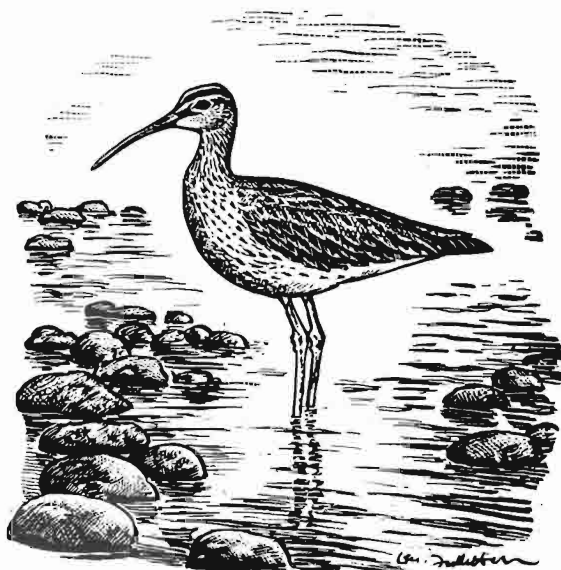


SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

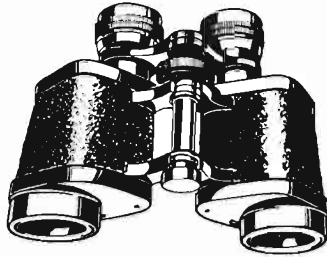
Vol. 2 No. 6

Summer 1963

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EDITORIAL ADDRESS

All contributions to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh 13. Advertisements to T. C. Smout, 93 Warrender Park Road, Edinburgh 9.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

The attention of contributors is drawn to the suggestions, last printed in the Autumn 1962 issue of the journal, about the form in which papers and notes should be submitted. It will be particularly appreciated if material for Current Notes is sent at the appropriate time—to reach the editor **before the end of June, September, December and March**, and **not** just after these dates.

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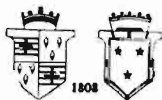
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Wanted : Scot. Nat. 1884-91; Birds of E. Lothian (Turnbull 1867); **Addenda to Birds of Dumfries** (Gladstone 1911).

For sale : Scot. Nat. 1935-57, complete, bound, 15 vols. in 14—£10. Andrew T. Macmillan, 66 Sovlaw Bank Road, Edinburgh 13.

Fair Isle Bird Observatory requires young married couple to take over research and administration of the Observatory from 1st July 1963. Write stating experience and qualifications to George Waterston, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7.

SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



Vol. 2 No. 6

Summer 1963

Edited by A. T. MACMILLAN with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and T. C. SMOUT. Business Editor, T. C. SMOUT. Cover Design (Whimbrel) by LEN FULLERTON. Published quarterly.

Editorial

Wild life and toxic chemicals. Publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, attacking the agricultural use of dangerous and often imperfectly understood chemicals, created a tremendous furore in the U.S.A. In spite of some large kills of birds, the problem has not yet reached the same proportions in this country, and reaction has been milder, or more complacent, depending on how one views the question. Nevertheless, the Association of British Manufacturers of Agricultural Chemicals has thought it worth producing a *Review and Commentary* on the book in order to present its own assessment of the situation in Great Britain.

Although it cannot be denied that some of Miss Carson's more horrific visions are largely hypothetical, yet equally it is true that it is not possible to prove they will not come to be. The important point is that the book directs attention to the whole subject and to the urgent need for more research and vigilance. The dangers and problems are with us now, and whether they are as dreadful as is suggested will not be known with certainty until it may be too late. There is a review of *Silent Spring* on another page. Everyone who finds pleasure in the countryside and its wild life must read this book. Copies can be had through the S.O.C. Book Agency, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7.

Film competition. Our special congratulations go to Charles Palmar, curator of the Department of Natural History in the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, but also chairman of the Glasgow Branch of the S.O.C. In a recent natural history film competition for amateurs, organised by the B.B.C. and the Council for Nature, he was joint winner of the £700 first prize for a film suitable for television. His entry, "Highland Heronry," shows the Heron and its neighbours on a sea loch in the West Highlands.

REVIEW OF ORNITHOLOGICAL CHANGES IN SCOTLAND IN 1962

DOUGAL G. ANDREW

Introduction

This is the tenth report of the Scottish Bird Records Committee, and it is concerned with records published during 1962 together with some records carried forward from earlier years. The journals searched, with the abbreviations used in this report, are as follows: *Scottish Birds* (SB), Vol. 2: 1-276; *The Scottish Naturalist* (SN), 1961 and 1962; *British Birds* (BB), Vol. 55; *Bird Migration* (BM), Vol. 2: 61-204; *Bird Study*, Vol. 9, *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* (FIBOB), Vol. 4: 207-236; *Bird Notes* (BN), Vol. 30: 1-160; *Ibis*, Vol. 104; *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* (Bull. BOC), Vol. 82. Use has also been made of a most valuable manuscript by Henry Boase—*Birds of North and East Perth* (BNEP)—of which further information will be found in a detailed review (SB 2: 266). Abbreviations are also used for the following works which are referred to more than once: *The Birds of Scotland*, 1953 (BofS); *Geographical Distribution and Status of Birds in Scotland*, 1928 (GDSBS).

The only change in the composition of the Committee since its last report has been an internal one. Dr James Campbell, who has been the Committee's Chairman for the past three years and who has so capably undertaken the main burden of preparing these reports, has felt obliged to retire from this office owing to pressure of other business. The Committee wishes to pay tribute to the valuable work Dr Campbell has done on its behalf. It is good to know that his experience will continue to be available as an ordinary member of the Committee.

The previous reports of the Committee have been published as follows: SN 1955: 98; 1956: 1; 1957: 37, 170; and SB 1: 30, 117, 253, 443; 2: 192.

BIRDS NEW TO SCOTLAND

SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPER *Calidris pusilla*. The 1956 Fair Isle record (SN 1957: 145) accepted by this Committee as the first for Scotland (SB 1: 30, 76) has now been shown (BB 56: 55) to have been a Western Sandpiper (see below). The 1957 Isle of May record (SB 1: 35) is now accepted as the first (and so far the only) occurrence of the Semi-palmated Sandpiper in Scotland.

WESTERN SANDPIPER *Calidris mauri*. One seen (and subsequently trapped), Fair Isle, 28th May 1956 (SN 1957: 145 *sub voce*

Semi-palmated Sandpiper, see also *BB* 56: 55). This is also the first British record.

DUSKY THRUSH *Turdus eunomus*. One seen (and subsequently trapped), Fair Isle, 18th October 1961 (*FIBOB* 4: 209). This is the third British record, the other two both being from England.

AMERICAN ROBIN *Turdus migratorius*. One seen, Grimsetter aerodrome, Orkney, 27th May 1961 (*BB* 55: 577). This is the fourth British occurrence, the species having been recorded once in England and twice in Ireland.

RIVER WARBLER *Locustella fluviatilis*. One trapped, Fair Isle, 24th September 1961 (*BB* 55: 137). This is also the first British record.

BONELLI'S WARBLER *Phylloscopus bonelli*. One trapped, Fair Isle, 22nd September 1961 (*BB* 55: 278). This species (first identified in Britain in 1948) has now been recorded nine times in England/Wales and twice in Ireland.

BIRDS NEW TO AREAS AND COUNTIES

GANNET *Sula bassana*. One between Drymen and Aberfoyle, 24th September 1961 (*SB* 2: 40); first for West Stirling. The Committee does not accept an earlier undated record (*BB* 38: 18).

FRIGATE-BIRD *Fregata* sp. One off Forvie, 20th August 1960 (*BB* 53: 455; 55: 565); first for Dee and Aberdeen.

[**WHITE STORK** *Ciconia ciconia*. One, Lochmaben, Dumfriesshire, 17th April 1961 (*SB* 1: 451); the tameness of this bird and the fact that one is known to have escaped from captivity early in the year must, in the Committee's opinion, raise serious doubts as to whether this was a genuine wild bird.]

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*. One (later joined by two others), mouth of the River Annan, 26th May 1962 (*SB* 2: 242); first for Solway and Dumfries.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *Anas crecca carolinensis*. It has been pointed out (*BNEP*: 45) that this Committee was wrong in accepting (*SN* 1955: 100) the 1952 Carsebreck record as the first for Tay and North Perth. Carsebreck lies within Forth and South Perth and the 1952 record is accordingly the first for this area and county. There is at yet no record for Tay. The 1961 Midlothian record accepted in our last report (*SB* 2: 192) as the first for Forth is in fact the second for this area.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*. One, Stormont Loch, 25th April 1953 (*BNEP*: 45); first for North Perth.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*. Two, Tullibody Island, 5th March 1960 (*SB* 2: 40); first for Clackmannan.

- GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*. Two, St Kilda, 10th October 1961 (SB 2: 70); first for St Kilda.
- LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. One, Kingoodie, 5th November 1922 (BNEP: 53); first definite record for North Perth, although the species has been described as "Winter?" (GDSBS: 252).
- VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*. One, Skinflats, 23rd October 1961 (SB 2: 41); first for East Stirling. A dead bird at Kingoodie, 4th March 1923 (BNEP: 53); first for North Perth.
- EIDER *Somateria mollissima*. Four, Kingoodie, 16th May 1920 (BNEP: 54); first definite record for North Perth, although the species has been described as "Occasional?" (GDSBS: 253).
- GREY LAG GOOSE *Anser anser*. One, Eagle Rock, 14th April 1962 (SB 2: 202); first for West Lothian.
- [GREATER SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens atlanticus*. One Libberton, first seen December 1959 (SB 1: 272; 2: 203); first record of this race for Clyde and Lanark. One, Caerlaverock, 13th October 1961 (SB 2: 203); first record of this race for Dumfries. The Committee accepts the correctness of the subspecific identification in these records, but again stresses that it is almost impossible to be sure that the bird (for it seems almost certain that these and other recent records all refer to the same individual) was not an escape from captivity (see BB 54: 182 and SB 2: 306). It has been implied that this bird was seen in Peebles (SB 2: 203; see also BB 55: 570) but the Committee is informed that the bird was not in fact seen to cross the county boundary.].
- BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*. The statement that "After the human population was evacuated from Island Roan in 1938 Barnacle Geese began to winter there and on the adjacent Eilean Iosal" (SB 2: 178) appears to provide the first definite record for North Sutherland, though Dr John Berry states that the Barnacle Goose "occurs sporadically along the North Coast, chiefly on small islands, but nowhere can be termed common" (*The Status and Distribution of Wild Geese and Wild Duck in Scotland*, 1939: 49). The species was first definitely identified in North Sutherland on 6th January 1949 (SB 2: 363).
- CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*. Four, Fair Isle, 6th June 1962 (BM 2: 203); first for Fair Isle. Two pairs with broods near Kelso, 13th June 1962 (SB 2: 255); first for Tweed and Roxburgh, although it is in fact known that birds have been present here for some time.
- MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*. One, Jura, 27th July 1962 (SB 2: 256); first for Inner Hebrides.
- RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*. One, Newport area, 21st

November 1941 (SB 2: 142); first for Tay and North Fife.

[RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE *Alectoris rufa*. A flock of 17 near Blair Drummond, South Perth, 28th October 1961 (SB 2: 96). The locality is only nine miles from Braco, where it is known that young birds had been released the previous year. There is no evidence known to the Committee that this species has yet succeeded in establishing itself anywhere in Scotland.]

KENTISH PLOVER *Charadrius alexandrinus*. One, Ythan Estuary, 3rd May 1962 (SB 2: 246); this (the second Scottish record) is the first for Dee and Aberdeen.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. One, Kingoodie, 3rd September 1922 (BNEP: 81); first for North Perth.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. "Common every autumn on Clackmannan shore of the Forth" (SB 2: 41); the first published reference to the occurrence of this species in Clackmannan.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*. One near Cambus, 12th September 1953 (SB 2: 41); first for Clackmannan.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*. Seven, Alloa Inch, 19th September 1953 (SB 2: 41); first for Clackmannan.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. One, Kerloch Hill, 7th August 1962 (SB 2: 257); first for North Kincardine.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. One, Orchard Farm, 11th September 1960 (SB 2: 41); first for Clackmannan. Three or four near Troup Head, 21st August 1962 (SB 2: 257); first for Banff.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*. One, mouth of River Black Devon, 15th April 1961 (SB 2: 41); first for Clackmannan.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*. One, mouth of River Endrick, 20th April 1961 (SB 1: 436); first for West Stirling. The observer has confirmed that the bird was seen to alight on both sides of the river at different times.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*. One, Fair Isle, 16th September 1961 (FIBOB 4: 209); first for Fair Isle.

WESTERN SANDPIPER *Calidris mauri*. (See under "Birds New to Scotland" above); first for Shetland and Fair Isle.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*. One, St Kilda, 15th June 1962 (BM 2: 204; SB 2: 299); first for Outer Hebrides and St Kilda.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*. Three, Rhind, 7th August 1960 (SB 2: 41); first for Clackmannan.

PHALAROPE *Phalaropus* sp. Two, St Kilda, 12th October 1961, "probably Grey Phalaropes" (SB 2: 71); first record of any phalarope for St Kilda.

- GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*. One, Eden Estuary, 17th September 1961 (SB 2: 148); first for North Fife. One off Malraig 26th May 1962 (SB 2: 206); first for West Inverness. The statement by Dr I. D. Pennie that "I have details of four subsequent unpublished records from the north and west (SB 2: 182) is the first published indication of the occurrence of this species in North Sutherland. The first record was in fact of one near Cape Wrath lighthouse on 19th August 1954 (SB 2: 363).
- ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*. One, Tullibody Island, 1st October 1960 (SB 2: 42); first for Clackmannan.
- IVORY GULL *Pagophila eburnea*. Dead bird at Templehall in early January 1956 (BNEP: 95); first for Tay and North Perth.
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*. "In winter flocks of between 6 and 24 may always be seen at certain favoured places in the Alloa area" (SB 2: 42); first published reference to the occurrence of this species in Clackmannan.
- ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*. One shot, Aberfeldy, 19th June 1926 (BNEP: 99); first for North Perth. One, Sheigra, 14th May 1962 (SB 2: 259); first for West Sutherland.
- LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*. One, St Kilda, 15th May 1962 (BM 2: 204, SB 2: 299); first for St Kilda.
- BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*. One, mouth of the River Spey, 16th August 1962 (SB 2: 259); first for Moray. One, Loch Morlich, 18th August 1962 (SB 2: 259); first for East Inverness.
- LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*. One, Kingoodie, 26th July 1924 (BNEP: 104); first for North Perth.
- COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. One, South Ronaldsay, 23rd July 1962 (SB 2: 247); first for Orkney. Two, Invergordon, 3rd August 1962 (SB 2: 247); first for East Ross.
- ALPINE SWIFT *Apus melba*. One, Unst, 13th June 1962 (SB 2: 249); first for Shetland.
- GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*. Has been noted in Kirkcudbrightshire at least since 1957 (SB 2: 43); first published reference to the occurrence of this species in Kirkcudbrightshire apart from an unsatisfactory second-hand record from the Kirkcudbrightshire/Wigtownshire border about 1883 (BofS 1: 254). See also under "First Breeding Records." One, St Mary's Loch, 12th November 1961 (SB 2: 43); first for Selkirk. One at Gartocharn, 31st August 1962 (SB 2: 261), is the first evidence that the current extension of range has reached Dunbarton. There is, however, an earlier undated record (*A Fauna of the Tay Basin and Strathmore*, 1906: 163) which the Committee accepts as the first record for Clyde and Dunbarton.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*. The 1953 breeding record at Luchmore (SB 2: 184—see under “First Breeding Records” below) is also the first recorded occurrence of the species in West Sutherland.

[WHITE-WINGED LARK *Melanocorypha leucoptera*. One seen, Loch Scarmelett, Caithness, 8th June 1958 (BB 51: 320). This record is not accepted by the Committee.]

SHORE LARK *Eremophila alpestris*. Four, Ythan Estuary, 30th December 1961 (SB 2: 105); first for Dee and Aberdeen.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*. “Jackdaws at Elphin in July 1958” (SB 2: 185); first published mention of the occurrence of this species in West Sutherland, though birds were in fact present in the same area as early as 1953 (SB 2: 364).

