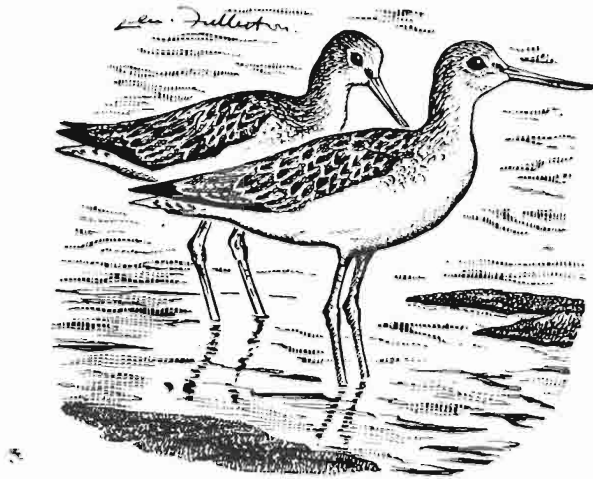


Scottish Birds



The Journal of The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

Vol. 4 No. 1

Spring 1966

FIVE SHILLINGS

Zeiss Binoculars of entirely new design:



Dialyt 8x30B



giving equal performance with or without spectacles

This delightfully elegant and compact new model from Carl Zeiss has an entirely new prism system which gives an amazing reduction in size. The special design also gives the fullest field of view—130 yards at 1000—to spectacle wearers and to the naked eye alike.

Price £53.10.0

 **Degenhardt**

DEGENHARDT & CO. LTD
20/22 Mortimer Street · London, W.1

Write for the latest camera, binocular
and sunglass booklets to the sole
U.K. importers.

CARL ZEISS HOUSE
MUS 8050 (9 lines)

CHOOSING A BINOCULAR OR A TELESCOPE

EXPERT ADVICE

From a Large Selection ... New and Secondhand



G. HUTCHISON & SONS

Phone CAL. 5579

OPTICIANS - - 18 FORREST ROAD, EDINBURGH

Open till 5.30 p.m. Saturdays : Early closing Tuesday

COLOUR SLIDES of BIRDS

Incomparable Collection of British, European and African birds. Also views and places throughout the world. Send stamp for list. Sets of 100 for hire.

BINOCULARS

Our "Birdwatcher 8 x 30" model is made to our own specifications—excellent value at 15 gns. Handy and practical to use.

Ross, Barr and Stroud, Zeiss, Bosch Binoculars in stock.

W. Cowen - Keswick

BIRD BOOKS

Please support

THE S.O.C. BIRD BOOKSHOP

by buying all your new
Bird Books from
THE SCOTTISH CENTRE
FOR ORNITHOLOGY AND
BIRD PROTECTION

21 Regent Terrace,
Edinburgh 7

All books sent post free

Terms—Strictly cash.

Ask for Price List.

ICELAND

AN ORNITHOLOGICAL TREASURE HOUSE

Some of the
200 species
which have
been observed
in Iceland:—

LITTLE AUK
PURPLE SANDPIPER
GREY PHALAROPE
BRUNNICH'S GUILLEMOT
SEA-EAGLE
SNOWY OWL
ARCTIC TERN
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE
HARLEQUIN DUCK

Spend the long summer
days in this intriguing
country. The enormity
of the landscapes and
the ever-recurring con-
trasts of the scenery are
only now being discov-
ered by the tourist. Its
wealth in birdlife, not
only in numbers but in
the variety of the
species has caused it to
be described as "a real
paradise for birdwatch-
ers."

*Fly direct from Renfrew
by*

**ICELANDAIR
VISCOUNT**

in only 3 hours

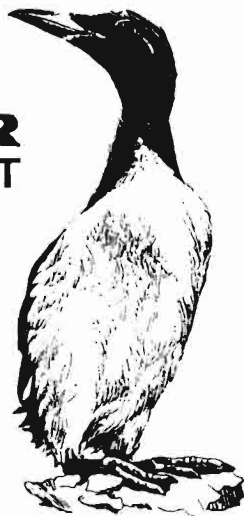
Daily Services Throughout the Summer
REDUCED RATES for Group Travel
Special 13-Day Tours for Naturalists
accompanied by qualified Guide

Consult your Local Travel Agent,
any Office of B.E.A., or



33 ST. ENOCH SQ., GLASGOW, C.I.

Telephone: CITY 3638



Scottish Birds

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Contents of Volume 4, Number 1, Spring 1966

	Page
Editorial	61
Scottish Ornithologists. 2. Martin Martin c. 1656-1719.	
By Ian D. Pennie (plates 10-11)	64
Isle of May Bird Observatory and Field Station Report	
for 1965. By Nancy J. Gordon	74
Short Notes	
Autumn notes from the Isle of Iona (W. M. Kerr,	
J. A. D. Hope)	80
Purple Heron at Fair Isle (R. H. Dennis)	81
Little Bitterns in Ayrshire and Shetland	
(D. & A. B. Johnstone, G. A. Richards; G. D. Joy)	82
Harlequin Ducks at Fair Isle and in Caithness	
(G. Barnes; R. S. Shand, G. Gunn)	83
Gyr Falcons in East Inverness-shire and Shetland	
(C. C. I. Murdoch; W. G. Porteous)	86
Capercaillie x Black Grouse hybrid in Perthshire	
(V. M. Thom) (plate 9)	88
Temminck's Stint in East Lothian (T. Boyd,	
E. M. Smith, R. W. J. Smith)	88
Pratincole in Orkney (E. Balfour)	90
The Green Woodpecker in Clackmannanshire (A. Tewnton)	95
Nesting of a nearly white hen and a normal cock	
Blackbird (R. W. Pickford) (plate 12)	96
Abnormally plumaged Willow Warblers (W. M. M. Eddie;	
P. J. Sellar, P. J. B. Slater)	97
Firecrest in Shetland (D. Coutts, W. G. Porteous)	99
Scandinavian Rock Pipits in Scotland in spring	
(J. L. S. Cobb; M. F. M. Meiklejohn)	100
Woodchat Shrikes in Fife and East Lothian	
(D. W. Oliver; A. Macdonald)	101
Black-headed Bunting in Shetland (R. J. Tulloch)	103
Rustic Bunting in Outer Hebrides (W. J. Eggeling)	104
Current Notes	106
Reviews	
Birds of Town and Village. By Basil Ede and	
W. D. Campbell. Reviewed by R. Scath	117
The Woodpigeon. By R. K. Murton. Reviewed by J. D. Lockie	118
The Bird Table Book. By T. Soper. Reviewed by M. J. Everett	119
The Young Specialist Looks at Birds. By H. Frieling.	
Reviewed by T. C. Smout	120
The Birds of the Isle of Lewis: 1963-1965. By N. Elkins	121
Letter	
Notes on the birds of Berneray, Mingulay and	
Pabbay (K. G. Walker)	121
Request for Information	121
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club	122

Edited by Andrew T. Macmillan, 12 Abinger Gardens, Edinburgh 12.

Assisted by D. G. Andrew, T. C. Smout and P. J. B. Slater.

Business Editor T. C. Smout, 93 Warrender Park Road, Edinburgh 9.

HOLIDAYS in IRELAND



An ideal centre for bird lovers and ornithologists close to Lough Corrib. Boat trips may be arranged to some of the Lough's 365 islands or you can walk in Irish country lanes and enjoy the wild flowers and superb scenery. Free fishing, and within easy reach of all the Connemara sea trout and salmon fisheries.

Rough shooting, Resting, Home Cooking, Packed Lunches . . . Book now for 1966. Limited accommodation.

Write for Brochure to:

**Miss Pauline Joyce,
St Michael's, Oughterard,
Connemara**

THE BOAT HOTEL



Set amidst mountain and moorland scenery, the Boat Hotel, with its reputation for comfort and good food, is an ideal centre for studying birds—the Ospreys at Loch Garten are only three miles away, and this is the country for Crested Tit, Crossbill, Capercaillie and much besides. Also ideal for photography, pony-trekking, fishing and climbing. 18-hole golf course 2 minutes from hotel. Now under new ownership of Mr and Mrs James Harris. Reduced rates for children.

**BOAT OF GARTEN
Inverness-shire**

Cliff House Residential Club Dunwich

In walking distance of
Minsmere Bird Sanctuary

Open from Easter till the
end of September

Good food Packed lunches
Comfortable rooms, H. & C.
Club Licence

Telephone: Westleton 282

Highland & Overseas Field Holidays

Bird-watching and general
Natural History holidays and
expeditions in Scotland and
on the Continent.

1966 programme includes
Scandinavia, Iceland, Por-
tugal, Austria and France.

For full details, write to:

**COLIN MURDOCH,
Pitmain Beag,
KINGUSSIE,
Inverness-shire
Tel. Kingussie 300.**

Scottish Birds

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



Volume 4 No. 1

Spring 1966

Edited by A. T. MACMILLAN with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW, T. C. SMOUT and P. J. B. SLATER. Business Editor, T. C. SMOUT.
Cover Design (Greenshanks) by LEN FULLERTON.

Editorial

Protection of Birds Bill. The new Protection of Birds Bill was given an unopposed second reading in the House of Commons on 28th January 1966. It was introduced by Col. Sir Tufton Beamish. Earlier it had received a third reading in the House of Lords, where it was introduced by the President of the R.S.P.B., Lord Hurcomb.

The purpose of the Bill is to strengthen the 1954 Act. It takes away the power of the Secretary of State to deprive the eggs of certain common birds of the normal protection given to all species. This removes one of the obstacles that has prevented Great Britain signing the International Convention for Bird Protection—an ironic situation for a people internationally famous as animal lovers. It will also mean that the law is less easily thwarted by a glib talker passing off rare eggs as those of a common species to an unornithological policeman. The Bill also makes it harder for a known egg collector to escape under the frustrated noses of the police for lack of a search warrant. He, and his car, may be stopped and searched on reasonable suspicion that he has been after the eggs of rare birds.

The Bill prohibits the import or sale of Lapwings' eggs and the sale of wild geese throughout the year. Power is taken for the Secretary of State, after suitable consultation, to impose a temporary ban on shooting in severe weather. It is also made an offence wilfully to disturb rare birds at their nests. A point of special interest in Scotland is that the Secretary of State will have power to allow the traditional harvesting of gugas (young Gannets) on Sula Sgeir to start two weeks earlier—from 14th August instead of the 31st.

It is to be hoped that these provisions will be ratified by Parliament. They are generally desirable. Our one regret is that if we want a tasty young Grey Lag for dinner it seems we must either take up wildfowling or rely on the goodwill and generosity of our shooting friends. This looks like a

subtle way of encouraging good relations between bird-watchers and wildfowlers—at least to birdwatchers.

The R.S.P.B. and 'Birds'. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has come a long way since the days of the plume trade. 'Protection' is a word tinged with emotional overtones, and the society has done well in recent years to opt for a policy of positive conservation and education rather than a sterile 'hands off' approach.

To prosecute egg collectors and bird catchers helps to discourage their activities and is therefore worthwhile, but it is favourable and informed public opinion that will do more good for wild birds. Bear baiting and cock fighting are no longer a problem, not because they are illegal but because most people would not tolerate them.

Much of the R.S.P.B.'s recent success has come through favourable publicity from showing its work to the public—such as the 20,000 ordinary holidaymakers visiting the Loch Garten Ospreys each summer.

With the rapid increase in membership and income, to a higher level than any other British wild bird society, the R.S.P.B. has been able to improve its publicity and start many new projects. Undoubtedly its most important work is education, in the widest sense: all else will follow. With first-class films, wall charts, nest boxes, bird feeders, Christmas cards, birdsong records, press releases, broadcasts, television appearances, competitions for schoolchildren, courses in bird-watching, journals, books, slides, filmstrips, birdy gifts, bird reserves, observation hides and conducted tours, the society is already doing a lot. We note each new venture as further evidence of progressive ideas.

These reflections are prompted by the arrival of the first issue of *Birds*, subtitled *The R.S.P.B. Magazine*, in place of *Bird Notes*, the successor to *Bird Notes and News*, first published in 1903. The spacious 8½" x 11" format, on the lines of *Animals* and the American *Audubon Magazine*, breaks away from the slightly cramping octavo size of British bird magazines. Charles Tunnicliffe's delightful pictures, which have adorned the covers for the past twelve years (the covers certainly do not get thrown out when binding volumes of this journal), give way to colour photographs alternated with the work of a variety of bird artists. The front of the first issue is glorious colour to the very edge—the considerable cost made possible by the large number of copies printed.

One may fault some details but the total effect is a big step forward. The modern appearance of *Birds* conveys a firm message that the R.S.P.B. is an up-to-date society.

Young Ornithologists' Club. This revitalised junior section of the R.S.P.B., with its own magazine *Bird Life*, is open to boys and girls up to the age of 18. It has just adopted a Kestrel in flight as its badge. A dozen exciting holiday courses in various aspects of bird study have been arranged for 1966. The club is very active. It recently ran a competition at the Schoolboys and Girls Exhibition at Olympia with a fortnight's holiday in Spain for two as first prize and a bicycle and binoculars for the runners-up. Full details of the Y.O.C. may be had from The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire.

The Birds of Foula. With this first number of vol. 4 we are distributing copies of our first supplement for nearly four years. This detailed account of *The Birds of Foula*, based on the work of many people over a long period, well deserves its place beside the earlier *Scottish Birds* supplements on Duddingston Loch (1: 393-416, 474) and Tentsmuir (2: 113-164, 497)—still obtainable, as is the earlier publication on Aberlady Bay, at 5/- each from the Scottish Centre for Ornithology.

There is a fascination in remote islands, but Foula is additionally a place of the greatest ornithological interest. Observations have been made there regularly since 1954 and are still going on; the problem has been to decide when to pause and put everything on paper. It is a happy chance that this account follows so soon after Ken Williamson's book on *Fair Isle and its Birds*. Fair Isle of course has its own *Bulletin*, and a lot of scientific papers have been published, so that the account of its birds is in part a convenient summary of what has already appeared in print; but most of the recent records from Foula have not been published until now.

Index and binding vol. 3. Title pages and an index for vol. 3 are being sent to subscribers with this issue. Arrangements for binding are given inside the cover of the index. Readers who want their copies bound are asked to send them to the binders now—after carefully filling in the particulars asked for on the back cover, and checking that they have sent the right money.

Current literature. Recent papers of special interest to Scottish ornithologists include:

Moult and its relation to taxonomy in Rock and Water Pipits, K. Williamson, 1965. *Brit. Birds* 58: 493-504. Valuable review of three Scottish races and immigrants.

The British breeding distribution of the Pied Flycatcher, 1953-62. B. Campbell, 1965. *Bird Study* 12: 305-318. Includes Scottish records by county.

Scottish Ornithologists

2. Martin Martin c. 1656-1719

IAN D. PENNIE

(Plates 10-11)

Martin Martin should require no introduction to Scottish readers, yet so little is known of the life of the author of what has been justly described as "the first intelligent topographical book regarding Scotland" that any attempt at a biography necessarily consists of a few facts weakly supported by a great deal of conjecture.

Martin Martin was the third son of Donald Martin of Bealach, Duntuilm in the Isle of Skye, where he was born on some date between 1656 and 1660. The family was apparently one of some standing for his father acted as chamberlain of Trotternish and married a niece of Sir Donald Macdonald of Sleat. He was educated in Edinburgh along with his brothers Donald and John, and there received the degree of M.A. in 1681. He was subsequently employed for some period until 1686 as governor (tutor) to Donald Macdonald, younger, of Sleat, evidently his own second cousin who was about ten years his junior; and from 1686 to 1692, or possibly later, as governor to the younger Macleod of Dunvegan.

In the Dunvegan household accounts occur the following entries:

Martin Martin, Governor to the young laird for 100 marks part payment of services dated Oct. 13, 1686.

Martin Martin for 100 marks part payment as above, dated Aug. 18 1686.

Martin Martin 100 merks part of stipend from Whitsunday 1688 to Whitsunday 1689.

Martin Martin Governor to the young Laird for £100 for service in 87 July 29, 1688 and for £6 sterling a quarter's pay at same date.

From Martin Martin two receipts, 1 June 1690 for £6 sterling, 2 July 6 for £10 sterling, 25 Aug. from A. MacLeod payment of above.

