884—"has been seen on Clibreck by the Alnaharra keeper" (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). There are no certain recent records.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*. Not recorded by Selby in 1834. St John (1848) says "of late years commenced breeding in most of the large woods." There were many breeding at Dunrobin in 1849 (Hancock 1874); plentiful in east Sutherland by 1853 (Buxton), and by 1887 common all over, including Tongue and Assynt (Harvie-Brown and Buckley).

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*. One seen on Handa and one near Scourie on 9th July 1959 (Dickinson and Harris 1959) are the first recorded in the county, apart from an October record of a young bird (Baxter and Rintoul 1910); I have details of four subsequent unpublished records from the north and west. As it now breeds in the Outer Hebrides (Cunningham 1959), and has regularly attempted to do so elsewhere on the mainland since 1949 (Pennie 1953, Sage and Pennie 1956), it may soon be found breeding in north or west Sutherland.

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*. Selby saw a few on the firths in 1834. In 1847 Milner found all gulls plentiful except Greater Black-backed. In 1871 there were 15 pairs on Handa, and it was not very common otherwise (Harvie-Brown 1875), but in 1892 Handa was deserted following raids (Buckley). On Eilean Bulgach it has increased from one pair in 1927 to 150 pairs in 1948 (Fisher and Piercey 1950). It is now very plentiful on the Cape-side and on Handa, and scattered pairs nest all along the north coast. On the east coast it also nests in fair numbers, as on Loch Fleet, but it is a rare breeder inland.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*. In 1834 there were many colonies on Loch Shin, Loch Loyal and elsewhere (Selby); and in 1847 on Loch Loyal, Loch Shin, Loch Assynt, Loch Naver and Loch Meadie (Milner). In 1867 Harvie-Brown described it as the most numerous species of gull in Sutherland, and in 1882 it was very abundant, but destroyed by keepers and shepherds at every opportunity (Buckley). In 1896 it "used to be very abundant but now much decreased" (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). This is now the rarest gull breeding in Sutherland; it is never seen in the east at any season, occasional stragglers appear in the centre, and a

few pairs breed on the north and west coasts. A similar disappearance of Lesser Black-backs in West Ross is described by Mackenzie (1918), and the Venables found a decrease in Shetland for no apparent cause (1955), but Lack (1942) records an increase in Orkney, while it is common and increasing in Faroe (Salomonsen 1935, Williamson 1954), and has increased greatly in Iceland since its first appearance in 1913 (Gudmundsson 1951).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*. Was plentiful in 1834 (Selby), and has continued to be so, but there has been a great increase both in the number and, with few exceptions, in the size of the colonies during the past twenty years. Every known colony in Sutherland was counted in the 1958 survey (Hamilton 1962). There has been a corresponding increase in Shetland (Venables and Venables 1955), in Iceland, where first breeding was in 1910 (Gudmundsson), and in Norway, where first breeding was in 1867, with a great increase and spread north in the past twenty years (Haftorn 1958).

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*. First bred in Sutherland in 1889 at Kintradwell, Brora (Buckley 1892), where it increased greatly and was said to be quite common by 1896 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). Now breeds sparingly in the south-east corner, but is far from common.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*. Recorded at Tongue in 1834 (Selby). In 1848 it was said to breed wherever there were woods (St John), but apparently was not known in the west until 1869 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1884); it spread to Eriboll about 1889 (Buckley 1892), and was not uncommon in Lochinver in 1877 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1887). The spread is fairly obviously governed by the growth of plantations.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. Not recorded by Selby or Milner. Eggs were taken at Loubcroy in 1851 (Newton 1864). Nested at Dornoch in 1873, and possibly at Loch Awe, Assynt, in 1876 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1884), and near Syre in 1886 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1887). Buckley recorded in 1892 "very rare in summer and not common at any time." In recent years seems to have been extremely scarce; I saw one at Melness in December 1949, but no more until 27th May 1958 when I saw two in Strathnaver. In 1961 it suddenly became plentiful all over central Sutherland, and throughout June and July one could see four or five in a day anywhere about Lairg, Altnaharra, Strathmore, Loyal, Syre, Rimsdale. This may be due to the Forestry Commission plantations which have been established in the past few years, but it is also worth noting that the Short-eared Owl is one of the species which has commenced breeding in Iceland within the past fifty years (Gudmund-

sson 1951) and that it has increased in Orkney (Lack 1942).

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*. One was observed at Loyal by Selby's party in 1834, and it was heard at Tongue by St John (1848). Booth makes no reference to Sutherland, but referring to Ross-shire he says that it was as numerous in Easter Ross in 1869 as in the south of England. Harvie-Brown (1875) stated that twenty years previously it was not uncommon at Dunrobin, but since then it had increased and spread west to Rosehall and to other parts of the east coast. It was breeding at Brora in 1882 (Buckley), but by 1896 was becoming less common in the east (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). It was still heard around Golspie about 1920, and possibly near Brora since then, but is now known to appear regularly in one wood only in the extreme south-east corner of the county.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*. The first record other than of autumn migrants was of one at Gordonbush from March to May 1910 (Gunnis 1910). The first nest to be found was at Invershin in 1925 (Paterson 1926), and another was found in south Sutherland in 1930 (Yeates, Robinson and Patrick). It now nests in many places in the south and east, and has nested near Loch Naver since 1949 (Pennie), and once at Lochmore, in 1953.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*. Selby recorded "great numbers on the cliffs at Inchnadamph." St John saw many on the sea cliffs, particularly at Smoo. In 1867 there were only two or three birds at Inchnadamph (Harvie-Brown), and by 1867 this old rock colony was deserted (Harvie-Brown 1878). In 1884 there were none in the Durness caves (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). The House Martin has become much scarcer in the north and west: even in the last two years they have been ousted by House Sparrows from Gubernisgeach and have deserted Loyal Lodge, but a few still nest in Altnaharra and in Tongue.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*. Is much diminished by unremitting persecution, but still holds its own on the coast and in a few inland localities. Up to 1878 there was a regular roost of over 100 at Badnacoil (Buckley 1882); Baxter and Rintoul (1953) record a flock of 200 at Brora in October 1937.

HOODED/CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*. The Carrion Crow seems to have been rarer at one time than it is now. Selby saw none in 1834, and in 1867 Harvie-Brown stated categorically that there were no Carrion Crows in Sutherland, but later (1878) reported that one had been shot in Dornoch in 1848, and St John (1848) saw a mixed pair in the south-east. The Carrion Crow is now fairly common in the south-east corner (D. MacDonald estimates that about 10% are Carrion) and mixed pairs are found as far north as Lairg.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*. In the south and east the sites of the rookeries have varied somewhat over the years but the numbers remain much the same. In the north, rookeries were established at Tongue in 1855, and at Kirkton, Bighouse, in 1860, and both built up to over 500 nests (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1884). In the 1946 survey (figures from James Fisher) there were 120 nests at Tongue and 121 at Kirkton. The Tongue rookery has been much disturbed by shooting and tree-felling, and in 1958 when I last counted it there were only 13 nests, while the Kirkton rookery has now been deserted for many years.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*. Was not listed by Selby but was said to be found "sparingly" at Tongue in 1884 and not inland or in the west (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). It has now increased on the north coast and is also much more common inland. It breeds at the Mound and at several places in Rogart, and I saw Jackdaws at Elphin in July 1958. It is however still rare on the west.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*. Was common in the south-east until 1870, but 56 were killed at Dunrobin between 1873 and 1880 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1884); there was still a pair in the Uppat Woods in 1896, and it was still not uncommon between Invershin and Rosehall in 1887. It is not known when the Magpie re-appeared, but nine or ten pairs were shot around Dunrobin between 1916 and 1918. It was becoming scarce by 1920 but was not finally exterminated until 1923. It remained extinct throughout the county until about three years ago when a single bird appeared near Dornoch, and I was told that two were shot at Skibo in 1947 or 1948.

CHOUGH *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*. The last Choughs to be seen in Sutherland were at Durness in 1848 (St John).

GREAT TIT *Parus major*. Was not recorded by Selby or Milner; St John (1848) brackets all tits together as "occur throughout the year," but this statement is valueless. In 1892 Buckley, who then lived in Sutherland, wrote "I have not seen this species myself" but later (1897) recorded one at Kintradwell in December 1895, and at Spinningdale in December 1896. These are the only two confirmed records of Great Tits in Sutherland prior to 1900. One was seen at Inchnadamph in June 1902, and in 1904 it was still "rare anywhere north of the Kyle of Sutherland" (Harvie-Brown and Macpherson). The next we hear of them is in 1929 when several were seen in Lairg and in Strath Oyke (Baxter and Rintoul), but now there is scarcely a wood in the county from Bonar Bridge to Loch Eriboll where Great Tits are not found. They were breeding in Tongue in 1947 when I first went there, and I have seen them in Glen Cassley, Strath Naver, Loch a'Choire, Scourie, Loch Assynt, and one even on the Cape-side of Durness, so this spectacular colonisation

has taken place in less than fifty years. A sudden colonisation of north Norway in the past thirty years by the Great Tit, which now breeds at 70°30'N, has been described by Haftorn (1957). The spread north is obviously not due to the spread of plantations, but is correlated by Haftorn with changes in the winter climate.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*. Recorded at Rosehall by Selby (1836). St John again is quite vague. Harvie-Brown (1887) gives it as rare and local in the west; in 1929 it was not seen in the west by Baxter and Rintoul, but was recorded by them (1953) in Lochinver in 1939. It is now common in the south and east, also at Tongue and Eriboll, and occurs in the west at such places as Scourie, Kinlochbervie, Rhiconich and Lochinver.

CRESTED TIT *Parus cristatus*. Has spread north in Ross-shire and has now reached Sutherland, where it was first recorded near Dornoch in October 1956 (MacDonald 1957), and since then I saw one near Golspie in February 1961, and D. MacDonald has seen another one near Dornoch in June 1961.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*. Not recorded by Selby or Milner. St John says it is found "throughout the year," but again gives no localities, and Harvie-Brown in 1875 listed it from Dunrobin, and said it was common in the east in his 1884 list. In 1887 it had been observed at Tongue (Harvie-Brown and Buckley), but there was no record from the west apart from an unconfirmed one from Loch Assynt in 1902 (Harvie-Brown and Macpherson 1904). Now it is widespread though not plentiful in the east, scarce but regular in Tongue, and has been confirmed as breeding in Strathnaver, and Lochinver, and recorded from Scourie.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*. Winter records are not infrequent as far back as November 1871 (Dunrobin Museum), but the first spring record was of a male at Borgie, Tongue, in May 1951 (*Scottish Naturalist* 64: 54). The Hon. G. L. Charteris heard one singing at Dunrobin on 6th June 1958 and one (sex not stated) was reported from Lairg on 9th August 1959 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 206). These few records in themselves may appear to be of little significance, but it is interesting to note that the two following species of warbler were first recorded at almost the same time.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*. Never recorded prior to 1951 when one was heard singing at Strathbeg, Eriboll, on 8th and 14th June (Fitter 1951). Other records are, near Scourie 11th June 1954 (Pennie 1954), Scourie 12th June 1955 (Meiklejohn and Stanford 1956), and one singing at Altnaharra on 7th and 10th June 1960.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. Selby commented on its