GREAT TIT *Parus major*. One (probably two), Stornoway Woods, 25th March 1962 (SB 2: 91); first for Outer Hebrides. The Committee can find no evidence to support the statement in Saunders’ *Manual of British Birds*, 3rd Edn., 1927: 148, that this species breeds at Stornoway.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus*. Two or more, Stornoway Woods, 7th November 1961 (SB 2: 43); first for Outer Hebrides. The Committee can find no evidence to support an earlier description of this species as “Resident” (GDSBS: 78) nor the implication this it has occurred in the Outer Hebrides (BofS 1: 128).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*. “Has been confirmed as breeding in... Lochinver, and recorded from Scourie” (SB 2: 186); first published reference to the occurrence of this species in West Sutherland. The earliest record is in fact of a family party at Loch a’ Mhuillin between 4th and 16th June 1951 (SB 2: 364).

DUSKY THRUSH *Turdus eunomus*. (See under “Birds New to Scotland” above); first for Shetland and Fair Isle.

AMERICAN ROBIN *Turdus migratorius*. (See under “Birds New to Scotland” above); first for Orkney.

ROCK THRUSH *Monticola saxatilis*. One, St Kilda, 17th June 1962 (BM 2: 204; BB 56: 66); this (the fourth Scottish record) is the first for Outer Hebrides and St Kilda.

[GREENLAND WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe leucorrhoa*. One, Pentland Hills, 12th May 1962 (SB 2: 210); this would be the first record of this race in Peebles, but the Committee considers that the existence of intermediate populations makes it impossible to identify with certainty the various races of the Wheatear in the field.]

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*. One obtained near Eliock, March 1947 (SB 2: 263); first for Dumfries.

RIVER WARBLER *Locustella fluviatilis*. (See under “Birds New to Scotland” above); first for Shetland and Fair Isle.

- CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. Three, St Andrews, 21st April 1962 (SB 2: 212); first for North Fife.
- BONELLI'S WARBLER *Phylloscopus bonelli*. (See under "Birds New to Scotland" above); first for Shetland and Fair Isle.
- ARCTIC WARFLER *Phylloscopus borealis*. One, Isle of May, 5th September 1961 (SB 2: 18); first for Forth and Isle of May.
- DUSKY WARBLER *Phylloscopus fuscatus*. One, Fair Isle, 14th October 1961 (BB 55: 190); this (the second British and Scottish record) is the first for Shetland and Fair Isle.
- GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*. "It is now plentiful wherever there are plantations, including Lochinver and Scourie" (SB 2: 187); first published reference to the occurrence of this species in West Sutherland. The earliest record was from near Scourie on 10th June 1954 (SB 2: 364). One, St Kilda, 5th September 1961 (SB 2: 72); first for St Kilda.
- PIED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. One, Strath Dionard, 30th May 1961 (SB 2: 44); first for North Sutherland. One, St Kilda, 5th October 1961 (SB 2: 72); first for St Kilda.
- TAWNY PIPIT *Anthus campestris*. One, West Lewis, 23rd October 1961 (SB 2: 250); this (the sixth Scottish record) is the first for Outer Hebrides.
- ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*. One, Kingoodie, 1st January 1928 (BNEP: 179); first for North Perth.
- WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*. One, St Kilda, 14th November 1961 (SB 2: 74); first for St Kilda.
- GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*. Two, St Kilda, 9th November 1961 (SB 2: 54); first for St Kilda.
- SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*. One or two, St Kilda, 12th November 1961 (SB 2: 54); first for St Kilda.
- LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea disruptis*. Has been recorded regularly on Tentsmuir since about 1930 though not yet proved to breed (SB 2: 158); first definite record for North Fife, where the status of this race has been described as "Occasional?" (GDSBS: 23).
- HORNEMANN'S REDPOLL *Carduelis h. hornemanni*. One found dead, West Lewis, 8th April 1962 (SB 2: 251); first record for either race of the Arctic Redpoll for Outer Hebrides.
- TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*. Flock of about 15 near Melvich, 24th May 1961 (SB 2: 39); first for North Sutherland.

FIRST BREEDING RECORDS FOR AREAS AND COUNTIES

- SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*. Pair with two small chicks on a lochan in Aberdeenshire, 5th August 1962 (SB 2: 242); had previously bred there in 1960 and 1961 (SB 2: 382);

- first breeding record for Dee and Aberdeen.
- BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps nigricollis*. The brief report of breeding "on a Perth loch" in 1949 (*BofS* 2: 504) in fact refers to Stormont Loch, where a pair and two young were seen on 12th June 1949 (*BNEP*: 38); first breeding for North Perth.
- FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*. Two eggs on Inchgarvie, 27th June 1962 (*SB* 2: 201); first breeding for West Lothian.
- WIGEON *Anas penelope*. One pair produced young, Morton Lochs, 1953 (*SB* 2: 133); first breeding for North Fife.
- PINTAIL *Anas acuta*. The record of breeding near Kingoodie in 1924 (*BofS* 2: 404) has now been withdrawn by the observer and the record of a female with a brood of five young at Stormont Loch, 6th June 1953 (*BNEP*: 47), is now accepted as the first breeding record for North Perth.
- COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*. Female in flightless moult and two juveniles found dead, Tentsmuir, 1947 (*SB* 2: 135); first breeding for North Fife.
- CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*. Two pairs with broods near Kelso, 13th June 1962 (*SB* 2: 255); first breeding for Tweed and Roxburgh—but see comments under "Occurrences" above.
- MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*. The first Scottish breeding records for this species were included without details in an earlier report (*SN* 1955: 104). To prevent confusion in the future, the Committee records that the 1952 and 1953 breeding "in the central highlands" (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 3: 63; 4: 73) provides the first breeding for Forth and South Perth; and that the 1953 breeding "in Galloway" (*SN* 1954: 41) provides the first breeding for Solway and Kirkcudbright.
- COMMON GULL *Larus canus*. Single pairs with nests near Sanguhar and at Loch Skene in the summer of 1962 (*SB* 2: 206-207); first breeding for Dumfries.
- ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii*. The statement that in 1961 "good numbers" were breeding on Fidra and about 200 pairs breeding on Inchmickery (*BN* 30: 26-27; but see also *SB* 2: 286) is the first published reference to breeding in East Lothian and Midlothian respectively.
- COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Pair with a nestling which had evidently fallen from the nest, near Dumfries, 10th April 1962; breeding had probably also taken place the previous year (*SB* 2: 199); first breeding for Solway and Dumfries.
- GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*. Has nested in Kirkcudbright since at least 1959 and probably as far back as 1956 (*SB* 2: 261); first breeding for Kirkcudbright. Bred, Lennox Castle,

1960 and possibly also in 1959 (SB 2: 43); first breeding for West Stirling.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*. Bred at Lochmore in 1953 (SB 2: 184); first breeding for West Sutherland.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*. "Has been confirmed as breeding in ...Lochinver" (SB 2: 186); first breeding for West Sutherland. The first acceptable breeding record is in fact of a pair seen carrying food at Lochinver on 17th May 1960 (SB 2: 364).

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris*. Pair nested in Stornoway Woods, May 1962 (SB 2: 93); first breeding for Outer Hebrides.

[CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. The description of this species as "Summer visitor, breeds" in Stornoway Woods (SB 2: 95) has been qualified by the observer. Small numbers have been heard singing during the breeding season over the past seven years (though not in 1962), but actual proof of breeding has still to be established in the Outer Hebrides.].

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*. Nest with young, Loch Leven, 23rd June 1962 (SB 2: 213); first breeding for Kinross. Nesting colony found in a wood on Eday, 1962, (BN 30: 154); first breeding for Orkney. Two nests near Barrhead, 2nd August 1962 (SB 2: 263); first detailed record of breeding in Renfrew, although there is a previous general statement by Dr J. A. Gibson in a paper on "The Breeding Birds of Renfrewshire" (*Glasgow Bird Bulletin* 4: 32) that "I myself know of four nesting records since 1944, and there are probably other records." At least three pairs bred Fair Isle, 1961 (*FIBOB* 4: 190); first breeding for Fair Isle since 1936. At least ten pairs bred, Kergord, July 1961 (*FIBOB* 4: 224); first breeding for Shetland since some time prior to 1937.

The following records have been held over for further consideration:

PELICAN *Pelecanus* sp. (SB 1: 356).

BAIKAL TEAL *Anas formosa* (*FIBOB* 2: 194), (*Bull. BOC* 78: 105).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*. (BM 2: 66).

ALPINE SWIFT *Apus melba*. (BM 2: 203).

SIBERIAN STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata maura*. (*FIBOB* 4: 209).

NOTES FROM ISLAND ROAN, SUTHERLAND

IAN R. DOWNHILL

Introduction

The group of islands known collectively as Island Roan, or Eilean nan Ròn, lies on the north coast of Sutherland just east of the mouth of the Kyle of Tongue and separated from the mainland by a half mile of the turbulent Kyle Rannoch. Fifty miles to the north-east the Orkney Isles line the horizon, and with the Shetland Isles provide shelter from Scandinavia; but to the north and west the North Atlantic stretches away to Faroe, Iceland and Greenland.

The main island, Island Roan proper, measures just over a mile from corner to corner and varies in width from a half to three quarters of a mile, with a very indented coastline. The cliffs rise steeply to about 50 feet on the south side and 200 feet on the north-eastern corner, the highest point being Cnoc Loisgen at 247 feet. The rock is mainly conglomerate, overlain in parts by red sandstone and split by deep clefts on the northern side, some of which run right down to the sea. At the foot of the two northern headlands, shelves of rock emerge from beneath huge boulders, and slope away into the sea, and a similar but flat shelf is exposed at low tide round the south-east corner of the island. There are fine natural arches and sea caves but many are only accessible by boat; while the West Bay holds a number of small stacks. At low water spring tides, Island Roan is joined to the smaller Eilean Iosal—the Low Island—and both are separated by steep gorges from the tall stacks of An Innis and Meall Halm respectively.

Island Roan was inhabited for at least 125 years up to December 1938 when the last families moved to the mainland. Their eight stone-houses, along with the old schoolhouse have fallen into various states of disrepair, some of the parts being removed to the mainland for building there. Clustered round these houses are the remains of the old stone sheep and cattle pens. An account of the lives of these fishing people is given by one of the islanders, John Mackay, in *The Northern Times*. They lived mainly on the natural resources of the island, and the animal life must have undergone considerable changes since they left, almost all of which are unrecorded.

At one point a core of the island has "dropped out," leaving at one end a black peat pool—Am Mol-lochan—and opening to the sea at the other end by a natural arch. The small area round the pool shows a rich growth of vegetation and tall ferns and forms a good shelter for small passerines in

windy weather. Most of the island top is given to heather moor dominated by ling, with the berried plants of crowberry and bearberry creeping through in the dryer parts. Bare stone patches give the island a somewhat arctic appearance on the more exposed slopes. The moor on the northern side is fairly hilly with marshy ground filling the hollows, and much of the water from here seeps into a muddy pool about 50 yards across and 12 to 18 inches deep, surrounded by clumps of *Juncus* and tall sedges. It drains over into Am Mol-lochan. The southern moor is flatter and wetter, there being little depth to the peat, and mosses and lichens grow amongst the sparser heather patches. Another somewhat shallower pond here drains over the southern cliffs and is much loved by the gulls for bathing.

Between the two moors lie the houses, and round them, running from west to east of the island, is an area of close-cropped grassland almost a quarter of a mile wide in one part. This was the area cultivated by the islanders, and it is intersected by numerous drainage ditches and a few dry stone walls, with spreading patches of *Juncus* and thistles. Another fairly extensive patch of very wet turf in the north-east corner of the island proved attractive to several species of wader. Areas of rather stunted bracken grow on the eastern cliff-edge, where the cliff vegetation itself is quite luxurious, owing, in part, to a series of springs, and to shelter from the prevailing winds. It is here too that dog rose, honeysuckle and a few willow bushes give shelter to some of the smaller passerines.

The island derives its name from the seals which are numerous around it. Fisher (1952, p. 174) refers to "Eilean nan Ròn, the island of the grey seal, on which the grey seal does not breed" but this is assuredly incorrect, as it was well known to the islanders that the grey seal breeds regularly in the island's caves. About 120 ewes graze Roan, with others on Iosal, but there are no rabbits or rodents. One of the islanders told me that both had been released ("mice, rats and rabbits") but the experiment had failed. The only land mammals appear to be bats and otters.

I stayed on the island from 18th to 20th July 1959 and again from 3rd August to 13th September 1962, mainly to study autumn migration on the north coast of Sutherland. The birds of the island are little known, reflected in the fact that it receives only two mentions from Baxter and Rintoul (1953), and indeed the only up-to-date account of Sutherland birds is that given by Pennie (1962), dealing with changes in status over the past century. The paucity of published records, particularly of seabirds, led me to prepare a full list and to bring all the available information under the one heading.

Unpublished notes have been provided by F. J. Betteridge, who was resident on the island from 6th July to 30th September 1950, and by Dr I. D. Pennie who has paid some seven visits since May 1947 and provided helpful records of the breeding species. Except where they contribute to generalisations these are acknowledged in the list.

LIST OF SPECIES

- Great Northern Diver.** Single birds on 8th and 18th August, and 3rd September 1962.
- Black-throated Diver.** Two on 6th August 1962.
- Red-throated Diver.** On three dates in 1962 from 3rd to 17th August, but thereafter up to four to 12th September.
- Storm Petrel.** Nesting on the north and west, Cnoc Loisgen, and possibly the south. Though this colony was first recorded in 1884 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley 1887) it could be still spreading, as there are many available sites round the houses. IDP found them on Iosal in 1949, and the colony there appears to be the larger.
- Manx Shearwater.** Westward passage observed in August and early September 1962, but numbers declining after mid August; highest count was 300 in an hour during a NW gale on 12th August. Details of shearwater passage have already been published (Downhill 1963), and these are some of the first records for Sutherland.
- Great Shearwater.** One on 10th August 1962, the first for Sutherland.
- Sooty Shearwater.** Westward passage in 1962, closer inshore than Manx Shearwater and on finer days, on 5th (10), 10th (6), 12th (6), 24th (1), 26th (3) and 27th August (3), 4th (1) and 9th September (1). First for Sutherland.
- Fulmar.** First appeared on Roan about 1929, though none on 18th June 1930. A good many on the west ledges in late May 1931, and about 30 sites there in June 1935 (Fisher 1952); nesting on the east side by 1948, with 96 sites in 1949. Of 143 chicks counted in 1962, 70 per cent were on the east. Iosal held 12 sites in 1949 and 14 in 1962, and there were seven on Meall Halm in 1949 (not counted 1962). A "blue" Fulmar was seen with westward passage of about 800 an hour on 10th August 1962.
- Gannet.** Fishing offshore June to September at least.
- Cormorant.** Colony on Meall Halm with 32 nests in 1959, and 40-50 in 1962. Sometimes visited by shooting parties (IDP).
- Shag.** Thirty-eight nests on Roan in 1962, but by late August there were up to 400 birds off the cliffs.
- Heron.** Single birds on 21st and 29th August, three on the 31st, and one on 11th September 1962.
- Mallard.** Two on 2nd September 1962.
- Teal.** Seven from the NE, 7th September 1962.
- Pintail.** Three on 18th and 19th July 1959.
- Eider.** First seen 1881, and breeding 1887 (Baxter and Rintoul 1953). Breeding also 1950, 1958 and 1962, but apparently irregular and never more than two or three pairs. Most of the adults seen probably come from the nearby Rabbit Islands.
- Red-breasted Merganser.** Seven on 10th July 1959, and two on 19th July 1962.
- Barnacle Goose.** Started wintering on the islands after the human population left, but not identified until January 1949. The only counts are

- of 300 on 28th March 1949 from the mainland, and 210 on 13th December 1955 (IDP). The unidentified geese seen by FJB on 12th and 13th September 1950 may have been of this species.
- Buzzard.** Nested 1950 (IDP); otherwise single birds on four dates in August and September 1947 and 1962.
- Sparrowhawk.** Ten birds on nine dates between 21st August and 11th September 1962, apparently coasting westwards.
- Peregrine.** Pairs present at least in 1950, 1955, and 1962 when a juvenile was also about. Said to breed by the local fishermen.
- Merlin.** One on 1st September 1950 and "seen subsequently" (FJB); also 25th August and 11th September 1962.
- Kestrel.** Single birds on seven dates, 5th August to 1st September in 1950 and 1962.
- Red Grouse.** In 1947 the gamekeeper at Tongue told IDP he found a single nest on Roan "some years ago."
- Oystercatcher.** About five pairs nest, but post-breeding flocks of up to 30 on the rocks in August.
- Lapwing.** A freshly dead adult on 19th August 1962 is the only record.
- Ringed Plover.** Two pairs present on 22nd May 1947 and noted again in June (IDP), but no proof of breeding. Heard flying over on 7th, 20th and 31st August 1962.
- Grey Plover.** Single birds flying SE on 6th and 11th September 1962.
- Golden Plover.** Up to four during the last ten days of September 1950 (FJB). Up to three on eight dates between 5th and 18th August 1962, and one on 29th. A second movement between 4th and 11th September resulted in up to three flying SE on six dates.
- Turnstone.** Up to two on the rocks in August 1962, and to 3rd September, but immigration in the last ten days of August brought the total to 20 on 20th, 16 on 24th and 8 on 30th.
- Snipe.** One pair bred 1959 and 1962. Five on 15th August 1962 were new.
- Curlew.** Less than ten post-breeding birds present in August and September; also recorded in December 1955 (IDP). Westward passage noted during the second half of August 1962, with maxima of 45 on 16th, 55 on 17th, and 32 on 23rd.
- Whimbrel.** One on 20th July 1959. Westward passage started on 16th August 1962 and was at a peak on 21st, 22nd and 23rd, with 27, 56 and 36 respectively. Mainly single birds thereafter to 10th September.
- Bar-tailed Godwit.** Two on 25th August 1962.
- Redshank.** Up to four most days in August and September; 32 on 4th, and 30 on 5th September 1962 were probably of Icelandic origin.
- Spotted Redshank.** One on 16th August 1962.
- Greenshank.** One on 3rd September 1962.
- Knot.** Present in fluctuating numbers from 18th August to 4th September 1962, with maxima of about 66 on 18th, 35 on 24th, and 40 on 25th August.
- Dunlin.** Single birds, 3rd to 5th, and 11th to 12th August 1962, with others on 13th, 19th, 20th (2) and 21st, and one on 8th September.
- Great Skua.** One seen on 19th July 1959; seen most days from 5th August to 12th September 1962, with numbers declining somewhat after eight on 17th August. For further details see Downhill (1963).
- Arctic Skua.** In August 1962 on 5th (3), 12th, 13th, 15th, 19th, 20th (2) and 31st. The last date coincided with the dispersal of the Kittiwake colony.