Martin Martin for 116 marks for the use of Issabel McLeod Aug. 13, 1692.

Donald McLeod indweller in the Isles for 759 marks upon a judgement from the Countess of Linlithgow also 100 marks given to Martin, McLeod's man, for his charges north, dated March 9, 1694.

This last entry, which seems to have been overlooked by previous biographers, rather suggests that he was employed at that time by Macleod on some estate business, possibly in Harris, where he certainly must have been about that time, this being the place of embarkation for St Kilda, which, he says, "I attempted several times to visit, but in

vain, until last summer [1697]." The ultimate successful voyage was an estate expedition, and possibly Martin was then still under contract with Dunvegan. Unfortunately, apart from the vivid description of this stormy passage, we have no record of any of his actual journeys or fellow travellers.

It is significant that the year of Martin's graduation, 1681, was also the year of the foundation of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh by Sibbald, Balfour and Pitcairn; and it may indeed have been these who "raised his natural curiosity to survey the isles of Scotland more exactly than any other." The assertion by F. T. Macleod (1920) that his journeys were undertaken "mainly at the request of Sir Robert Sibbald" may well be correct as the latter was at that time actively engaged in collecting the material for *Scotia Illustrata*.

We know from Martin's own statement that he knew Dr Pitcairn—"Dr *Pitcairn* told me that the like Cure had been perform'd in the Shire of *Fife* for the same Disease." We know also that he was at least familiar with the work of James Sutherland, who was gardener in charge of Sibbald's botanical garden and later professor of botany, so it can safely be assumed that he had associated with Dr Sibbald in Edinburgh. It has even been suggested that Martin began to collect the material for his publications before he left Edinburgh, the evidence being the passage referring to Benbecula that "this island belongs properly to Ranal Mackdonald of Benbecula", a chieftain who died in 1679. One certain fact is that later Sibbald possessed a copy at least of Martin's *A Late Voyage to St Kilda*, as in Sibbald's *History of Fife and Kinross* there is a description of a Storm Petrel which was shot at Leith, which he calls the Assilag, saying, "I found it agreed well with Mr Martin's figure, and description of the bird."

Martin's Edinburgh associations may eventually have influenced his decision to study medicine, although he did not take his medical degree until much later, entering Leyden Medical College in March 1710, where Sibbald had studied fifty years earlier. It is said that he never practised his profession and that he latterly resided in London, where he died, unmarried, in 1719.

Martin wrote two books and two scientific papers. The earlier book was entitled *A Late Voyage to St Kilda* and was first published in 1698; the second, *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland*, was published in 1703. A full description of these, with details of collations and editions, is given by Mullens and Kirke Swann, but the latest, and most useful source for reference, was the combined edition of

1934 published by Eneas Mackay in Stirling. It is a pity indeed that this fine volume has not been reprinted.

As a mine of contemporary information pertaining to the Scottish isles, for the folk-lorist, the naturalist and particularly the medical historian, these two books stand unique and indispensable. Martin did not write travelogues, but simply and impersonally recorded what he saw and heard, usually distinguishing clearly between heresay and personal observation. He had certain obvious outstanding qualifications for his mission; he travelled the isles not as a stranger in a foreign land, yet as an educated and trained observer; he had considerable knowledge of medicine, and seems to have been well briefed by the leading Scottish scientists of the day; and lastly he was a speaker, though possibly not a fluent writer, of Scottish Gaelic.

The scientific papers are of relatively minor importance. Both were published in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, although Martin himself was never a fellow of the Society. The first of these papers was published in 1697, presumably soon after his return from St Kilda, and consists of twelve numbered, brief and disconnected paragraphs, all medical in content except the first three, which are quoted in full below:

1. All Tribes of Fowls are observed to have their Sentinels, especially in the Night, the Watchfulness of the Scart is true to a Proverb; I have known one, who by surprizing the Sentinel, caught Three Hundred in a Night.
2. The want of Rain at the usual time of laying Eggs, hinders the Sea Fowls from laying for some time.
3. If the *April* Moon goes far in *May*, it hinders the Sea Fowls from laying Ten or Twelve Days longer than is ordinary.

The second paper in purely medical and was published in 1707.

Seventy years after the publication of Martin's second volume, Samuel Johnson set out on his equally well known journey to the Western Isles and wrote his account of it, the opening sentence of which reads, "I had desired to visit the Hebrides, or Western Islands of Scotland, so long, that I scarcely remember how the wish was originally excited . . ."; but it is clearly stated in one biography of Johnson that "Dr Johnson's father, the old Lichfield bookseller, had put into Johnson's hands, when Johnson was very young, a copy of Martin's work, which aroused his youthful fancy." So it may well be that Johnson's journey was undertaken solely as a result of his early study of Martin's *Western Isles*, and it is known that Johnson had a copy of it with him on his voyage, for this actual copy is still in existence.

Interspersed in the general matter of both of Martin's

books is much ornithological material: some of this has been quoted by Mullens and other writers but no complete list of his birds seems to have been extracted and critically examined. Many of the entries are simply local lists of doubtful value; some are unrecognisable to the casual reader; others are of outstanding interest when examined carefully; and one at least is a unique and invaluable scientific record. The following is a systematic list of the species named in the two books, identified as nearly as possible. If the annotations should stimulate scholarly objection, argument or discussion this paper will have served a useful purpose.

With regard to Martin's dates, which have puzzled many readers, it was pointed out by Fisher that, owing to the alteration to the calendar in 1752, eleven days have to be added to all dates given.

Great Northern Diver. 'Bonnivochil' (North Uist) and 'Bunivochil' (Skye) are phonetic renderings of Bun-bhuachail (Gray), although Martin's descriptions are scarcely recognisable. If the specimen killed by the minister of North Uist did weigh sixteen pounds and one ounce this suggests that it was a White-billed Diver.

Red-throated Diver. The 'Sereachan-aittin' of North Uist appears to be a phonetic rendering of Deargan-aodann; from dearg (red) and aodann (face or front) (compare deargan-allt—Red-necked Phalarope; and deargann—flea) although Martin transposed the red colour to the bill. Gray refers to the Hebridean belief that this bird expresses grief on being robbed of its eggs in loud and melancholy lamentations. 'Rain-goose' (North Uist) is also one of the divers, probably also the Red-throated Diver.

Leach's Petrel. 'Gawlin' (North Uist) is a phonetic rendering of gobhlan; Nicolaisen gives gobhlan-mara (Gobhal—fork; gobhlan-gaoithe or gobhlachan-gaoithe—Swallow). The 'Goylir' (North Uist), which is said to be a sea-bird "about the bigness of a swallow," is presumably a variation—gobhlar. The seamen are said to have called them 'malifigies,' which could be a corruption of 'maalie,' which is a common seaman's and Shetland name for the Fulmar, and bheag (small), i.e. 'little petrel.'

Storm Petrel. 'Assilag.' Martin's illustration in *A Late Voyage to St Kilda* was used by Sibbald to identify a specimen shot near Leith: the description is accurate so far as it goes. 'Lint-white,' to which he compares the assilag in size appears to be a direct translation of Nicolaisen's gealan lin (Linnet), but this was altered to 'linnet' in the fourth (revised) edition of 1753.

Manx Shearwater. Martin confuses Manx Shearwaters and

Black Guillemots, but careful examination shows that all his 'Puffins' are shearwaters. In his list of the birds of St Kilda he names it correctly as 'scraber' (Nicolaisen's *scrabaire*), and describes its behaviour well—" . . . it is never to be seen but in the Night, being all the Day either abroad at Fishing, or upon its Nest, which it digs very far under Ground, from whence it never comes in Day-light"; but his description of the adult is of the Black Guillemot, and he refers to the young bird as "the young *Puffin*." He refers also to the dogs in St Kilda being ". . . very dexterous in climbing and bringing out from their Holes those Fowls which build their Nests far under Ground, such as the *Scraber*, *Puffinet*, &c." There were said to be both 'coulter-neb' and 'puffin' on Sula Sgeir, but 'the *Puffin*' which on Rum builds "in the Hills as much as in the Rocks on the Coast" can only be the Manx Shearwater, and the 'Lyre' of Orkney is unmistakable (note, *lire* in Norwegian, but *skraape* in Danish).

Martin refers also to "The Rock *Linmull* . . . abounds with Sea-fowls . . . such as the *Gillemot*, *Coulter-neb*, *Puffin*, &c.", and to "The *Lyra-Skerries* [Shetland]), so called from the Fowl of that name that abound in them." The former is the Stack of Lianamull, Mingulay, figured by Harvie-Brown and Buckley, where shearwaters formerly bred but were later driven out by Puffins; and the latter is a large stack off Papa Stour where no shearwaters nest today but where they did so formerly according to name and old records (Venables). This may well have been the case on Sula Sgeir also and points to an ecological succession with changes in the soil, vegetation and birds on stacks and small islands which would be well worth further study.

Fulmar. As a British breeding species the Fulmar was of course restricted to St Kilda in Martin's time, and he was probably the first person to use the name in English. His illustration, though somewhat grotesque, is recognisable if only from the beak, which is well drawn, and his description of the bird tolerably accurate. The Fulmar was believed by the St Kildans to "pick Food out of the Backs of living Whales" and was recorded correctly, in the earlier account, to eject "a Quantity of pure Oyl out at its bill" on being approached. The story seems to have improved in the telling for by 1703 had grown to "about a Quart of pure Oyl," which was caught in a wooden vessel as ejected, or else the bird was caught by a noose round the neck and the oil so retained.

Use was made by the St Kildans of every part of the Fulmar; the flesh as food was preferred to that of any other bird; the eggs were extensively eaten (this species and the Great Auk being the only seabirds said not to re-lay); the oil was used not only for lambs but also medicinally both

internally and externally; the feathers were exported for bedding; the long bones used as plaid brooches; and finally the carcase bones, wings and entrails were added to the straw for compost.

Gannet. Away from St Kilda, Martin makes only casual mention of the 'Solan Goose' on Ailsa Craig*, Orkney and Sula Sgeir, and it is surprising that he does not say anything about the expeditions from Ness, faithfully recorded earlier by Dean Monro. With regard to the Gannet on St Kilda he has a great deal to say and *inter alia* seems to have been the first person to place on record the observation which a quarter of a millenium later led Wynne-Edwards to the conclusion that "...not only gannets, but perhaps even birds generally, do not normally need to employ their full 'man-power' in order to produce the year's recruitment quota," or, in Martin's words, "There is a tribe of barren *Solan* Geese which have no Nests, and sit upon the bare Rock; these are not the Young Fowls of a Year Old, whose Dark Colour would soon distinguish them, but Old ones, in all things like the rest; these have a Province, as it were allotted to them, and are in a separate State, having a Rock Two hundred paces distant from all other; neither do they meddle with, or approach to those hatching, or any other Fowl; they sympathize and fish together; this was told me by the Inhabitants, and afterwards confirmed several times by my own Observation." Elsewhere he extends this to other species—"There are some flocks of barren Fowls of all kinds, which are distinguished by their not joyning with the rest of their kind, and they are seen commonly upon the bare Rocks, without any Nests."

Enormous numbers of Gannets were taken for food on St Kilda, but the validity of Martin's figures is discussed by Gurney. The most interesting point in this context is the description of the method used to ensure that the crop of Gannets was adequately harvested—"In this Rock [Stack Li] the *Solan* Geese are allowed to hatch their first Eggs, but it is not so in the Rocks next to be described; and that for this Reason, that if all were allowed to hatch at the same time, the Loss of the Product in one Rock would at the same time prove the Loss of all the rest, since all would take Wing pretty nearly at the same Time," and later, "...from their coming in *March* till the Young Fowl is ready to fly in *August* or *September* according as the Inhabitants take or leave the First or Second Eggs... The *Solan* Goose comes about the middle of *March* with a S.W. Wind, warm Snow or Rain, and goes away, according as the Inhabitants determine the Time, i.e. by taking away or leaving its Egg, whether at the First, Second, or Third time he lays."

*Gurney (1913, p. 319), misinterpreting Martin's Islesay (Ailsa), wrongly attributes to him the view that Gannets are numerous on Islay.

Cormorant and **Shag**. No clear distinction is made and they are referred to indiscriminately as 'Cormorants,' 'Sea Cormorants' and 'Scarts,' recorded from Haskeir Rock (North Uist), Skye and Tiree. Both species were eaten although the Cormorant seems to have been preferred as it was said in Skye that the "*Sea Cormorant* . . . if perfectly Black, makes no good Broth, nor is its Flesh worth eating, but that a *Cormorant*, which has any white Feathers or Down, makes good Broth, and the Flesh of it is good Food."

Heron. The 'Cranes' of Skye were probably Herons, of which Martin himself had seen a flock of sixty on the shore.

Duck sp. 'Ducks' are listed for Orkney, but nowhere else.

Eider. This is Martin's 'Colk,' correctly spelled Colc (there is no 'k' in Gaelic) which seems not to have been plentiful, and was said to be found only in the remotest islands such as Heisker, Sula Sgeir and Rona. His spectacular description is reminiscent of Dean Monro's, though lacking the attractive archaic detail of the latter.

Goose sp. 'Geese' are listed for Orkney without comment, and on North Uist are "plentiful here and very destructive to the Barley, notwithstanding the many methods used for driving them away both by Traps and Gun-shot." This almost certainly would refer to the native Grey Lag Geese. A note that "the Rock *Heisker*, on the South end [of Canna] abounds with wild Geese in *August*, and then they cast their quills," refers obviously to a moult migration of a pattern which may no longer exist in the much depleted stocks of Scottish Greylags.

Martin is uncritical of the belief still prevalent in Orkney in the genesis of the Cleck-Goose, although he covers himself by observing that he "never saw any of them with life in them upon the Tree."

Whooper Swan. 'Swans' are listed for Orkney, where at that time the Whooper was still a breeding species, but in the Western Isles Martin's only record is for North Uist where they "come hither in great Numbers in the Month of *October* . . . and live in the fresh Lakes . . . till *March*."

Golden Eagle. Called the 'Black Eagle' in distinction from the 'Grey' or 'Sea Eagle' and said to be much more destructive to stock. Golden Eagles are recorded from Harris, Skye and North Uist, and in this last island both species of eagle were said to kill deer by fixing their talons in the beast's forehead and, by flapping the wings in its face, driving it over a cliff or into a ditch: several eagles might thus join in harrying one deer.

White-tailed Eagle. The 'Grey Eagle' of Martin, said to be larger than the Black Eagle, bred in Eilean Mor of the

Shiants, in Harris, North Uist, Skye, St Kilda, Orkney and Shetland. The Shiant's eyrie was still occupied in 1888 (Harvie-Brown and Buckley), and this pair was said to hunt only on the mainland and never to kill lambs on the island. The St Kilda pair also "... have their Nest on the North end of the Isle ... make their Purchase in the adjacent Isles and Continent, and never take so much as a Lamb or Hen from the Place of their Abode." In North Uist, fish, commonly salmon, were taken; in Orkney the eagles were "... so strong as to carry away Children," which in fact happened to a child in Skye, who was subsequently saved and known thereafter as Neil Eagle.

Peregrine. The 'hawks' of the Scottish isles were evidently held in high esteem by falconers, those of St Kilda being reckoned the finest of all and those of Fair Isle the finest in Shetland. The Fair Isle Peregrines were known to hunt grouse in Orkney. The vassalage of Barra was £40 and a hawk annually. Other sources of hawks were Harris, North Uist, Skye and Mull.

Red Grouse. Known as 'Muir-Fowl' and 'Heath Hen': listed for North Uist, Skye and Mull.

Ptarmigan. Recorded from North Uist, Skye and Mull without comment.

Black Grouse. Recorded from Skye and Mull.

Pheasant. Without comment in the list of birds of North Uist.

Corncrake. Listed for St Kilda and North Uist. In the latter it is said to be "... of a brown Colour, but blacker in harvest than in Summer": perhaps these autumn birds were Water Rails.

Oystercatcher. Recorded from Skye and St Kilda; called by Martin the 'Tirma' or 'Sea-Pie' (also 'Sea-Pye'), and known as 'Trilichan' in St Kilda, where it "comes in May and goes away in August."