absence. There is no record prior to 1952 when one was heard singing at Skibo on 7th June (MacDonald 1952). Since then there have been five spring and summer records of singing birds published in *The Scottish Naturalist* and *Scottish Birds*.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. Selby traced the Wood Warbler as far north as Dingwall in 1834, but the first to be seen in Sutherland was in Glen Cassley in 1875 (Buckley 1882); it was next recorded in Kildonan in 1876 (Clifton 1876), and it was said to be common at Dunrobin in 1877. Records from further north did not come until much later; Loch Hope 1913 (Brooksbank 1913), Loch Shin 1929 (Baxter and Rintoul 1929), Loch Naver and Tongue 1949 (Pennie 1950), and Loch Eriboll 1951. In Norway the Wood Warbler was unknown until it made its appearance at Larvik in 1877, but since 1900 there has been a great increase and spread north (Haftorn 1958). It may be noted that there is less than one degree of a difference between the latitudes of Kildonan and Larvik.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*. Not recorded by Selby or Milner. St John says "numerous throughout the year," and Harvie-Brown in 1875 said "all parts where fir-woods," but amended this in 1904 to "occasional in autumn only in the west, but will probably be found breeding in the Lochinver plantations." It is now plentiful wherever there are plantations, including Lochinver and Scourie, and in 1961 I found a pair feeding young in a birch and alder wood at Tongue over a mile from the nearest conifer, and heard a male singing in a birchwood at Loch Loyal.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*. Was first recorded at Inchnadamph in 1868 (Harvie-Brown 1868); bred at Glenrossal (Glen Cassley), 2 pairs in 1875, and numerous there by 1886. In 1903, not uncommon at Loch Assynt (Harvie-Brown and Macpherson 1904), and at Loch Brora in 1892 (Buckley), but occasional only at Tongue in 1884 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley). The Tree Pipit is now common in practically every mature birchwood in the county right up to Loch Eriboll, where it was noted as plentiful in the Strath Beg woods in 1960 and 1961; it is also plentiful in Glen Golly and particularly so at Loch a'Choire. This expansion of range cannot be due to change in land use as the Tree Pipit is almost confined to the birchwoods. It has also increased in number and expanded its range in Norway in recent years (Haftorn 1958).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*. Selby found it breeding in the north and west in 1834, and St John lists it as widely distributed, but most plentiful on Handa, although Harvie-Brown and Buckley (1884) say it was rare before 1870, and still confined to the coast line. A pair at Balnacoil in 1879 seems

to have been the first inland breeding record, and in October 1888 Buckley (1892) noted with astonishment a flock of thirty on the roof of a house near Badanloch. The Starling has spread a great deal since then but still has not reached every outpost in Sutherland. They appeared at Gobernuisgeach in 1960 for the first time; occasional non-breeders only have so far been seen at Loch a'Choire, but they are breeding at Bowside, Strathy.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*. Was not listed at all by Selby or Milner. St John says "common" with no qualifications. Harvie-Brown and Buckley (1867, 1884, 1887) say it is not numerous, probably confined to the south-east, rare at Tongue, and rare or absent in the west, while Harvie-Brown and Macpherson (1904) say that it is a winter visitor only to the west, and does not breed. The Greenfinch is now plentiful in all suitable places in the south and east, and also on the north coast as far west as Durness. It is less plentiful in the west, but breeds regularly in Lochinver and probably at Lochmore.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*. Two pairs are said to have bred in the garden of Skelbo House in 1758 (Anon. 1961). St John stated that it was "only seen in some of the gardens and orchards in the south" and Harvie-Brown and Buckley (1884) say that it "has bred at Dornoch but is apparently rarer than in 1848." A pair was seen by James Wilson, who was a member of Selby's party, in a birchwood on Loch Loyal side, but it was not seen by Selby himself who did not include it in his list. The Goldfinch certainly disappeared as a breeding species at an early date, but several have been seen in winter in the past few years between Dornoch and Golspie.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*. There is considerable inconsistency among the records. Selby says "found wherever there is birch," referring to the west, but Milner did not record it at all in the centre or north; Harvie-Brown does not record it in his 1875 list of breeding birds, but both he and Buckley later list it as common on the east though not recorded on the north and west. Recently it has been recorded as breeding since 1928 in Strathnaver, Tongue, Strath-Halladale and Lochinver (Baxter and Rintoul 1929, Oldham 1935 (1)), but in my experience it is irregular and variable in all these places, though very common in some years, and this may account for the discrepancies in the old records.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. Was not recorded by either Selby or Milner. St John says "common" and Harvie-Brown and Buckley (1887) "not common, more abundant in the east than in the west, once recorded in Tongue." Now quite plentiful in the south and east, and less so, though regular,

at Lochinver; less plentiful in the north, but has been recorded in recent years at Tongue, Eriboll and Strathnaver.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*. Was seen by Selby in all the villages and was also said by him to be common in the thatch at Keoldale House, but according to Harvie-Brown and Buckley (1887) the Tree Sparrow was the commoner at Scourie and Rhiconich in the 1880's, and the House Sparrow was rare at Durness. The House Sparrow is now plentiful at practically every habitation in the county, breeding at Kearvaig and at the Cape Wrath Lighthouse, and also at Lone in the Reay Forest. They arrived at Governuisgeach only within the last two or three years, but have already ousted the House Martins which bred there for many years. They breed at Badanloch but so far have not managed to reach Loch a'Choire. There has been a corresponding spread of the House Sparrow in north Norway in recent years and it seems that they have been enterprising enough to be carried by ships to some of the towns and villages in East Finnmark (Lund 1956).

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*. The first known in the county were those which commenced breeding in Dornoch in 1872 (Harvie-Brown 1875), and they were also recorded from Helmsdale from 1880 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1884). The Tree Sparrow was commoner than the House Sparrow in the Scourie/Rhiconich area from 1880 onwards, and there were still considerable numbers at Scourie and Tarbat in 1901 and 1902 (Harvie-Brown and Macpherson 1904). A few pairs still breed in Dornoch, where they nest in the undercarriage of Rooks' nests, but as far as I am aware there is none nesting elsewhere in the county, although an unconfirmed report suggests that there may be one or two left near Laxford Bridge.

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REVIEW OF ORNITHOLOGICAL CHANGES IN SCOTLAND IN 1961

JAMES W. CAMPBELL

Introduction

This is the ninth report of the Scottish Bird Records Committee, and it is concerned with records published during 1961. The following journals have been searched: *Scottish Birds* (S.B.); *British Birds* (B.B.); *Bird Migration* (B.M.); *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* (F.I.B.O.B.); *Ibis*; *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* (Bull.B.O.C.); *Scottish Field*; *The Field*; *Bird Notes* (B.N.). The abbreviations used in this report are shown in brackets.

There has been one change in the membership of the Committee since its constitution was detailed in our seventh report (S.B. 1: 254), Mr A. T. Macmillan having been appointed in 1961 in place of Commander Sir Geoffrey Hughes Onslow, who has resigned. Previous reports have been published in *The Scottish Naturalist* 1955: 98; 1956: 1; 1957: 37, 170; and *Scottish Birds* 1: 30, 117, 253, 443.

As on previous occasions, some records have been held over for further consideration.

BIRDS NEW TO AREAS AND COUNTIES

- WHITE-BILLED DIVER *Gavia adamsii*. One, Fair Isle, 14th May 1961 (B.M. 2: 53, and F.I.B.O.B. 4: 181); first for Fair Isle.
- RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps griseigena*. One, shot lower reaches of River Beauly, 23rd March 1960 (S.B. 1: 286); first for East Inverness.
- MANX SHEARWATER *Procellaria p. puffinus*. One, Loch Tay, 23rd July 1961 (S.B. 1: 450); first for North Perth.
- LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*. One, Firth and Rendall area, during July 1961 (B.N. 30: 30); first for Orkney.
- GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas crecca carolinensis*. Adult drake, Gladhouse Reservoir, 21st October 1961 (S.B. 1: 490); first for Forth and Midlothian.
- GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*. One, Barr Loch, 26th May 1959

(S.B. 1: 387); first for Renfrew.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*. Ten, Loch Ewe, 30th March 1961 (S.B. 1: 433); first for North-West Highlands and Western Ross. One, Village Bay, 27th July 1961 (S.B. 1: 491); first for St Kilda.

EUROPEAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser a. albifrons*. Two, Endrick mouth, in November 1960 (S.B. 1: 385); first record of eastern race for Dunbarton.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser a. arvensis*. Eight, near Carnwath, 16th April 1961 (S.B. 1: 463); first for Lanark.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*. One Lesser *Anser c. caerulescens*, Libberton, 8th March 1960 (S.B. 1: 273); first record of this race for Lanark.

One Greater *Anser c. atlanticus*, Hule Moss, 13th (not 9th) November 1960 (S.B. 1: 425); first for Tweed and Berwick. In both cases, the possibility of these birds being escapes cannot be discounted (B.B. 54: 182).

GOLDEN EAGLE *Aquila chrysaetos*. One, Fair Isle, 7th April 1961 (B.M. 2: 53, and F.I.B.O.B. 4: 181); first for Fair Isle.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*. One, near Thurso, 5th March 1961 (S.B. 1: 426); first for North Coast and Caithness.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*. One, Delnies Moss, 16th March 1961 (S.B. 1: 431); first for Nairn.

GYR FALCON *Falco rusticolus*. One, Endrick mouth, 5th November 1960 (S.B. 1: 378); first for Dunbarton and West Stirling.

RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*. One, near Boat of Garten, 15th May 1961 (S.B. 1: 451); first for Moray area and East Inverness. One, Hule Moss, seen 8th October and found dead 15th October 1961 (S.B. 1: 492); first for Berwick.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. One, Lake of Menteith, 21st May 1960 (S.B. 1: 387); first for South Perth.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*. One, Stirling bank of Endrick mouth, 22nd April 1961 (S.B. 1: 464); first for West Stirling.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. One, Endrick mouth, 21st May 1961 (S.B. 1: 498); first for West Stirling.

ICELAND REDSHANK *Tringa totanus robusta*. One, found dead, Tynningame, 16th October 1960 (S.B. 1: 384); first record of this race for East Lothian.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*. One, Foula, 1st September 1959 (B.M. 1: 146); first for Shetland other than Fair Isle.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*. Three, Invergowrie Bay, 26th September 1960 (S.B. 1: 384); first for North Perth. One, Cambus, 28th August 1961 (S.B. 1: 467); first for Clackmannan. One hundred and six, Findhorn Bay, 18th September

- 1960 (S.B. 1: 333); first for Moray.
- SANDERLING *Crocethia alba*. Three, Kingoodie, 12th May 1957 (S.B. 1: 387); first for North Perth.
- LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*. One, Barr Loch, 7th May 1961 (S.B. 1: 464); first for Renfrew.
- COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. One, Kinloch, Rhum, 5th May 1960 (S.B. 1: 379); first for Inner Hebrides. One, Stornoway, 2nd June 1960 (S.B. 1: 379); first for Outer Hebrides. One, near Dumfries, 31st May 1961 (S.B. 1: 482); first for Solway and Dumfries. A pair, Coldingham, May 1961 (S.B. 1: 482); first for Tweed and Berwick. Two, Edmonstone, in autumn 1960 (S.B. 1: 484); first for Midlothian. One, St Andrews, mid-May 1961 (S.B. 1: 486); first for North Fife. One, Old Aberdeen, 5th June 1960 (S.B. 1: 487); first for Dee and Aberdeen. One, Dell Hotel, Rothiemurchus, 2nd July 1961 (S.B. 1: 488); first for East Inverness. One, Hamnavoe, West Burra, 31st May 1961 (S.B. 1: 488); first for Shetland other than Fair Isle.
- WHITE-BREASTED BARN OWL. *Tyto a. alba*. One, Isle of May, 24th June 1961 (B.M. 2: 54); first record of this race for Isle of May.
- LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*. One, found dead, Leith, 17th March 1961 (S.B. 1: 453); first for Midlothian.
- TENGMALM'S OWL *Aegolius funereus*. One, Cruan, Firth, 26th December 1959 (S.B. 1: 453); first for Orkney.
- HOOPOE *Upupa epops*. One, Howden Haugh, 17th April 1961 (S.B. 1: 427); first for Selkirk.
- GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*. One, Loch Leven, 28th October 1961 (S.B. 1: 497); first for Kinross.
- JAY *Garrulus glandarius*. One, Glen Dye, 15th June 1961 (S.B. 1: 460); first for North Kincardine.
- CONTINENTAL SONG THRUSH *Turdus p. philomelos*. Two, Gladhouse, 29th October 1961 (S.B. 1: 507); first record of this race for Midlothian.
- GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*. Considered to be "reasonably common," east end Gartmorn Dam, and towards Dollar and Tillicoultry (S.B. 1: 498); first for Clackmannan. Two, heard and seen, Blackhall near Banchory, 26th May 1961 (S.B. 1: 498); first for North Kincardine.
- CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. One, heard, Blackhall near Banchory, 28th May 1961 (S.B. 1: 498); first for North Kincardine. One, Orton, 26th May 1960 (S.B. 1: 339); first for Moray.
- [ARCTIC WARBLER *Phylloscopus borealis*. One, Isle of May, 26th August 1960 (S.B. 1: 356); first for Isle of May. This record was subsequently withdrawn (S.B. 2: 18).]
- YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One, near Buchlyvie, 6th November 1960 (S.B. 1: 380); first for East Stirling.

- GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*. One, mid-November 1960, in Skye (S.B. 1: 387); first for Skye. One, between Fort William and Spean Bridge, 26th March 1961 (S.B. 1: 464); first for South Inverness.
- LESSER GREY SHRIKE *Lanius minor*. One, between Crosshill and Dalrymple, 15th June 1961 (S.B. 1: 455); first for Clyde and Ayr.
- SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*. Four, Loch Leven, 28th October 1961 (S.B. 1: 508); first for Kinross.
- REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*. Six, Loch Leven, 6th February 1954 (S.B. 1: 508); first for Kinross.
- RED-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza bruniceps*. One, Isle of May, 28th-29th August 1960 (B.M. 1: 251); first for Forth and Isle of May. Probable escape.

FIRST BREEDING RECORDS FOR AREAS AND COUNTIES

- TEAL *Anas c. crecca*. Nest with eggs, Isle of May, 15th May 1960 (S.B. 1: 358); first breeding for Isle of May.
- WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. Bred in undisclosed area, Sutherland, 1960 (S.B. 1: 427); first breeding for South-East Sutherland.
- HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*. Nest with eggs, Loch Leven, 28th May 1961 (S.B. 1: 459); first breeding for Kinross.
- BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*. Nesting colony found near Lochinver, 25th June 1961, had evidently existed for some years (S.B. 1: 497); first breeding for West Sutherland.
- SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*. Pair bred Whalsay in 1955 (S.B. 1: 494); first satisfactory breeding for Shetland.
- COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Nest and eggs found Coldingham, June 1961 (S.B. 1: 483); first breeding for Tweed and Berwick. Nested near Craigmillar, summer 1961 (S.B. 1: 484); first breeding for Midlothian.
- GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*. Nest found Dumfriesshire, May 1960 (S.B. 1: 379); first breeding for Solway and Dumfries. Nest found near East Kilbride, 28th May 1961 (S.B. 1: 454); first breeding for Lanark.
- STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*. Nest with young at Voe, Delting, 10th May 1961 (F.I.B.O.B. 4: 198); first breeding for Shetland.

The following are included for general information:

- DOWITCHER *Limnodromus* spp. The *British Birds* Rarity Records Committee have examined occurrences of the Dowitcher in Great Britain (B.B. 54: 343) and have assigned the Scottish records as follows:

1. LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER *Limnodromus scolopaceus*. Specimens obtained Largo, Fife, September 1867 (Gray. 1871. *The birds of the west of Scotland*, p. 314).
 2. Unidentified specimens. One, Crinan, Argyll, 2nd September 1891 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley. 1892. *A vertebrate fauna of Argyll and the Inner Hebrides*, p. 177).
 3. Indeterminate sight-records. One, Hule Moss, Berwick, 20th-30th September 1958 (S.B. 1: 34, 76, 256). One, Gullane Point, East Lothian, 29th September 1960 (S.B. 1: 330, 444). One, Hamilton, Lanark, 8th-12th October 1960 (S.B. 1: 330).
- REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea* (?) *rostrata*. Pair with nest containing young, Spey Valley, East Inverness, May 1959 (B.B. 54: 251). Description and photographs of adults show characters of north-western type of Redpoll. Williamson (B.B. 54: 241) discussing the race involved, concluded that "whilst there cannot be absolute certainty, there is extremely high probability that the Scottish breeding pair belonged to the Greenland low-arctic form"—i.e. *rostrata*.

The following records, mostly held over from previous years, are still awaiting the decisions of the *British Birds* Rarity Records Committee:

PELICAN *Pelecanus* sp. (B.M. 1: 251).

FRIGATE BIRD *Fregata* sp. (B.B. 53: 455).

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia* (S.B. 1. 451).

BAIKAL TEAL *Anas formosa* (Bull B.O.C. Sept. 1958).

WESTERN SANDPIPER *Calidris mauri* (*Popular Handbook of Rarer British Birds*, p. 49).

SHORT NOTES

FOOD AT A BUZZARDS' NEST

In 1962 I had a unique opportunity of making daily visits to a Buzzards' nest which was built in a sloping ivy-draped oak tree leaning out over a steep river bank about half a mile from my house. It was actually an old Buzzards' nest which had been renovated after having been untenanted for at least 10 years.

The nest was first seen to be occupied on 25th May when it held two chicks, judged to be about two days old, and an unhatched egg which later proved to be addled. A hide was built 33 feet from the nest and daily visits were thereafter



PLATE 11. Pair of BUZZARDS at nest, Fort Augustus, Inverness-shire, 31st May 1962, the cock with a vole, and the hen bringing in a spray of oak (see opposite).

Photograph by L. MacNally

made for the purpose of observing the prey brought in. On 8th June it was noted that the elder chick was able to pick small shreds from a rabbit lying in the nest, and it savagely repulsed the younger chick when it attempted to do the same. During the following week this aggressiveness became more pronounced, even when there was plenty of food at the nest. On the morning of the 15th the younger chick was looking very seedy, its head criss-crossed with red cuts presumably inflicted by the elder chick, and by 6 p.m. of the same day it was dead, surrounded by an abundance of food. The elder chick fledged some time between 5 p.m. on 6th and 8 a.m. on 7th July.

During this period the nest was visited on 43 consecutive days and the following items of prey were identified at the nest:

Rabbit—32

Mole—19

Frog—5 (3 of which were brought in alive)

Vole—4 (these are eaten very quickly and evidently formed a larger part of the diet than this figure suggests)

Birds—8 (1 Snipe, the remains of a Black-headed Gull, possibly picked up from a fox's den, 1 young Cuckoo, 2 fledgling Song Thrushes, 2 fledgling Robins and 1 fledgling Dipper)

On five occasions carrion (in each case parts of a lamb) was found at the nest—lamb's wool; the hind-leg of a Black-face lamb, with the thigh-bone broken across by the teeth of a fox or dog; some piece of decomposing offal; the odorous foreleg of a Black-face lamb; and the fresh pelvic bone and attached backbone of a lamb, with the ribs chewed to stumps by a fox. These remains had probably all been taken from a fox's den on the opposite side of the valley, where lamb remains were much in evidence.

The live frogs were a rather surprising discovery in the nest. On two occasions these were found crouching underneath a chick. I touched one of the frogs and it gave a galvanic leap over the edge of the nest and out into space! These frogs were perforce eaten alive by the chicks, although they seemed to prefer furred prey, voles being apparently a prime favourite, followed by rabbits and then moles. Small prey was brought to the nest in the beak; moles and rabbits in the talons. The male bird was the chief food provider, while the female stayed in the area on guard. She was also the only one of the two that I saw bringing in sprays to the nest (see Plate 11).

L. MACNALLY.

LITTLE AUK IN SUMMER IN SOUTH-EAST SUTHERLAND

During the lunchtime break on 14th June 1962 a schoolboy brought me a Little Auk which he had found squatting beside a wall in his garden at Dornoch. Except for a few lightish specks on the otherwise black breast the bird was in full summer plumage. At first it was very lively, running away with remarkable speed when released, but by evening it had become much weaker. All attempts to feed the bird were unsuccessful and by next morning it had died. The *Handbook* (5: 167) gives only one June record. There was a strong south-east to south-west wind in the area on the night of 13th/14th June.

D. MACDONALD.

COLLARED DOVES IN DUMFRIESSHIRE

On 13th March 1962 when driving through private grounds some three miles from Dumfries I disturbed a bird which I thought must be a Collared Dove. I returned the following day with R. T. Smith, and almost at once a dove flew down from a tree to join some domestic Fan-tailed Pigeons feeding on the roof of a farm out-building. We had excellent views at about 25 yards, and saw the black half-collar and very dark primaries plainly. The underparts were paler than the upperparts and breast, and the tail showed white when the bird flew. On the 13th I had heard a second bird calling while I was looking at the first, and on making further enquiries at the farm we were told that the doves had first appeared about three years previously, soon after the pigeons were acquired. They had evidently nested successfully nearby because at least one young bird had fed on the roof with the old birds, but no nest had been found. It is likely that it was one of these birds which W. Austin recorded in the area on 31st May 1961 (*antea* 1: 482).

H. M. RUSSELL.

(Formal proof of breeding was added on 10th April 1962, when W. Austin found two adults on the ground with a nestling which had evidently fallen from the nest. This is the first breeding record for the Solway Faunal Area.—ED.).

CURRENT NOTES

(Key to initials of observers : G. H. Acklam, R. W. Adamson, A. F. Airey, A. Anderson, D. R. Anderson, D. G. Andrew, J. M. S. Arnott, W. Austin, J. Baird (JBd), J. Ballantyne (JBal), P. G. R. Barbier, Miss P. G. Baxter, J. A. Begg, W. K. Birrell, H. Boase, T. Boyd, W. Brotherston, J. Cadbury, S. J. Clarke, C. N. L. Cowper, W. A. Craw, Miss M. H. E. Cuninghame, J. R. Cuthbert, D. Dewar, E. Dicerbo, G. Dick, H. Dott, H. F. D. Elder, Sir R. Erskine-Hill, M. Everett, H. A. Ford, I. M. Ford, E. Freedlander, Miss E. A. Garden, P. M. Gordon, H. Halliday, Dr K. C. R. Halliday, Mrs E. Hamilton, I. Henderson, M. J. Henderson, W. G. M. Henderson, The Hon. H. D. Home, Lt.-Col. W. M. Logan Home, W. H. Houston, J. Hoy, Dr D. Jenkins, Mrs M. W. Jenkins, Mrs E. Knight, D. Lawson, J. Lockerbie, D. G. Long, A. McConnell (AMcC), A. Macdonald (AMacd), D. Macdonald, C. D. Macfarlane, Miss J. McFarlane (JMCF), K. S. Macgregor, A. T. Macmillan, Prof. M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Dr A. Milward (AMi), J. Murray (JM), J. B. Nelson, C. E. Palmar, G. L. A. Patrick, Dr J. D. Pickup, J. Potter, R. M. Ramage, D. A. Ratcliffe, C. P. Rawcliffe, W. K. Richmond, Mr and Mrs E. L. Roberts, Dr M. Rusk, G. L. Sandeman, L. Seymour, Mrs M. V. Seymour, W. M. Skene, D. Skilling, K. D. Smith, M. Smith, R. T. Smith, R. W. J. Smith, Dr T. C. Smout, J. A. Stewart, R. Stokoe, J. H. Swan, Miss L. B. Tynan, L. A. Urquhart, Rev. E. T. Vernon, T. Warwick, G. Waterston, Mrs M. I. Waterston, Dr R. S. Weir, A. Wilson, D. R. Wise, W. Wyper, J. G. Young.

Unless otherwise stated, all dates refer to 1962).

Distribution

This section is confined to 1962 records, and earlier observations are included only in amplification of such records. In principle we dislike publishing out-of-date notes of a minor nature, and these have been relegated to another section.