- Great Black-backed Gull.** Four or five pairs nest on Roan, but many more on Iosal.
- Lesser Black-backed Gull.** Recorded on 10th June 1947 (IDP), but not in 1950 (FJB). In 1959 a few pairs were nesting with the Herring Gulls on An Innis and a colony of about 50 pairs was established on the South Moor of Roan. Herring Gulls had joined this in 1962, when no Lesser Blackbacks were nesting on An Innis.
- Herring Gull.** Large well established colonies on Meall Halm and An Innis and a few scattered pairs on the cliffs of Roan and Iosal in 1959 and 1962 at least. A few pairs were with the Lesser Blackbacks on Roan in 1962 but not in 1959. After the dispersal of the colonies in late August 1962 a large roost formed on Iosal.
- Common Gull.** Up to seven most days, 3rd to 17th August 1962, with 17 on 16th. Thereafter on four dates to 11th September when there were seven.
- Black-headed Gull.** Five on 7th, and two on 21st August 1962, flying eastwards.
- Kittiwake.** Recorded nesting on the west side of Roan in 1947 and described as a fair sized colony in 1949, but by 1958 nesting only on one of the stacks in the West Bay (IDP). This stack held 95 nests in 1962, when there were also at least 18 nests on the side of An Innis facing the colony.
- Common Tern.** Seen August 1958 (IDP), but none nesting until 1962, when there were eight to ten scrapes on a small skerry off Iosal.
- Arctic Tern.** About 20 nests on a small skerry in 1947, and recorded since, in May 1950 and August 1958 (IDP). No terns nested in 1950 (FJB) or 1959.
- Razorbill.** Nesting recorded only in 1947, when a few pairs were on the NW side of Roan (IDP). Those seen on the sea during the breeding season are probably from the nearby Sgier an Oir. Westward passage was observed in early August 1962, with a maximum of 37 on 5th.
- Guillemot.** No breeding records, but present on the sea during the summer months. In 1962 seen during sea watches to 13th August with a maximum of ten on 5th August and two late ones on 4th September.
- Black Guillemot.** Nesting in cliff crevices round both Roan and Iosal, but no accurate count of sites.
- Puffin.** In August 1962 seen in large numbers to 12th, with about 90 on 5th, but after this on only four dates to 7th September.
- Rock Dove.** Nests on both Roan and Iosal. Maximum counts show about 20 birds in July 1959, and 12 in August 1962.
- Short-eared Owl.** Single birds on 15th August and 8th September 1962.
- Swift.** One on 27th August 1950 (FJB); two on 11th and one on 21st August 1962.
- Skylark.** Noted on most visits and presumably breeds. About 30 counted in August 1962.
- Swallow.** One on 29th August 1962.
- Raven.** Nested at least in 1947 and 1950 (IDP). Two usually about, but seven on 3rd August 1962.
- Hooded Crow.** Nested 1959 and 1962 at least. Variable numbers from mid August to mid September 1962, with a maximum of nine on 19th August; also seen in December 1955 (IDP).
- Rook.** About eight on 30th July 1950 (FJB); otherwise only in 1962, with one from 18th August to 6th September, one on 8th, four on 17th, one on 21st, and two on 29th August. All these were juveniles and presumably from the rookery at Tongue.

- Wren.** Noted in 1950 (FJB); and at least three with an unused nest on the east cliffs in 1962.
- Mistle Thrush.** Juvenile, 5th and 6th August 1962.
- Song Thrush.** One found dead, 18th September 1950 (FJB); one from 5th to 22nd August 1962, joined by another on 11th and 12th; single birds on 31st August, 4th, 9th and 11th September.
- Ring Ousel.** One on 21st August 1962.
- Blackbird.** Probably bred 1961 and 1962; pair and juvenile present on 3rd August 1962 and a 1961 nest found in one of the houses. These birds had all left by 10th September, but another juvenile was present on 22nd and 23rd August.
- Wheatear.** Seen in other summers, but the following details apply to 1962—about 60 present on 3rd August were the breeding population and progeny, and these all left between 18th August and 6th September; the second half of August saw passage of Iceland-type birds with about 20 on 23rd, and about 15 on 29th; most of those arriving in September were Greenland-type birds—almost daily in small numbers.
- Robin.** An adult and juvenile from 24th August to at least 30th September 1950 (FJB); a juvenile, 31st August 1962, and adults 1st to 3rd, and 5th to 7th September
- Garden Warbler.** One on 6th and 7th September 1962 was only the fifth for Sutherland.
- Willow Warbler.** One on 19th August 1962.
- Meadow Pipit.** Large breeding population never estimated. Passage difficult to detect but 10-20 very brown ones on the mornings of 24th to 26th August 1962 coincided with passage of White Wagtails.
- Rock Pipit.** Breeds, but no estimate of number of pairs.
- Pied Wagtail.** Pair in May and June 1947 (IDP). Two adults present on 3rd August 1962, left on 11th and 26th; single juveniles present on 5th and 11th.
- White Wagtail.** FJB records "pale wagtails" in the last ten days of September 1950, and in 1962 there was passage from the NW from 20th August to 6th September in small numbers, with a peak of eight on 26th August.
- Starling.** Breeds in the houses and on the cliffs. The island flock of 70 roosted on stacks in the West Bay in 1962.
- Twite.** Noted in other years, but in 1962 about 13 were about in August and at least one pair bred. Others sometimes came from the mainland to roost so that there were about 60 on 1st and 2nd September.
- Redpoll.** One flying south on 12th September 1962.
- Reed Bunting.** One on 18th July 1959.
- Lapland Bunting.** Three on 8th, seven on 9th, two on 10th, and one on 11th September 1962.
- Snow Bunting.** One on 30th September 1950 (FJB).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank both F. J. Betteridge and Dr Ian D. Pennie for providing their records, and particularly Dr Pennie for his helpful criticism of these notes.

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NOTES FROM THE BASS ROCK, 1962

J. B. NELSON

The rock was covered for migrants from 19th February to 11th October 1962. The birds seen are listed below, followed by a summary of the population of breeding sea-birds in 1962.

MIGRANTS AND VISITORS

- Cormorant.** A 1st year bird landed on the rock on 8th May. Though breeding on the Lamb nearby, Cormorants are rarely seen on the Bass.
- Heron.** Two on 31st August, and two 2nd September, flying up the Forth.
- Mallard.** Pair flushed from Top Loch on 9th and 16th April.
- Common Scoter.** Immature drake from 23rd to 28th April.
- Eider.** One pair bred. From about the third week of September numbers began to increase, from the odd bird to 15 drakes and 31 ducks on 5th October.
- Peregrine.** One flew low over the rock on 1st September.
- Oystercatcher.** Single birds and small parties frequently fly over high, but never settle.
- Ringed Plover.** One flying SE on 17th July.
- Woodcock.** One appeared on the rock on 17th April with strong NNW wind following ENE winds.
- Curlew.** Single birds flying over from 17th July to 7th September.
- Common Sandpiper.** One flew over on 20th April.
- Redshank.** Odd birds frequently about the rock. These and an occasional **Purple Sandpiper** are the only waders to settle.
- Greenshank.** One flew over on 14th July.
- Great Skua.** One flew round the rock on 31st August, two flew west on 2nd September, and one landed on the rock on 10th September; none showed any interest in Gannets.
- Common Gull.** Large movements of birds flying high with much calling, and heading NW, on 19th April; another movement in same direction on the 24th.
- Black-headed Gull.** At least two flying high on 7th October.
- Sandwich Tern.** Two flying south on 11th July. There is a curious dearth of terns in the vicinity of the Bass.
- Great Spotted Woodpecker.** Following mist and force 6 NE winds a juvenile arrived on 15th August, along with many other migrants. It tried to feed on the stems of the tree mallow.

- Skylark.** Small spring movement from 17th March to 19th April; and big autumn movement from 29th August, with many moving by 10th October.
- Swallow.** Many appeared low over the rock on 5th and 6th May, and passed straight on; also one on 24th May and 4th June, four on 25th September, and two on the 26th.
- House Martin.** One on 10th October with large fall of thrushes and other species following mist and force 4 to 5 east winds.
- Carriion Crow.** Two's and three's frequently visit the rock in spring and autumn; five on 3rd October.
- Rook.** Four circled over the rock on 28th April; autumn movement from 23rd September to 9th October, on which date several passed over in the mist.
- Jackdaw.** Two or three flew over on several dates at the end of September and beginning of October.
- Blue Tit.** One on 4th October.
- Treecreeper.** Following NE winds one was seen climbing on the chapel doorway on 13th July; it was a very bright bird, very pale underneath, and probably of the Northern race.
- Fieldfare.** One on 5th May; autumn movement began on 10th October, and there was an extremely large fall next day with thousands passing over, following mist and fresh NE winds.
- Song Thrush.** Constant passage between 17th March and 23rd April, with large fall of thrush species on 18th March; first autumn arrival on 1st September, two on the 29th, a few from 5th to 8th October, and large numbers from 9th to 11th.
- Redwing.** Two landed and others flew over on 18th April; spectacular start to autumn influx at dusk on 4th October, when a procession, mainly of single birds, flew low over the rock heading south, followed by several on 7th and 8th, many on 9th and 10th—on which day the rock was full of Redwings, with up to 30 in one patch of nettles a few feet square—and more than 1,000 flying past from before dawn until an hour after on the 11th.
- Ring Ouzel.** One on 11th October.
- Blackbird.** Two or three present continuously from 20th February to 17th March, a large fall on 18th March, and thereafter two or three to 9th May; then a gap until one arrived on 29th September, and large numbers with the other thrushes from 9th to 11th October.
- Wheatear.** One to three most days from 19th April until 16th May, with two large Greenland-type birds on 18th April; autumn passage from 15th August to 28th September, with maximum of six on 28th August.
- Whinchat.** One on 11th and 19th September.
- Redstart.** One on 18th April; three on 15th August, three from 26th to 29th September, one remaining until 2nd October, and at least two on 11th October.
- Robin.** One to three between 23rd February and 18th March; display and territorial fighting but no breeding. Huge rush began on 17th April with over 50 on the rock, many of them badly underweight, and several found dead later; all gone by the 24th; 44 ringed in two days and one later recovered in France. One on 15th August, one on 22nd September, two on the 26th, several on 10th October, and many on the 11th.
- Sedge Warbler.** One singing on 18th May.
- Garden Warbler.** One on 26th September.

- Willow Warbler.** One on 25th April, about six on 5th May following NNE wind, over 50 on the 6th, a very misty day, several each day until the 12th, and several more between 18th and 23rd; autumn movement began with one on 9th August, about six on 15th and 16th, single birds until the 26th, and several on many dates to 27th September.
- Chiffchaff.** One caught on 8th October.
- Goldcrest.** One on 14th April, five on the 18th, and single birds until the 25th; one on 20th September, several on the 26th, and a few to 6th October.
- Spotted Flycatcher.** One on 27th September.
- Pied Flycatcher.** About ten on 15th August, and one's and two's until 26th September.
- Red-breasted Flycatcher.** One on 26th September with mist and easterly winds.
- Hedge Sparrow.** Many migrating with the Robins from 18th to 20th April, and nine ringed, also underweight.
- Meadow Pipit.** Several moving through on dates between 2nd September and 8th October, and large numbers between 9th and 11th.
- Yellow Wagtail.** One on 23rd May, race not determined.
- Starling.** Apart from residents there were parties of 20 to 40 on several dates in spring and autumn; many arrived on 10th October.
- Goldfinch.** One on 24th April; five on 3rd October.
- Siskin.** Cock on 26th September, and one or two on 10th and 11th October.
- Linnnet.** Small numbers regularly from 20th February to mid May; several on 8th September, over 30 on the 29th, and over 50 on 6th October.
- Twite.** Four flew over calling on 25th September.
- Crossbill.** Eleven from 8th to 11th July, one on the 13th, and two juveniles on 15th August.
- Chaffinch.** Two on 18th April, and one or two more until the 23rd; several with other migrants on 10th and 11th October.
- Brambling.** One on 18th April, and four on 19th and 20th; three on 8th October, and many on the 11th.
- Lapland Bunting.** One on 28th September and two on the 29th.
- Snow Bunting.** Two on 20th February.

BREEDING SEA-BIRDS

- Fulmar.** About 25 occupied sites, but not all permanent, and not all necessarily pairs.
- Gannet** (see Plate 17). Between 15,380 and 16,752 birds, in the categories indicated below. It should be noted that the possibility of the adult so-called non-breeders being in fact off-duty breeding birds has not yet been conclusively disproved, though it seems very unlikely.

	Pairs		Single birds	
	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
Breeding pairs	5353	5701		
Non-breeders with established sites	1337	1425		
Non-breeders without sites			2000	2500
	<hr/> 6690	<hr/> 7126	<hr/> 2000	<hr/> 2500

Shag. About 256 nests.

Lesser Black-backed Gull. About 18 to 20 pairs.

Herring Gull. A total of 515 was obtained by counting birds, without distinguishing members of pairs, and will therefore err on the high side as an estimate of breeding pairs. This count was made some time after laying had stopped, and as large numbers of eggs had been taken some birds may have left the breeding ground.

Kittiwake. About 1350 nests.

Razorbill. Estimated at a little under 100 pairs, but could be more.

Guillemot. At least 1165 birds—not nests—counted on 4th/5th June.

Puffin. Estimated at 50 pairs.

HANDA BIRD RESERVE, 1962

GEORGE WATERSTON

Handa has long been famous for its splendid breeding colonies of seabirds. Harvie-Brown, visiting the island in 1867, stated that he considered there were far more birds on Handa than at Hoy Head, the Bass Rock, and Ailsa Craig put together.

By agreement with the proprietors, the island is now managed as a Bird Reserve by the R.S.P.B., and work on the renovation of the derelict bothy, formerly occupied by a shepherd during lambing time, was completed last summer in time to house two school expeditions at the end of July and beginning of August (Plate 18). Victor Mendham and his wife were in charge of a party of girls and boys from Ackworth School, Pontefract, who spent a week on the island carrying out a general natural history survey from 27th July to 3rd August. A further survey was undertaken by a party from Forest Hill School, London, under the supervision of David Stanbury and Brian S. Brookes between 7th and 21st August. Both parties slept under canvas—using the bothy as a cookhouse/common-room and laboratory.