Plover sp. 'Plovers' are in the list of birds of North Uist, Skye and St Kilda. There is also a charming and somewhat unusual account of bird protection—unusual at this period as being solely for sentimental reasons—"There is a great Flock of Plovers, that come to this Isle [Fladda Chuan] from Skie, in the beginning of *September*, they return again in *April*, and are said to be neer two thousand in all; I told the Tenant he might have a Couple of these at every meal during the Winter and Spring, but my motion seem'd very disagreeable to him: For he declared that he never once attempted to take any of them, tho he might if he would, and at the same time told me, he wondred how I could imagine, that he would be so Barbarous, as to take the lives

of such innocent Creatures as came to him only for Self-preservation."

Arctic Skua. The 'Faskidar' of North Uist "... is observed to fly with greater swiftness than any other fowl in those parts, and pursues lesser fowls, and forces them in their flight to let fall the Food which they have got, and by its nimbleness catches it, before it touch the Ground."

Gulls spp. Little is said about gulls except in a vague reference in the passage on Skye to "*Malls* of all kinds," and on St Kilda where "There are three sorts of *Sea-Malls* here; the first of a grey Colour, like a Goose, the second considerably less, and of a grey Colour; and the third sort white, and less in size than a Tame Duck; the Inhabitants call it *Reddag*; it comes the fifteenth of *April* with a S.W. Wind, lays its Egg about the middle of *May*, and goes away in the Month of *August*." This is the Kittiwake, Reddag being correctly spelled Ruideag.

Razorbill. Not recorded by Martin except on St Kilda where it was called the 'Falk' (more correctly Falc). "It lays its Egg in *May*, its Young take *Wing* the middle of *July*, if the Inhabitants do not determine its Stay longer, by taking the Egg."

Great Auk. Martin's account of the Great Auk on St Kilda is brief, accurate, and almost as much as anyone has been able to tell us subsequently. "The . . . *Gairfowl*, being the stateliest, as well as the largest Sort, and above the size of a *Solan* Goose, of a black Colour, red about the Eyes, a large white Spot under each, a long broad Bill; it stands stately, its whole Body erected, its Wings short, flies not at all; lays its egg upon the bare Rock, which, if taken away, she lays no more for that Year; she is whole-footed and has the hatching Spot upon her Breast, i.e. a bare Spot from which the Feathers have fallen off with the Heat in hatching; its Egg is twice as big as that of a *Solan* Goose, and is variously spotted, Black, Green and Dark; it comes without Regard to any Wind, appears the first of *May*, and goes away about the middle of *June*."

Guillemot. Martin's 'Lavy' (correctly Labhaidh or Lamhaidh). Apart from St Kilda, where it is discussed in considerable detail, recorded on Sula Sgeir, Haskeir Rocks, Stack of Lianamull and Skye. While on St Kilda the daily ration of Guillemot eggs to the joint crews of Martin and the steward was eighteen per man as well as "a greater number of the lesser Eggs"—an estimated total of sixteen thousand eggs for the three weeks.

Puffin. 'Coulter-Neb,' 'Bowger' or 'Bouger,' also known to the fishermen around Ailsa Craig as "Albanich, which in the ancient Irish language signifies Scotsmen" (Sibbald's

albanoca; later albunac). Recorded for Sula Sgeir, Haskeir Rocks, Stack of Lianamull, Skye, Ailsa and St Kilda.

Black Guillemot. Mentioned only from St Kilda, where Martin refers to the 'Scraber, Puffinet, or Greenland Dove,' followed by a description of the Black Guillemot, but later refers to 'Scraber' and 'Puffinet' as separate species (Greenland Dove and Sea Turtle Dove are old names for the Black Guillemot).

Rock Dove. 'Pigeons' are recorded from North Uist, Skye and St Kilda.

Cuckoo. "Very rarely" seen on St Kilda, otherwise not mentioned.

Raven. The only breeding records are of pairs in Bernera, Harris, and the Monach Isles, although Ravens would undoubtedly be widespread elsewhere.

Carrion/Hooded Crow. 'Crows' are recorded from North Uist and St Kilda, but Martin states clearly that those in Shetland are Hoodies whereas all on the mainland of Scotland are Carrion Crows.

Wren. Mentioned in the St Kilda list.

Wheatear. The 'Stonechaker' of St Kilda.

References and sources

- BEVERIDGE, E. 1911. *North Uist*. Edinburgh.
- FISHER, J. 1952. *The Fulmar*. London.
- GRAY, R. 1871. *The Birds of the West of Scotland*. Glasgow.
- GURNEY, J. H. 1913. *The Gannet*. London.
- HARVIE-BROWN, J. A. & BUCKLEY, T. E. 1888. *A Vertebrate Fauna of the Outer Hebrides*. Edinburgh.
- JOHNSON, S. 1775. *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. London.
- MACLEOD, F. T. 1920. Martin's History of the Western Isles. *Trans. Inverness Sci. Soc. and Field Club*. 9:169-177.
- MACLEOD, R. C. 1939. *The Book of Dunvegan*, Vol. 2. Aberdeen.
- MARTIN, M. 1697. Several Observations in the North Islands of Scotland. *Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc.* 19:727-729.
- MARTIN, M. 1698. *A Late Voyage to St. Kilda*. London.
- MARTIN, M. 1703. *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*. London (See also Editorial Note and Introduction to the 1934, Eneas Mackay, Stirling, edition).
- MARTIN, M. 1707. A Relation of a Deaf and Dumb Person, who recover'd his Speech and Hearing after a Violent Fever: With some other Medicinal and Chirurgical Observations. *Phil. Trans. Roy. Soc.* 25:1469 (2469)-2470.
- MONRO, D. 1774. *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland Called Hybrides* . . . 1:349. Edinburgh. (Reprinted in Eneas Mackay's 1934 edition of Martin).
- MULLENS, W. H. 1908. Some Early British Ornithologists and their Work. IV—Martin Martin. *Brit. Birds*. 2:173-182.
- MULLENS, W. H. & SWANN, H. KIRKE. 1917. *A Bibliography of British Ornithology*. London.
- NICOLAISEN, W. F. H. 1963. *A Short Comparative List of Celtic Bird Names of the British Isles*. In Bannerman's *The Birds of the British Isles*, Vol. 12. Edinburgh.
- SIBBALD, R. 1684. *Scotia Illustrata*. Edinburgh.
- SIBBALD, R. 1710. *The History Ancient and Modern of the Sheriffdoms of Fife and Kinross*. Edinburgh.
- VENABLES, L. S. V. & U. M. 1955. *Birds and Mammals of Shetland*. Edinburgh and London.
- WYNNE-EDWARDS, V. C. 1962. *Animal Dispersion in Relation to Social Behaviour*. Edinburgh and London.

Isle of May Bird Observatory and Field Station Report for 1965

Prepared for the Observatory Committee by NANCY J. GORDON,
Honorary Secretary

The Observatory was manned for a total of 155 days between 2nd April and 26th October 1965, with a very brief visit on 8th November. The number of observer nights (618) was considerably higher than in recent years.

The spring migration was well covered, although there were five small gaps of a day or two in April and May. Observers in late April were rewarded by a spectacular arrival of Robins, Dunnocks and other species from the continent. There was also good coverage in early autumn, with only one small gap in September, but a good deal of migration was missed in October. The falls of small passerine migrants during the first few days of September and October were some of the largest ever witnessed on the May.

No new species were seen or ringed in 1965, but two subspecies were recorded for the first time; a Northern Tree-creeper *Certhia familiaris familiaris* on 12th September and a Scandinavian Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta littoralis* on 27th May.

Spring migration

Observers were on the island 2nd-12th, 15th-19th, 21st-29th April; 2nd-5th, 8th-28th May; 5th-12th June.

April. Little migration was recorded until the end of the month. The first week, with mainly west winds, produced a trickle of Wheatears (up to 15 daily) and Meadow Pipits, though after a day's southeast wind the first Chiffchaff arrived on the 4th, with 15 Goldcrests. The wind shifted to southeast on the 7th, and the morning of the 8th brought a Woodcock, a Song Thrush, 7 Mistle Thrushes, 36 Fieldfares and 5 Greenfinches. There was a similar mixture on the next two mornings, with the addition of a few Bramblings; on the 10th a Green Sandpiper and 12 Whooper Swans were recorded. After this, westerly winds increased to gale force and no migrants were seen until a return of southeasterly winds brought a few Chiffchaffs and finches on 21st and 22nd. These were joined on the 23rd by one Redstart and two Black Redstarts before the wind changed; little except Wheatears, Linnets and Meadow Pipits passed through during the next four days. The 28th started overcast, with a

moderate northeast wind and few migrants, but by 10 a.m. the island was filling with Robins (about 150, mainly Continental), accompanied by 20 Fieldfares, 15 Song Thrushes, 10 Ring Ouzels and 8 Blackbirds. In the afternoon there was a second wave of arrivals, this time mainly Dunnocks (well over 200), Bramblings (25) and a Great Grey Shrike. That night saw a further influx, and on the 29th Robins totalled 400-500 and Dunnocks 300, with 10 Bramblings, 18 Fieldfares and 3 Willow/Chiffs. According to the lightkeepers, the movement abated over the next few days (when there were no observers in residence).

May-June. Many Robins and Dunnocks remained on the island through the foggy spell of the first few days of May, joined by fresh arrivals. Clear weather followed a change to west winds at midday on the 4th, bringing a coastal movement of warblers (20 Willow Warblers, 5 Chiffchaffs, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Garden Warbler, 1 Sedge Warbler and 1 Whitethroat), 15 Bramblings, 2 Ring Ouzels, a Cuckoo and a Tree Sparrow. West winds persisted until the 10th but returned to southeast 10th-15th, when a few Whinchats, Redstarts, Swallows, Blackbirds, Wheatears, Sedge Warblers (up to 15), Grasshopper Warblers, Whitethroats (up to 25), Willow Warblers (up to 50) and Linnets (up to 15) were recorded. A Whimbrel was seen on the 10th, 2 Tree Sparrows and 3 Common Sandpipers on the 14th, a Mealy Redpoll, a Pied Flycatcher and a Cuckoo on the 15th, a Black Redstart on the 13th and the last three Fieldfares of the spring on the 15th. Little was seen over the next few days, in variable winds and good visibility, but some easterly drizzle on the 21st and 22nd brought a few warblers, a Cuckoo and a Turtle Dove. The movement increased over the next two days, and included an Icterine Warbler, two more Turtle Doves and 4 Lesser Whitethroats on the 23rd, and a Bluethroat and more whitethroats (both species) on the 24th. The last notable bird in May was an Osprey flying north on the 26th. A few migrants occurred in early June—a Whimbrel on the 5th and 6th, a Spotted Flycatcher and a Mealy Redpoll on the 6th, and a Blackcap on the 10th.

Autumn migration

The Observatory was manned 2nd-31st August; 1st-18th, 22nd-30th September; 1st-7th, 8th-11th, 15th-18th, 22nd-26th October. The island was briefly visited also on 8th November.

August. Winds were westerly until the 7th with few migrants (a Whitethroat on the 5th, a Sedge Warbler and 2 Whimbrels on the 7th). Although the wind then changed to the east, the next few days saw only a trickle of warblers

(and a Green Sandpiper on the 12th). The first real movement came with strengthening winds on the 14th, especially during the afternoon. Two Pied Flycatchers, a Spotted Flycatcher, 12 Garden Warblers, 1 Barred Warbler, 6 Whinchats, 2 Redstarts, 1 Ruff and 3 Dunlins were recorded, and at full tide the flocks of Turnstones and Purple Sandpipers were much bigger than usual. The migration continued during fog and east or variable winds until the 18th, with much the same pattern. It brought a few more Pied Flycatchers and Garden Warblers, a Wood Sandpiper on the 15th, an influx of 50 Willow Warblers on the 16th, 12 Whinchats on the 17th and a very early Woodcock. A final small influx at midday on the 18th added a Cuckoo and a Treecreeper, and the autumn's first Goldcrest. Most of these birds left during the fine westerly weather of the following week, though an unusually large flock of Whimbrels (22) was seen on the 20th, and between 10 and 26 Swallows were recorded daily from the 22nd to the 25th. There was another arrival of Willow Warblers (35), along with a Redstart, a Whitethroat and a Woodcock, on the 24th, and slight wader passage on the 25th. The steady trickle of Wheatears during the month increased to 30 on the 27th, but winds remained west and the only migrants at the end of August were a few Meadow Pipits and warblers, a Little Stint on the 29th, a White Wagtail on the 30th, 7 Golden Plovers and 4 Whimbrels on the 31st and shearwaters out at sea.

September. On the afternoon of the 1st the wind veered to ENE and a handful of Goldcrests and Willow Warblers heralded an unprecedented few weeks of visible migration. There was still only a trickle of birds on the 2nd (3 Pied Flycatchers, 1 Garden Warbler, 2 Song Thrushes, a Whinchat and a Red-backed Shrike), but after overnight fog a large number of migrants appeared at dawn on the 3rd and continued to arrive during the day. They were assessed at 200 Garden Warblers, 3 Barred Warblers, 19 Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs, 30 Whinchats, 40 Redstarts, 10 White-throats, 10 Robins, 1 Reed Warbler, 1 Spotted and 50 Pied Flycatchers, 4 Wrynecks, another Red-backed Shrike, 2 Ring Ouzels, a Redwing, 2 Goldcrests and a Green Sandpiper. During the next two days there was some coastal movement of Swallows (14 on the 4th, 76 on the 5th), House Martins (35 and 155), Sand Martins (10 and 21) and Tree Pipits (10 and 20). New arrivals on the 4th were a Bluethroat, the autumn's first Fieldfare, 2 Reed Warblers, a Red-breasted Flycatcher, 2 Wrynecks, 12 Golden Plovers and 5 Common Sandpipers. Most of the migrants moved on as the visibility improved after the 4th, but a steady movement of passerines continued, becoming mainly coastal when the wind settled

westerly on the 8th. A few more Wrynecks were recorded during this week, a Bar-tailed Godwit was seen on the 6th, and Swallow numbers reached 200 and House Martins 20 on the 8th. Wheatears increased to 30, and Whinchats and Redstarts to 20 each on the 7th, and warblers, flycatchers and Goldcrests continued to pass through. On the 10th about 500 Meadow Pipits on passage were counted. A return to east winds on the 12th brought 20 Pied Flycatchers, 6 Siskins and a Treecreeper (Northern), followed overnight by 2 more Wrynecks and 6 Goldcrests. There was then little movement until the next spell of east winds on the 23rd, which produced at sea a Red-throated Diver, skuas and terns, and the first autumn record of a Blue-headed Wagtail, a few Goldcrests, Whitethroats, Pied Flycatchers and Garden Warblers. The 24th saw a limited movement of Turdidae, the first for some time—6 Fieldfares, a Song Thrush and 2 Ring Ouzels—with 2 Redwings next day. There was next a massive influx on the 26th in poor visibility, including 200 Fieldfares, 400 Song Thrushes, 150 Redwings, 50 Ring Ouzels, 20 Blackbirds, 80 Whinchats, 150 Redstarts, 60 Robins, a Bluethroat, a Reed Warbler, 20 Blackcaps, 180 Garden Warblers, 3 White-throats, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 5 Willow Warblers, 10 Goldcrests, 2 Spotted and 80 Pied Flycatchers, 38 Siskins, 50 Chaffinches, 30 Bramblings, an Ortolan Bunting, a Red-backed Shrike, a Hoopoe, a Ringed Plover and a Jack Snipe. Most of these birds had moved on by the 27th, but a further arrival in northwest winds on the 28th included over 250 Redwings, 15 Fieldfares, 15 Ring Ouzels, a Barred Warbler, a Yellow-browed Warbler, a Lapland Bunting and the first two Snow Buntings of the season. There was still some movement in east winds over the last two days of the month, with a Sparrowhawk and a Ruff on the 29th, and a Reed Warbler on the 30th.