In the present section we have tried to include a picture of arrival dates—though not attempting any serious correlation with the weather charts, which we leave to others—but we would enter a plea that readers do not now send in lists of 1962 arrival dates to prove us wrong, as it is too late to make any use of them.

The data which we have been able to collect show clearly the way in which many of the early summer visitors, such as Swallow, Sand Martin, Ring Ouzel, Wheatear and Chiffchaff, were held up for a fortnight or so, whereas the second-wave birds, such as House Martin and Willow Warbler, were only slightly late, and the late birds, such as the Swift, were scarcely affected. The big break through came about 20th to 24th April, with many interesting observations on Sunday the 22nd, though the great rush of Robins at the Bass Rock which started on the 17th indicates that birds were on the move before the 20th.

The remains of a **Red-throated Diver** found inland at Wamphray, Dumfriesshire, on 5th May had evidently lain there for several months (RWA, ED).

A **Great Crested Grebe** was seen on the sea at Barnbougle, West Lothian on 2nd June—an unusual date (TCS). A **Red-necked Grebe** was in Pease Bay, Berwickshire, on 21st April (MJH, DGL), and there were two at Gullane Point, East Lothian, next day (DGA, DJ, TCS). In 1961 a pair of **Black-necked Grebes** visited Kilconquhar Loch, Fife, on 8th April (*antea* 1: 462), and this year a pair was seen on 13th April, no less than three pairs next day, and the last (3) on the 28th and 29th (PGB, RSW).

A **Leach's Petrel** was found in the middle of Perthshire on 19th May at Invervar in Glen Lyon (CDM). Its identity was confirmed by GW who tells us that another was picked up in Speyside about the same time, and suggests that both may have come in with severe westerly gales on the 16th and 17th. We have received no details of the Speyside bird. **Fulmars** do not breed in Bute, though one was seen in 1946 (*The Fulmar* p. 229). On 21st May, two—or perhaps a single bird twice—flying along the cliffs near Garroch Head, may have been prospecting (WW). In recent years **Fulmars** have been seen about Inchgarvie, under the Forth Bridge, and even sitting on the cliffs, but no proof of breeding could be found until this year, when two eggs were seen on 27th June (RWJS). A **Fulmar** flew over the Braid Hills in Edinburgh on 16th June (GLS).

An exhausted **Gannet** standing by the Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, Ayrshire, on 12th April, was dead next day. It may have been the same bird reported the previous week in the Nith valley, and perhaps came inland with gales early in the month (JAB). Over 200 **Gannets** flew SW past Corsewall Point Lighthouse, Wigtownshire, between 1000 and 1100 hrs on 22nd April, and were probably on their way from Ailsa Craig to feed in the Irish Sea (AFA). At Castle Loch, Mochrum, Wigtownshire, it was estimated that about 100 pairs of **Cormorants** were nesting in this old colony on islets in the loch on 24th April (AFA).

In Edinburgh the first brood of **Mallard** appeared on Duddingston earlier than expected—on 27th April, although the loch was not free of ice until 19th March. This compares with first broods on 23rd April 1960 and 17th April 1961 (DRA). A drake **Garganey** was seen on a loch near East Linton, East Lothian, on 29th April, but there is no evidence of breeding (CNLC, KSM). The count of 136 **Pintail** at Inverness (*antea* 2: 45) evidently refers to a regular flock which winters off Alturlie Point. Numbers on the Lentrane side of the Beaulie Firth, at the one place where **Pintail** may be seen regularly, are much smaller, with a maximum of 20 or 30 birds (MR). Off Piltanton Burn Sands, Luce Bay, Wigtownshire, counts of **Pintail** on 24th February, 17th March and 7th April gave

totals of 400, 250 and 100 respectively (AFA). Six at Tynninghame, East Lothian, on 18th March is unusually many for this part of the Forth (RWJS). At Montrose (see *antea* 2: 45) 45 were still present on 10th April (HB). A **Shoveler** off Eagle Rock, West Lothian, on 29th April was the first the observer has seen in the Almond Estuary (TCS).

Five **Scaup** were seen on 22nd April off Gullane Point, where the species is surprisingly scarce considering the numbers a few miles up the Forth at Leith (DGA, DJ, TCS). A flock of 40 was still at Carsethorn, Kirkcudbrightshire, on 18th May (HB). In Glasgow a pair of **Pochard** was at Hilda Marshes on 7th April and 8th May, and the drake was often seen until 22nd May, though there was no evidence of breeding (WW). On various Scottish lochs **Goldeneye** regularly linger into the first or second week of May. Late birds are reported from L. Ken, Kirkcudbrightshire, where a drake and a duck were seen on the 24th (HB), and Barr Loch, Renfrewshire, where a single bird was seen on 27th May and 2nd June (GHA, GLAP, LAU). Three **Long-tailed Ducks** were in L. Ryan, Wigtownshire, on 21st April (RS). The species is much less common in the south-west than on the east coast of Scotland.

Single "redhead" **Smews** were on the Lake of Menteith, Perthshire, on 1st April (GHA, ME, GLAP), and Barr Loch, Renfrewshire, on the 29th (LAU). A **Shelduck** was noted inland at Balgray Dam, Renfrewshire, on 18th March (DL, AMcC, AW).

A **Grey Lag Goose** off Eagle Rock on 14th April seems to be the first published record for West Lothian (TCS). There are a number of records of late, or in some instances possibly "pricked," Grey Lags. At Kingoodie there were 13 on 3rd May (HB); three at Gadloch, Lanarkshire, on the 11th were gone next day (WW); two at Barr Loch, Renfrewshire, on 2nd and 6th June had gone by the 16th (GHA, GLAP), but two on the Lake of Menteith on 3rd June (MFMM) were still there on the 10th (GHA). Most of the **White-fronted Geese** on Islay are of the Greenland form *flavirostris*, but flocks of about 40 European Whitefronts *Anser a. albifrons* were noted near Bridgend at the end of March (GW, MIW), and at Cornabus on 4th April (JMu). **Bean Geese** are now very unusual in Islay, where 15 were seen on 2nd April and five in the same area on the 5th (JMu). One thousand **Pink-footed Geese** flew N over Gifford, East Lothian, on 14th April (IH). At the Loch of Strathbeg, Aberdeenshire, 900 were still present on the 25th (ETV), and there were, as with the Grey Lags, quite a number of late Pinkfeet reported. In May there were still 28 at Libberton, Lanarkshire, until the 6th (RE-H), 47 at Kingoodie on the 7th (HB), and one at the mouth of the R. Endrick, L. Lomond, on the 27th (GHA). On 2nd June one was reported on Canna, Invernessshire (WW), and on the 3rd

there were five at the Lake of Menteith (MFMM), where two remained on the 10th (GHA).

During the winters of 1959/60, 1960/61 and 1961/62 a white Snow Goose was reported at various places in the lowlands, most frequently at Libberton, Lanarkshire (*antea* 1: 272, 386, 425). There can be no real doubt that all these reports refer to the same bird. There is no overlap of dates, and as it was a most outstanding bird—witness the fact that WB picked it up at nearly three miles range in a flight of over 1,500 Pink-footed Geese—it would not be easily overlooked. It was always with Pinkfeet, and in fact last autumn arrived with them (*antea* 1: 501). Those observers who saw it well agreed that, both on the ground and in the air, it was appreciably larger and heftier than the Pinkfeet, and that compared with the Lesser Snow Geese at Libberton it had a much heavier bill and comparatively shorter tarsus (WKR *et al.*). Save only for the fact that the white Lesser Snow Goose which escaped in Dumfriesshire in February 1958—a first year bird—was exceptionally large (*antea* 1: 274), one would have no hesitation in recording this bird as a Greater Snow Goose *A. c. atlanticus*; if it is ever possible to tell white Lessers from Greaters in the field this must be a Greater. Yet this would rule out a possible explanation put to us by WKR—that the white, and one of the blue, Lesser Snow Geese which escaped in 1958 might have bred beside the Pinkfeet in 1959 and reared the juvenile blue bird seen at Libberton the following winter. Snags to this theory include the absence of any Snow Geese in the winter of 1958/59, the absence of any further immatures, the independent behaviour of all three birds in 1960, as well as the great bulk of the white one.

In the winter of 1961/62 the supposed Greater Snow Goose was first seen flying with three Pinkfeet down the Dewar Burn, into Peeblesshire, at 1.15 p.m. on 13th October—a day when great numbers of Pinkfeet were arriving in the Lothians and moving south (per WB). At 3.30 p.m. it was seen landing with Pinkfeet at Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire—a very neat tie-up. It frequented Lochar Moss during the subsequent week, and there was a report of it from Collin, also near Dumfries, in early November (ELR). It then apparently returned to Midlothian, roosting at Gladhouse at least from 11th November to 2nd December (DGA, RWJS). Just after this there was a southward movement of local geese and an arrival of others from further north. The Snow Goose was back at Libberton on 14th December, and this seems to have been its main centre for the rest of the winter—though it was seen rather irregularly as it moved about a lot (RE-H). There is an unconfirmed, but evidently reliable report of it at the Peeblesshire end of Auchencorth Moss one day during the week before 27th January (per WB). On 4th, 10th, 16th,

17th, 18th, 19th and 21st February it was seen by a string of visitors to Libberton (JMSA, KCRH, CEP, WKR, GW, MIW), but on 1st March it was back at Gladhouse again, flying towards Biggar, and on the 6th near Wester Middleton, flying towards Gladhouse (per WB). On the 10th and 11th it had returned to Libberton (GHA, JRC, ME, EF, WGMH, GLAP, DRW), and it was still in that area in mid April (WKR).

Both the blue phase **Lesser Snow Geese** (or **Blue Geese**) returned to Libberton in the winter of 1961/62. The adult arrived on 13th October—the same day as the white bird flew south to the Solway and great numbers of Pinkfeet were seen—and was noted fairly regularly until 20th April, leaving during the next week while the observer was away (PGRB, KCRH, RE-H, WKR). The younger bird, last seen as a juvenile in the spring of 1960, was observed several times in February and March by WKR, and seen also by members of his adult education class. It now has a pure white head and upper neck, though considerably less white on the neck and body than the other bird. It tends not to mix with the other two Snow Geese which, for the first time, were feeding and moving about together from the middle of February. Except when the white bird went off to Gladhouse they seemed almost inseparable and gave the impression of being paired (KCRH, WKR).

A **Barnacle Goose** was seen with the Pinkfeet at Libberton, Lanarkshire, on 6th January and various dates until at least 2nd April (GHA, PGRB, ME, GLAP). Five **Canada Geese** were beside the road some miles north of Dumfries on 8th April (DL, AMcC, AW), 16 at Rowbank Reservoir on the Ayrshire/Renfrewshire border on 24th February (GHA), six at L. Thom, Renfrewshire, on 16th June (GHA), one at Duddingston Loch in Edinburgh, where it did not associate with the pinioned Grey Lags, on 4th June (DRA), and single birds at two places on Islay during the first week of April (JMu).

A surprising number of observers have reported **Whooper Swans** in May and June this year. Records come from:

Bridge of Dee, Kirkcudbright—3 adults and 1 immature on 5th May (AFA).

Loch Ken, Kirkcudbright—3 adults at N end, and 5 adults at S end on 5th May (AFA); 2 on 15th and 24th May (HB); 2 immatures on 2nd June (JGY).

Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, Ayr—an adult still there on 29th June after at least five weeks residence (JAB).

Gadloch, Lanark—3 adults on 5th May, but only one on the 6th, and it was driven away on the 8th by an aggressive Mute Swan (WW).

Barr Loch, Renfrew—an immature bird on 2nd, 6th and 16th June (GHA, GLAP).

White Loch, Renfrew—3 adults on 29th and 30th June (GHA).

Endrick mouth, L. Lomond—an adult on 27th May (GHA).