Roy H. Dennis made a census of the breeding birds on 6th and 7th June 1962 and reported as follows—Red-throated Diver, 1 pair; Fulmar, some 2000 pairs; Shag, 268 pairs; Eider, a few pairs; Shelduck, 3 pairs; Peregrine, 1 pair present but did not breed; Kestrel, 1 pair; Oystercatcher, 17 pairs; Lapwing, 1 pair; Ringed Plover, 2 pairs; Golden Plover, 2 to 3 pairs; Snipe, 8 to 12 pairs; Great Black-backed Gull, 33 to 35 pairs; Lesser Black-backed Gull, 2 pairs; Herring Gull, 284 pairs; Kittiwake, 7032 pairs; Arctic Tern, 3 pairs; Razorbill, 5340 pairs; Guillemot, 26,000 to 30,000 pairs; Black Guillemot, 4 pairs; Puffin, 393 pairs; Rock Dove, 2 pairs; Skylark, about 100 pairs; Raven, 1 pair; Hooded Crow, 3 or 4 pairs; Wren, 6 to 9 pairs; Wheatear, 35 to 50 pairs; Meadow Pipit, 100 to 150



PLATE 17. GANNET on the Bass Rock (see page 357)

Photograph by J. B. Nelson.



PLATE 18. The HELENA HOWDEN BOTHY on Handa Bird Reserve (see page 560)

Top: In 1960, before restoration.

Photograph by Alasdair Alpin MacGregor.

Bottom: July 1962, after restoration.

Photograph by George Waterston.

pairs; Rock Pipit, 30 to 40 pairs; Pied Wagtail, 1 pair; and Twite, 1 or 2 pairs.

The following breed in the vicinity and are frequently seen—Cormorant, Heron, Mallard, Golden Eagle, Buzzard, Merlin, Curlew, Redshank, Great and Arctic Skuas, Common Gull, Stonechat, Hedge Sparrow, and Starling.

Great Northern Diver, Grey Lag and Barnacle Geese, are regular winter visitors and passage migrants.

The bothy, which provides accommodation for up to eight people, is a two-roomed building fully furnished. It is a nice snug place with a big open-hearth fire burning peat and driftwood. It is an ideal base for organised school parties wishing to carry out field studies in natural history. Visiting naturalists are asked to keep a daily log of their observations on the island.

If you want to stay at the bothy, all you need to take with you are your own provisions, a sleeping bag, and a pillow slip; everything else is provided. Applications for bookings and a copy of the Prospectus should be made to the Scottish Office, R.S.P.B., 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7 (see advertisement pages for further details).

SHORT NOTES

FURTHER NOTES ON SOME SUTHERLAND RECORDS

Attention has been drawn to the fact that in my recent paper on the birds of Sutherland (*antea* 2: 167-192) reference was made to some records which had not in fact been published, and as some of these constitute "first records," notes on them are appended.

BARNACLE GOOSE. This is the first definite record for North Sutherland. To be exact the birds were first identified as Barnacle Geese by me on 6th January 1949. Geese were known to have wintered annually on Island Roan for about ten years previously but had never been identified.

GREAT SKUA. The record quoted is the first for West Sutherland. The earliest for North Sutherland to which allusion was made in my paper was one seen by Ian Downhill on Eilean Iosal on 19th July 1959, but I have since received a record of an adult seen over the moor about two miles east of Cape Wrath Lighthouse by D. I. M. and W. J. Wallace on 19th August 1954.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER. The record of breeding at Lochmore in 1953 was received from the late Lt.-Col. Neilson who was factor to the Westminster Estates in Sutherland.

JACKDAW. My record of 24th July 1958 did not confirm

breeding but I have subsequently received the following notes from Donald Banks, who was under-keeper at Ledmore in 1953 and 1954, and who kept a detailed diary of his observations: "19th February 1954, about 30 near Loch Urigill; 25th February 1954, large flock on Elphin crofts; 18th March 1954, have returned to nesting colony in the ivy on the cliff face above the Elphin crofts."

LONG-TAILED TIT. The Scourie record was of a family party seen at Loch a'Mhuillin by R. S. R. Fitter between 4th and 16th June 1951, and the earliest Lochinver record is of a family party seen beside Loch Culag by Miss Elizabeth Maugham between 29th June and 26th July 1956. I myself saw a pair carrying food at Lochinver on 17th May 1960 and a second pair the following day.

GOLDCREST. The earliest record I have is 10th June 1954 when Goldcrests were heard singing in the Badaidh Darach Wood, Scourie, by D. G. Andrew and myself; a family party was seen by Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn on 11th June 1955 in an isolated conifer wood south-east of Loch Stack. My first Lochinver record was on 18th May 1960.

IAN D. PENNIE.

GLOSSY IBIS IN SOUTH-EAST SUTHERLAND

While I was working in the greenhouse at Cambusavie Hospital, The Mound, on 3rd December 1962 at about 1430 hrs, my attention was attracted by a large flock of Herring Gulls mobbing a bird in flight. Fortunately my binoculars were at hand, and during the time I had the flock under observation it passed within about 160 yards from where I was standing. The light was fairly good and during part of the time the flock was against a background of green fields. I obtained the following notes on the bird that was being mobbed:

Plumage appeared jet black both above and below. This was noticeable as the bird twisted and turned away from the gulls. In appearance it was heron-like, with long legs and a long neck, but in flight it appeared to move much quicker than a heron. The most outstanding feature, however, was a long down-curved bill which appeared quite heavy. The wings were rounded. The overall wing span was similar to that of the Herring Gulls, but the bird's overall length was greater than that of the gulls.

I feel certain that the bird was a Glossy Ibis. When last seen it was heading towards the mud-flats of the Dornoch Firth about 4 miles distant. I telephoned D. Macdonald, Dornoch, who went out to the mud-flats that afternoon but failed to find the bird. The previous week the under-gamekeeper at Cambusmore Estate had seen in the Loch Fleet alder swamp a dark heron-like bird that he had not recognised. D. Macdonald and W. C. Wright spent the morning of 6th December

searching this swamp without success, and Dr I. D. Pennie also kept a look-out on Loch Fleet but saw no sign of the bird.

D. Macdonald has drawn my attention to the fact that in at least one recent record of this species (*Brit. Birds* 46: 431) mention is made of the bird being mobbed by gulls (in this case Black-headed Gulls).

JAMES D. OLIVER.

(This is the first record for South-East Sutherland.—ED.)

WATER RAILS "SCAVENGING" IN OPEN

During the long spell of hard weather at the beginning of 1963 Water Rails were regularly to be seen at the municipal refuse tip outside Moffat, Dumfriesshire. This is separated from an area of adjoining moorland by a burn 4-5 yards wide which remained open when all the surrounding countryside was hard frozen, and this no doubt accounted for the concentration of these birds in the area. My first sight of the birds was on 25th January, when two were present, but I was told that up to four had been seen regularly during the previous fortnight. I counted at least six on the 26th, and smaller numbers were regularly to be seen until at least the beginning of March. So far as I can discover, this is the first time that Water Rails have been noticed at the tip.

Water Rails are normally so secretive that it was something of a surprise to find that these birds were showing themselves quite openly. On 25th January, for instance, I found one bird feeding on the tip while another stood preening amongst the bushes on the far side of the burn. Neither made any attempt to conceal itself when I approached and the feeding bird allowed me to watch it for ten minutes at a range of about 12 yards. On the following day all six birds were moving about freely in the open; although, during the temporary thaw that followed, the birds became progressively more wary and more ready to take cover whenever there was any disturbance. Two were last seen near the tip on 15th March.

The Water Rails were mostly content to feed along the edge of the burn, but on several occasions a single bird was seen feeding on the refuse tip itself. The main attraction was a sack containing the heads, feet and entrails of hens and pheasants. On closer examination I found that some of the fatty entrails had been pecked to some extent and that the bird had undoubtedly been feeding on these. On another occasion I was able to take a photograph (Plate 19) of a bird as it was pecking at the meat on a piece of ham-shank.

E. DICERBO.

(In this connection it is interesting to note two recent records (*Brit. Birds* 55: 132 and 56: 27) of Water Rails killing other birds and taking eggs.—Ed.).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE IN DUNBARTONSHIRE

On 30th August 1962 in the west bay at Ardmore I discovered a small sandpiper-shaped wader which I was unable to identify. It was watched for twenty minutes in bright sunshine with 13 x 60 binoculars at 250 yards range, and was seen to be slightly smaller than a Redshank, with bright white underparts, which first drew attention as it hurried along the shore; back very pale grey-brown; bill thin and completely straight. It did not fly but was always in a desperate hurry, moving about and feeding.

On the 31st it was closely examined for over half an hour with x40 telescope at 150 yards range. It was glimpsed briefly on 1st September by A. Gordon and T. D. H. Merrie before wildfowlers disturbed it, but could not be found on the 2nd and 3rd. Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn later identified it from the detailed field notes as a Wilson's Phalarope, and the *British Birds* Rarity Records Committee has now accepted the record.

It was a very active walker and feeder. It would put its head down and charge along the mud amongst the scattered rocks on the shore, then feed at walking pace, energetically pecking at the mud or water, often with a quick short lateral movement of the bill. Occasionally it waded, but still moved quite fast in deep water.

At rest it had a dumpy sandpiper shape, in contrast to its slimmer lines while walking; the bill was held at a steeper angle than a Redshank's. When it stood beside four Redshanks it was smaller, though approaching their size; in shape it was generally similar, but much slighter, with a small rounded head. When the Redshanks flew it went with them, but flying much lower, only a few feet above the mud.

General appearance very pale; forehead white; crown, nape and mantle grey-brown; wings uniform grey-brown above, much paler than a Greenshank's; rump and tail white, showing clearly when it drooped a wing while preening; end of tail not boldly marked, but could have been darkish as only seen briefly in flight; no wing bar or patch in flight, but white rump and tail then very obvious; eye-stripe dark; superciliary and lores white; cheek, throat, breast, sides of neck, belly and undertail coverts pure white; bill as long as or longer than head, completely straight, very thin, and black; legs yellowish-green.

This is the second Wilson's Phalarope to be recorded in Scotland, the first being in Fife from 11th September to 5th October 1954 (*Scot. Nat.* 1956: 2), and it is the first for Clyde and Dunbartonshire.

J. M. S. ARNOTT.

RADDE'S WARBLER AT THE ISLE OF MAY

8th October 1962 was a fine anticyclonic day at the Isle of May with the wind fairly settled in the east. The subsiding air gave us a cloudless sky and produced the kind of haar that bird-watchers delight in and light-keepers deplore. Yet despite these promising conditions there were few birds about—only a handful of Turdidae and a few warblers, and three Siskins to add interest to a dull morning. After midday interest was sustained with the capture of a Yellow-browed Warbler in the Bain Trap; and in mid-afternoon George L. A. Patrick and G. H. Acklam found another warbler, of a kind they had not seen before, in a nettle-bed on Ruff Green. It was shown to R. A. O. Hickling and later to me. Although I had only ten minutes or so with the bird, in failing light, I was confident both from previous experience in the field and from work I had recently done in the Bird-room at the British Museum (Natural History) that the bird was an example of Radde's Warbler (or Radde's Bush Warbler) *Phylloscopus schwarzi*. The following description of habits and plumage is compounded from the observations of RAOH, GLAP and GHA, as they had longer and better views than I had:

The bird confined its activities mainly to the nettle-bed and an area of dense grass tussocks from 100-200 yards north of Dunvegan. It was under observation from 1500 hrs GMT till dusk at about 1730 hrs, and was watched for the most part in bright but diffused sunlight, at varying distances from 30 yards down to about 6 feet. Because of its habits, views were intermittent and usually brief, for the bird spent most of the time feeding briskly in thick cover, and was twice seen with a larva in its bill. Its behaviour was distinctive: it would creep quietly through the cover, showing itself momentarily at quite short distances without any sign of panic or nervousness, and occasionally would forsake the cover altogether and perch in open view on top of a grass tussock or rock. Once it hopped about on bare rocks, fully exposed, for several minutes (RAOH). It also perched on dead stalks and on the stick set up for a mist-net, adopting an upright attitude, and on one occasion it clung to a rock like a Swift. The bird was heard to call twice—on both occasions a soft, Blackbird-like *chik, chik* (GLAP). Attempts to catch it in a single-panel mist-net were made in vain, and it was while setting up the net for the second time at dusk that we finally lost contact.

In size it was rather larger than a Chiffchaff in the same area, and altogether a more "solid" bird (GLAP). An impression was gained of a bird slightly larger than a Willow Warbler, which could have been due to its robust character—a sturdy, rather dumpy bird. The bill was stout and fairly short, much heavier than a Willow Warbler's (RAOH). Field-notes, compared later, were agreed on the uniformly dark olive-brown upperparts with slightly darker wings and tail; the absence of a wing-bar; the presence of a striking pale yellowish supercilium extending almost to the nape; and pale olive-grey underparts with brighter yellowish-buff or rufous-buff on the lower belly, vent and flanks. The sturdy legs were pale

and bright, near straw-flesh or brownish-flesh, and not dissimilar in colour from those of a Meadow Pipit.

During the short period in which I had the bird under observation it behaved exactly as described, coming out of cover occasionally to perch openly on dead thistle-plants or on the side of a tussock. Its actions, and indeed the whole "jizz" of the bird, were strongly reminiscent of a Radde's Warbler I had watched for an hour or so following its release at Blakeney Point, Norfolk, on 4th October 1961. The robust build, short thick bill, stout brightly-coloured tarsi, and the intensity of yellowish-buff on the lower belly and flanks were all characteristic of this species as I knew it from that occasion and from my examination of skins gathered together from a number of museums when preparing my field guide *Identification for Ringers, No. 2—The Genus Phylloscopus*.

The bird was seen fleetingly by GLAP and GHA on 9th and 10th October. This constitutes the first record for Scotland and the fourth for the British Isles. In autumn 1962 it was preceded in western Europe by examples at Ottenby Fagelstation, Oland, Sweden, on 25th September, and at Dungeness Bird Observatory, Kent, where one which was trapped and ringed remained from 3rd to 8th October. The Swedish bird (a male) was collected, and I later saw the mounted specimen at the British Museum. Its plumage characteristics were very similar to those of our own bird—which, judging by the amount and intensity of yellowish-buff underneath, may well have been a young bird, though in this respect Radde's Warbler appears to be variable. The bird breeds in south-east Siberia and Manchuria, migrating through eastern and central China to winter quarters in the Indo-Chinese countries.

Although this species is referred to in *The Handbook of British Birds* (2: 26) as a "Bush-Warbler", this expression was used to identify the species with the monotypic genus *Herbivocula* Swinhoe 1871. Ticehurst (*The Genus Phylloscopus*, 1938, page 96) placed *Herbivocula* in the synonymy of *Phylloscopus* Boie 1826, thus effectively making this species a "leaf-warbler." All subsequent workers have accepted Ticehurst's action and the bird is best referred to simply as Radde's Warbler.

KENNETH WILLIAMSON.

WITHOUT COMMENT

Removed from an ill-hidden nest of a pair of Blackbirds in a hedge at Gullane, a rather obvious slip of paper about 4 inches long bearing in large red capitals the injunction—IN THE EVENT OF DAMAGE KINDLY ADVISE US IMMEDIATELY AND RETAIN ENTIRE PACKING FOR INSPECTION.

WINIFRED U. FLOWER.