October. The weather and migration pattern of the first eleven days resembled that of early September. Small movements on the 1st (a Red-breasted Flycatcher, a Lapland Bunting, 50 Goldcrests and 100 Chaffinches) built up to a large fall on the 2nd, the most spectacular items being 800 Song Thrushes, 150 Redwings, 25 Redstarts, 60 Robins, 25 Blackcaps, 15 Garden Warblers, 5 more Lapland Buntings, a Black Redstart and another Jack Snipe. Most of these moved on overnight but a Merlin, a Lesser Whitethroat and another Red-breasted Flycatcher appeared on the 3rd. On the 4th Turdidae movement increased, Chaffinches were passing, and a Wryneck was seen; the 5th saw a small influx of warblers. Another large fall of Turdidae occurred overnight 6th/7th in bad weather, when 400 Song Thrushes, 40 Bramblings and 12 Reed Buntings were counted, thrush numbers re-

maining high until the 10th. A Great Grey Shrike arrived on the 9th, a Bluethroat on the 10th and a Stonechat on the 11th. After this, winds reverted to the west and the island's temporary bird population dwindled gradually, with only small fresh arrivals. These included a flock of 7 Waxwings on the 17th (up to 4 on a day were seen during the following week). Observer cover was patchy for the last half of October, but there were undoubtedly some fairly large arrivals of Turdidae and Bramblings with a few Redpolls at the end of the third week. An influx at the end of the month unfortunately went unrecorded, but as late as 8th November there were at least 300 Blackbirds on the island, 5 Redpolls and 2 Woodcocks.

Unusual occurrences

- Little Grebe.** One, 23rd-24th October. First record since 1942.
Tufted Duck. One, 8th November. Second record (first since 1908).
Whooper Swan. Seven, 15th October. Sixth record.
Buzzard. One, 28th September. Seventh record.
Osprey. One, 26th May. Sixth record.
Whimbrel. Twenty-two, 20th August. Largest flock ever recorded.
Wood Sandpiper. One, 15th-18th August. Fifth record.
Hoopoe. One, 26th September. Eighth record.
Treecreeper. One, 12th September. First definite record of Northern race.
Whinchat. Eighty, 26th September. Record high number.
Bluethroat. One, 10th October. Latest autumn record (Red-spotted).
Robin. 400-500, 29th April. Record total for one day.
Icterine Warbler. One, 23rd May. Second spring record.
Garden Warbler. 200, 3rd September. Record total for one day.
Red-breasted Flycatcher. One, 4th-5th September. Earliest autumn record.,
Rock Pipit. One, 27th May. First record of Scandinavian race.
Blue-headed Wagtail. One, 23rd September. First autumn record.
Waxwing. Up to seven between 17th and 25th October. Seventh and earliest autumn record.
Great Grey Shrike. One, 28th April. Second spring record.

Breeding populations

A count was made of Shag nests in late May. The total of 751 shows that this species is still increasing as a breeding species, both on the cliffs at the south end of the island, and on the more recent sites on Rona and at Tarbet. The number of Puffins may have decreased slightly, and fewer Fulmar chicks were reared (only four seen in July). A single pair of Great Black-backed Gulls bred for the fourth successive year. A pair of Dunnocks reared two young in the Top Trap; the pair of Blackbirds nested again; the Swallows, though present, failed to rear a brood.

Ringling and recoveries

2,859 birds of 63 species were ringed. Had the last would-be visitors of the season not been thwarted by the stormy weather in their attempts to land, the 1965 total would easily have exceeded the 1951 record of 2,901. A record number of 445 Shags contributed to the year's total, and other records were: Puffins (36), Song Thrushes (111), Redstarts (114), Blackcaps (58), Chiffchaffs (32), Pied Flycatchers (65) and Rock Pipits (139). The total for Garden Warblers (202) is almost double the previous highest, and that for Dunnocks (151) three times the previous best. The number of Blackbirds ringed (90) was the lowest for nearly ten years.

Many of the 93 recoveries were of Shags involved in 'wrecks' as far south as Essex during the cold spell from late October to early December. The following recoveries from abroad were notified:

	Ringed	Recovered	
Song Thrush Ad	22. 3.64	Escorial, Caceres, Spain	8. 2.65
Blackbird Ad ♂	26.10.63	Quimperlé, Finisterre, France	14. 2.65
Blackbird 1st W ♀	26.10.64	Åskim, Ostfold, Norway	31. 3.65
Blackbird Ad ♂	6.11.62	Sokndal, Rogaland, Norway	1.11.64
Blackbird Ad ♀	3.11.62	Nortorf, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany	14. 7.65
Blackbird FG ♀	5.11.63	Skarup, Svenaborg, Denmark	11. 7.65
Blackbird Ad ♀	1.11.63	Onarheim, Tysnesoy, Norway	8. 8.65
Blackbird Ad ♂	26.10.63	Norre Vissing, Tulstrup, Denmark	19. 9.65
Robin FG	29. 4.65	Skjeberg, Sarpsborg, Norway	13. 9.65
Robin FG	29. 4.65	Nouzilly, Indre et Loire, France	20.10.65
Garden Warbler Ad	5.10.65	Baracaldo, Vizcaya, Spain	25.10.65
Willow Warbler Ad	13. 5.65	Ben-Ahmed, Casablanca, Morocco	10.10.65

Other observations

A few rabbits survived the attack of myxomatosis in July 1964, and their numbers are beginning to increase again slowly. As yet there do not appear to be more than a few dozen. As a result of the scarcity of rabbits the vegetation was extremely dense and luxuriant in 1965, with spectacular flowering of sea pink and sea campion.

No change in the seal population has been observed; no pups were born.

A study of the lichen flora of the island was carried out by Messrs B. W. Ferry and J. W. Sheard of London University in August. They identified more than 78 species.

Once again the Committee wishes to thank the Principal Keeper and staff for all their help given to the Observatory during the season.

Short Notes

Autumn notes from the Isle of Iona

There are surprisingly few published accounts of the birds of this much-visited little island. Apart from Graham's fascinating book *The Birds of Iona and Mull*, published in 1890, which contains notes dating from the second half of the 19th century—and it is not always clear how far what he records is relevant only to Mull—we have been able to trace only the scattered notes made from personal visits which appear in the more general works by Gray, *Birds of the West of Scotland* (1871), Harvie-Brown, *A Vertebrate Fauna of Argyll and the Inner Hebrides* (1892), and more recently, Baxter and Rintoul, *The Birds of Scotland* (1953). We visited the island from 4th to 18th September 1965 and compiled a full list of what we saw during our visit, which we have lodged in the S.O.C. Library, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh.

No note could, of course, be made of breeding populations, nor was anything seen of the wide variety of wintering duck which is such a feature of Graham's book. However, a number of small passerines were spotted on migration of which we could find no previous record; and it is worth noting that the Golden Oriole which was recorded on Iona on 27th May 1965 (*antea* 3: 374) appears also to have been a new bird for the island. On the other hand a number of species which were common in September throughout Graham's time have disappeared. The Chough is a familiar example; more surprising was the complete absence of Dunnocks. Greenfinch, Yellowhammer and Corn Bunting are all recorded as common by Graham, the last being "very abundant." The withdrawal of these species from Iona, as from most of this part of the West Highlands, was noted in 1948 by Baxter and Rintoul, and the only records we have found since then are of three Greenfinches seen by us in September 1965 and of a single Yellowhammer reported in July 1964.

The following records appear to us to be of more particular interest:

GREY LAG GOOSE. One seen moving south off west side of the island, 6th September.

*KNOT. One on 8th, three from 13th to 16th September, with small numbers of Sanderling, Ringed Plover and Dunlin in the large bay fringing the machair on the west.

COLLARED DOVE. First noticed (two) August 1963, with up to 13 in mid August 1964 (3: 299). Two in September 1965, roosting in trees of manse garden and feeding with hens nearby, but no sign of their having bred.

ROOK. Graham mentions this as a winter visitor only, crossing from the mainland by day to feed and returning just before dusk. Similar habits noticed in September 1965, and though they occasionally frequented the trees of the manse garden there was no sign of their having bred there.

*BLUE TIT. A single bird in the manse garden on 12th and 13th September.

*WHINCHAT. A single bird on 6th September.

*GARDEN WARBLER. One on 12th September in the manse garden.

*LESSER WHITETHROAT. One watched at close quarters in a tree by the post office, 13th September.

*GOLDCREST. Two to three in manse garden with a few Willow Warblers and a Spotted Flycatcher, 12th and 13th September.

*TREE PIPIT. One on 12th September.

*No previous record traced.

W. M. KERR, J. A. D. HOPE.

Purple Heron at Fair Isle

E. J. Wiseman found a Purple Heron feeding in a ditch on the Leogh croft at 1400 hrs GMT on 17th June 1965. It flew off and landed in a marsh about half a mile away, where we both watched it stalking along a ditch and later skulking in a field of half-grown oats. It was thought to be an immature coming into adult plumage.

It was slightly smaller than a Heron, and a darker bird, both on the ground and in the air; crown and nape blackish, but a distinct blue colour on forehead when bird faced observer at close range; sides of head warm buff, with dark line from eye to nape; neck orangy buff with dark line running from gape, below eye, down side of neck; mantle and back brownish grey, with scapulars warm chestnut-buff and grey, paler than back; rump and tail grey brown; chin and cheeks white; throat paler than sides of neck; breast pale buff with long brown stripes; sides of body rich maroon brown; rest of underparts paler chestnut-brown; primaries and secondaries dark greyish black; coverts paler with golden tinge; allula paler; in flight, wings darker than a Heron's; underwing pale brown with maroon band on underwing coverts; bill long and orange-brown, with ridge of upper mandible and tip darker; legs greenish brown, paler from behind, and soles paler; iris yellow.

In flight the shape was noticeably different from a Heron's; the neck was more bulging when viewed from the side and narrower from behind, and the feet looked larger.

We left it in the field of oats and it was later seen by James Wilson and Marina Dennis. It frequented the ditches in these two areas until 22nd June. This is the first record for Fair Isle and Shetland and the fifth for Scotland, the last being seen in Berwickshire on 8th April 1917 (*Scot. Nat.* 1917: 214).

ROY H. DENNIS.

Little Bitterns in Ayrshire and Shetland

On 18th May 1965 DJ and ABJ flushed a bird from the north bank of the River Ayr at Craigie Park, Ayr. It remained in full view on the opposite bank long enough for them to note with the naked eye that it stood about 10" high in the hunched attitude of a bittern or small heron and had blackish upperparts with pale wing patches. They were sure it was a Little Bittern, and telephoned GAR that evening.

Next morning DJ and ABJ on the north bank, and GAR on the south, saw it standing erect among reeds on an island 20 yards from the original area. It soon walked in full view onto the mud, pausing to stretch full length vertically, when the bittern outline with elongated lower breast feathers was accentuated. A few minutes later it flew to within 10 yards of GAR, where it stood in a hunched attitude and speared a 2" fish. It then climbed over a bush which had hidden it from the other observers and into full view on the mud. When approached to within 5 yards it crouched flat along the ground with head on one side before flying upstream. In flight the legs were not fully retracted, and the wing action was very similar to a Moorhen's; the pale oval wing patches contrasted with the black wings and upperparts.

The following description was obtained with the sun shining from behind by GAR using 10x50 binoculars at 5-10 yards:

All upperparts black, faintly glossed green; pale buff line over eye; ear coverts and sides of neck pale mouse-grey; throat and breast rich buff with lower feathers elongated; belly and under tail-coverts pale buff; wings black with oval buff patch on coverts, pinkish on lesser and median, greyish on greater; bill medium length, pale horn with blackish ridge on upper mandible and tip ($\frac{1}{3}$ " or so) whitish; lores yellowish-green; legs and feet bright green; iris bright yellow.

This male is the second Little Bittern recorded in Ayrshire; the first was found dead in Ayr on 30th April 1947 (*Scot. Nat.* 1954: 66).

D. JOHNSTONE, A. B. JOHNSTONE, G. A. RICHARDS.

At 2100 hrs GMT on 2nd June 1965 I found a small heron-like bird by the Loch of Gards at Scatness in the south of Shetland Mainland. I had only a fleeting glimpse of it that evening, but was able to get a full description the following morning. R. H. Dennis was given the description by telephone and identified it as a female Little Bittern. It was seen also by W. Horne and Dennis Coutts, who photographed it.

RHD came over from Fair Isle on the 4th and we studied the bird for over two hours but failed to catch it. At ranges down to 15 ft in good light we took a full description and confirmed that it was a female Little Bittern.

The Loch of Gards, about 10 ft a.s.l., is surrounded by short vegetation, with small marshy areas at each end. It is a small loch in open rough grazing criss-crossed with stone dykes. During the week it was seen the bird spent most of the time at the water's edge, resting on its tarsi with head retracted into hunched shoulders and bill held horizontal over the water. Occasionally it stalked along the bank, when the strange disjointed movement of the body and legs was most unbirdlike. It was once seen catching and quickly eating a small fish.

At the first sign of danger the body was pressed flat to the ground, and the extended neck and bill pointed skywards; the breast and throat feathers were fluffed out and the dark stripes seemed to predominate, giving the impression of dark lower stems of waterside plants. If danger persisted, a second stance was adopted: the body was raised from the ground and the bird visibly elongated in a bill-pointing posture; the body was slowly rotated so that the breast was always directed towards the intruder. In this position the dark stripes seemed to narrow, and the resulting lighter colour was similar to dried reeds. If approached from behind, the bird seemed undecided which stance to adopt and more readily took wing. The flight was buoyant and typically bittern in character, although the lazy wing beats and the long legs held stiffly behind were also like a heron. On take-off the light wing patches and long dangling legs were most obvious. The following description was compiled from notes taken on our combined visit:

Size similar to small Lapwing (by comparison with Kittiwakes and Starlings nearby). Crown and nape grey-brown; mantle and scapulars brown with pale margins, giving streaky appearance; rump and tail uniform dark brown; underparts pale buff with long brown-buff streaks on sides of throat and flanks; at rest, shoulders creamy buff; underwing pale; iris yellow; bill dull orange-yellow with dark horn ridge and tip; legs and feet greenish yellow, the tarsi appearing more yellowish viewed from the rear.

The bird was seen by numerous observers, including R. J. Tulloch. It was last seen on 10th June. One was taken at Fair Isle on 10th April 1940 (and two or three were reported seen there that summer) and there are two other Shetland records, the last being in Unst on 29th May 1917.

GODFREY D. JOY.

Harlequin Ducks at Fair Isle and in Caithness

On 11th January 1965 I noticed two small ducks diving close to the cliff in Maver's Geo, near the bird observatory on Fair Isle. I identified them as male and female Harlequin Ducks, the first time this species has been recorded at Fair Isle.

I went home to collect my binoculars, telescope and note-

book and returned at 1200 hrs to find them diving in the west side of the geo. Next day I found them round the headland in South Haven and they stayed in this general area until 2nd February. They were always swimming near the cliffs or over submerged rocks, where they dived in the roughest water with impunity. A favourite place was just below the bird observatory, where they allowed one to approach within 20 yards. During their stay they were seen by most of the islanders, and Tommy Russell, James Stout, James Wilson and Miss Kate Russell confirmed my identification. Between 11th January and 2nd February, I noted the following details:

Male. Small size between that of a Wigeon and a Teal, with round-headed and short-necked appearance; body very dark brown, with rusty flanks and a variety of white markings; bright white spot on ear-coverts; large greyish white patch at base of bill, stretching from forehead to throat; small white line down side of neck (hardly noticeable); broad curved white line in front of wings; narrow broken white band on side of neck, forming half collar; three elongated white spots on each side of back, the largest near the tail, forming narrow V when viewed from above; small bill lead colour; legs and feet appeared green under water. On 1st February I noticed that the male's plumage had become dark gun-metal blue between the collar and the broad line on the breast.

Female. Much the same dark brown colour, but white spot on ear-coverts larger, and there was less greyish white at the base of the bill, forming a spot above and below the bill; bill darker; legs and feet green.

GORDON BARNES.

On 18th April 1965 we found a pair of Harlequin Ducks on the sea a mile north of Wick. We watched them for 15 minutes in a sunny period between showers of snow and hail, with a fresh to gale force northerly wind blowing. Subsequently the birds were seen by many people, including Dr I. D. Pennie, D. Macdonald, D. M. Stark and other S.O.C. members. They remained in the same area and were last seen on 1st May. The account which follows is based on notes we took at the time and on additional comments by IDP and DM.