S. Uist—3 adults on one loch on 7th June, and 2 on another on the 9th (WW).

Six **Bewick's Swans** were seen with Whoopers beside the R. Medwin at Carnwath, Lanarkshire, on 9th February (RE-H), and two at Barr Loch on 11th March (LAU).

An **Osprey** was seen on Unst on 14th June (KDS).

Black Grouse seem to be on the increase in the upper regions of the R. Ayr. On 6th May three groups, of ten cocks and a hen, seven cocks, and eight cocks, were noted on a run from Sorn to Glenbuck, and they have been seen regularly in the area in the past year or two. Also, whereas one used often to come through the pass from Sanquhar to Crawford without seeing any, now one may see five or six (DL, AMcC, AW). At the end of April a **Corncrake** spent 24 hours in a small garden in Newburgh, Aberdeenshire (EAG), and on 2nd June one was seen and heard in a field at Belmont, Ayrshire (RMR). In the Lothians the species seems to have virtually disappeared in the last few years.

Oystercatchers were already inland and sitting about in the fields along the Tweed on 18th February (TCS), and in the St Mary's Loch area, Selkirkshire, on the same date (JBal). At the Moorfoot reservoirs the first bird had been recorded on the 10th (DGA). Three **Ringed Plovers** were recorded on a shingle bank in the R. Clyde near Thankerton, Lanarkshire, on 11th March (GHA, ME, GLAP). A winter record of **Grey Plover** in the west is of one at Barassie, Ayrshire, on 18th February (LAU). Baldoon Old Airfield, Wigtown, is a favourite winter haunt of **Golden Plover**, but more than 1,000 on 28th March were in fact passing through (AFA). Two **Dotterel** were at Southernness, Kirkcudbrightshire, on 16th April (WA). On 9th March **Woodcock** and **Oystercatchers** were arriving on a rugger pitch at Haddington. It was very cold and the ground was covered with snow. The **Oystercatchers** continued on northwards, but the **Woodcock** turned back towards the R. Tyne (AMacd).

In and about the Lothians there seems to have been a substantial increase in the number of breeding **Curlews**; with only a little more effort this year it has been possible, while looking for broods of Lapwings, to ring 17 Curlew chicks, where three were ringed last year, one in 1960, and none in 1959, 1957, 1956 or 1955 (ATM). An early **Whimbrel** was on Islay on 1st April (JMu). Two were at Aberlady on 5th May (KSM, MFMM), two at Longannet, Fife, on the 19th (JH), and single birds at the mouth of the R. Endrick, Dunbarton and Stirling, on 27th May (GHA), Tayport on 1st May (HB), Morar on the 24th, Canna on 2nd June, and Sanday, the neighbouring island, on the 3rd (WW). A **Black-tailed Godwit** was at Aberlady on 25th May (ATM), two were at Cult Ness, Fife, on 1st May (GD, JP), and single birds were at Lundin Links, Fife, on 21st April (PGB), Kingoodie on 18th April

(HB), the Ythan Estuary on 11th April (EAG), and Cotehill Loch, Aberdeenshire, on the 22nd (ETV). A **Green Sandpiper** at Bell's Burn, Manderston, Berwickshire, on 21st and 22nd April was the first recorded there in April, though this is a winter locality (*antea* 2: 42) (SJC). At New Cumnock, Ayrshire, the first **Common Sandpiper** arrived on 11th April—about the usual date (JAB), and on the Tweed at Walkerburn there were three on the 21st (JBal). In the Moorfoots two were seen at the reservoirs on 15th April (DGA), and in the hill valleys the first was seen on 21st April, three pairs were noted next day, and they were generally distributed by the 25th (WB). Two were at West Saltoun, East Lothian, on the 23rd (AMacd), and two near Balerno, Midlothian, the same day (KSM). A **Spotted Redshank** was at Aberlady on 22nd April (DGA, JBd, WKB, TCS). In Lanarkshire single **Greenshanks** were noted during the winter at Quothquan on 21st January (RE-H), and on the Clyde near Thankerton on 11th March, perhaps the same bird (GHA, ME, GLAP), and in Dunbartonshire there were two at Cardross on 25th February (GHA, ME, GLAP). In East Lothian one was seen leaving Gullane Point to the NE on 22nd April (DGA, JBd, WKB, DJ, TCS).

Away from their breeding grounds single **Great Skuas** were seen a mile offshore from Anstruther, Fife, on 21st May (CNLC, KSM, JAS), and a mile offshore from Mallaig, Invernessshire, on the 26th (WW). Two **Arctic Skuas** were taking a short cut overland at Kilconquhar Loch, Fife, on 23rd April (PGB), and two dark phase birds were harrying the gulls near Horse Island, Ardrrossan, Ayrshire, on 16th June—an unusual date (JAB). A rather seedy **Long-tailed Skua** was found sitting on the 7th green of the golf course at North Berwick, East Lothian, on 13th June. It was taken home but later died. It was thought, from its plumage, to be a third or fourth year bird (HFDE per AMacd). On 27th June members of an Edinburgh Natural History Society outing had excellent views of an adult **Long-tailed Skua** on the sea and chasing terns west of Inchmickery in the Firth of Forth. A second skua was probably an immature of the same species as the shape and flight action were similar (RWJS).

Herring Gulls were noted breeding on Inchgarvie in the Firth of Forth this year (RWJS). Parties of **Common Gulls** were flying NE at Haddington, East Lothian, in wet weather between 1600 and 1700 hrs on 21st April (AMacd), and a similar movement on a smaller scale was seen at Aberlady at about the same time on the following day under very much better conditions (DGA, DJ, TCS). This was perhaps spring departure as discussed by Bourne and Patterson (*antea* 2: 3-17). A pair of **Common Gulls** which nested at Lochside, Sanquhar, was the observer's first breeding record for upper

Nithsdale (JGY). At Loch Skene, in the Moffat Hills, on 6th June a pair of Common Gulls was flushed from the same islet which White-tailed Eagles once used, and the birds watched through binoculars as they returned and one of them very clearly settled down on a nest to incubate (DAR). These two records would seem to be the first reports of breeding in Dumfriesshire. At Dornoch, Sutherland, at least two pairs nested in a field of barley (DM).

An immature **Glaucous Gull** was seen at Ayr on 18th February (GHA, ME). Single **Iceland Gulls** were noted at various places in April, and descriptions of these birds have been sent. One was at the Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, with Herring and Greater Black-backed Gulls on the 6th, and may have been blown inland by westerly gales on the 5th and 6th (JAB), one was at Longannet, Fife, on the 22nd (JH), and one at Oban with two Glaucous Gulls on the 23rd, and again on the 26th when it was watched at ranges down to two feet as it walked among the fish boxes on the quayside, or stood beside a Glaucous Gull (ME, GLAP). None of these birds was fully adult.

At Buddon Burn, Angus, 49 **Little Gulls** were counted on 24th April. Of these, 20 were 1st year birds, and the rest were adults in summer plumage—11 with their breasts and the front of their necks suffused salmon-pink (HB). An immature bird was at Barr Loch, Renfrewshire, on 6th June (GHA, GLAP). A dead **Kittiwake** was found inland at Manderston, Berwickshire, on 22nd April (SJC). A count of the colony at Dunbar harbour gave a total of at least 225 nests on 17th May (AFA).

The first report of **Common Terns** this spring was an inland one of three at Sanquhar sewage works in Dumfriesshire on 18th April (JL). Two were at St Andrews on the 22nd (MHEC), and three near Monifieth, Angus, on the 24th (HB). At Longannet, Fife, 40 or 50 pairs bred in 1961 on low islets in the area enclosed by the sea wall used as a settling area for the muddy waste from the nearby power station. 1962 must be the last year in which they can nest, as the level of the mud is rising. There were 90 nests on 28th June, as well as 65 deserted eggs which had been flooded by recent rain. Quantities of grass, sticks and other material were used by the observers to raise low lying nests and to make some completely new ones. Nearly all were accepted, including one made entirely of a large piece of fibreglass. On 1st July 97 nests were counted. Two **Arctic Terns** were seen there on 13th May, and up to 24 **Sandwich Terns** were present from mid May to mid June without attempting to nest, though several of them were seen mating (JH). An **Arctic Tern**—tarsus 16mm—was found on Garvald Law in the Moorfoots on 19th May.

As it had been dead for two or three days it may have come in with the gale on the 17th (WB).

The first **Little Terns** were reported on 24th April, when four pairs were at Buddon Burn, Angus (HB). Four at Forvie Sands, Aberdeenshire, on the 26th had just arrived as they were not there earlier (ETV). The first two **Sandwich Terns** were at Port William, Wigtownshire, on 9th April (AFA). After a gap there was a report from Elie, Fife, on the 20th (PGB), and two were at Pease Bay, Berwickshire, on the 21st (MJH, DGL), one at Aberlady (JBd, WKB) and three at Inverness (MR) on the 22nd, seven at Tynninghame on the 23rd (HAF), and 12 at Aberlady by the 25th (HAF, KSM).

An occasional **Razorbill** has been seen about the Lamb, off North Berwick, in recent years. An egg and a chick found on 9th June are the first proof of breeding (RWJS). An oiled and recently dead **Little Auk** was found at Barns Ness, East Lothian, on 23rd April (AMacd). A tremendous increase has taken place in the number of **Puffins** on Craighleith in the Firth of Forth. Between 500 and 600 birds were estimated by two groups of observers, and this ignored birds underground. Two nests with eggs were found in open crevices—an unusual thing there (RWJS).

A **Turtle Dove** was seen near Gartmore Station, Perthshire, on 6th June (MFMM).

The first **Cuckoo** was reported in Wigtownshire on 20th April in a letter to the *Scotsman*. It was at L. Ba in Mull two days later (LS, MVS), Walkerburn on the 25th (JBal), and in the Moorfoots on the 26th. There were more in this last area than for the past two years, and consequently they were more vocal (WB).

In response to our appeal (*antea* 2: 43) we have received a few reports of **Barn Owls**. That the south-west is probably the best area in which to look for them is testified by reports from the Whithorn area (AFA) and Caerlaverock (HD). On Islay, two were flushed from a copse at Bowmore and a third seen by the mouth of the Laggan on 19th February (JC per MFMM), while Dr Tait sees them regularly at Bruichladdich (per MFMM). In Midlothian one was seen this spring near Mid Calder. They have roosted at various sites about the Addiewell shale oil works since 1939, and still do so (HH).

In spite of the late season for early migrants, **Swifts** arrived well up to time, with several April records. The following reports probably give a fairly accurate picture, especially as the weekend fell on 28th/29th April:

29th Apr—1 Gladhouse, Midlothian (DGA).

30th Apr—5 Haddington (AMacd), 1 Inverleith (IHS) and 3 Blackford (ATM), both in Edinburgh.

1 May—Hirsel, Berwickshire (HDD), Glasgow (MS per MFMM), Dud-dingston (DRA) and Fairmilehead (HAF), both in Edinburgh.

- 2 May—1 Gullane, East Lothian (WKB), now 25 at Inverleith (JHS), 15 Linlithgow, West Lothian (KSM).
 8 May—"not till today" in Inverness (MR), 3 Dornoch—earliest for 29 years (DM).

A **Green Woodpecker** was seen on Corstorphine Hill, Edinburgh, on 22nd April (AA). Although the species has bred within the city for some years it is slow to consolidate or progress much further. One was seen near Lanark on 11th March (GHA, ME, GLAP). In the county the birds were back again at the 1961 breeding site near East Kilbride (see *antea* 1: 454) (DL, AMcC, AW), and a letter in the *Scotsman* on 26th June records that Green Woodpeckers have been about Dalzell Estate, Motherwell, for several years, and that a pair was seen this year with young in a nest in a tree on the estate. As **Great Spotted Woodpeckers** have apparently never bred at Tentsmuir (*antea* 2: 152) it is worth noting that a pair was watched feeding young at a nest not far away at St Fort Wood near Wormit in June. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen there in March 1961 but no nest was found that year (LBT).