CURRENT NOTES

(Key to initials of observers : A. F. Airey, D. C. Anderson, D. R. Anderson, D. G. Andrew, W. Austin, R. S. Baillie, G. H. Ballantyne, J. Ballantyne, D. Banks, Miss P. G. Baxter, A. Black, G. W. G. Boag, H. Boase, T. Boyd, Miss E. R. Brock, M. S. Brown, R. J. Buxton, R. G. Caldow, Miss K. M. Calver, Dr J. W. Campbell, P. Clark, J. K. Cowden, G. M. Crighton, Miss M. H. E. Cuninghame, W. A. J. Cunningham, P. E. Davis, R. H. Dennis, D. Dewar, E. Dicerbo, G. Dick, J. Donnan (JDo), H. Dott, J. Dunbar (JDu), Dr G. M. Dunnet, Sir R. Erskine-Hill, M. C. Fletcher, Miss W. U. Flower, Miss E. A. Garden, K. Goodchild, A. G. Gordon, J. Gunn, H. Halliday, M. K. Hamilton, B. Hardy, T. Henderson, Hon. H. D. Home, J. A. D. Hope, Sir G. Hughes-Onslow, A. Inglis, Rev. G. T. Jamieson, R. A. Jeffrey, R. Job, N. Langham, D. J. Lockerbie, Miss M. Low (MLo), T. Luce, Miss M. Lyall (MLy), A. Macdonald (AMcD), D. Macdonald, Mrs M. K. Macduff-Duncan, H. MacKenzie, E. MacLauchlan, Mrs M. J. C. Maclean, A. T. Macmillan, Dr P. McMorrán, A. G. Marshall, Miss M. M. Mathisen, Prof. M. F. M. Meiklejohn, J. K. R. Melrose, T. D. H. Merrie, A. Middleton (AMi), C. K. Mylne, T. Nisbet, J. Oliver, C. E. Palmer, Rev. I. S. Phillips, A. J. Posnett, J. Potter, A. F. Pratt, A. Pringle, Mrs I. Rainier, G. A. Richards, Dr M. Rusk, G. W. C. Salvesen, Mrs D. Scott (DSc), J. Shiell, D. Skilling (DSk), A. J. Smith, M. O. Smith, R. T. Smith, R. W. J. Smith, Dr T. C. Smout, Miss G. S. Somerville, D. L. Sowerbutts, D. Stalker (DSt), D. M. Stark, J. H. Sutherland (JHSu), J. H. Swan (JHSw), D. Swindles (DSw), C. Tait, A. Tewnton, Miss O. T. Thompson, Mrs R. Upton, Rev. E. T. Vernon, A. F. G. Walker, G. Waterston, Mrs M. I. Waterston, A. D. Watson, B. E. Weld, D. P. Willis, C. M. Young, J. Young, I. G. Young, B. Zonfrillo.

Unless otherwise stated, January to April dates refer to 1963 and all others to 1962).

Introduction

In view of the exceptional severity of the past winter, we are devoting a section of Current Notes to some general remarks on the subject. Other distributional notes follow as usual, in scientific order, with those prior to 7th October 1962 given separately except where relevant to current observations. Data on the arrival of summer visitors have been held over.

Effects of the severe weather

With most of the country in the grip of prolonged hard frost and snow blizzards for two months or more from Christmas 1962, the past winter was one of exceptional severity. Insofar as weather is of prime importance to all birds, many records given in the *Distribution* section under species will also be relevant to a full study of the subject, but the present section has been confined to some of the more obvious effects, and is based on the notes of a limited number of observers.

One well known result of hard weather is to drive birds to the coast. In Moray Basin and the northern counties, most lochs, and even the sea, froze on many days in January.

Wildfowl moved to the sea in the first few days of the severe cold, but disappeared from the area when the sea froze; **geese** and **swans** were very scarce; **waders** remained in much the same numbers as usual, but **Oystercatchers** seemed worse off than the rest, and several were found dead by 9th January; many **thrushes**, especially **Redwings**, and **finches** died in the east, but were still plentiful in the west, which escaped the deep snow at this time (RHD).

From the beginning of January and throughout February, exceptional numbers of ducks resorted to the Clyde between Cardross and Dumbarton. In place of the usual 100/200 **Tufted Duck** found in frosty weather, up to 2,000 frequented the mouth of the River Leven and the adjoining mudflats, together with **Pochard**, **Goldeneye** and a few **Scaup**. Instead of three or four **Red-breasted Mergansers** feeding in the Leven there were frequently 30/40 this winter, and about 100 **Teal** which winter on Carman Reservoir were seen on the Clyde—as on 23rd February. For several days there were also 16 **Coot** (ERB).

Tufted Duck on tidal water were noted at many places, including large numbers in the Tay at Stannergate, Dundee (600 on 16th February) and Invergowrie Bay (170 on 21st February) (HB). **Pochard** were reported at Stannergate (up to 32 on 14th and 16th February) (HB), and Dalmeny, West Lothian (25 on 9th February) (TCS). **Coot** were noted on the sea at Ardersier, Inverness (20 on 10th January) (RHD), and at Tynninghame, East Lothian (9 on 30th December, and 19 on 13th January) (RWJS).

Inland, naturally, **wildfowl** tended to disappear. The first blizzards of the winter in mid November scattered the **geese** in all directions from Libberton, Lanarkshire (RE-H). By no means all the wildfowl left, however, and even at the height of the cold spell some **Tufted Duck** and **Pochard** remained inland in Kirkcudbrightshire, where on 21st February a pair of Tufted and a duck Pochard were diving in a narrow ditch in Carlingwark marsh (ADW). At Headshaw Loch, Selkirkshire, on 17th February, despite the loch being frozen and covered with 18 in. of snow, 95 **Mallard** remained; they fed on fodder put out for the hill cattle and sheep, which also supported other species such as **Rooks**, **finches** and **buntings** in the area (JB). Whilst other diving birds moved in great numbers to the coast, **Coot** merely migrate to fields of stubble and grass by the frozen lochs and feed there if possible. Large numbers (over 400 on 15th January) remained by Loch Ken and the River Dee (ADW), and flocks of 50 and 80 were seen at Loch Lomond on 16th February and 3rd March (TDHM).

In the Forth, up to 1,000 **gulls** are usual at low tide between Burntisland and Kinghorn, but on 13th and 20th January

there were 10 or 20 times as many—with three-quarters of them **Common Gulls**, usually rather uncommon there (GHB). Exceptional numbers of **waders** and gulls were noted also in February (MSB). At various places **Golden Plovers** were below high tide mark, and one found dead near Dirleton on 3rd January was just skin and bone. Hundreds of **Redwings** at Tynninghame on 13th January were obviously in bad shape and some were lurking just inside rabbit burrows; they had all disappeared two weeks later. On the 13th also there were 20 **Blackbirds** on as many yards of beach rubbish, and dozens of **Song Thrushes** on the dunes and feeding on the mud beside the Dunlin (RWJS).

All along the shore of the Clyde near Dumbarton there were hedgerow birds feeding on the tide wrack, especially **Blackbirds**, **Song Thrushes**, **Robins** and **Hedge Sparrows**, the Blackbirds being particularly numerous with one every few yards (TDHM). Very large numbers of **Lapwings** also fed on this shore, and **Redwings** and **Fieldfares** were noted (ERB). **Lapwings** were reported starving on the Fife coast, with 10 dead ones near Culross (GD, JP), and **Woodcock** were seen on or near the shore in several places (GWGB, MFMM, RWJS).

Observers commented on distressing numbers of dead birds along the shores of the Forth. On 9th February at Dalmeny these comprised **Red-throated Diver**, **Scaup**, **Common Scoter**, **Shelduck**, **Oystercatcher**, **Knot**, **Common** and **Black-headed Gulls**, **Razorbill**, **Guillemot**, and many **Wood pigeons**; some of the seabirds may have died of oiling, but the Guillemot was quite unmarked (TCS). Two miles of shore from Burntisland to Kinghorn and at Kirkcaldy on 17th March revealed **Black-throated Diver** (1), **Great Crested** (1) and **Little** (1) **Grebes**, **Gannet** (1), **Shag** (4), **Common Scoter** (2), **Eider** (3), **Lapwing** (1), **Redshank** (1), **Herring** (10) and **Black-headed** (2) **Gulls**, **Kittiwake** (1), **Razorbill** (1), **Guillemot** (12), **feral pigeons** (6), and **Blackbird** (1); though the condition of some of the corpses made it impossible to tell whether the birds had been oiled, there was only one—a Guillemot—which definitely had been, and the observer concluded that most of them probably died of starvation or exposure (GHB). On the other hand, the majority of birds found dead between North Berwick and Gullane on 10th February, except for the waders, were oiled—**Great Northern** (1) and **Red-throated** (2) **Divers**, **Red-necked Grebe** (1), **Fulmar** (2), **Mallard** (1), **Pintail** (1), **Scaup** (1), **Velvet Scoter** (1), **Common Scoter** (16), **Eider** (3), **Pink-footed Goose** (1), **Oystercatcher** (3), **Curlew** (5), **Redshank** (several), **gulls** (several), **Razorbill** (6) and **Guillemot** (33) (TB). Near Lochgilphead, Argyll, large numbers of ducks and other birds have been picked up dead; some of the corpses were taken to a local vet, who reported

that the deaths were due to starvation (IR).

Redwings appeared in town as usual in hard weather; they were reported from many parts of Edinburgh and elsewhere, but moved out again as soon as the cold spell ended. Severe weather bears heavily on this species, and in Dornoch, Sutherland, 57 dead birds were picked up, mostly under cotoneasters in the local gardens, and the majority seem to have died on 11th and 12th January, the first days of really intense frost. The wings of 14 of them measured 113/118 mm, indicating the Continental race. Four **Fieldfares** also died (DM), but this species is less frequent in town, though in central Edinburgh one arrived in George Square about 1st February (TCS).

There were the usual oddities. In Edinburgh, a **Woodcock** appeared in Belgrave Crescent gardens on 24th January (GWCS per DGA), and in the early morning three days later a **Moorhen** was flushed from the gutter in Ainslie Place (JADH in *The Scotsman*); both places are within half a mile of the West End. A **Coot** appeared one day in February at the door of a house in Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire (ADW). Back in Edinburgh in January **Redwings** ate all the berries off a cotoneaster in St John's Road and then turned their attention to the berried branches in a vase in the vestibule (MCF in *The Scotsman*), and on 14th January a really filthy **Pied Wagtail** was picking about on the pavement at the busy and heavily built-up junction of Leith Street and Picardy Place (ATM).

In Caithness, February was cold but the snow had gone by the end of the first week. Of birds common there at this time of year, **Lapwing**, **Fieldfare**, **Redwing**, **Greenfinch** and **Snow Bunting** were conspicuously absent, and numbers of waders and duck also seemed low (DMS). Near West Calder, Midlothian, **Song Thrushes** were noticeably absent, as in 1946/47 (HH). Near Walkerburn, Peebles-shire, small birds moved out, and dead ones were not found. Many **Robins** and **Hedge Sparrows** normally leave the area in winter, but they are slow to return this year, and **Wrens** and **Treecreepers** seem hard hit, though it is too early to be sure about other species (JB).

In general, however, reports which we have been sent about the survival of small passerines are less discouraging than one might expect. On another page details are given of two **Blackcaps** passing the winter comfortably at a bird table in Morayshire (AP). Even vulnerable birds like **tits** and **Chaffinches** have remained as frequent as usual in the Meadows in Edinburgh, and presumably scraps put out by householders were enough for them (TCS).

At Fair Isle, residents such as **Wrens** and **Rock Pipits** suffered little, and singing **Skylarks** are very abundant, though it was in fact not an exceptionally bad winter on the island (PED).

A preliminary survey of 200 acres in Fife when the better weather came suggests that numbers there may not be down as much as was feared (GD, JP). In the Lothians there are many reports of small birds such as **Long-tailed Tits**, **Treecreepers** and **Goldcrests**, so that it seems that there has been much less damage than in 1946/47 (RWJS). In woods near Gifford, East Lothian, there is likewise no evidence of disaster; **Great Spotted Woodpeckers**, **Coal Tits**, **Treecreepers**, **Robins**, **Goldcrests**, **Hedge Sparrows** and **Crossbills** were there before and are still there, and only the **Woodpigeons** seemed obviously fewer between 1st December and 2nd and 31st March (TCS). It will be very interesting to see whether these encouraging reports are reflected in the breeding populations of resident birds this summer.

Distribution

As already indicated, this section excludes observations made before 7th October 1962, so that in general it deals with winter records and virtually not at all with autumn migration.

Two **Great Northern Divers** at Loch Lomond on 2nd September have already been noted (*antea* 2: 253); subsequently there were two there on 7th October, one on 4th November and one on 16th February (AGG, TDHM). On 29th January one was at Balcary Point, Kirkcudbrightshire, a county where they are seldom noted (AFA). A dead **Red-throated Diver** was picked up below roadside wires at Heriot, Midlothian, on 7th February (JS per GW), and other inland records are of single birds at Duddingston, Edinburgh, on 11th February (DRA), at the head of Loch Ken on 9th March (ADW), and of a dead and oiled bird at Loch Leven, Kinross-shire, on the 30th (TB, RWJS).

An oiled **Red-necked Grebe** was found at Earlsferry, Fife, on 30th January (PGB), and one was at Gullane Point, East Lothian, on 23rd February (CT), while inland there were single birds at Tarbet, Loch Lomond, Dunbartonshire, from 11th to 21st February (TN), Loch Earn, Perthshire, on 17th March (PGB), and Lindores Loch, Fife, on 3rd April (HB).

On 2nd January two **Shags** were right up at the head of Loch Ailort, Inverness-shire (RHD).

A **Bittern** in Lewis early in November has already been noted (*antea* 2: 312), and one in Dumfriesshire on 29th August is recorded in the section on *Earlier observations* in this number of *Scottish Birds*. Three others are reported: on 6th January an exhausted bird was picked up on a cliff path near the wireless station at Portpatrick, Wigtownshire, and it died next day (JKC); another was present from late January at Dougalston Loch, Milngavie, Dunbartonshire, and was caught in an ex-

hausted condition on 24th February (RSB, CEP); and on 11th March just south of Langholm, Dumfriesshire, one was watched at five yards range from a car as it walked slowly across the road by the river and, becoming slightly alarmed, pointed its head and beak straight up in the air (DSc per MIW).

At least 50 **Gadwall** were counted at Loch Leven on 16th September. In areas where they are less numerous there was one at Loch Lomond on 9th December and a pair on 2nd January (AGG, TDHM), and again on 31st March nearby (DSt), and a duck at the mouth of the River Stinchar, Ayrshire, on 2nd February (MFMM).

On 23rd March big numbers of diving ducks were seen off Aberlady Point; there were thousands of **Common Scoter**, hundreds of **Velvet Scoter**, about 250 **Scaup**, and about 100 **Long-tailed Ducks**; between 1520 hrs and 1620 hrs, parties of 45, 70 and 10 Scaup were watched out of sight as they left to the north (RWJS). Six days earlier at Gullane Point quite unprecedented numbers of Common Scoter were present; there were hundreds of ducks far out at sea at 1330 hrs but, even with 16 x 50 binoculars, only the nearest could be identified. At 1400 hrs small groups began to take wing, and for the next ten minutes they seemed to be flying in all directions, until they were gone. All that could be identified were Common Scoter; there were at least 5,000 and probably nearer 20,000 compared with maximum numbers on spring passage of 2,000 recorded by Hamilton & Macgregor (*The Birds of Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve*) (MKH). On 14th January in Grangemouth Bay 260 **Scaup** were unusually many for so far up the Forth (GD, JP). Numbers of **Pochard** again reached a high level at Duddingston, with 2,500 tightly packed round a pool of open water on 6th February, some 500 fewer than in the last week of January 1962 (*antea* 2: 46) (DRA). At Stanner-gate, Dundee, the peak count of **Goldeneye** was over 600 on 26th January, with drakes outnumbering the ducks four to one (HB). Over 60 **Long-tailed Ducks** were counted at Nairn on 12th February (RHD), but on the west coast they are scarcer, and a pair at Lendalfoot, Ayrshire, on 2nd February was the observer's first in the Firth of Clyde (MFMM); an adult drake was found dead at Ardmore Point, Dunbartonshire, in the early spring (WUF). A drake **Common Scoter** was found dead on the railway in the middle of Dunfermline, Fife, on 11th March (GD, JP).

About 400 **Red-breasted Mergansers** flew down the Clyde past Ardmore Point, Dunbartonshire, half an hour after high tide on 3rd November; similar numbers have apparently been seen previously just after high tide (TDHM); 67 off Broughty Castle, Angus, on 10th January was the largest party in the



PLATE 19. WATER RAIL, at Moffat refuse tip. Near the bottom of the left side of the picture can be seen the open end of the ham-shank on which the bird was feeding (see page 365).

Photograph by E. Dicerbo.

area for some years (HB). In addition to those already recorded (*antea* 2: 313) a surprising number of **Smews** are reported.

East Voe of Scalloway, Shetland—red-head on 1st January (BH).
 Craigs Pool, South Esk, Angus—red-head on 24th January, and drake on the 27th (GMC per HB).

Forfar Loch—drake on 9th March (HB).

Stamergate, Dundee—red-head on 26th March (HB).

Rescobie, Angus—pair on 23rd March and 2nd April (GMC per HB).

Longannet, Fife—red-head on 26th January (GD, JP).

Cult Ness, Fife—drake on 11th February (GD, JP).

Tynninghame, East Lothian—red-head above bridge in village on 13th January (RWJS).