The birds were very lively, diving frequently (short dives of not more than 25 seconds) with the male usually following the female, the pair diving and surfacing together. When diving they would lift out of the water, except for their legs, and go over like a Shag; and when they came up, holding themselves straight, they would pop almost out of the water. On the surface they were very active, bobbing their heads down to the water (the female making a sort of sideways preening movement away from the male), hanging about in the surf below the cliffs, or paddling along, constantly flicking their wings and splashing. Their restless behaviour was quite unlike other ducks as they darted here and there

dabbling continually around, presumably at small creatures stirred up by the rough water. They spent a lot of time entering and leaving the surf and poking under the seaweed at the edge of the surf, giving an impression of resting on their bellies. The female was seen upending with feet paddling in the air. They were once noted out of the water on sloping rocks, walking with heads down (like Moorhens). They were never seen in flight, and no calls were heard.

The male was in full breeding plumage, and the striking head pattern, vivid white crescents on the dark blue neck and breast, bright chestnut flanks and small bill were clearly seen. The female could possibly have been mistaken for a Long-tailed Duck in size and shape but it was much more uniform and dark all over, particularly as at a distance the head seemed to be almost sooty black, contrasting with the white spot behind the eye. When the bird dived its underparts were seen to be dark.

The best views were had from the cliffs, as the birds readily moved behind rocks when approached. Against a background of white broken water, grey rock and russet weed exposed by the tide their striking colour pattern hid them most effectively.

Descriptions. Male. Front of neck blackish blue; rest of body grey-black, with conspicuous rufous flanks; uniformly dark underneath; white on front of face (very obvious on either side when seen from front) was more a patch than a crescent; white spot behind eye; white crescent down side of neck and another below round front of throat (these marks showing from the front as a pair of Vs one above the other and not joined at the tips); white vertical mark on side of body in front of wing; white patch on back; short up-pointed tail; small short wedge-shaped beak; legs seemed short.

Female. Dark brown with uniformly dark underparts; very conspicuous white circle behind eye; two smaller white circles, one above the other, in front of eye, but indistinct at times; legs noted as bluish when upended.

R. S. SHAND, G. GUNN.

(These two records might well refer to the same two birds. The only previous acceptable Scottish records are of a drake seen in the Outer Hebrides on 13th February 1931 (*Brit. Birds* 23: 370) and a 1st-winter male shot in Roxburghshire on 16th January 1954 (*Scot. Nat.* 1954: 15). Although the 1931 record is a little incomplete it has been generally accepted, but a sight record of a drake in Shetland on 5th March 1933 (*Scot. Nat.* 1933: 152), though quoted in *The Birds of Scotland*, has been ignored by the authors of *Birds and Mammals of Shetland* and *The Popular Handbook of Rarer British Birds*, and seems rather too tentative to be admitted. A 1955 Shetland record (*Brit. Birds* 49: 36) was later shown to refer to a Long-tailed Duck (*Brit. Birds* 50: 445). One race of the species is

resident in Iceland and breeds also in Greenland and N.E. Canada; another race breeds in western North America and west into Siberia.—Ed.)

Gyr Falcons in East Inverness-shire and Shetland

On 24th March 1965 I heard from our neighbour, Mr J. Munro, Pitmain, Kingussie, that an unusual bird, perhaps two, had been flying overhead and flushing Woodpigeons from nearby pines. I went to investigate and together with Mr and Mrs Munro watched a bird now perched on a fence stob topping a stone dyke about 250 yards from the garden fence. There was then no sign of a second bird.

Through 10x binoculars in rather poor late afternoon light—the weather being dull—I noted that at this range the bird was obviously a falcon but looked longer than and differently proportioned from a Peregrine; the head seemed more prominent or relatively larger, and the tail distinctly longer, giving the bird a more attenuated outline. It appeared entirely white or grubby white, with slightly darker mantle and back.

It flew to a rather nearer post where, at about 200 yards, the prominent dark eye gave the face a distinctive appearance, probably increased by dark feathering around the eye; the hooked bill was an indeterminate lightish colour; head, neck and underparts white, without obvious markings; mantle and back evenly marked with dark spotting, giving a very chequered look; upperside of medium-long, straight tail showed regular faint barring but was otherwise white; feet not clearly seen but appeared pale.

The bird flew off over the moor and perched in a scrubby tree; it finally went off west, and the rear view in flight confirmed the longer tail and perhaps straighter wings than a Peregrine, the wings being held very flat when flying (long glides, alternating with several wing-beats). From below the wings showed dull dark tips in flight.

The bird disappeared from view remarkably quickly heading on a direct westward course. I got the impression that it was not very large or heavily built for a Gyr Falcon. Considering the whiteness of its plumage it was probably an immature male

It may be interesting to refer to a previously unpublished record of my own: the finding of a dead 'Greenland' Gyr Falcon—an immature bird in similar, if rather more strongly marked, plumage—on moorland a mile from the present spot in April 1958. The identification was confirmed by the staff of the Royal Scottish Museum who considered the bird had been dead a few weeks. I still have one of its wings.

Both these records have been accepted by the *British Birds* Rarities Committee. I had also several reports during the winter of 1964-65 of a white bird of prey in this area of Speyside which may have referred to the bird described above.

COLIN C. I. MURDOCH.

About noon on 9th September 1965, while I was moving between two of the hill plantations at Kergord, I happened to glance up and see a raptor appear over the crest of the hill above me at some considerable height. It was being persistently and fiercely mobbed by a female Merlin.

In size it was about as big as a Buzzard; in fact my momentary impression was that it was a Buzzard, but almost immediately I realised that it had pointed, not rounded, wings. The Merlin gave an excellent comparison of size, and it was obvious, especially as it moved lower, that the bird was several times as large as its aggressor, dwarfing it completely.

In shape it was not unlike a Peregrine but it seemed heavier and much slower-moving and was definitely much larger than the average Peregrine. The wings were long and very powerful-looking, being broad near the body, swept back slightly from the carpal joints, and tapering to perfect 'falcon tips' without any sign of the ragged appearance which is typical of a Buzzard. The tail was long and narrow but did not seem quite as tapered as in the commoner falcons. It appeared to become darker towards the tip, although the only dark band visible was the broad one very near the extreme end. There was no sign of any face markings such as the Peregrine shows, and the upperparts and the underparts, apart from the tail, appeared to be a uniform brown, very similar to a typical Buzzard.

It was only after noting these points and watching the bird for some time as it dodged the Merlin by a sideways rolling motion, rather like the rolling of a Raven, and circled easily above the plantations, that I realised I was looking at a Gyr Falcon, and, judging by the colour, a bird of the year.

After about ten minutes a small flock of Starlings left the plantation and started to fly up the hill. Falcon and Merlin went into one of the most spectacular power dives I have seen and were among them in a moment. They were unsuccessful, mainly because the Merlin was more interested in the falcon than in the Starlings, and they were soon above me, exactly as before. A few minutes later, however, they began to move off to the southwest, the falcon diving to about half height twice more, either for fun or to discourage the Merlin, and I watched them until they disappeared over the hill to the south.

WILLIAM G. PORTEOUS.

Capercaillie x Black Grouse hybrid in Perthshire

On 30th September 1965 S. F. Simmons and party, out on the hill between Loch Tummel and Blair Atholl, shot a Blackcock, a young cock Capercaillie and an obvious hybrid bird. All three were brought to Perth where they were examined and photographed. Plate 9 shows clearly the intermediate plumage pattern and tail shape of the hybrid. The comparative measurements are tabulated below. The hybrid weighed $4\frac{3}{4}$ lb and had a purple iridescence on the neck and upper breast. It was found to have rudimentary male sex organs but I. McLachlan, M.R.C.V.S., who carried out the dissection, considered it unlikely to be fertile. The crop contents of the three birds were examined and found to consist of conifer needles, green caterpillars and a few heather tips in the Capercaillie; conifer needles only in the hybrid; and heather tips with a few unidentified buds in the Blackcock. A. W. Robson identified both sets of conifer leaves as common larch—the current year's needles in the hybrid and the tufted growth of previous years in the Capercaillie.

The birds were shot in a plantation 10-20 years old in which a hen Capercaillie was first recorded two years ago. Several broods appeared in 1965 but no adult male has yet been seen.

	Capercaillie*	Hybrid	Blackcock*
Wing	375-410 mm	325 mm	252-265 mm
Tail—centre	280-325 mm	170 mm	75-100 mm
outer		30 mm longer	65-100 mm longer
Bill	32- 38 mm	22 mm	15-17.5 mm

*Measurements for males as given in *The Handbook of British Birds*.

V. M. THOM.

(Female Capercaillies usually reach new areas before males, and are then liable to pair with Blackcocks. In the former days of lavish illustrated books on gamebirds and their management such hybrids as this were frequently reported but they do not receive so much attention today.—Ed.)

Temminck's Stint in East Lothian

At 1620 hrs on 15th August 1965 while we were walking through a flock of Dunlin and Ringed Plover at Belhaven Sands a small wader with a soft twittering call, reminiscent of a Swallow, landed ahead and immediately crouched. We watched it for half an hour at ranges down to 20 yards and were able to compare it with a Little Stint. The two birds seemed to be mutually attracted.

Although generally rather similar this bird was slightly

smaller than the Little Stint and had an unmarked dark brown mantle; a pale greyish gorget ended in a straight line across the upper breast; it had a slight wing-bar, and a light eyestripe; at times—in very good light—the legs looked muddy red. The bird was obviously a Temminck's Stint.

It fed in a similar manner to, and often close beside, the Little Stint but it seemed to have a marked preference for one area of wet sand bordered by hummocks of short grass. In flight it often gave the twittering call, unlike the Little Stint, which was not heard to call at all. Both birds had the same swift grace in flight but the Temminck's would occasionally execute a series of sudden wild swerves. At times we would have a glimpse of the broad white of outer tail feathers contrasting with the dark upperparts; on the ground, a line of white at the side of the tail was often very conspicuous. Whether in flight or on the ground the Temminck's was always easily picked out from the Little by its much darker mantle.

On the 21st we were attracted again by an unusual *trrrrt* call, and finally located a small wader crouched in a shallow hollow by a few small pools in an area of mud and grass near the shore. There were Dunlin and Ringed Plover feeding close by but it paid no attention except to crouch very low when they swept overhead. It was obviously the same bird we had seen a week earlier. It was now much more alert and restless and called often, but we had excellent views of it in the open and flying round and were able to make some additional notes before it rose high and went right away SSE about 1915 hrs.

Head brown with light streaks; dark line from short bill to eye; white above this almost meeting in V above bill; white from behind eye round and down under eye to throat; nape and feathers of neck grey and often fluffed up as though in a ruffle; back darker grey; wings dark brown with centre of feathers grey, appearing very dappled in some lights but almost unmarked in others; white outer tail feathers prominent in flight, each pale side of tail apparently as broad as its dark centre; streaking on breast pale grey and very pale indeed in centre of breast; legs either yellowish tinged (EMS) or flesh (RWJS).

T. BOYD, E. M. SMITH, R. W. J. SMITH.

(The bird was seen again in the same area on 28th August by A. Macdonald. Although Temminck's Stint attempted to breed in Scotland 30 years ago it is now rarely seen. Birds were noted in Renfrewshire in autumn 1953 and in East Lothian in the autumns of 1953 and 1954, but the only record since then seems to be of one at Fair Isle on 21st May 1964, at a time when at least eight were recorded in Britain (*Brit. Birds* 57: 339; *Bird Study* 11: 218). A bird at Paisley on the

very day that the Temminck's Stint was at Fair Isle was reported as this species. The record was not published because experienced observers to whom we showed the notes felt that the description was inconclusive, especially for a first record of the species in Scotland in spring. This decision must stand, but the surrounding circumstances are so suggestive that we have been tempted to mention it in passing.—Ed.)

Pratincole in Orkney

On 6th October 1963, a fine, mainly sunny day, almost calm or light south to southeast wind, the late Herbert McKenzie observed a strange bird in company with a fairly large flock of Golden Plover on a grass field near Widewall Bay, South Ronaldsay. He described the bird to me.

In flight it resembled a dark-coloured tern, or an outsize Swallow, having long pointed wings and a deeply forked tail. Its body was clearly smaller than a plover's, but the long wings and tail gave it an elongated appearance. The main colour was dusky brown on the upperparts, shading to paler, more yellowish, brown on the breast, paler still on the lower belly, and white under the tail. There was a pale yellowish area on the chin and throat, forming a sort of bib, which was bordered all round by a thin black line. The upper tail-coverts were conspicuously white in flight and there was a dull reddish-brown patch under the wing, also seen in flight. The flight feathers and tail were blackish. The bill was short, decurved and blackish; and the legs were black and shorter than the plovers'.

The bird was very active, both on the ground and in the air, apparently chasing flies and other insects. It ran swiftly, dashing about in all directions, and frequently took flight, sweeping backwards and forwards close above the flock of feeding plovers.

Mr McKenzie was a bit of a wildfowler in his younger days and intimately knew all the common birds. In his time he had spotted a number of rare birds, including Orkney's first Chough and Collared Dove. He watched this present bird through low-power binoculars from his car, parked beside the field where the birds were feeding. I have absolutely no doubt that the bird was a Pratincole.

E. BALFOUR.

(There are only a very few records of this species in Scotland, and in recent years there have been only sporadic occurrences in Great Britain, none of them in Scotland.—Ed.)



PLATE 9. Male hybrid from Blackcock x female Capercaillie mating (*centre*) with cock Capercaillie (*top*) and Blackcock for comparison. Note the intermediate plumage and shape of the tail. The birds were shot in Perthshire on 30th September 1965 (see p. 88).

Photograph by R. A. Laing

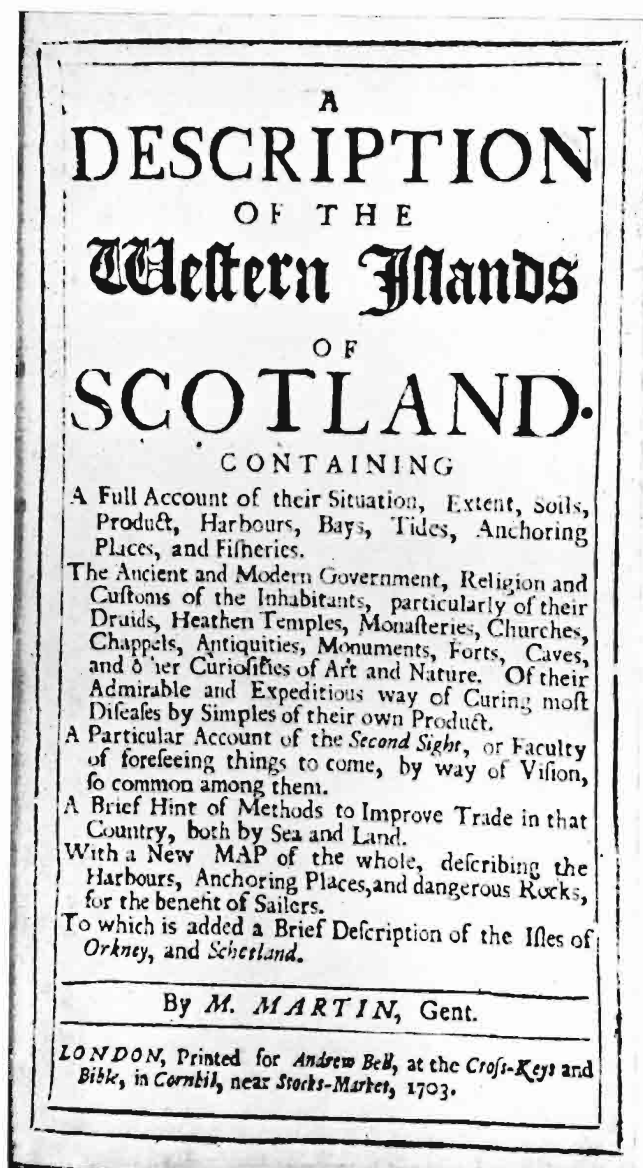


PLATE 10. The original 1703 title page from Martin's *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (see p. 64).