Swallows were about two weeks late this year. A single bird was seen on 13th April in advance of a most impressive series of observations from the 20th to the 24th:

- 13 Apr—1 Cramalt, between Talla and St Mary's Loch (HAF).
 20 Apr—moving in Wigtownshire (RS), 12 at the Hirsell (MJH, DGL) and 2 Duns (WMLH), both Berwickshire, and noted Lundin Links, Fife (PGB).
 21 Apr—noted Haddington (AMacd), 1 Longannet (JH).
 22 Apr—1 in Moorfoots (WB), 6 Gladhouse (RWJS), 10 Aberlady (DGA, JBd, WKB, DJ, TCS, JHS), 1 Longniddry, 1 Musselburgh (DGA), and in Edinburgh at Granton (AMi) and 1 Colinton (ATM).
 23 Apr—1 Barns Ness, East Lothian (AMacd).
 24 Apr—1 Crichton, Midlothian (KSM), 1 Kingoodie, Perthshire (HB).

House Martins arrived about the usual time, which meant that instead of being perhaps a fortnight later than the Swallows they came more or less with them. This is a clear demonstration of the way in which the early migrants were held up by the weather but the later ones were little affected:

- 20 Apr—1 Sandhead, Wigtownshire (RS), 1 Moorfoots (WB).
 23 Apr—1 Lundin Links, Fife (PGB).
 29 Apr—1 Colinton, Edinburgh (ATM).
 30 Apr—2 Haddington (AMacd).

Sand Martins, being early migrants, were held up and arrived a good two weeks late. A few reports on 13th and 14th April were followed by a gap until the 20th to 24th—the same dates when the first Swallows were being seen:

- 13 Apr—New Cumnock, Ayrshire (JAB), Inverleith Park, Edinburgh (JHS).
 14 Apr—11 Lennel, Berwickshire (DGL).
 20 Apr—Duddingston (DRA), St Andrews (MHec).
 21 Apr—7 Walkerburn (JBal).
 22 Apr—Sandhead, Wigtownshire (RS), 3 in Moorfoots—where general by 29th (WB), 1 Longannet (JH).

23 Apr—single birds at W. Saltoun, Humber, and near Haddington, all East Lothian (AMacd), 3 Aberlady (WKB), Dalkeith, Midlothian (HAF), Lundin Links (PGB).

24 Apr—1 Crichton, Midlothian (KSM).

A **Maggie's** nest with six young birds was found in a fir at Lochwood, near Moffat, on 27th April. Magpies have been virtually absent from this part of Dumfriesshire for a good number of years (RWA, ED). A **Jay** was seen at Tulliallan, Fife, on 24th April. The observer searches unsuccessfully for a nest there each year (JH).

Great Tits and **Blue Tits** have been very scarce in the Invergowrie district on the Perthshire/Angus border this spring (HB).

Fieldfares were still present at Manderston, Berwickshire, on 4th May (SJC), and one was seen in Glen Lyon, Perthshire, the same day (HB). The first **Ring Ouzel** was not seen in the Moorfoots until 1st April. By the 15th they were generally distributed in that area (WB).

Not one **Wheatear** was reported in March, and only a very few in the first week or 10 days of April. The records do not show the clear picture given by those for Swallow and Sand Martin, but this species was probably about a fortnight late:

1 Apr—Thornhill, Dumfriesshire (JHS).

5 Apr—1 cock Islay (JMu).

6 Apr—1 cock Kingsbarns, Fife (HB).

7 Apr—New Cumnock, Ayrshire (JAB)—and 8th (WA, JGY).

8 Apr—2 cocks Moorfoots (WB), 1 bird Dalwhinnie, Inverness-shire (PGB).

10 Apr—3 Glenkill, Dumfriesshire (DS), 1 Drem, East Lothian (per AMacd).

12 Apr—1 Crathes (MWJ), Mull (EK per TCS).

13 Apr—3 St Mary's Loch area (HAF).

14 Apr—1 Walkerburn, Peeblesshire (JBal).

15 Apr—2 St Abbs, Berwickshire (SJC, MJH, DGL), 6 Carnethy Hill, Midlothian (HAF).

18 Apr—Arisaig (EK per TCS).

20 Apr—moving in Wigtownshire (RS).

22 Apr—prominent Aberlady (JBd, WKB), I Longannet (JH).

A **Wheatear** on the West Linton side of the Cauldstane Slap on 12th May was evidently on the move, and on the basis of colour and larger size the observer identified it as a cock of the Greenland race *Oe. oe. leucorrhoea* (WB).

Wigtownshire must be one of the best parts of Scotland for seeing **Stonechats**. Many pairs wintered and others arrived in March. They are common on the rough heathland of the Machars, and also about in good numbers in the coastal parts of the Rhinns. Along the same five miles of coast where there were ten pairs in October 1961 (*antea* 2: 53), over 15 pairs were counted on 21st April (AFA). A poorly marked cock was at Tynninghame on 18th March—probably a migrant (WMS, RWJS). In the Pentlands a pair was at Carnethy Hill on 15th April (HAF, IMF). As a pair was at Threipmuir in 1961 (*antea*

1: 460), this is further evidence of a very slow return to the area.

An early cock **Whinchat** was seen near Balerno on 23rd April (KSM). Apart from this record the first birds were seen early in May—about the usual time. A cock was at Glencorse Reservoir, Midlothian, on the 3rd (HAF), a number were passing through the Moorfoots on the 5th (WB), and a remarkable party of about 20 was at Corehead, on the Annan Water, on the 7th (RWA, ED).

Only a few arrival dates are reported for **Redstarts**—one at Gifford, East Lothian, on 19th April (AMacd), one at Gladsmuir, East Lothian, on the 25th (KSM), and a pair at their breeding site near Milton Bridge, Midlothian, on the same day (DD).

A **Black Redstart** was at Tundergarth, Lockerbie, for most of the day on 21st April. It fed in the midden, and flitted about, singing from a gable or a branch. From its plumage—especially the lack of any white flash on the wings—it was evidently a first year cock. This is a new species for Dumfriesshire (PMG, RTS).

There was a most spectacular rush of **Robins** on the Bass Rock from 17th to 22nd April. During that time no less than 44 were caught in one mistnet under difficult conditions. Such numbers represent an enormous movement. Five Robins were found dead on the rock, and from the range of weights of the birds which were caught—13 to 18 gms—it seems that they had been involved in a taxing passage. Hedge Sparrows (*q.v.*) were also moving (JBN).

Reports of reeling **Grasshopper Warblers** come from Saltoun, East Lothian, on 28th May (ATM), Tulliallan, Fife, on 3rd and 9th May—thought to be an unmated bird (GD, JP), and from Benderloch Station, Argyll on 13th May (TW).

The first **Sedge Warbler** was in East Fife on 28th April (RSW), one was at Stormont Loch on 3rd May (HB), there were two near Walkerburn on the 7th (JBal), and pairs were at Lochmaben on the 11th, West Linton on the 13th, and Dirleton the same day (AFA). At Duddingston the first one was not noted until the 22nd (DRA).

The first **Blackcap** was singing at Gladsmuir, East Lothian, on 25th April (KSM). In the Valleyfield district of Fife this year a pair was present but no nest was found, while three other cocks did not remain in the area (JH). A cock singing near Troon on 10th June was the first the observer had seen in Ayrshire (RMR). The only arrival date reported for **Garden Warblers** was 11th May, when two were at Lochmaben (AFA). In West Fife they have been scarce this year—possibly because of disturbance to their habitat (JH). The only reports of **Whitethroats** before mid May are of single birds at Glad-

muir on 25th April (KSM), Aberlady on the 29th (WKB), and Kingoodie on 6th May (HB).

Willow Warblers appeared at the same time as the Swallows and martins:

- 18 Apr—1 in song at Garvald Farm in the Moorfoots (WB).
- 19 Apr—Monreith, Wigtownshire (AFA).
- 20 Apr—on the move in Wigtownshire (RS).
- 21 Apr—4 Threipmuir (HAF), and noted Currie (JHS), both Midlothian, noted St Andrews (MHEC).
- 22 Apr—1 High Valleyfield, Fife (JH), 3 Gladhouse (RWJS).
- 23 Apr—Hound Point, West Lothian (TCS), Duddingston (DRA).
- 24 Apr—1 Haddington (AMacd), Kingoodie (HB).

Chiffchaffs do not appear to have arrived any earlier than the Willow Warblers except in a few places:

- 12 Apr—Monreith (AFA), singing Dumfries (WA).
- 21 Apr—3 singing and chasing at Lade Braes, St Andrews, and again on the 22nd, but gone by the 24th (MHEC, JMcF), 1 singing Belford, Edinburgh (CPR).
- 22 Apr—singing over rhododendrons at Newbattle Church, Midlothian, and again on 6th May (EH).
- 24 Apr—4 singing Port Logan, Wigtownshire (AFA).
- 25 Apr—1 Gladsmuir, East Lothian (KSM).

While some of these are hardly worth mentioning for the dates—since the birds had probably been present earlier—the localities may be of interest. Other Chiffchaffs are reported from Milton Bridge, Midlothian, where they were almost certainly feeding young on 16th June (WAC), from suitable habitat for breeding near Dalhousie, Midlothian, on 7th May (EH), and singing at the end of April by the landing place on Eigg, where one was heard in 1960 (*antea* 1: 383) (LS, MVS).

The only arrival dates reported for **Spotted Flycatchers**—two in the Moorfoots on 10th May (WB), and at Duddingston on the 16th (DRA)—may not be representative.

Ten **Hedge Sparrows** were caught on the Bass Rock with the rush of Robins from 17th to 22nd April. They weighed from 16½ to 22½ gms (JBN).

Several pairs of **Yellow Wagtails** *M. f. flavissima* nest each year in an area of rough pasture within the northern boundaries of Glasgow. There were three pairs in both 1960 and 1961. Usually the cocks arrive in late April or early May, and the hens some two weeks later. They have time for one brood only, and are gone by September—latest date, a juvenile on 15th September 1961. This year one of the cocks was already paired as early as 4th May. From 24th April to 11th May a cock of the Blue-headed form *M. f. flava* (a detailed description has been supplied) was present, and on 8th May it was displaying to one of the local *flavissima* hens (WW). At Aberlady a Yellow Wagtail of undetermined race was seen on 5th May (MFMM), and a cock Blue-headed, fully described, on 5th June (EH). We continue to use the old nomenclature for these *flava* Wagtails and leave it to others to decide, if it is

possible, whether birds showing the characteristics of the Blue-headed race are Blue-headed Wagtails or mutants thrown up by the British population of Yellow Wagtails.

A **Waxwing** was at Invergowrie on 26th April (HB). A **Great Grey Shrike** was perched above the railway track near Parton, Kirkcudbrightshire, on 18th February (GHA, ME).

Three **Hawfinches** were seen on the edge of Binning Wood, East Lothian, on 13th May (MFMM), and one in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh—where they were seen quite often a few years ago—on 22nd April (CPR). Nine **Siskins** were still with a mixed flock of finches at Gifford, East Lothian, on 23rd April (AMacd). A pair almost certainly nested at Tulliallan, Fife, but proof is lacking. The birds were watched there on 14th May (JH). A flock of some 25 **Twite** was seen near Eagle-sham, Renfrewshire, on 17th February (LAU). **Bramblings** are reported more widespread than usual in and around the Clyde area; there were three with Chaffinches by the West Kilbride/Dalry, Ayrshire, road on 13th January, several with Chaffinches in Stirlingshire by the Balfron/Buchlyvie road in December 1961, several near Buchlyvie Station, Perthshire, on 25th February, and some with Chaffinches and Greenfinches near Thankerton, Lanarkshire, on 28th January (GHA, ME). No large flocks have been reported.