Near Kelso, Roxburgh—red-head on the Tweed on 2nd February (AJP).

Mouth of River Leven, Dunbarton—red-head from 9th to 16th February, two on 3rd March, and pair on 25th February (ERB, TDHM).

Castle Semple Loch, Renfrew—red-head on 17th February (RGC), and 6th March (RAI).

Bothwell Bridge, Lanark—red-head and two drakes, one of which eventually drove the other away, on 17th February (DSt).

Loch Ken and River Dee, Kirkcudbright—at least two red-heads and two drakes between 6th January and 2nd March (AFA, ICRM, ADW).

An exceptional count of 169 **Shelduck** in the Montrose Basin was made on 23rd February (HB). Inland, one was at Castle Loch, Lochmaben, Dumfriesshire, on 11th November (RTS), and two were at Weird Loch, Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire, 25 or 30 miles from the sea, on 23rd December, but gone next day (DJL).

In the Threave/Castle Douglas area numbers of **Grey Lag Geese** were high for most of the winter, but quite exceptional during the coldest weather, with rough estimates of 3,000 on 15th January, and 5,000 on 1st March. The Loch Ken flocks of **White-fronted Geese** numbered at least 530 Greenland birds at their peak in mid November (ADW). Small numbers of Whitefronts are usually seen in the early spring in Caithness near Loch Hielan; on 3rd February there were 19 at Greenland, and on 17th March seven at Hielan and ten at Brubster, where three were seen on the 23rd (JG, KG, DMS). At Gartocharn, Loch Lomond, one Whitefront was seen on 8th December, and up to six in January. Fourteen **Bean Geese** were in the same area on 13th January, and 17 on 9th February (AGG, TDHM). A single Bean Goose was shot from a flock of 28 similar geese at Cruden Bay, Aberdeenshire, on 19th January, and the skin sent to Culterty Field Station; these birds kept apart from Pinkfeet and Grey Lag, and returned to the Slains area (AMi per GMD, CMY); at dusk on the 24th a flock of 200 geese was located in the same area, half of them Pinkfeet and the others almost certainly Bean Geese, though the light was very poor (EAG). The first Bean Geese in Kirkcudbrightshire were two seen on 22nd November, but most arrived in late December to give a maximum of about 150

birds, which were still there on 16th March but not located on the 24th (ADW). A "blue" **Lesser Snow Goose** returned to Libberton, Lanarkshire, on 20th October, but the large white one has not been seen this winter (RE-H).

A **Light-breasted Brent Goose** was seen with Grey Lags at Drumburn, Kirkcudbrightshire, on 20th January (WA, AB, DSk, JGY), and other Light-breasted birds were two in the Eden Estuary, Fife, on 29th January (PGB) and 10th February (CT), and six at Tynninghame on 17th March (TB, RWJS); in Aberdeenshire 13 Brents were seen in flight at Newburgh on 9th February (AGM). A large flock of **Barnacle Geese** was heard flying south over Lockerbie at 10.45 p.m. on 12th October, and subsequent counts of the flock on the Solway gave totals of about 2,000 on 18th November, and 1,842 on 16th December (RTS). Two were at Kirkoswald, Ayrshire, on 10th January (GAR), and one was with Pinkfeet at Libberton, Lanarkshire, on the 22nd (RE-H).

The status of the **Canada Goose** in many places remains obscure. At Rowbank Reservoir, Renfrewshire/Ayrshire, a pair of colour-ringed birds, at least one of which still remains, was introduced some years ago. Numbers have increased from 10 in 1960/61 and 18 in 1961/62, so that this winter 28 were counted there on 13th January, and 15 (probably the same birds) at Barr Loch, two miles away, where the observer had not seen them before in three years watching. The birds breed wild at Rowbank, but the flock is present at all seasons, except for occasional sorties; they do not allow one to approach much nearer than 50 yards before taking flight (RGC). On 11th November one was flying towards Loch Lomond near Gartocharn (MQS), and on 24th March there was one at Gladhouse, Midlothian (RWJS).

The large winter population of **Whooper Swans** along the Clackmannan shores of the Forth has been noted in the past (*antea* 2: 104). Further up the river, on 2nd February, at least 123 were counted in various groups along the banks between Stirling and Blackdub, 2½ miles along the Doune road (BEW), and on the 16th there were 252 on 350 yards of the Forth by Cambuskenneth, near Stirling (PC). There are more reports than usual of **Bewick's Swans**, all from the southern half of Scotland:

Yarrowfeus, Selkirk—8 adults flew off from melt water in a field, and landed by St Mary's Loch, on 17th March, apparently the first recorded in the county this century (AJS).

Ross Priory, Loch Lomond, Dunbarton—2 on 16th January and 16th February (TDHM).

Hamilton Low Parks, Lanark—2 on 30th March (DSt), and 3 on 8th April (AFP).

Near Mayhole, Ayr—2 on 29th and 30th January (GH-O).

River Dee near Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbright—5 adults on 13th January (JGY).

Between Dalry and Ken Bridge, Kirkcudbright—6 adults on 16th March (GAR) and again next day (ADW).

A **Peregrine** was seen over Kelvin Bridge goods yard in Glasgow on 29th November (MQS).

A cock **Capercaillie** was found in a garden on the outskirts of Stirling on 17th December, and died later though it showed no external sign of injury (GTJ). A hen Capercaillie on some waste ground near Moffat, Dumfriesshire, on 6th March had been seen a week earlier by some quarry workers (ED); two cocks are reported to have been shot 3 miles south of Moffat about 5 years ago, and another was seen in Craigieburn Forest, Moffat Water, by a visitor on 25th March 1963 (per ED).

A Short Note on another page refers to **Water Rails** coming boldly into the open at Moffat. There are similar reports from elsewhere, which may well be related to the cold weather: at Stracathro Hospital, Angus, one was standing unconcernedly in a shallow pool on 2nd February (GMC); on the same day, at Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire, one walked across the track and disappeared under a hen coop (AGG, AI, TDHM); on 9th February in Edinburgh one was caught at the side of a burn just outside the Hermitage of Braid (OTT); and on 3rd March one was mincing across the ice of the pool at Belhaven rubbish tip near Dunbar, East Lothian (MFMM). On 26th and 28th December a small brown crake, much smaller than a Water Rail, and with a red spot at the base of its bill, was seen at Duddingston Loch, Edinburgh. It was very similar to the bird seen there by the same observer in November 1952 (see *antea* 1: 406, 474, and *Edin. Bird Bull.* 3: 19), but unfortunately, as before, the views obtained were not sufficient to establish it with certainty as a **Little Crake** (DRA). On 23rd February there were no fewer than 58 Moorhens assembled in an ice-free burn at Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire (RTS).

Since **Lapwings** left Caithness in the cold weather, their re-appearance in mid March was very striking, the first big flock being over 200 birds at St John's Loch on the 17th, although there had been three at Dounreay on the 7th, and 18 at Castletown on the 10th (KG, DMS). Fair Isle had a good fall of migrants, including Lapwings, on the 12th, and there were up to 500 of them on several days. Few seem to have been local birds as only three or four had taken up territories by the end of the month, but such numbers have seldom been recorded there before (PED).

Winter records of single **Green Sandpipers** are of birds near Gourrock, Renfrewshire, on 26th January (MQS), near Bilston, Midlothian, on 3rd and 17th February (DD), and in a flooded field near Dumfries on 10th March (WA). A **Spotted Redshank**

was at Powfoot, Annan, Dumfriesshire, on 4th and 5th March (RTS, DSw, AFGW), and a winter **Greenshank** was on the fore-shore at Fairlie, Ayrshire, from 16th to 23rd January (ETV).

At Carsethorn, Kirkcudbrightshire, there were well over 10,000 **Knot** on 2nd February (AGG, AI, TDHM); 400 north of Girvan next day were unusually many for Clyde (MFMM); and 1,300 at Seafield, Leith, on 17th March was unprecedented at that particular locality (ATM). Inland, one was seen on a flooded sandy ploughed field at Loch Leven on 30th March (RWJS). Three **Dunlin** by the Tweed between Walkerburn and Innerleithen, Peeblesshire, on 24th December were odd in both date and place (JB).

Two **Ruff** were at Aberlady, East Lothian, on 23rd February (CT), and one was still present at Prestwick (see *antea* 2: 317) on 3rd March (GAR).

A very large assembly of over 650 **Great Black-backed Gulls** was feeding on abattoir offal at Dornock, near Eastriggs, Dumfriesshire, on 30th December (RTS). Mature or nearly adult **Glaucous Gulls** are reported near Gourrock, Renfrewshire, on 26th January (MQS), and at Ayr on 24th February (MFMM) and 16th March (RGC), but the first at Stornoway, a 1st winter bird, was not seen this winter until 10th March, an unusually late first date. Not one **Iceland Gull** appeared in Stornoway this winter, which is unusual (WAJC), but a 1st winter bird was seen at Lentrán, Inverness, on 9th January (RHD).

Single **Little Auks** were found dead at Reay, Caithness, on 2nd and 12th December (JG), and there were fresh remains of one at Aberlady on 27th January (JO). On 22nd March there were already many **Puffins** on the sea south of Boddam, Aberdeenshire, and about a dozen on the cliffs, one of them actually emerging from a hole. This seems exceptionally early, since Baxter & Rintoul (*The Birds of Scotland*) state that they do not land until the second half of April or early May, and R. M. Lockley gives a series of arrival dates at Skokholm, far to the south, from 1928 to 1952, of which the earliest was 22nd March 1932, and the first landing was not until 4th April (DPW).

On 13th January there was a huge migration of **Woodpigeons** at Dunbar, East Lothian. It was said to have started at first light at 0830 hrs, and while the observer watched from 1015 hrs to 1145 hrs the birds were estimated to be passing at about 500 per minute in an almost continuous stream, equal to 45,000 in those 90 minutes. They came off the sea from E or SE, heading into the strong NW wind, and hitting the coast just south of Dunbar. They flew northward under the cliffs and a few turned west up the Tyne, but most continued northwards. The birds may have come in a direct line from St Abbs Head, rather than over the North Sea, since the movement was

clearly a northward one at Dunbar (MFMM). On the same day flocks were noted from Port Seton to Whitekirk, along the East Lothian shore, passing westward up the coast, and crowding every turnip field along the A1 in the evening (TCS).

Collared Doves were absent from Stornoway, Lewis, for a few months but one or two pairs returned to their usual haunts in the second half of March (WAJC). This same mid-winter absence was noted from Edmonstone, Edinburgh, where none was seen from 10th December until 23rd February, but up to seven in March (GWGB).

A **Barn Owl** was seen about Kinnaird Park, Brechin, Angus, during March (JDu per HB); one of two was still at Longannet, Fife, on 21st January (GD, JP); one was flushed from farm buildings near Broxburn, West Lothian, on 22nd January (per JB); one was hunting by day at Bush Estate, Midlothian, on 6th January (DD); a weak sickly bird came to a steading at Makerston, Roxburghshire, on 13th January and died next day, but another was hunting there on the 21st (AJP). Rubbing in the superiority of the Solway for Barn Owls, are comments that two or three may always be seen now by the road from Dalry to Castle Douglas (ADW), and that three were noted on 12th February between Castle Douglas and Dumfries (JKRM). On 30th January there was a **Little Owl** sitting on top of Greenlaw Town Hall, Berwickshire; when approached within 20 yards it flew off to the top of the grocer's shop (HDH). In East Lothian, one at Hedderwickhill Farm on 16th March had been there for a fortnight, and it remained there for some time after this date. Two pellets under its roost contained mice remains (AMcD). Within the bounds of Edinburgh, at Edmonstone, a **Long-eared Owl** which frequented a narrow strip of dense shrubbery was closely observed on 2nd, 3rd and 4th April (GWGB), and on the same farm a **Short-eared Owl** was seen on 6th January, and three on 23rd February and 2nd March (GWGB, CKM).

Evidence of the number of **Green Woodpeckers** in Lanarkshire is provided by reports of single birds at Craignethan Castle, Tullietudlem, on 23rd March, near Larkhall on the 26th, at the Falls of Clyde near Lanark on the same day (DSt), and at Hamilton on 8th April (AFP).

There are further reports of the influx of **Great Spotted Woodpeckers** last autumn (see *antea* 2: 319). In Aberdeenshire some, at least, arrived much earlier than those previously reported, one being seen to fly into a small wood near the Loch of Strathbeg on 28th August, though there had been none there for several years. The observer's last record for the area is of one stripping bark from a fence post on Forvie Moor on 12th January (DPW), on which date one was still

present in Newburgh (GMD). In Caithness notes come from Dunbeath and Thurso on 11th December (PM), and from Castletown where there were two on 25th December, one on the 29th, one on 26th January, and one throughout March (DMS). More than usual were about Inverness and the Black Isle, Ross-shire, during December, and one was seen at Loch Morar on 2nd January (RHD). It is, of course, not claimed that none of these was a local bird. In Skye one was present in Dunvegan woods on 25th December and subsequently (HM & EM per MJCM), and in Lewis a female was found dead at Stornoway about the New Year, a different bird from that already reported (*loc. cit.*), which still survived (WAJC).

Large flocks of **Skylarks** include 200 on the move near Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire, on 5th January (AFA), 150 possibly brought by a temporary mild spell near Walkerburn, Peeblesshire, on 26th January (JB), a big immigration at Nairn on 12th February with 190, 220, 95 and 35 flying in from the east off the sea between 1015 hrs and 1025 hrs (RHD), and 600/700 in two fields near Ayr on 18th February (JSP).

A **Hooded Crow** was seen near Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire, on 20th and 23rd February (RTS). A cock **Black Redstart** was noted at Lerwick, Shetland, on 19th March (TH per GW).

A cock **Blackcap** which visited a bird table at Scone, Perthshire, on 7th March, and again about two weeks later, presumably survived the inhospitable winter in Scotland (MLy): two others certainly did so. These were a cock and hen previously reported from Rothes, Morayshire, in December and January (*antea* 2: 322). Until 23rd March they were seen almost daily, and then less frequently until the 31st. They were very aggressive to each other and to other species at the bird table, but latterly were seen together on a number of occasions, so that possibly they might remain to breed (AP). Two rather pale **Chiffchaffs** were noted at Wick, Caithness, on 11th November (DB).

As previously suggested (*antea* 2: 323) there were some reports of **Waxwings** about New Year. From 13th to 16th December three ate apples, deliberately left on the trees for them in Stirling (GTJ), and on the 28th there were two in St Andrews, Fife (MHEC), where subsequently one was seen from 5th to 12th January and on 15th February (DCA, MLo, DLS). On 1st January one was at Barr, Ayrshire (GH-O), and on the 3rd there were two at Rothes, Morayshire (AP), on the 11th some were in Comrie, Perthshire (GSS), next day one was seen in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh (TL per JHSw), and in Dundee there was one at the West End on the 18th (JHSu), and several in Ancrum Road from 14th February (per HB). Finally, one was killed on 2nd March from a flock of seven or eight which had been present in Inverness

for the previous six weeks, and which was gone next day (MR). Apart from apples in Stirling, the only food mentioned by observers was cotoneaster berries, in five different localities.

There are further reports of single **Great Grey Shrikes** (see *antea* 2: 323): on 26th November near Lauriston, Kirkeudbrightshire (ADW); on 2nd December 3 miles south of Lairg, Sutherland (RJB); at Flanders Moss in Stirlingshire on 27th January (MFMM), and by the disused railway line there in both Stirlingshire and Perthshire on 2nd March (KMC, MMM); at the Loch of Butterstone, Dunkeld, Perthshire, on 23rd February (RJ); in Inverness-shire next day at Loch Insh meadows, where one was seen in October (*loc. cit.*) (RHD), and between Aviemore and Kingussie on 17th March (RU).

The I.C.I. factory at Girvan, Ayrshire, has 2,750 holes where bricks are missing—evidently in case it has to be extended—and at dusk on 3rd January each one held an average of at least three **Starlings**, thus providing a dormitory for at least 8,000 of them (MFMM).

In Fife, five **Twite** were seen at Cult Ness on 27th December, and seven on 11th February (GD, JP). **Crossbill** records are still coming in, and have again been held over.

More **Bramblings** are reported than in recent winters, with many records of small flocks and a few of larger ones, such as 50/100 in the Carsebreck area, Perthshire, on 23rd December (AGG, TDHM), and 200/250 at Skinflats, Stirlingshire, on 14th January (GD, JP). Near Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire, sensational numbers were seen; on 19th November there had been over 40, and on 30th January there were over 20, but on 12th February more than 200 were feeding on grain in a stackyard with a mixture of other finches, and next day there were over 500 there; numbers were down to 100 on the 14th, however, and gradually dwindled (WA, JDo, RTS).