Photograph by I. D. Pennie

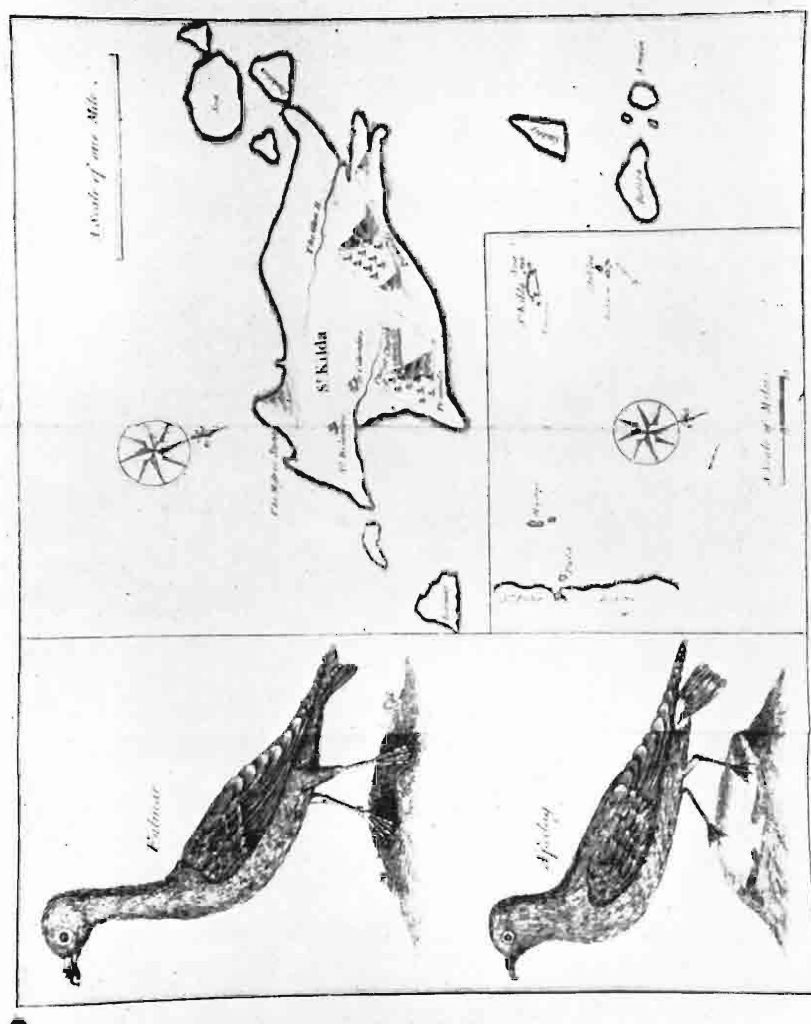


PLATE 11. Martin's map of St Kilda with the Fulmar and Storm Petrel. It was from this illustration that Sir Robert Sibbald was able to make his identification. The plate is from the 1753 edition but is essentially the same as that in the original 1698 edition.

Photograph by I. D. Pennie



PLATE 12. Albino hen Blackbird brooding normal young (see p. 96).

Photograph by William S. Paton

The Green Woodpecker in Clackmannanshire

The first published report of a Green Woodpecker in Clackmannanshire on 16th April 1965 (3: 373) was of particular interest to me, as the date preceded by only four days my own first observation of the species in this county. On 20th April 1965 I first heard and then saw a Green Woodpecker in a clump of ash and oak trees on Gloom Hill, Dollar. Iain C. Munro, of Dollar, and I subsequently watched this bird on several occasions, and by 27th April it had made a (?roosting) hole about 30 ft up in the trunk of an ash tree on Gloom Hill. The bird was present throughout June but remained unmated, and after the end of June we did not see it again.

Numerous other sightings of the Green Woodpecker have been made in the county. On 29th April 1965 I learned from one of my pupils who is interested in birds that he had heard of a pair nesting at Menstrie in 1964. Confirmation of this is lacking so far, but through ICM I contacted R. Cook of Menstrie, a keen naturalist, who kindly supplied the following information:

"Mr I. G. Scott of Tillicoultry, a shepherd, heard a Green Woodpecker calling in the summer of 1963 (day and month uncertain) in Lady Anne Wood and in another wood, both near Tillicoultry; and a year later, in April 1964 (day uncertain) he saw a Green Woodpecker in Lady Anne Wood."

On 28th April 1964 RC himself saw in Menstrie Glen a bird which he then mistook for a Golden Oriole, but which—as he realised on 3rd August 1964 when he saw and recognised a definite Green Woodpecker in Balquharn Glen—had almost certainly been a Green Woodpecker. Throughout the winter of 1964-65 RC frequently heard the species calling among the trees on Myreton Hill, at Menstrie, and in April 1965 he found a pair boring what he considered to be a possible nesting hole in an ash tree. He also heard and saw another bird calling among trees in the Silver Glen at Alva.

I myself visited Myreton Hill on 2nd May 1965, confirmed the existence of a pair there, and located an old woodpecker hole and also the new one found by RC. I was unable to climb the tree to verify nesting, but it was most interesting to hear a third woodpecker calling about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the west, nearer Menstrie, while I had both birds of the pair with the (?nesting) hole under observation. On 9th May I searched for and located this third bird and by its behaviour suspected it had a mate nearby, but a search for it proved unsuccessful. Later that evening I visited the Myreton, a large house at the foot of Myreton Hill owned by a Mr Porteous, who told me that Green Woodpeckers had come to his bird table on a few rare occasions during the winters of 1963-64 and 1964-65. He had both heard and seen the birds in the vicinity in 1963 (un-

fortunately he could not give definite dates) and in 1964, but he had no knowledge of any nesting. This information was confirmed by his son, who had observed the woodpeckers on many occasions.

Suspecting then that the species was probably well established along the southern foot of the Ochils, I searched all suitable localities between Dollar and Menstrie and confirmed the presence in May 1965 of five definite pairs and a possible sixth, excluding the single bird at Dollar. I also found two more woodpecker holes, one old and one new, in ash trees (these of course could have been made by Great Spotted Woodpeckers).

Breeding, however, was not finally proved until 17th June, when Alex Weir of Cambus, a friend of ICM, telephoned and asked me to inspect a Green Woodpecker hole he had found a few days earlier in an oak tree on Wood Hill, Alva, where I had already pinpointed a pair. ICM, AW and I visited Wood Hill that evening and by means of a torch and a mirror held by a long pair of pliers, each of us verified the presence of a single newly hatched chick and two unhatched eggs at the base of the deep nesting-hole. The female woodpecker remained anxiously in the vicinity throughout the ten minutes or so that we spent at the nest.

To date, this appears to be the only actual record of breeding in Clackmannanshire, as RC was unable to confirm that his Myreton Hill pair had bred.

Summarised, the history of the Green Woodpecker in the county as presently known would appear to be: first sightings in 1963, increase in numbers in 1964, and a further increase and a spread followed by breeding in 1965. From the evidence available there seems little doubt that the species has established a firm foothold in Clackmannanshire and thus pushed its distribution a little further north in Scotland.

ALEX. TEWNION.

Nesting of a nearly white hen and a normal cock Blackbird

William S. Paton, of Kilmarnock, published a photograph in *The Countryman* (Autumn 1965, p. 73) showing an almost completely white hen Blackbird, which had some dark wing and outer tail feathers and a dark eye, sitting on her nest, and a normal cock standing beside her. In answer to a letter of inquiry he kindly wrote:

"The nest was atop a tool bag hanging from the wall of a shed in a contractor's yard off London Road, Kilmarnock. Three normal coloured young were successfully reared. A few weeks later she was incubating a second clutch of 4 eggs in a bush alongside a dwelling house, some fifty yards from the original site. Unfortunately I had to remove this nest as the building was being demolished. Not sur-

prisingly she deserted. I am told she is still occasionally seen in this area, now a petrol station nearing completion, and believe she is resident in the London Road district."

This observation supports the view that at least in the majority of cases albinism in the Blackbird is a Mendelian recessive character, like albinism in the Pheasant and in Man. Breeding experiments with Pheasants showed that the homozygous recessives were white but had an occasional coloured feather (Sage, Bryan L. 1962. *Brit. Birds* 55: 205-208) just as this almost completely white Blackbird had a few dark feathers and a dark eye. In the breeding experiments the heterozygous Pheasants were coloured but sometimes had a few white feathers, like the pied and white-marked Blackbirds fairly often reported, which show partial albinism under some conditions, such as abnormal feeding, with about three times as frequent manifestation of the partial albinism in cocks as in hens, and rarely or never in chicks or juveniles (Pickford, R. W. In press. *Biology and Human Affairs*, Spring 1966). Complete or almost complete albinism in the Blackbird is rare, but may occur as often in hens as in cocks. The existing data are not decisive on this point.

Three other records support the same view, namely: an all-white Blackbird (a hen?) which had normal young (Jeffrey, R. A. 1963. *Scot. Birds* 2: 447); an all-white cock and a normal hen which had five normal young (Rollin, N. 1964. Non-hereditary and hereditary abnormal plumage. *Bird Research* 2: 32); and a pair of all-white birds which are said to have had white offspring (Morris, F. C. 1903. *A History of British Birds* 3rd Ed: 85-87). In the last case all the offspring would be homozygous recessives and would be expected to be completely or almost completely white. In the other cases the young would be heterozygotes and would be expected to be normal in colouring, as reported.

The illustration, plate 12, published with Mr Paton's kind permission, shows the nearly white hen sitting on her nest, with the beaks of the three young protruding.

R. W. PICKFORD.

Abnormally plumaged Willow Warblers

An abnormal Willow Warbler was seen by R. C. Meekin, D. Boomer and myself on 25th July 1965 at Bardowie Loch, Stirlingshire, in an area of bushy vegetation and hedges. It associated with other Willow Warblers and a few White-throats. It flitted actively amongst the branches, hovering occasionally, and was chased once by an adult Willow Warbler. It was a juvenile as shown by the very fresh state of the primaries and secondaries, and it was not heard calling.

The following description is based on notes made at the time:

Chin, throat and breast bright lemon yellow, much like a Wood Warbler or young Willow Warbler; belly whitish; head, neck, back, scapulars, and wing coverts bright canary yellow, so bright that the superciliary was barely visible; rump slightly paler than back; outer primaries slightly darker than back; inner primaries, secondaries, and whole of tail cream, paler than back and contrasting with it, this being very apparent in flight (especially the tail); paler colouring on wings completely symmetrical; the overall paleness of the bird made it look slightly larger than a Willow Warbler in flight; bill dark like other Willow Warblers, but legs and feet much brighter buffish yellow than normal; eyes normally coloured.

We concluded that this abnormal yellowness of the plumage was due to xanthism, a condition found mainly in birds with greenish plumage and caused by excessive retention of yellow pigment and loss of dark ones. As far as I know, the only previous record of this condition in leaf-warblers was in a pair of Wood Warblers in Wales in 1954 (*Brit. Birds* 55, pls. 44, 45).

W. M. M. EDDIE.

Mr Eddie's note prompted us to report a Willow Warbler with several striking aberrations of plumage which we saw at Fair Isle on 4th September 1958 during a fall of migrants. The following field notes were taken by PJS shortly after he found the bird:

Bright pale lemon head; fleck of lemon on nape; dark olive back, with pinkish lemon primaries; lower back darker olive than upper; pale grey-buff below, shading to ashy white on chest; pinkish legs; bill very pale straw; no wing-bars in flight; indulging in flycatcher-like forays for insects.

Apart from its curious plumage the bird resembled in every way a normal Willow Warbler, with several of which it was associating. It was first seen at Easter Lothar in the north of the island but was observed near the south light-house on subsequent days.

P. J. SELLAR, P. J. B. SLATER.

(A yellow and white Willow Warbler was captured at Selkirk on 9th July 1954 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 5: 15); it was different from either of the birds described above. We sent these two notes to Bryan L. Sage, who has made a special study of plumage abnormalities, and he commented that the Stirlingshire bird was evidently "an example of schizochroism, in which the melanin pigment is absent from the plumage, but the carotenoid pigment remains, thus resulting in a predominantly yellow individual. This must be quite a rare condition in this species as the only other record of which I am aware is the Selkirk bird." He has not come across any-

thing like the Fair Isle bird "but it would seem to be a case of partial absence of melanin pigment in certain parts of the plumage (mainly the primaries and head) and in the bill and legs. It is a pity that the iris colour was not noted. I imagine that the pinkish colour apparently seen in the primaries was an effect of light."—Ed.)

Firecrest in Shetland

On the evening of 11th June 1965 DC found a male Firecrest in a plantation at Seafield, Lerwick. He told WGP, who saw it next morning. Subsequently both of us watched it at close range on various dates until 3rd July and it was seen also by R. H. Dennis, R. J. Tulloch and others. The plantation was checked every day and we thought the bird had gone, but it reappeared, showing traces of moult, on 29th August. Just before it disappeared, presumably to moult, and again when it reappeared eight weeks later, it called less than at other times, making it more difficult to find. It remained until 27th September, by which time it was in good plumage. There were numbers of Goldcrests in the plantation at this time and it may have left with them.

In general shape, size and behaviour the bird resembled a Goldcrest, though in flight it first looked like a small warbler. When discovered it seemed rather tired and ruffled, but on later occasions it was very active and could often be heard and seen feeding from as low as four feet among dead firs to as high as the leaf canopy of the 30-ft sycamores.

The brilliant orange-red crest (looking too wide and red for a Goldcrest) was most striking, with the black border above the very distinct white supercillium. Once when viewed from directly in front these bands of colour and the dark stripes through the eye and on the cheeks created a most eye-catching effect as they all seemed to radiate from the bill.

We paid particular attention to the call, which resembled a Goldcrest's but was easier to detect because of its lower pitch, though tending to rise towards the end of a string of about nine notes. The bird called less persistently than a Goldcrest and the tone was somewhat harsher. Once it was observed that the bill opened wider as the call progressed.

The following description is compiled from our notes:

Similar to Goldcrest (including wing pattern at rest) with general colour, if anything, slightly greener, especially on rump; orange-red crest with greater brilliance showing at base of feathers (almost luminous with sun shining on it); very distinct white supercillium divided from crest by black border; pale patch under eye bordered by dark line through eye and by moustachial stripe; sides of neck tinged golden bronze; underparts whitish; back olive-green; wings brownish.

DENNIS COUTTS, WILLIAM G. PORTEOUS.

(This record has been submitted to and accepted by the *British Birds* Rarities Committee, as the species was included (for Scotland only) in the list of species with which the committee is concerned (*Brit. Birds* 57: 281). We have been told that it was meant to delete it from the list and therefore the record does not appear in the 1965 report (see *Brit. Birds* 58: 354). This is the third Firecrest recorded in Scotland. The others were on the Isle of May from 30th September to 3rd October 1959 and on 22nd September 1960 (*Scot. Birds* 1: 153, 357).—Ed.)

Scandinavian Rock Pipits in Scotland in spring

A pale pipit was noticed on the sea wall above the Bruce Embankment in St Andrews, Fife, on 14th March 1965. It was keeping close company with a Rock Pipit and feeding on flies from the rotting seaweed. It had most of the same postural characteristics as the Rock Pipit, being particularly inclined to stand very upright, and it chased the flies in a wagtail-like fashion, darting after them. It appeared pale buff-grey in flight and had dark legs. It seemed very slightly larger than the Rock Pipit, with which it was compared constantly. It was present all afternoon and was viewed down to 20 feet with 6 x 30 binoculars in good light. Several attempts were made to trap it but it avoided the net. The following features were noted:

Eyestripe off-white and very distinct even without binoculars, especially when compared with Rock Pipit; head, back and rump grey-brown, very different from dark olive-brown of Rock Pipit; outer tail feathers off-white, but appeared white in flight; tips of primary and secondary coverts markedly white-buff and distinct; throat and breast very pale buff shading to off-white under chin, being neatly marked with dark brown spots, slightly oblong and very much sparser than on Rock Pipit and tending to form faint collar under chin; belly pale buff and not noticeably streaked. Call slightly more drawn out and not quite so harsh and vibrant as the Rock Pipit's.

These notes were shown to K. Williamson, who has made a special study of Rock Pipits, and he commented that they fit very well the Baltic (or Scandinavian) race of Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta littoralis*—a specimen which has undergone more than the usual amount of spring moult for this date. Such birds are rather similar to Water Pipits.