Four **Lapland Buntings**, described by the observer, were seen in Berwickshire at Kyles Hill, near Hule Moss, on 1st January (DGL). Though the **Snow Bunting** is a common winter visitor to Scotland it may be worth noting, for the sake of completeness, two flocks reported in addition to those previously recorded (*antea* 2: 56, 106). In Ayrshire there were between 100 and 150 in a stubble field at New Cumnock on 6th January (JAB), and in Renfrewshire about 50 on barley stubble on 10th March (LAU).

We know of only two reports of **Tree Sparrows** in Kinrossshire (*antea* 1: 431, *Scot. Nat.* 1955: 104). A small flock was seen at Old Manse of L. Leven on 6th October 1960 (GD per RWJS), and odd birds have been heard, but never seen, for several years. One was seen on 27th May this year, and a nest with three young birds found on 23rd June in a small group of trees in a field. This is the first breeding record for the county. At least three more Tree Sparrows were heard in another area (TB, RWJS). At Kirkhill, Invernessshire, a small colony—the only one the observer knows in East Inverness—has associated with House Sparrows about a farm steading since at least 1960. There were about 12 on 6th March 1960, about 40 in March 1961, but only about six in April 1962 (MR). At Dornoch, Sutherland, a small colony nests in the foundations of occupied Rooks' nests, starting their operations before the young Rooks fledge. A few House Sparrows use similar sites (DM).

1961 and earlier notes

A **Sooty Shearwater** was seen some eight to ten miles out from Troon on 23rd July 1960. Several Manx Shearwaters were there for comparison, and good views were had at 40 yards range, when the pale white line on the underside of the wing could be seen (WW).

At Hilda Marshes, Glasgow, a **Whimbrel** was seen on 25th August 1961 (WW). A **Wood Sandpiper** was in the Low Parks, Hamilton, Lanarkshire, on 12th and 13th August 1961 (GHA, ME, GLAP), and a **Spotted Redshank** at the same place on the 17th and 26th (GHA). A **Greenshank** was seen at Hilda Marshes on 1st April 1961, and five **Ruffs** on 29th August 1960, and one on 31st July 1961. **Oystercatcher**, **Ringed Plover**, **Common Sandpiper** and **Dunlin** occur on spring and autumn passage (WW).

Two **Pied Flycatchers** were seen at Culquoich Estate, Glenkindie, Aberdeenshire on 9th May 1961, but we have no information as to whether they were breeding (JDP per EAG).

Further evidence of immigration of **Goldfinches** (see *antea* 2: 54) is provided by 28 near Redcastle, in the Black Isle, on 24th November 1961, and a small flock reported from near Strathpeffer about the same time. Goldfinches are uncommon in the area (WHH). Fifteen **Twite** at Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire, where they are regular winter visitors, were seen on 30th October 1961—three days earlier than those previously reported (*antea* 2: 55) (HD).

General observations on behaviour, plumage, etc.

A pale-coloured **Pink-footed Goose** was seen at Libberton, Lanarkshire, on 2nd April (PGRB).

Though the coast of Skye is bounded in many places by tremendous ranges of cliff, few of these fall into deep water, and there are few sea-bird colonies of any note. **Fulmars**, however, are widely distributed. In June they were found to have been a source of food to the **Golden Eagles** in five different coastal territories. In four of these the pluckings of single Fulmars were found on the cliffs frequented by the eagles, but in the fifth territory pluckings of about ten different Fulmars were scattered along half a mile of the top of the nesting cliffs. In each locality the eagles conveniently identified themselves by shedding their own body feathers and down at the plucking places (DAR).

The white-headed **Oystercatcher** seen at Barnbogle on 17th March (*antea* 2: 107) stayed there until at least 2nd June (TCS).

On 3rd May a **Woodpigeon** was flushed from the upper part of a steep, treeless, hundred-foot crag in Inverness-shire. There was a typical twig nest, with two eggs, on the bare rock,

beside a jammed block and under a slight overhang about ten feet below the crest of the crag—a site reminiscent of many favoured by Ravens. It was only about 60 feet away from a Peregrine's eyrie, containing three eggs and surrounded by the remains of the bird's prey, including pluckings of a Woodpigeon, there being pigeons in the wood below. While rock nests of this species are apparently not exceptional the other circumstances make this instance somewhat unusual (DAR).

A **Carrión Crow** seen regularly since July 1961 near Robroyston, Glasgow, has all-white primaries and secondaries on each wing. Another, with traces of white on the secondaries, is often with the white-winged bird (WW).

A **Song Thrush's** nest with seven eggs was found at Walkerburn in April. It is not known whether two females or two separate layings—caused by the cold weather—could have been involved. The nest was deserted by the birds (JBal).

An almost fully fledged **Willow Warbler**, "found" by a small girl, was fed on bread and milk and kept overnight, and placed the next day in the short tunnel leading to a nest containing five half-grown Willow Warblers. The foundling moved into the nest, and the adults returned with food after some hesitation. Two days later the stranger was still there, at the very back of the nest, and obviously accepted by its foster parents (JH).

REVIEWS

BIRDS AND WOODS. By W. B. Yapp. London, Oxford University Press, 1962. Pp. 308; text figures, tables, 28 plates and illustrations. 35/-.

This is an original and stimulating book in which the approaches of plant and animal ecologist are blended. Dr Yapp has aimed to provide information about all aspects of the lives of birds which are associated with trees, but particularly about their existence as a community conditioned by environment.

Sampling techniques for counting woodland birds and estimating relative abundance of the different species have been an essential tool in the construction of the work. The opening chapter is a pleasantly simple and readable description of these methods, and although the author does not claim a spurious accuracy for his results they have good comparative value and rise far above woolly generalisations. An admirable short account of British woodlands follows, giving main types, structure, history and distribution in relation to climate and geology. The status of native and semi-natural woodland, and the activities of the Forestry Commission are discussed,

with the introduction of useful forestry and botanical terms.

The main types of woodland are then described in greater detail and numerical data for their bird populations are given. Each type, distinguished by dominance of a particular species of tree, has its own characteristic assemblage of different birds. Most species occur in a variety of woods but some show apparent preferences, the Willow Warbler being outstandingly a bird of the north-west Highland birchwoods, while the Pied Flycatcher belongs mainly to sessile oakwoods. Only a few have a specialised choice, such as the Crested Tit of the Highland pinewoods, but several (e.g. Capercaillie, Goldcrest, Siskin and Crossbill) nest almost entirely in coniferous woods, a habitat preference which is matched by the largely Scottish distribution of the group. Pedunculate oakwood is generally the most productive for bird-life but Forestry Commission plantations are better than the casual observer might suspect, and even support nesting Kites in Wales. Winter populations are discussed but most of the data refer to the breeding season.

The significance of the ecotone or transitional zone between main climax types of vegetation is emphasised in dealing with small woods and semi-woods, and many birds are shown to belong to ground of open tree or shrub growth. Man has been responsible, through farming and urbanisation, for creating new and extensive areas of partly wooded habitat, and some birds are now more familiar in these artificial settings than in their original haunts. That particularly important but much neglected habitat, the hedge, is the subject of an interesting essay.

Then there is a picture of the changes in bird populations accompanying the growth of woods from seedling stage to maturity. The woodland bird community is discussed from many aspects as an inter-related group of species and individuals. Species are classified according to their food and each is shown to exploit a different range of habitat, though some overlap in food habits. Here we are led to controversial issues such as interspecific competition and the effects of predators on populations of their prey. Song, territorialism, nesting habitat, roosting and flocking habits, adaptability to habitat and population regulation all find discussion in this review of inter-relationships. And the effects of the birds on the woods is not forgotten: one intriguing suggestion here is that the Jay's habit of burying acorns may be important in the maintenance and spread of natural oakwood.

Geographical distribution patterns are explained primarily in terms of limiting climatic factors. Dr Yapp has followed a fashionable trend in showing maps with isolines of climatic factors such as temperature, rainfall and sunshine duration

which fit fairly closely the geographical distribution limits of certain species. Birds are, however, a particularly intractable experimental material for obtaining proof of the inference that this is a true cause-effect relationship. The northward shift of range in some birds under recent temperature amelioration is perhaps a more convincing demonstration of climatic control, although it would seem from examples mentioned throughout the book that substantial, unprecedented and usually unaccountable change of distribution is so frequent as to be almost a characteristic of birds. Carrying on from the climate theme, there is a hypothetical reconstruction of the Quaternary history of woodland birds according to the widely accepted sequence of vegetational changes, assuming that habitat requirements have remained constant.

A final systematic list gives the geographical distribution and habitat range of each species, with notes on certain other aspects of their lives. The unorthodox systematic treatment will be applauded by those who believe that systematics should be a means to an end.

The fifteen black and white bird illustrations include a fine Tunnicliffe frontispiece of Pied Flycatchers and a selection from Bewick's *Land Birds*, while twelve half-tone plates are mainly of different types of woodland.

The book as a whole has a scope and measure of integration which could only have come from years of careful thought, planning and field work, during which the ideas and themes have gradually matured. Using woodland birds as his material and ranging over many fundamental aspects of avian biology, Dr Yapp has made an outstanding contribution to ecology. In these days of team projects and organised enquiries in ornithology it is refreshing to find so full a study which is essentially the work of one enthusiast, whose own field experience extends over a large part of Britain. The author nevertheless takes adequate account of the literature.

Some dangerous speculation in places is freely admitted and provides plenty of food for thought, while exceptions to some findings might be quoted according to more local experience. There are a few details of questionable accuracy, such as the Cumberland distribution of the Green Woodpecker (p. 292) and the statement that the Willow Tit is not a bird of the birchwoods (p. 256). Again, the man of Kent who goes to live in Skye might not agree that "Great Britain is not large enough to show any great difference in climate from one part to another." However, these are trivialities in a work which contains so much meat and is well worth the attention of all who take a serious interest in our native birds.

DEREK A. RATCLIFFE.

BIRDS IN BRITAIN. By Kenneth Richmond. London, Odhams Press Ltd, 1962. Pp. 160; 225 photographs (16 in colour). 30/-.

It is always pleasant to welcome a book by a Scottish ornithologist, and this is one which should find a vacant ecological niche. The modern identification guides make it easy for the beginner to put a name to his birds: this book takes him on to the much more rewarding stage of being able to appreciate the individual characters of each species and its place in the overall pattern.

After a short introductory chapter, dealing with the history of bird-watching and some current trends of investigation, the book proceeds to discuss all but the most uncommon British birds in their systematic order. This programme could have resulted in a dull catalogue, but the author has wisely not attempted to give each species uniform treatment and he allows himself to digress at length on the topics which interest him most. These digressions are wholly successful and show Mr Richmond as an accurate and sensitive observer with an infectious enthusiasm for his subject.

It is, however, disappointing that a number of minor errors should have crept into this book, especially where the author is not writing at first hand. These are often due to a certain carelessness in writing. For instance, the uninitiated may well wonder why it should be "incredible" that young Puffins, Guillemots and Razorbills should reach the sea by tumbling down into it from the cliff-face. No mention is made of the fact that this journey is performed long before the chicks are capable of flight, although this is presumably what the author had in mind. Moreover this does not hold good for the Puffin chick which does not leave its burrow until it is fully fledged and which is not attended by its parents when it puts out to sea. Most of the errors are not likely to cause much damage, but it is to be devoutly hoped that readers of this book will not accept at its face value the statement that "a pipit seen parachuting in song-flight from the top of a tall tree in May or June is almost certainly a Tree Pipit."

At a more general level, it seems a pity that Mr Richmond has so seldom made any reference to a bird's distribution outside the British Isles: there are so many cases in which this information helps enormously in understanding the bird's status in Britain. To Scottish readers, however, this parochialism may seem to be more than offset by the fact that the book is so largely written against a Scottish background, although even in this narrow field there are some statements that call for comment. Storm Petrel colonies, for instance, are not

restricted to the Atlantic seaboard, and Edinburgh ornithologists will be surprised to read that the Black Redstart has settled in their town and interested to know whether there is any foundation for the statement that the recent spread of the Gadwall in their area "is due almost entirely to the escape of pinioned birds."