A **Lapland Bunting** was seen at Aberlady on 1st January (HD), and again nearby on the 13th (AJP, TCS). We have previously commented on the status of the **Tree Sparrow** in north Lanarkshire (*antea* 2: 106); from the southern tip of the county comes a winter record of ten 2 miles SW of Symington on 12th December. In Angus (see *antea* 1: 498) there were 27 in a small plantation at Fern, near Brechin, on 8th January (GMC).

Earlier observations—before 7th October 1962

Information has been sent to us proving that the **Slavonian Grebes** which bred in Aberdeenshire in 1962 (see *antea* 2: 242) did so also in 1960 and 1961; the birds were sitting on full clutches in the first fortnight of June in both years (per AT).

A **Sooty Shearwater** was seen in the Minch near the Shiants on 4th August (NL).

At Thornhill, Dumfriesshire, a moribund **Bittern** was found in a field on 29th August. It died, and the skin was preserved (JY).

As the last swathe was cut in a hay field near Thornhill on 9th July a **Corncrake** escaped with eight chicks. It was seen again with them on the 13th, and with two flying young on 30th August. This is one of few recent records of successful breeding in Dumfriesshire (JY).

Another large flock of **Golden Plovers** (see *antea* 2: 315), with about 600 birds in it was at Crail, Fife, throughout the second half of August (RAJ). A **Spotted Redshank** flew down the River Annan near Lockerbie on 26th August, and there was one at Caerlaverock Castle on 16th September, both in Dumfriesshire (RTS). Two **Little Stints** were identified at Browhouse, East-rigg, Dumfriesshire, on 26th August (RTS), and there were three at Hamilton Low Parks, Lanarkshire, on 29th September, and one on 6th October (AFP).

Good views were had of a **Black Tern** at Milngavie Reservoirs, Dunbartonshire, on 6th September, another to add to the list of those already published (*antea* 2: 259, 317) (TDHM).

At Rannagulzion, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, two **Collared Doves** flew up from a field on 22nd May; next day one was calling quite a lot and making love flights, but none was seen after the 24th (JWC).

General observations on food and plumage

During the cold weather, **Black-headed Gulls** near Culross, Fife, tried eating swedes, but evidently found them indigestible as small heaps were found thrown up on the breakwater wall. Nearby a Moorhen's whole leg, folded like a collapsed letter Z, was found in a **Tawny Owl's** pellet, the foot still glossy olive green and quite pliant, and all encased in mouse fur and a few tibial feathers. Evidently so large a bird is not beyond the Tawny Owl in an emergency (GD, JP). At Tore, Ross-shire, a small flock of a dozen **Fieldfares** remained from New Year until 13th March, apparently living entirely on turnips—to which this species may resort in hard weather—and perhaps a little grain from the sheep troughs (MKM-D).

At Kingsbarns, Fife, a very conspicuous and entirely white **Red-throated Diver** was diving in the sea on 3rd April (HB). On the Dee at Aberdeen a **Mute Swan** was seen on 13th February with practically no webbing on one foot, so that its toes tended to spread out rather more than on its normal foot. The same thing has happened at Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, and it is possible that these birds might have had the webbing ripped out by sharp pieces of ice when braking with their feet as they landed on the ice, something that has been necessary more often than usual this winter (EAG, DPW).

An apparently adult **Whooper Swan** was reported at Loch Ken in January 1962 with a pink bill (*antea* 2: 56), and what was probably the same bird was present again from December to February. The bill is distinctly brighter than that of a 1st winter bird, and this swan is apparently the pen of a pair with three young birds in tow. It seems that the suggestion that the pink bill might indicate a 2nd winter bird (*antea* 2: 107) cannot apply to this one (ADW).

Early in 1962 a photograph, taken from the deck of a Clyde steamer, of a **Herring Gull** with no legs, caused speculation as to how an apparently healthy bird thus mutilated could find a living, and it was concluded that it probably spent all its time in the air or on the water. Then on 19th November, returning from Larne to Stranraer, the observer noticed that almost half the gulls following the ship were legless. The day was exceedingly cold, with a fierce north wind, and it was clear that the gulls were using their under tail-coverts as a muff or footwarmer. It is not known whether this habit has been recorded or not, but the story will perhaps in future prevent any Scottish ornithologist proving so gullible (MFMM).

And finally, a **Starling** with a pure white rump and tail at Balornock, Glasgow, on 27th February (BZ).

REVIEWS

SILENT SPRING. By Rachel Carson. London, Hamish Hamilton, 1963. Pp. xxii + 304. 25/-.

This is a book of vital importance to everyone interested in natural history. It is concerned with the grave dangers to all living organisms (including Man) arising from the ever-increasing development and use of dangerous chemicals for insecticides and herbicides. It is written by an American biologist who has made a special study of the inter-relationship of all living creatures and the chain-reactions set up by biological vacuums created by sudden mass extermination of pests.

Rachel Carson has the distinction of having written two best-sellers in the field of biology—*The Sea around us*, and now *Silent Spring*. Her basic interest is the science of ecology. Early in 1958 she became increasingly perturbed by the effects on wildlife of the widespread and indiscriminate use of toxic chemicals in forestry and agriculture in the U.S.A., and began collecting data on the subject from scientists all over the world. She combed the literature thoroughly; her list of references fills 49 pages in the book. The result is a

remarkable synthesis and presentation of facts concerning toxic chemicals, written in a style easily understandable to the layman. The situation as revealed by the author is disquieting to say the least of it. In America, thousands of tons of D.D.T. and other more toxic chemicals have been sprayed over land, forests, and water without sufficient research having been carried out on possible harmful side-effects. Compared with this country, the use of the dangerous and highly persistent chlorinated hydrocarbons—D.D.T., D.D.D., aldrin, dieldrin, heptachlor, etc.—is on a vast scale. It has resulted in some appalling casualties to birds and other wildlife. Public anxiety about the effects on wildlife resulted in President Kennedy setting up a special committee of investigation.

What then are the facts which the author brings to our notice? She quotes many examples of heavy mortality to birds—one of the most striking being the shocking “kill” of American Robins resulting from D.D.T. sprays used to combat Dutch elm disease. “The trees are sprayed in the spring (usually at the rate of 2 to 6 lbs. of D.D.T. per 50-foot tree, which may be the equivalent of as much as 23 lbs. per acre where elms are numerous) and often again in July, at about half this concentration. Powerful sprayers direct a stream of poison to all parts of the tallest trees, killing directly not only the target organism, the bark beetle, but other insects, including pollinating species and predatory spiders and beetles. The poison forms a tenacious film over the leaves and bark. Rains do not wash it away. In the autumn the leaves fall to the ground, accumulate in sodden layers, and begin the slow process of becoming one with the soil. In this they are aided by the toil of the earthworms, who feed in the leaf litter, for elm leaves are among their favourite foods. In feeding on the leaves the worms also swallow the insecticide, accumulating and concentrating it in their bodies. Dr Barker found deposits of D.D.T. throughout the digestive tracts of the worms, their blood vessels, nerves, and body wall. Undoubtedly some of the earthworms themselves succumb, but others survive to become “biological magnifiers” of the poison. In the spring, the robins return to provide another link in the cycle. As few as eleven large earthworms can transfer a lethal dose of D.D.T. to a robin. And eleven worms form a small part of a day’s rations to a bird that eats ten to twelve earthworms in as many minutes.” Although the robin was the chief victim (one woman calling a Research Institute reported twelve robins lying dead on her lawn as she spoke), sixty-three different species were included among the specimens examined. This all happened despite assurances of the insecticide people that their sprays were “harmless to birds.”

Since the book was written, Roger Tory Peterson told the reviewer that in 1962, on the Connecticut River, out of 62

pairs of nesting Ospreys, only one pair had succeeded in rearing one young. The remainder were sitting on infertile eggs. A chemical analysis of these eggs revealed high residues of chlorinated hydrocarbons. How did the Ospreys accumulate these? The answer is that there was large-scale spraying of forests with insecticides—millions of acres at a time. The dead insects find their way into the rivers where they are eaten by fish. The fish ingest cumulative doses; and then, along come the Ospreys to feed on the fish to absorb an even greater accumulation. A terrifying feature is the fact that these chlorinated hydrocarbons can be transferred genetically from parent to offspring before complete infertility is reached. What then of Man—the greatest predator on earth?

At a weekend conference at Cambridge in early March this year to discuss the decline in numbers of birds of prey, the meeting, attended by ornithologists, biologists, landowners, gamekeepers etc. attributed the severe reduction to the cumulative effects of persistent chlorinated hydrocarbons, and called for much more intensified research on the side-effects of such insecticides.

Although the Government has placed a voluntary ban on the sowing in spring of grain dressed with aldrin, dieldrin and heptachlor in agriculture, there are as yet no controls on their widespread use in private gardens, which are rapidly becoming veritable death-traps to wild birds. There is still far too much complacency in Government circles on toxic chemical dangers, as evidenced in the recent debate on the subject in the House of Lords.

Readers are reminded that specimens of any birds suspected of having died as a result of poisoning by toxic chemicals should be sent at once for chemical analysis to Peter Conder, R.S.P.B., The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire.

GEORGE WATERSTON.

(The attention of readers is drawn to "Silent Spring" —Review and Commentary. Published by the Association of British Manufacturers of Agricultural Chemicals, 86 Strand, London W.C.2, 1963. Pp. 9.—Ed.).

BIRDS OF THE WORLD. By Oliver L. Austin, Jr. Illustrated by Arthur Singer. British edition. London, Paul Hamlyn, 1962. Pp. 317; 300 colour plates. 84/-.

British ornithologists are often accused of insularity, and this accusation is not without some justice. We compile lists of the birds of Britain, or (if we are broad-minded) of Europe. Our reference books are *The Handbook of British Birds* and *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*. If we are seriously inclined we read books, or even write papers, on migration, or behaviour, or ecology, or the regulation of

animal numbers—but the species they discuss are almost invariably those of the North Temperate zone, a small and colourless part of the world's avifauna. For most of us a quarter of the birds of the world are merely names we have read in books; two-thirds of the birds of the world are not even names. But even if we have heard of todies, or tinamous, or touracos, or trogons, where can we find them all described? Without an extensive library it has been truly impossible to learn anything about the birds of remote parts of the world.

Now, however, we will have less excuse for our ignorance, for this book describes and illustrates every one of the 155 families of the world's birds. Each family is allotted one or two pages of text, in which it is described in general terms—its distribution, the number and appearance of its species, their food and nesting habits, their migrations, voice and characteristic behaviour. The book is not a mere catalogue, however, for Dr Austin has included a large number of interesting facts about the systematics and life history of birds which have special peculiarities. Thus we can read about the nesting habits of hornbills, the longevity of terns, the feeding association between honey-guides and honey-badgers, the migration of the Slender-billed Shearwater, the displays of birds of paradise, the feather lice of flamingoes, the place of the Night Heron in the Japanese peerage, or the myths surrounding the legendary Quetzal. Perhaps too many of these examples are familiar from other books, but together they give an impressive demonstration of the fantastic variety in the appearance and habits of birds.

To describe eight thousand species in two hundred pages is a daunting task, and the accounts of some families are colourless collections of facts, but most families are brought to life in a very successful way. This would not have been possible without the illustrations, which include at least one bird from each family and comprise a total of over seven hundred species. Large in size, vivid in style and colour, lavish in scope and excellently reproduced, they make this a handsome, striking and lively book. In general they are attractive and accurate, although those of the colourful species are the most successful and the drabber birds are often over-drawn or over-coloured.

The book has an irritating number of minor errors, and does not quite live up to its superficial splendour or the extravagance of its advertising. But it is unlikely to be superseded for a long time, and can be thoroughly recommended to the armchair ornithologist who wishes to escape from his drab northern fauna and to browse among the lavish variety of the world of birds.

I. C. T. NISBET.

BIRDS OF ANGUS. By Henry Boase. 1962. Typescript. Pp. iv + 195; 1 map and 5 graphs.

This account is similar in style and content to *Birds of North and East Perthshire*, by the same author, reviewed in *Scottish Birds* 2 (4): 266-268. There is a useful description of the county, species lists of several areas, a systematic County List, notes on migration and rookeries, and a reference list of 50 titles. It is clear that in Angus Mr Boase spent most of his bird watching time in the past 50 years in the lowlands and on the shores of the rivers and lochs; and "the main purpose of this account is to place on record the writer's findings." The lists of birds seen at the various lochs and the interesting account of migration are valuable, since they are based on regular visits. The systematic list gives a statement under each species of records in a report by Drummond Hay (1886), *A Fauna of the Tay Basin and Strathmore* (1906), the *Geographical Distribution* (1928), *Status and Distribution of Wild Geese and Wild Duck in Scotland* (1938), and *The Birds of Scotland* (1953), supplemented by records published in ornithological journals between 1900 and 1961 together with the notes of the author and his friends. Clearly these statements need critical interpretation, and a casual reader might assume that few records mean that a species is scarce. Particularly with birds of the glens and hills, this is often not the case, but the author occasionally seems to conclude that the records given do present a fair assessment of a species' status. An account of such a large area cannot, however, hope to assess status except in small areas known intimately by the writer. The chief value of lists of this kind is to summarise observations not suitable for publication alone and to provide a basis for detailed future work by local specialists. County lists can eventually be prepared by editing local contributions. Mr Boase's example in selecting the lochs and streams for detailed treatment shows how these pioneer accounts can be planned, and his readers can profitably supplement his account with detailed local knowledge for other habitats and from other counties.

DAVID JENKINS.

A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF SUSSEX. By G. des Forges & D. D. Harber. Edinburgh and London, Oliver & Boyd, 1963. Pp. 177; fold-out map and 12 plates. 30/-.

To anyone watching birds in Sussex this book can be warmly recommended: as a model of what a local bird book should be, it might well be studied also by all who aspire to write such books.

ANDREW T. MACMILLAN.

EVERY CHILD'S BOOK OF BIRDS AND BIRD-WATCHING. By Henry Makowski. English edition, translated by Kathleen Shaw, edited and adapted by Winwood Reade. London, Burke, 1962. Pp. 127; 54 plates, 66 text figures. 15/-.

COLLINS GUIDE TO BIRD WATCHING. By R. S. R. Fitter. London, Collins, 1963. Pp. 254; figures, line drawings and 40 plates. 21/-.

BIRDS: A PRIMER OF ORNITHOLOGY (Teach Yourself Books series). By G. E. Hyde. London, English Universities Press, 1962. Pp. xviii + 174; line drawings and 9 plates (one in colour). 7/6.

These three books—one translated from the German, two by English authors—share the general intention of introducing the budding bird watcher to the bird. But what is bird watching? To Mr Makowski it is essentially a hobby in which the amateur can both enjoy himself and aid the scientist by careful field observation, and one which can therefore be pursued as satisfactorily, and much more conveniently, in a town park or back garden, as on a distant mountain-side or mudflat. Mr Fitter aims his book more deliberately at the itinerant British week-ender, with his round of reservoirs, lakes and woods, to whom bird watching is primarily an intelligent form of escapism, and a matter of collecting records of birds seen largely for their own sake. Mr Hyde's much less satisfactory book gives the impression that his subject is not on a much higher intellectual level than train spotting.

Every Child's Book of Birds and Bird-Watching is excellent, though the title suggests a more juvenile book than it is. Most amateurs of whatever age, whether novice or not, could read it with profit, and certainly no child of ten or upwards would be bored or disappointed with its contents. It is written with an enthusiasm that never jars or condescends, and which has been nicely caught in the English version. It is lucid and refreshing on such potentially dry subjects as the physical structure and classification of birds, as well as on the easier topics of bird song and migration. It is ingenious on the practical side, full of useful information about taking notes, making nest boxes, bird baths, feeding tables, with good sections on photography and avian first-aid and, best of all, a list of the most important and illuminating questions to ask about birds in the breeding season, thus providing the amateur with an orientation for study that he too often lacks in dealing with common species. The faults are slight—contrary to the author's suggestion, most bird watchers find tripods for a telescope more of a burden than a help; the map showing migration over Britain is more misleading than enlightening; some of the captions to the photographs fall below the high

standard of the text. Otherwise it is a very pleasant and well illustrated book. It would be good to think that it makes many converts to Mr Makowski's highly intelligent view of bird watching as a subject "in which amateur and scientist can work together, side by side, with each contributing to the knowledge and enjoyment of the other... It is not a hobby for the unadventurous. But it is a hobby which lasts a lifetime. If you take up bird-watching you will never feel bored or dull again."