J. L. S. COBB.

On 27th May 1965 I saw a Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A. s. littoralis* on the Isle of May. It flew onto a wall beside a local Rock Pipit and the contrast was immediate and apparent. I also saw it chivvied off three territories, which indicates it was a stranger. It seemed a little larger than the local

birds, and not only because it was paler and had its feathers fluffed out; but it was exactly the same shape, notably in the bill. The pattern on head and upperparts was the same, but the colour completely different, a kind of yellowish brown instead of greeny slate. Below, it was almost unstreaked, though there was a ring of faint streaks across the breast and more on the flanks. It completely lacked the heavy black appearance of the usual Rock Pipit's streaks. In addition there was a rosy tinge over the whole breast (which might well be lost in a museum skin). Altogether it was a most distinctive bird at that time of year.

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

(Races of the Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* are similar in winter plumage but distinctive in nuptial plumage. There are only a few published records of the Scandinavian race in Scotland although it is strongly migratory, many wintering in north and west France. It may well prove to be a regular spring migrant in very small numbers on the east coast. For a full discussion of the races and their distribution see K. Williamson, 'Moult and its relation to taxonomy in Rock and Water Pipits', *Brit. Birds* 58: 493-504.

In the light of these researches it seems likely that the 'Water Pipit' in Shetland on 8th and 9th May 1950 (*Birds and Mammals of Shetland*: 138) which the Scottish Bird Records Committee square-bracketted because the race was not determined (*Scot. Nat.* 1957: 42) was a well moulted example of the Scandinavian Rock Pipit *A. s. littoralis*.—Ed.)

Woodchat Shrikes in Fife and East Lothian

About 10.30 a.m. on 30th May 1965 R. B. Hughes found a Woodchat Shrike on the south bank of Kilconquhar Loch. I returned to the area with him and we made a detailed description of the bird:

Slightly larger than a House Sparrow, but with a noticeably long tail and typical shrike stance on its perch. Throat and underparts fawn, perhaps slightly lighter than a female Chaffinch; chestnut crown and nape, with bold blackish band through eye continuing across forehead; black or dark brown back, mantle and tail, with white outer tail feathers: large oval scapular patch and small patch on edge of closed wing very much the same colour as underparts (showing in flight as an oval patch and small wing-bar); very conspicuous large area of white on rump; a few light bars just discernible at close range on body just below closed wing; slightly hooked black bill; legs and feet black.

The bird haunted a small plantation of 3 ft pines, perching on the tops of the trees. Its flight was undulating over short distances but more direct on the occasional longer flight. It flew in low, ending with an upward sweep onto its perch. Its tail was constantly flicked in a curious fashion, from one side

to the other as well as up and down, almost describing a semi-circle. When hunting it would view from the perch, but always took its prey from the ground in a dashing swoop, quickly returning to its perch again. Twice the prey was bumble bees, but a small worm or caterpillar was also taken. Though basically a very silent bird we heard it once utter a harsh *chatt*.

It was quite trusting and excellent views were obtained. We returned in the afternoon with Dr W. J. Eggeling and saw it again, and at 1900 hrs when we found it sitting on a highish branch of a sycamore as if settling to roost, where we left it. Despite a thorough search it could not be found on the 31st.

DAVID W. OLIVER.

(The only previous record for South Fife is of a rather sketchily described bird near Kinghorn on 21st and 22nd May 1953 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 3: 69, 72).—Ed.)

At Barns Ness on 4th September 1965, following a day and night of heavy rain and strong east winds which succeeded the clear anticyclonic weather of the 2nd, I found there had been a fall of passerine migrants, including a female Pied Flycatcher, Garden Warblers, Redstarts, Whitethroats, one Lesser Whitethroat and, with them in the old quarry, a female Woodchat Shrike.

The most noticeable feature was the chestnut crown and nape above the dark brown eyestripe, which crossed the forehead and passed behind the eyes to merge with the dark brown back and wings, of which latter only the scapulars were seen to be dirty white at rest. The whole underside was a dirty white, and in flight the rump and outer tail feathers were the same shade. The eye was black, and the hooked bill was dark at the tip, shading to a dirty pink at the base. When it opened its bill, prior to disgorging a pellet, the inside of the mouth was seen to be pale pink. The legs were black but not normally visible while it perched. During the occasional short fast flights I noted the white on the scapulars and rump, but the patch on the primaries escaped me.

I was quite sure that it was a Woodchat Shrike, and a female from the dullness of the colours, the chestnut not being as red as in males nor the white clean enough, and the black parts being a dull sooty brown. There was no barring as in immatures.

The bird selected prominent perches, at the top of the bare branches of the elder bushes or on the bundles of barbed wire, from which it kept a lookout for passing insects. It sat hunched up on its perch, and it was during one of these longer quiet spells that it suddenly yawned and stretched up to its full height and disgorged the pellet ($\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{3}{4}$ "") of indigestible insect fragments, mostly the hard horny black parts of thorax, head and legs of insects. After this it became much

more active, and chased and knocked to the ground a large bumble bee and, securing it on the ground, returned with it to its perch on the barbed wire, there to chew it sufficiently to make it soft enough to swallow whole. There was no hammering of the bee on the wire, only a steady chewing in the bill, once only holding it in its right foot to change the grip in the mouth, and then more chewing and the final swallow—perhaps 30 seconds in all. No prey was hung on the barbs: all was eaten as it was caught. It seems that a 'siesta' is needed between each bumble bee for digestion, as it resumed its hunched position for some time after the bee was swallowed; then it would revive and start watching for another one to appear. It would allow approach to about 15 yards and then move to the next perch.

Mrs Susan Beasley of the Department of Zoology, University of Edinburgh, kindly identified the contents of the pellet as parts of four bees (Apidae), one carabid beetle, and probably the remains of a parasitic insect.

The bird was caught on the 5th by A. T. and E. H. L. Macmillan and identified as an unmoulted female in very scruffy abraded plumage. Detailed notes were made of its plumage, including the white patch across the primaries. It remained in the area and was seen by M. J. Everett, R. W. J. Smith, G. and M. I. Waterston and others, being last noted by P. J. B. Slater on the 15th. This is the first record for East Lothian.

ALASTAIR MACDONALD.

Black-headed Bunting in Shetland

On 4th June 1965 I heard from John H. Simpson that he had finally managed to see a bird which had been reported several times during the previous week in the Brough district of Whalsay. He had watched it in bright light for some time as it fed on a field of short grass, and had concluded that it was a male Black-headed Bunting.

After searching the area together for over two hours on the morning of the 5th we were rewarded by the bird flying towards us and perching on low power cables about 30 yards from us. It remained there, fairly still, for about half a minute, before flying over the fields to another power cable and then out of sight behind some houses.

The flight was undulating and reminded me of a Snow Bunting, to which it seemed similar in size, though perhaps slightly less robust. It called several times in flight—a short, slightly rising, fairly low-pitched *whst*, repeated at about 3-4 second intervals

At rest the most noticeable feature was the rather large, very pale leaden-blue bill, contrasting sharply with the black front and sides of the head, and with the canary-yellow belly, breast and throat, which extended right up to the bill and gave the bird, when the head was turned towards us, an almost Peregrine-like moustached appearance. The wings and tail were brown, pale edges to the coverts showing as a double wing-bar on the closed wing, and pale outer webs of primaries and secondaries also being noticeable. No white showed in the tail but it was not clearly seen and the outer feathers could have been a little paler than the rest. The back was a richer brown than the wing and showed some streaking, but in the dull misty conditions we could not make out the more russet colour which JHS had previously noted, nor a brownish sheen which had showed at times on the head. The black of the crown seemed to merge into the brown of the back on the nape. The legs were pale brown, and the eye, not clearly seen, appeared to be dark.

On looking at illustrations later we agreed that the bird was exactly like the male shown in the *Field Guide*, except that the bill was much paler and more like the *Handbook* illustration.

People living nearby told us that the bird was rather shy, and that, when disturbed, usually flew away fairly high for a considerable distance, although once it was seen on a lawn in front of a house with some House Sparrows.

We were left in no doubt that the bird was a male Black-headed Bunting. Apart from Fair Isle records this is the first to be recorded in Shetland. It is interesting to note that a male Red-headed Bunting was in the Tingwall area for approximately the same period.

ROBERT J. TULLOCH.

(This record has been accepted by the Rarities Committee of *British Birds*, but the committee consider that the bird was most probably an escape, particularly as it occurred at the same time as a Red-headed Bunting—a frequent fugitive. We understand that the same combination of Black-headed and Red-headed Buntings occurred about this time at Fair Isle.—Ed.)

Rustic Bunting in Outer Hebrides

A Rustic Bunting was observed at Askernish House, South Uist, from 9.30 to 10.30 a.m. on 7th May 1965 by W. J. Eggeling, D. Lea, D. S. Ranwell, G. Waterston and M. I. Waterston. It

was first seen perched on a wire fence, the unusual head pattern immediately attracting attention. From the fence it flew into a patch of irises where it fed on the ground between the clumps. When flushed it flew to the garden wall and was watched by all five observers as it perched there and later in a small bush by the house. Eventually it flew off and was lost in a marshy field.

The crown and cheeks were black or brown-black, the colour extending down the nape. The throat was white tinged with cream and there was a broad white stripe running back from the eye to above the nape. In certain positions this stripe appeared tinged cream or buff. A streaky warm brown chest band merged irregularly with the almost pure white underparts. The upperparts were chestnut streaked with black, the chestnut extending to the upper tail-coverts. When it was perched the raising of the crest referred to in the *Field Guide* was noticed by several members of the party.

Flying with Reed Buntings the bird seemed noticeably shorter to DL and gave the impression of being stockier. WJE did not consider it appreciably shorter than a Reed Bunting when seen alone but noted it as slightly smaller in flight with them. GW recorded its posture at rest as not so erect as a Reed Bunting's and thought the mantle not so boldly streaked as that of accompanying cock Reed Buntings. WJE noted the bird as more chestnut than the latter, probably because of the less obvious black back streaks, and considered the head pattern not so strikingly black and white as one would expect in a cock Rustic Bunting in summer plumage. Because the white stripe behind the eye and the white throat both showed traces of cream or brown it was suggested that the bird had not completed its spring moult.

When it was in the bush the bird was seen by WJE to creep through it slowly like a mouse—in the manner of a Lapland Bunting on the ground—something he has never seen a Reed Bunting do. No call note was recorded.

Askernish House lies on the edge of the machair on the west coast of South Uist some four miles south of Ardvale Point. It is situated in an area of rough damp fields with *Juncus*, *Iris* and some *Phragmites* in the ditches. The weather on 6th May was cold with strong SE wind and low cloud, and on the morning of the 7th the wind was still SE and quite strong. This is the first occurrence of the species in the Outer Hebrides.

W. J. EGGELING.

Current Notes

Compiled by P. J. B. SLATER

(**Key to initials of observers** : D. G. Andrew, J. M. S. Arnott, W. Austin, R. S. Baillie, J. Ballantyne, H. Boase (HBs), D. Boomer, H. Boyd (HBd), T. Boyd, Mrs A. Buchanan, Caithness Group per D. M. Stark (Caith Gp), Miss K. M. Calver, Dr J. W. Campbell, S. J. Clarke, F. Colman, M. Coyne, H. G. Cree, R. Dalrymple, P. E. Davis, R. H. Dennis, D. Dewar, G. Dick, R. A. Dickson, R. C. Dickson, J. Dunbar, J. N. Dymond, W. M. M. Eddie, J. Edelsten, Dr W. J. Eggeing, M. J. Everett, R. W. Forrester, I. Gibson, P. Grubb, A. Halliday, P. B. Heppleston, D. C. Hulme, W. Hutton, E. N. Hunter, R. Job, P. Johnson, M. Jones, T. S. Kelly, Miss H. Knight, D. Lea, A. F. Leitch, J. Lister, D. G. Long, J. A. Love, A. Macdonald, D. Macdonald, D. W. R. Macdonald, E. Macdonald, M. A. Macdonald, B. McDowall, J. MacEachern (JMCE), Mrs M. MacEachern, Miss J. McFarlane (JMCF), J. MacGeogh (JMcG), K. S. Macgregor, K. Mackenzie, Dr P. McMorran, R. Meekin (RMn), Prof. M. F. M. Meiklejohn, J. K. R. Melrose, D. G. Middleton, Lt. Cdr. R. H. Miller, F. M. Moore, Miss H. Morley, W. M. Morrison, Cdr. R. Muir (RMr), I. C. Munro, D. J. Norden, M. A. Ogilvie, D. W. Oliver, J. S. Oliver, C. F. Palmair, R. K. Pollock, J. Potter, R. M. Ramage, A. D. K. Ramsay, C. P. Rawcliffe (CPRi), G. A. Richards, R. Richardson, E. L. Roberts, Lt. Cdr. C. P. Ross (CPRs), Dr M. Rusk, W. K. Russell, P. W. Sandeman, I. H. Simpson, P. J. B. Slater, A. J. Smith, Mrs E. M. Smith, R. W. J. Smith, Dr T. C. Smout, D. Stewart, N. L. Storie, J. Swan, R. L. Swann, C. Tait, I. Taylor, Miss V. M. Thom, B. R. Thomson, R. B. Tozer, Dr B. C. Tulloch, R. J. Tulloch, G. Waterston, A. D. Watson, J. Watt, J. R. Weir, T. Weir, W. H. Wild, P. C. Williams, J. F. Wilson, M. G. Wilson, N. Wright, J. G. Young.

All dates refer to 1965.)

Distribution

Records from before 1st September 1965 are not included in this section except where they are relevant to more recent topics.

A **Great Northern Diver**, initially in almost full breeding plumage but later showing signs of moult, was at Earlston Loch near Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire, from 5th to 19th November (JKRM, JS, ADW). In recent years **Red-necked Grebe** records from the Forth seem to have become more numerous: one at least was present at Gullane, East Lothian, on 17th October (MGW), and there were two there on 23rd (MAM, RLS, CT). A **Slavonian Grebe** was inland at Gladhouse, Midlothian, on 10th October (RWJS). There being few records of **Little Grebes** at Aberlady, East Lothian, it is worth recording that one was seen on the Marl Loch there on 19th September (RAD, RCD).

On 11th December about 6500 **Mallard** were seen at Strathbeg, Aberdeenshire (JE), and 1500 were counted at the Al-

mond Estuary, West Lothian, on the same day; the numbers there in autumn have increased steadily over the last few years and this is the maximum ever recorded (TCS). There are few places in Scotland where **Gadwall** occur regularly and the following reports are therefore of interest: a pair at Loch Ken, Kirkcudbrightshire, on 17th October (RBT); a male on a small pond at Currie, Midlothian, on 2nd November (CPRf); a pair at Stormont Loch, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, on 7th November (VMT); two pairs on Glenbuck reservoir, Ayrshire, on 11th November (GAR); two males at Linlithgow Loch, West Lothian, on 27th November (JAL); and four birds at Garlieston, Wigtownshire, on 9th December (RHM).

Two **Pintail** were seen at Doonfoot on 6th October (JND) and seven at Barassie, Ayrshire, on 8th October (GAR); two drakes and a duck were at the Almond Estuary on 11th December (TCS); there was a duck at Aberlady, East Lothian, on 6th November (RLS); and two drakes at Stormont Loch on 7th (VMT). Although **Scaup** are not infrequent inland, single females near Port Henderson, Wester Ross, from 9th to 11th October (ENH), and at Gartmorn Dam, Clackmannanshire, on 30th October (ICM, RMR) are worth mentioning, being further from the usual winter concentrations of this species than other records. Another species which has shown an increase at the Almond Estuary in the last five years is the **Goldeneye**—116 were seen there on 11th December (TCS). Only one record of **Long-tailed Duck** inland has come to light: that of an adult male at Lindores Loch, Fife, between 25th October and 10th November (JW), in the same place and at the same time as one was seen last year (3: 261).

A male **Goosander** was at Glencorse Reservoir, Midlothian, on 13th November (RLS), and a female was seen at Duddingston Loch, Edinburgh, on 20th and 27th November and on 23rd December (PJ, AFL, RLS). There were 242 on the Beaully Firth, Inverness-shire, on 12th December (WMM, MR); substantially bigger numbers have sometimes been counted there in winter (2: 313; 3: 319).

All the **Smew** seen recently have been 'red-heads', and some of these have been seen in small concentrations:

Strathbeg, Aberdeen—1 on 11th Dec (JE).