The photographs vary widely in quality and interest. Too many are unsharp or give evidence of over-enlargement, and the general effect would have been very much improved by a more critical selection and more attention to artistic presentation. Some of the colour photographs tend to be garish and would seem to have suffered in reproduction. In only a few cases is any information given as to the taking of the photographs, and this is particularly unfortunate as some of the other photographs would appear to have been taken of birds in captivity, notably the geese and ducks. Perhaps the flight photographs are the most outstandingly successful, but there are also some portraits of waders on migration which bear impressive proof to Mr Richmond's skill as a photographer.

D. G. ANDREW.

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,

Spotted Crake in Midlothian

With reference to R. W. J. Smith's record of a Spotted Crake at Gladhouse (*antea* 2: 30), it is as well to observe that this species, when seen from behind, is indistinguishable from the Carolina Crake *Porzana carolina*. In view of the date of Mr Smith's bird, however, 20th July, the probability of its being a Spotted Crake is overwhelming, but a similar bird seen at Castle Douglas by A. D. Watson and myself on 9th February 1958, and F. D. Hamilton on the 16th, cannot, when the date is considered, be identified with the same measure of certainty, which is why we have never submitted the record.

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

(Professor Meiklejohn's point is a pertinent one, but we feel that the circumstances of this record are sufficient to eliminate the rather remote chance of its being the American species.—ED.).

OFFICIAL SECTION

THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB FIFTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE DUNBLANE HOTEL HYDRO, PERTHSHIRE 26th to 28th October 1962

PROGRAMME

Friday 26th October :

- 5 to 7.30 p.m. Conference Office in the Hotel Hydro opens for Members and guests to register (8s 6d each). Collect name cards and 8.30 to 9.30 p.m. and Annual Dinner tickets (16s 6d each).
6.15 p.m. Meeting of Council.
6.30 p.m. to midnight. Lounges reserved for informal discussions and refreshments. Ballroom reserved from 8 p.m. for showing slides and films exhibited by Members who **must** inform C. E. Palmer, 5 University Avenue, Glasgow W.2, not later than 22nd October if they wish to have slides or films included.
9.30 p.m. Excursion leaders will describe the places to be visited on Saturday and Sunday afternoons; in the Ballroom.

Saturday 27th October :

- 8.45 to 9.15 Conference Office open for registrations.
9.20 a.m. Official Opening of the Conference in the Ballroom.
ADDRESS OF WELCOME by Archibald M'Lellan, Esq., Provost of Dunblane.
9.30 a.m. LECTURE on "Geographical distribution and species formation in birds of prey," by Prof. Dr K. H. Voous (Zoological Museum, University of Amsterdam), followed by discussion.
11 a.m. INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.
11.30 a.m. COLOUR FILM. First showing in Britain of "Birds of the Galapagos," introduced in person by Heinz Sielmann (Munich, Germany).
1 to 2 p.m. INTERVAL for informal lunches (Hotels must be informed).
2 to 5.30 p.m. EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving the Hotel Hydro Car Park (See under "Information"). Details of the excursions will be posted on the Conference notice board.
6.15 p.m. 26th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CLUB in the Ballroom.
BUSINESS:
(1) Apologies for absence.
(2) Approval of Minutes of 25th Annual General Meeting of the Club held in Dunblane on 28th October, 1961.
(3) Report of Council for Session 25.
(4) Approval of Accounts for Session 25.
(5) Appointment of Auditor.

- (6) Consideration of the following proposed amendments to the Constitution:
- (a) That the words "or his or her Membership shall have become undesirable, or he or she shall have personally assisted in or connived at the capture or destruction of any bird, nest or eggs, in the British Isles, by purchase or otherwise, likely, in the opinion of the Council, to lead to the extermination or serious diminution of that species as a British Bird" in Paragraph 3(g) be deleted.
 - (b) That the words "The Club Treasurer shall collect all subscriptions" in Paragraph 4(a) shall be deleted and in their place shall be substituted "The Hon. Treasurer shall supervise the collection of subscriptions."
 - (c) That Paragraph 4(c) shall be deleted and in its place shall be substituted the following:
 "(c) Nominations:
 Nominations for vacancies among the Office-bearers or the elected Members of Council must be received by the Club Secretary not later than 31st July each year. Intimation of all nominations shall be given in the Notice calling the Annual General Meeting. Nominations for any vacancy in a Branch Committee must be received by the Branch Secretary not later than one week before the Annual General Meeting of the Branch."
 - (d) That Paragraph 4(e) shall be deleted and in its place shall be substituted the following:
 "(e) Branch Committees.
 The Office-bearers of each Branch shall be: (1) the Chairman; (2) the Vice-chairman; and (3) the Branch Secretary. Each of these shall hold office for three years and shall then be eligible for re-election. These, together with the addition of such members of the Branch up to a maximum of four, as each Branch shall deem necessary at each Annual General Meeting of the Branch, shall constitute the Branch Committee. Each Branch shall elect annually one member of the Branch Committee to represent the Branch on the Council. The Branch Chairman (or in the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman) shall preside at meetings of the Branch; and the Branch Secretary shall keep Minutes of the Branch Meetings and perform such other duties as may be assigned to him. He shall be empowered to receive and transmit subscriptions as may be arranged"
 - (7) Election of two new Members of Council. (The Council recommend the election of Dr G. M. Dunnet and G. H. Acklam to replace K. S. Macgregor and Prof. V. C. Wynne-Edwards who retire by rotation).
 - (8) Any other competent business.

7.30 for 8 p.m. ANNUAL DINNER in the Diningroom of the Hotel Hydro (Dress informal).

Sunday 28th October :

9.30 a.m. LECTURE AND FILM "The Royal Penguin" by Dr Robert Carrick (Division of Wildlife Research, C.S.I.R.O., Canberra, Australia).

11 a.m.	INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.
11.30 a.m.	COLOUR FILM "Wild Highlands" (produced by the British Transport Commission).
1 to 2 p.m.	INTERVAL for informal lunches.
2 p.m.	EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving the Hotel Hydro Car Park.

INFORMATION

(1) **Conference Post Card.** In order to simplify arrangements, it is **essential** that Members intending to be present should complete the enclosed printed postcard and send it to the Club Secretary **not later than 22nd October**. Owing to limited seating accommodation, the Council regrets that Members may invite only one guest each to the Annual Dinner.

(2) **Excursions.** Members are asked if possible to provide private cars and arrange to fill their passenger seats; to avoid congestion in the Car Park the minimum number of cars will be used. Petrol expenses should be shared. Maps of the area should be brought (O.S. 1" maps; Old edition Nos 62, 63, 66, and 67; New edition Nos 53, 54, 55, 60, and 61). Members who wish to go out on their own are particularly asked not to go in advance of led excursions to avoid disturbing the birds.

(3) **Registration.** Everyone attending the Conference must register (8s 6d each) at the Conference Office on arrival (opening times—see Programme). Members wishing to attend the Annual General Meeting **only** do not require to pay the registration fee which covers incidental expenses—hire of films, projection equipment, mid-morning coffee, etc.

(4) **Annual Dinner.** Tickets for the Annual Dinner (price 16s 6d inclusive of tips) should be purchased when registering on arrival. Members and guests staying at the Hotel Hydro will be charged for the Annual Dinner in their inclusive hotel bill, but **must** obtain a ticket from the Conference Office. All tickets will be collected at the Dinner. No payments should be made in advance to the office in Edinburgh.

(5) **Hotel Bookings.** All Hotel bookings must be made direct with the hotel in which you wish to stay. Owing to the shortage of single rooms, members are urged to make arrangements to share a room with a friend. Private arrangements must be made with your hotel for lunches each day.

(6) **Swimming Pool.** The indoor swimming pool in the Dunblane Hotel Hydro will be available to residents during the weekend at no extra charge.

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.

¶ARDLEIGHTON 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. B. of A. 2293). Bed and breakfast from 30s.

ROYAL HOTEL (Tel. B. of A. 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.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, DEEDS OF COVENANT, AND BANKERS' ORDERS

Subscriptions for the new Session are now due, and should be sent with the enclosed form to the Club Secretary. The winter number of "Scottish Birds" will only be issued to paid-up subscribers.

Members are reminded that the Club is able to reclaim Income Tax on all subscriptions paid under Deed of Covenant; this greatly benefits the Club funds by almost doubling subscriptions paid in this way. The Council invites Members who pay Income Tax at the full rate to undertake a seven-year Deed of Covenant by using the form enclosed. Completed forms should be returned to the Secretary who will forward a Certificate of Deduction of Tax for signature each year.

A Banker's Order is also enclosed for the use of Members who find this a more convenient way of paying an annual subscription; this should be returned to the Secretary and not to the Bank.

NORTHERN COUNTIES CONFERENCE

KINGSMILLS HOTEL, INVERNESS

30th November to 2nd December 1962

An informal weekend Conference will be held in the Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness, from Friday 30th November to Sunday 2nd December 1962 for the purpose of discussing ornithological and conservation problems in the north of Scotland. There will be no official programme, but short papers will be given under the Chairmanship of Dr Ian D. Pennie. Members willing to contribute a paper are asked to inform Dr Pennie, The Hollies, Golspie, Sutherland, as soon as possible.

Owing to limited accommodation in the hotel, preference must be given to those resident in the northern counties and those particularly interested in northern problems, although every effort will be made to accommodate others who apply. It is hoped that members from further south will appreciate that the purpose of this week-end is to meet the request of those who find it difficult to attend the Annual Conference because of distance, and the latter must be given priority in bookings.

All reservations must be made with the Club Secretary, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, and **not** with the hotel. A registration fee of 5s should be sent at the time of booking to cover the cost of morning coffees and special hire of rooms for meetings. Members not requiring accommodation must also register with the Secretary, sending a registration fee. Fees will be returned if the booking cannot be accepted.

The inclusive weekend charge at the Kingsmills Hotel will be £4. This will include bed on Friday 30th; breakfast, lunch, dinner, and bed on Sat-

urday 1st; breakfast and lunch on Sunday 2nd. Dinner on Friday night will be an extra charge and the hotel must be informed in good time (Tel. Inverness 33034). Dinner is served between 7 and 8 p.m.

NEW BRANCH IN AYR

The Council have pleasure in announcing the formation of a new Branch of the Club in Ayr.

The Club Secretary and Mr George Waterston (Member of Council) attended a special meeting in Ayr on 25th April, at which over forty interested people, some already members of the Club, were present. It was evident that there was a great deal of interest and potential support for the formation of a Branch.

A the inaugural meeting, the following Officers were appointed—Chairman, Mr R. Macalpine Ramage; Vice-Chairman, Mr Gordon A. Richards; Secretary, Dr C. Higginbottom, 59 Forehill Road, Ayr; Committee, Dr M. E. Castle and Mrs A. E. S. Scorgie. Branch Representative, Mr R. Macalpine Ramage.

Although unable to be present at the meeting, Commander Sir Geoffrey Hughes-Onslow, R.N., was anxious to give his support and was elected Hon. President of the new Branch.

Three successful field excursions were held during the summer, and a programme of lectures has been planned for the winter months. Already twenty new members have joined the Club, bringing the total number in the area to over fifty.

The Council hopes that all Members living in the area will support this new venture by attending meetings and introducing new members, and wishes to congratulate Mr Ramage and Dr Higginbottom for their efforts and enthusiasm in establishing this new Branch.

BRANCH LECTURES

Aberdeen. Members are asked to note that meetings of the Aberdeen Branch will be held on a Monday instead of a Friday in each month, in the Senior Common Room, Marischal College.

Edinburgh. Members should note that the March and April meetings will be held at 7.30 p.m. to enable country members to attend.

CORRECTION

The Solway weekend excursion reported in the spring number (Vol. 2: 63) took place in 1962, not 1961.