Collins Guide to Bird Watching has also much to recommend it, and may achieve a popularity second only to Mr Fitter's previous *Pocket Guides* for the same publishers. It is in three sections—how to watch, what to watch and where to watch. The first 43 pages cover some of Mr Makowski's ground, with similar advice on taking notes, choosing binoculars, attracting and feeding birds, first-aid, photography and bird protection, all clear and sensible. While the author hopes the reader will "graduate from plain enjoyment of birds to something more scientific," the actual job of describing how a bird works, and how to study that subject, he leaves to others. Nearly half of the book consists of hints on the identification of every species occurring regularly in Britain, illustrated with a number of R. A. Richardson's drawings and 40 pages of photographs of typical habitats and some of the birds found in them. Considering the number of excellent illustrated books on identification—including Mr Fitter's own—this section might seem a little hard to justify, especially as coloured plates are out of the question and the text on each species is necessarily very brief. If the author pulls it off it is largely because of the shrewdness and humour of his observations—"...I am convinced that some Blackcaps do also mimic Garden Warblers. This lends a kind of Marx brothers' air to the task of learning to separate these two..." The notes generally maintain a high standard of accuracy, but the statement that immature Mediterranean Gulls have no black on their wings is an extraordinary slip. The arrangement of species in what the author calls "roughly natural groupings," begins with sparrows and ends with terns, and is probably less helpful to the beginner than accustoming him to the Wetmore order from the start. In the final section, Mr Fitter breaks new ground with a 50 page list of the main localities of ornithological interest in every county in the British Isles, together with some of the ornithological specialities of each area. It would be easy to pick holes in the detail of these lists, and to regret the inadequate coverage of parts of the country—the wintering ducks off Seafield, for instance, surely one of the sensational sights of Scotland, are not mentioned—but to harp on this would be ungracious. The idea of an ornithological Baedeker is at once so novel, so

simple and so useful that it is very much to be hoped that this section will be extended, revised and expanded to cover more "special birds" in each of the future editions that the book is likely to run to. Like Collins' other bird guides, it is attractively produced and pleasant to use.

Birds: A Primer of Ornithology is unfortunately a book which cannot be recommended. It demolishes, in ten pages, the topics of bird spotting techniques, conservation, changes in status, migration and classification; the remaining pages plod gracelessly from crows to game-birds, in the almost universally discarded *Handbook* order, as the author reels off "concise descriptions of all the birds which now breed in Britain, and also shorter references to non-breeding visitors." The small size of the book and the absence of plates except of the most unimaginative kind—"Mute Swan on nest"—preclude satisfactory presentation. Furthermore, the information given is often misleading, unhelpful and wrong—no winter plumages are even hinted at for any of the divers or grebes; the Snow Goose is "a pure white bird"; the song of the Sedge Warbler is "noisy rather than musical, but includes some softer notes"; outside Britain the Twite "breeds only in Norway"; and one could go on. There is constant confusion between species and sub-species, with Northern Willow Warbler, Siberian Chiffchaff and Continental Hedge Sparrow, to take but three, described as separate species from their British counterparts. This book is negligible by the side of Mr Makowski's and Mr Fitter's attractive and imaginative productions.

T. C. SMOUT.

THE HOUSE SPARROW (New Naturalist series). By J. D. Summers-Smith. London, Collins, 1963. Pp. xvi + 269; 25 plates (1 in colour); 36 text figs. 25/-.

The *New Naturalist* monographs on single species of birds conform to a regular pattern, a great part of the book being taken up by a detailed life history and the later chapters dealing with a variety of themes, such as Origins, Distribution, Relations with Man, and so on; and the two tests of merit are—how far is the research work original; and how well is it presented? Mr Summers-Smith scores well in Test 1: it is clear that a great deal of painstaking labour has gone into this book and there seems to be nothing about the House Sparrow that he has not found out, except, of course, the one thing that we all want to know—why does it eat our crocuses? In Test 2 the author is not so successful: material that makes interesting papers in scientific periodicals does not always make a readable book, and this is why the later chapters, devoid of analysis of figures, make the better reading:

throughout there is a lack of sparkle, except when it is unintentional, as when the author, twice, refers, when he means "discrete," to sparrow colonies as being "discreet," the last adjective one would apply to them. The picture of the House Sparrow presented here, however, is commendably complete, wholly accurate and analysed with intelligence.

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

THE GOOSANDER AND RED-BREASTED MERGANSER AS PREDATORS OF SALMON IN SCOTTISH WATERS. Freshwater and Salmon Fisheries Research series, No. 29. By D. H. Mills. Edinburgh, H.M.S.O., 1962. Pp. 10. 3/6.

An important discussion, clearly showing that young salmon form a large part of the diet of Scottish sawbills; but leaving open the question whether or not their presence ultimately controls the number of adult salmon returning to our rivers.

ANDREW T. MACMILLAN.

PORTRAIT OF A RIVER. The Wildlife of the Danube from the Black Sea to Budapest. By G. Mountfort. Illustrated by E. Hosking. London, Hutchinson, 1962. Pp. 207; line drawings, maps, and 57 plates (1 in colour). 35/-.

As the subtitle states, this is a survey of the wild life of the Danube from the Black Sea to Budapest. Basically it is the account of ornithological expeditions in 1960 and 1961 to Bulgaria and Hungary respectively. Especially interesting is the fact that both countries are behind the Iron Curtain, and the author outlines some of the problems found in organising such expeditions to a corner of Europe that is unfortunately inaccessible to the ordinary man in the street these days.

The excellent photography is mainly by Eric Hosking, although the author himself makes a by no means negligible contribution to a series of outstanding illustrations. These supplement the text in describing the Danube, its birds and its animals. A chapter on the filming of the Lesser Spotted Eagle in the Baltata forest well illustrates the problems involved in bird photography on expeditions such as these.

The first expedition started from Sofia and explored the lower reaches of the Danube, where it forms the boundary between Bulgaria and Rumania. The party then moved south-east across the Dobruja to the Black Sea coast. In this area the outstanding birds are the White Pelican, White-tailed Eagle and Great Bustard. Unfortunately, however, history and politics, both of which are discussed in this book, have created peculiar problems of conservation, to a great

extent due to the large-scale collective farming. This is tending to eliminate the rare species through the destruction of their particular habitats. Egg collectors too, apparently exist even behind the Iron Curtain; and despite strict protection many species including the Rose-coloured Starling, one of Europe's rarest birds, are threatened with extinction as breeding birds on the Continent.

Various lakes just inland from the Black Sea coast were inspected before returning to Sofia by way of the high mountains south-east of the city. After rather an anticlimax of a climb, one of the highlights of the expedition was achieved—the filming of Wall Creepers at the nest.

The Hungarian expedition started from Budapest with a study of the birds of the surrounding mountains and marshes, where such species as Eagle Owl, Lesser Grey and Red-backed Shrikes, and River Warblers were seen. This took up the greater part of the expedition and it is captivatingly described. A large lake in the western half of Hungary, Lake Balaton, was then visited with gratifying results. Glossy Ibis, Night Herons, Spoonbills and Bearded Tits were among the many species seen in this area.

The book concludes with an appendix, including a list of birds seen and an indication of their status in the regions visited. A useful selected bibliography is also given.

C. N. L. COWPER.

A MOSAIC OF ISLANDS. By Kenneth Williamson & J. Morton Boyd. Edinburgh and London, Oliver & Boyd, 1963. Pp. 187; maps, text figures and 16 plates. 21/-.

In *A Mosaic of Islands* the authors of *St Kilda Summer* capture something of the fascination of small and remote islands. The book is by no means confined to birds, but is flavoured in the fine tradition of Robert Atkinson's classic, *Island Going*. Whale-hunting, archaeology, bird-fowling and studies of seals—the pages are filled with the authors' impressions of their visits, brief or extended, to the Faroes, Fair Isle, Rhum, Unst, St Kilda, North Rona and a host of other islands in the north and west; not least, is a generous sprinkling of maps, which help one locate the places mentioned and bring them to life in one's mind.

ANDREW T. MACMILLAN.

THE BIRD IN THE HAND (B.T.O. Field Guide No. 6). By R. K. Cornwallis & A. E. Smith. Revised By K. Williamson, Oxford, British Trust for Ornithology, 1963 (second

edition). First published 1960. Pp. 78; text figures. Paper cover 6/-, boards 9/6.

This revised edition will be almost essential for anyone making use of the section on sexing and ageing; quite a few of the criteria given in the earlier edition have in practice proved unreliable, and the text carries further warnings on problems of identification. Two dozen new species have been included and a more professional looking cover added, while one blank interleaving sheet and an index have disappeared, and the price has gone up by half.

ANDREW T. MACMILLAN.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Eigg, Muck, Rhum and Canna. A paper is being prepared on the birds of these islands, and the authors would be most grateful for any unpublished information. In particular, dates of visits, species lists with approximate counts, and proof of breeding would be of value. Information about Rhum and Canna should be sent to Dr P. R. Evans, Edward Grey Institute, Botanic Gardens, Oxford, and about Eigg and Muck to Miss W. U. Flower, 5 Airthrey Avenue, Glasgow W.4.

Chough Enquiry 1963. During the past decade the Chough has possibly increased in Wales and the Isle of Man, though the severe winter may have set it back. Information is sought for all areas on breeding numbers and distribution, size of flocks throughout the year, nesting success, and nature of nest sites, for 1963 and earlier years, as well as data on food, habitat, mortality etc. where available. This enquiry is supported by the B.T.O., and questionnaires may be had from the organiser, Martin Richards, Sub-Department of Animal Behaviour, High Street, Madingley, Cambridge.

CORRECTION

The Barnacle Geese referred to on page 307 (lines 33 and 34) escaped from a collection at "Tayfield, Newport," not at "Tayport," 2½ miles away. The significance of this is that there are wildfowl collections at both places, and also that the wildfowl on the Tay estuary are very different at these two points.

OFFICIAL SECTION

THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Sixteenth Annual Conference and Twenty-sixth Annual General Meeting of the Club will be held in the Dunblane Hotel Hydro, Dunblane, Perthshire, from 25th to 27th October 1963. The conference programme will be printed in the next issue of "Scottish Birds," and this intimation is given in order that members may make their hotel reservations in good time. All bookings, including those at the Hotel Hydro, should be made with the hotels and **not** with the Secretary.

Hotel Accommodation in Dunblane

DUNBLANE HOTEL HYDRO (Tel. 3161). Special Conference charge: £4, 16s 0d. This includes accommodation and all meals from Friday dinner until Sunday luncheon, the Annual Dinner, after-meal coffees, morning coffees, and early morning teas. A 7½% gratuity charge will be added to all bills.

Residents staying part of the weekend will be charged as follows: Room and breakfast 32s 6d, dinner 12s 6d, or 16s 6d for the Annual Dinner, luncheon 7s 6d, afternoon tea 3s 6d, after-meal coffee 1s, early morning tea 1s, morning coffee and biscuits 1s 6d.

STIRLING ARMS HOTEL (Tel. 2156). Bed and breakfast from 25s.

*THE NEUK PRIVATE HOTEL, Doune Road (Tel. 2150). Bed and breakfast 18s 6d to 19s 6d.

*SCHIEHALLION HOTEL, Doune Road (Tel. 3141). Bed and breakfast 18s 6d to 21s.

BLAIRALAN, Dargie Terrace (Tel. 3196). Bed and breakfast 17s 6d to 18s 6d.

†GARDLEIGHTON HOTEL (Tel. 2273). Bed and breakfast 15s to 17s 6d.

*These hotels are some distance from the Conference Hotel.

‡Situating near the Hydro Hotel gates.

Hotel Accommodation in Bridge of Allan

ALLAN WATER HOTEL (Tel. Bridge of Allan 2293). Bed and breakfast 35s to 47s 6d.

ROYAL HOTEL (Tel. Bridge of Allan 2284). Bed and breakfast 33s to 36s.

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

The Conference registration fee will be 10s. The cost of the Annual Dinner to members not staying in the Conference Hotel will be 16s 6d. Both these items should be paid at the Conference registration office on arrival at the Hydro.

THE LATE SIR HUGH GLADSTONE'S LIBRARY, PENPONT

Mr John Gladstone, Capenoch, Penpont, Dumfriesshire, has most generously offered facilities to members of the Club to visit and consult the valuable and unique library of ornithological books and pamphlets

collected by his father, the late Sir Hugh Gladstone. This collection comprises books published prior to his death in 1949 and is considered to be the most complete in existence. There is also a collection of pictures and stuffed birds, many of which are rare and of extreme interest.

Members who are making a particular study of ornithological literature and who wish to take advantage of this extremely kind offer may use the library by previous arrangement with Mr Gladstone, and are asked to give him ample notice in case he is absent from home when they write.

AYR BRANCH

We regret that the address of Dr M. E. Castle, new Secretary of the Ayr Branch, was given incorrectly in the last number of the journal. It should be Mount Hamilton, St Quivox, by Ayr.

NEW GROUPS IN INVERNESS AND THURSO

The Council of the Club announces the formation of two new Club Groups in Inverness and Thurso. Although at present not sufficiently large to be recognised as Branches or to qualify for representation on the Council, these Groups have the full support and recognition of the Council, and notices of their meetings and activities will be published with those of the Branches. It is hoped also to provide one or two official lecturers to visit these Groups during each Session.

The Thurso Group has appointed J. M. Gunn as their Chairman, and D. M. Stark, 2 Harland Road, Castletown, by Thurso, Caithness, as Secretary. This Group has planned various activities during the summer and has already carried out a census of Rooks in Caithness, and a bird song and ringing excursion at Reay, and has held a public film show in Thurso. Members in the area may wish to note the following dates:

23rd June—Census of the Arctic Skua in Caithness.

7th July—Ringing excursion, gull colonies.

11th August—Sea watches at Strathy, Dunnet, Duncansby and Noss Heads.

The autumn migration will be covered as far as possible on most weekends at Noss Head and Wick. Further details may be obtained from the Group Secretary.

Details of Inverness Group office-bearers and meetings will be published in the next number of the journal, and members in the area are asked to support this new venture which replaces the original Inverness Bird Watching Group.

The Council extends its good wishes to both Groups and it is hoped that they will lead to an increased interest in field work and provide centres of contact for the more scattered members of the Club in the northern counties.

DONATIONS TO THE SCOTTISH CENTRE

As a result of a most generous donation of £200 to the Scottish Centre, the Council intend to recondition and furnish a new room for the Lending Section of the Library. The growth of the Reference Library has curtailed the space available for the Lending Section, and this gift has come at a very appropriate time. It is hoped that the room will be ready by early autumn. Gifts of books from members to increase the number available for lending will also be much appreciated.

The Council has also received from Miss Betty Garden the very generous donation of £60, and it is intended to use this sum for the purchase of a glass-fronted bookcase to hold the rarer and more valuable books in the Reference Library.

The Council is extremely grateful for these gifts, which will contribute so much to the development of the Club.

Highland and Overseas Field Holidays

Bird-watching and general Natural History holidays in Scotland and on the Continent, planned for small groups and run on informal lines. Special studies of hill birds, flora and fauna in Cairngorms, Grampian and Monadhliath ranges; autumn migration Spey area and Moray Firth.

Overseas visits include Holland, France, Norway, Sweden, etc. and special Migration Watch Sept. 1963.

New annexe accommodation at Pitmain Beag, Kingussie; study facilities and small library. Day or weekend visitors welcome as well as reservations for regular week or fortnight programme. For details write to:

Colin Murdoch,

Highland & Overseas Field Holidays
Kingussie, Inverness-shire.
Tel. Kingussie 300

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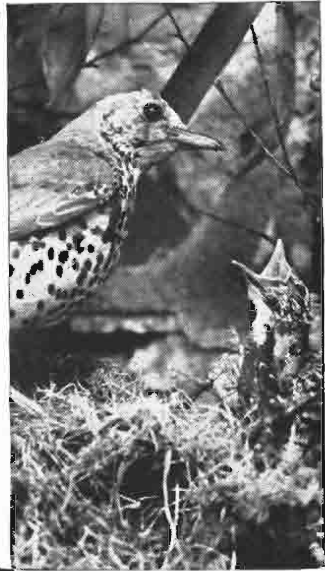
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