Endrick mouth, Stirling/Dunbarton—2 on 21st and 1 on 26th Nov (HGC, JND, RWF).

Castle Semple Loch, Renfrew—4 on 14th Nov (WHW), 2 on 12th Dec (MJE).

Rowbank Reservoir, Renfrew—1 on 12th Dec (MJE).

Roseberry Reservoir, Midlothian—7 on 14th and 21st Nov; 3 on 26th Dec (DGA, EMS, RWJS).

The report of a **Shelduck** seen flying off Drummond Pond, Crieff, Perthshire, on 7th November is unusual as being so far inland (MAO per VMT).

The earliest report of **Grey Lag Geese** is of about 25 at Abernethy, Perthshire, on 11th September, the date suggesting that they were Scottish breeding birds (WH per JW). Otherwise the first records were of 38 going south over the Lake of Menteith, Perthshire, on 30th September (RCD), and a skein of 30 at Endrick mouth on 3rd October (IG). Although the main arrival did not occur until the first few days of November, the annual count on 7th showed an increase to 45,000 in Scotland (see 3: 262), suggesting that the wintering population was pretty well complete by then (per HBd).

The first **Greenland White-fronted Geese** to arrive at Loch Ken, Kirkcudbrightshire, did so on 30th October and full numbers were present by 9th November (ADW). These dates seem to tie in with the observation of a skein of about 20 flying south at Sanna Bay, Ardnamurchan, Argyllshire, on 29th October (JMCE, MM, DS), and of 9 present on Fair Isle, Shetland, from 28th to 31st October (RHD). Two adult **Greenland** birds were outwith their normal wintering areas at Tibbermore, Perthshire, on 18th December (VMT).

The first **Bean Geese** to arrive in Kirkcudbrightshire were eight seen near Castle Douglas on 26th December (ADW, JGY), but earlier reports from elsewhere are of nine at Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, on 12th November (MFMM), and one with Pinkfeet at Endrick mouth on 5th December (DB, WMME, RMn). The earliest **Pink-footed Geese** seen were 25 going west at East Calder, Midlothian, on 10th September (DD). At Caerlaverock, Dumfriesshire, there were 18 on 11th, 75 on 18th and 300-500 by 30th September (ELR). A skein of 31 was seen at Moonzie, near Cupar, Fife, on 13th September (DWO). Large-scale arrivals are reported from Perthshire between 1st and 3rd October (VMT), and on the latter date there was a steady passage of skeins going south-west in Glen Lyon (TW). While the main passage seems to have been in late September and early October some birds arrived rather later: 52,000 were estimated to be present in Scotland on 17th October but this had increased to 59,000 by 7th November, according to the annual goose count. This national figure is again slightly up on that of last year (3: 262), but the most striking increase has been in Aberdeenshire, where numbers have increased steadily from just over 1,000 in 1962 to this year's record total of over 11,500 (per HBd).

Odd **Snow Geese** have been seen again this year: in October there were three, thought not to be Ross's, at Carsebreck, Perthshire, on 16th (JRW); one was at Loch Strathbeg, Aber-

deenshire, on 17th (JE); and a small bird, possibly a Ross's, was at Flander's Moss, Stirlingshire, on 24th (JMSA, MFMM). A blue-phase Lesser Snow Goose was seen at Windyedge, Perthshire, on 8th November (VMT). Also in Perthshire, a Pale-bellied Brent Goose was seen at Methven Moss on 3rd October (VMT), and two were at Dupplin Loch on 17th (JRW). Another was seen at Tynninghame, East Lothian, on 21st November (CT), and there were five, Dark-bellied birds this time, at Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, on 14th (MFMM).

Two Barnacle Geese were present at Caerlaverock on 27th September, with 13 on 29th and at least 2000 by 6th October (ELR). Some were apparently still travelling south at the end of October as skeins totalling about 500 birds were seen at Sanna Bay, Ardnamurchan, on 29th and 30th (JMcE, MM, DS). The following are records of Barnacles away from their normal wintering grounds, but excluding those of smaller parties in Perthshire which are too numerous to detail:

Fair Isle—odd birds from 5th Oct to 21st Nov, with maxima of 10 on 5th and 8 on 30th Oct (RHD).

Dornoch, Sutherland—1 on 30th Oct (DM).

Ythan Estuary, Aberdeen—5 on 15th Nov (MFMM).

Carsebreck, Perth—13 on 24th Oct (VMT).

Windyedge, Perth—19 on 8th Nov (VMT).

Kinkell Bridge, Perth—7 on 27th Nov (VMT).

Carnbee Reservoir, Fife—1 in last week of Nov (per DWO).

Gartocharn, Dunbarton—2 with Greylag on 6th Nov (TW).

Skinflats, East Stirling—7 on 9th Oct; 4 on 30th; 3 on 31st; 2 on 7th Nov (GD, JP, IT).

Threipmuir, Midlothian—1 on 27th Nov (CT).

The earliest Whooper Swans reported were on 26th September when there was one at Longman Bay, Inverness (JAL, WMM), and six were seen at Gadloch, Lanarkshire (FC). Passage was noted at Fair Isle from 16th October to 20th November—the largest number seen was 39 on 28th October (RHD). On 30th October herds were seen passing Sanna Bay, Ardnamurchan—a total of 64 birds (JMcE, MM, DS). Eight adults and an immature were seen at Tynninghame, where this species is unusual, on 7th November (MFMM). Bewick's Swans have also been reported from Tynninghame where there were two on 21st November and four on 19th December (CT). Family parties, each of two adults and three immatures, were at Strathbeg on 11th December (JE), and at Branahvie Loch, Lewis, on 15th (GAR). A further record is of one which spent half an hour at Kilconquhar Loch, Fife, on 26th December (DWO).

Single sightings of our resident birds of prey during the winter are unfortunately of little use in assessing their diminished status because of their tendency to wander extensively. But it may perhaps be worth noting that more

reports of **Buzzards** and **Sparrowhawks** than usual have been received during the last quarter indicating, one hopes, an increase. A **Rough-legged Buzzard** was watched at close quarters both hovering and perching on Black Hill in the Pentlands, Midlothian, on 12th December (ADKR). An **Osprey** was present on Fair Isle on 3rd October (RHD), and a female **Peregrine** was seen being mobbed by Crows near Fife Ness on 23rd October (DWO).

An interesting occurrence is that of a female **Capercaillie** in Inverness between 14th November and 14th December. It was seen by a number of people in various gardens in the town and it allowed a close approach before flying off. (MR).

While probably not uncommon, **Water Rails** are seldom seen—two at Yetholm, Roxburghshire, on 27th November were the first there in the observer's experience (RSB). On 25th December 26 **Moorhens** were counted at the Peffer Burn, Aberlady, this being a high number for this area in winter (RSB).

The biggest number of **Golden Plover** for a number of years were seen in the Moorfoot area, Midlothian, during the autumn, with up to 575 being counted together (DGA, EMS, RWJS). Three flocks along 5 miles of the Ayr bypass on 2nd October totalled nearly 2800 birds (JND). Two were noted at the Figgate Pond in Edinburgh on 27th November (PJ, AFL). **Jack Snipe** seen in Fife have been 12 at Largo Bay on 14th November (DWO), and one at the Eden Estuary, an area for which there are few recent records, on 4th December (DJN, DWO). The highest count at Paisley Moss, Renfrewshire, was of six on 5th October (IG).

The following are reports of **Black-tailed Godwits** additional to those given previously (3: 424):

Montrose Basin, Angus—1 on 7th Nov (JD).

Kilchattan Bay, Bute—1 on 25th and 26th Nov (DGM).

Largo Bay, Fife—20 on 27th Nov, probably birds moving from the Eden Estuary (DWO).

Skinflats—2 on 3rd Oct (IT).

Near Kilwinning, Ayr—1 on 8th Oct (GAR).

A **Green Sandpiper** at Knowesdean Reservoir (NT 437395) on 15th and 17th September seems to be only the second recorded in Selkirkshire (JB).

Further **Wood Sandpiper** records are all from the Forth area with two at Rosyth, Fife, on 19th September (HM, BRT); one at Aberlady on 2nd October (JSO); and one at Skinflats on 3rd (IT). The latest **Common Sandpiper** to be reported was one still at Montrose Basin on 24th October (JD).

A **Redshank** with very dark black-brown on the wing coverts was found dead at Prestwick, Ayrshire, on 16th October; it had a particularly long wing (170 mm) and can therefore be safely attributed to the Iceland race (GAR). A count of 600 Redshanks on the Almond Estuary on 11th December was unprecedented for the time of year—the birds were apparently attracted by food associated with piles of seaweed thrown onto the beech in stormy weather (TCS).

A number of late autumn records of **Spotted Redshanks** have come to light:

- Montrose Basin—1 on 24th Oct (JD).
- Anstruther, Fife—1 heard on night of 2nd Oct (MFMM).
- Skinflats—1 on 2nd; 2 on 3rd and 1 on 30th Oct (IT).
- Aberlady—1 on 16th Oct (RSB).
- West Barns pools, East Lothian—1 from mid Oct to 14th Nov (TB, EMS, RWJS), probably the same as 1 at Belhaven on 17th Oct (MFMM).
- Near Kilwinning, Ayr—1 from 8th Oct to 8th Nov (GAR).

There are several more reports of **Little Stints** to add to the already impressive list for last autumn (3: 426):

- Fair Isle—1 on 2nd Oct (RHD).
- Montrose Basin—2 on 11th Oct (JD).
- Fife Ness—1 on 3rd Oct (DWO).
- Skinflats—4 on 3rd Oct; 1 on 30th Oct (IT).
- Aberlady—2 on 12th Oct (AFL, DWRM, MAM, RLS, PCW).
- Tynninghame—10 on 29th Sept; at least 7 on 2nd Oct; 1 on 30th Oct (TB, ADKR, EMS, RWJS).
- Doonfoot, Ayr—1 on 29th Sept (GAR), and 6th Oct (JND).

A first-winter male **Temminck's Stint**, which was unfortunately subsequently shot, was present with another bird, possibly of the same species, at Islesteps, Dumfries, from about 10th November to 16th. It has since been prepared as a skin (WMME, DJN, CEP).

Further sightings of **Curlew Sandpipers** are as follows:

- Invergowrie Bay, Perth—1 on 14th Oct (HBs).
- Eden Estuary—2 with Dunlin on 2nd Oct (RJ).
- Skinflats—8 on 9th; 2 on 10th; and 1 on 24th Oct (IT).
- Tynninghame—1 on 26th Sept (TB, FMS, RWJS).
- Caerlaverock—1 on 3rd Oct (ELR).

Although **Ruff** records for last autumn have proved too numerous to give in detail, it is worth noting that numbers at Caerlaverock increased steadily from three on 14th August to hundreds by 3rd October (ELR).

The first definite occurrence of a **Pomarine Skua** at Tynninghame was of an immature, which allowed approach to within about fifty yards, on 26th September (EMS, RWJS).

An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** of the Scandinavian race was seen on the Water of Leith in Leith, Midlothian, on 8th

November (CPRf). **Glaucous Gulls** in less usual areas have been one at Machrie Bay, Islay, on 6th October (RKP), and a first-winter bird on the Beaully Firth on 30th December (RHD). Excluding the controversial 'white gull' (see 3: 371), which was back on the *Carrick* in Glasgow by 3rd September (NLS), there are three reports of **Iceland Gulls**. An immature was at Gairloch, Wester Ross, on 26th September (TW); and single adults were seen at Carlingheugh Bay, Angus, on 12th December (RJ), and at Seafield, Midlothian, on 11th December (MJE, ADKR).

The last **Little Gull** to leave Kilconquhar Loch was still there on 9th October but 20 were still in Fife at Elie Ness on 7th November (DWO). In Angus there were over 20 at Monifieth on 3rd October (JD); 23 adults and 28 immatures at Carnoustie on 16th October (RJ); and at least 20 birds still in the same area on 12th December (JD). A juvenile **Kittiwake**, which was found dead at Summerston, Glasgow, on 30th October, had strayed a good bit from the sea (WKR).

A very good count of **Black Terns** is of 16 which were hawking flies along the edge of the sea marsh near Skinflats on 26th September (JP, IT). An immature was found dead at Mertoun, Roxburghshire, on 4th September (AJS). The latest record of **Common Tern** is of two seen in flight at Seafield on 30th October (JAL). The **Black Guillemot** is unusual in the Clyde: one was seen there at Hunterston, Ayrshire, on 10th October (RD, IG, EM).

There are two reports of **Hoopoes**, the first being seen in sand dunes west of Dornoch, Sutherland, on 3rd October (DM, NW). The other, which may possibly have been the same bird as was seen in Ayrshire the previous month (3: 428), was observed near Kirkholm, Wigtownshire, on 11th October and had been reported as present for a fortnight previous to this (AH, BM per ADW). A **Green Woodpecker** was seen and heard on several occasions between 10th and 23rd October on Tulliallan Moor, Fife, a county for which records are very few (MC, GD, JP, IT). A **Wryneck**, which was caught and ringed at Castletown, Caithness, on 2nd October, was no doubt part of the tail end of the fall of migrants which took place in late September and early October (3: 429) (Caith Gp).

Late **Swallows** do not really become unusual until November, a month for which there are several records this year:

- St Andrews, Fife—1 on 6th (JMCF).
- Ardross, near Elie, Fife—1 on 13th (DWO).
- Kincardine, Fife—1 on 10th (GD, JP, IT).
- Aberlady—1 on 6th (JAL, JSO, CPRs).
- Johnstone, Renfrew—1 on 27th (AB).
- Sandhead, Wigtown—2 on 6th (RCD).

The latest **House Martins** to be reported were two at Elie on 31st October (DWO); one at Liberton, Edinburgh, on 1st November (MAM); and two immatures at Temple, Midlothian, on 7th November (JL). Two **Sand Martins** were still at Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, on 3rd November (PBH).

A brief glimpse was had of a fine male **Golden Oriole** at Kildalton, Islay, on 22nd September, when it flew up from the road into a neighbouring wood (KMC, BCT).

An invasion of tits which took place in Shetland in late September has already been mentioned (3: 430). One **Blue Tit** was still present on Whalsay on 17th December (JHS). Some idea of the scarcity of tits in Shetland can be gathered from the fact that a **Coal Tit** on Fair Isle on 28th October is only the second to be recorded on the island (RHD).

Although one bird was seen in August and odd ones in early September, the first real arrival of **Fieldfares** on Fair Isle did not take place till the end of that month with 25 on 23rd increasing to 500 by 27th (RHD). Further south the earliest reported were four over Kilconquhar on 18th September (DWO). Otherwise the only birds to be reported in September were singles and it was not until early October that good numbers were seen. On 2nd there were about 100 at Whitelaw Cleugh, Midlothian (JB); 50 at Yetholm, Roxburghshire (RSB); 5 at Bridge of Dee, Kirkcudbrightshire (RBT); and about 80 at Summerston, Glasgow (WMME, DJN). The following day small flocks amounting to hundreds in all were passing down Glen Lyon and along Loch Tay in Perthshire (PWS, TW); there were about 70 at Lamford, Kirkcudbrightshire (JND); and some 300 were flying south near Carsphairn, Kirkcudbrightshire (JND). Although most observers agree that there were no very spectacular peaks in passage there seems to have been a strong movement in the central Highlands and south on 10th October when there were large numbers near Dunkeld, Perthshire (RJ); about 500 per hour passing the Menteith area (VMT); a movement involving some 10,000 above thick mist on Glas Maol, Angus (ADKR); and a marked passage of hundreds of birds through Galloway (ELR). The main arrival in the far north was not until later, with numbers in Caithness building up to at least 10,000 during the last week of October (Caith Gp), when there were large flocks everywhere in Orkney as well (PJBS).

Redwing passage took place at about the same time with the same rather indistinct peaks. The first at Fair Isle were two on 4th September, with 12 on 18th increasing to 750 by 27th (RHD). The first at Braemar, Aberdeenshire, was on 24th (TCS); five were at Crinan, Argyll, on 26th (NLS); and on 28th there were three at Blairgowrie, Perthshire (JWC), and 19 at Barr, Ayrshire (GAR). There are various

reports for 2nd October though not involving very great numbers: on the following day about 250 flew south at Carsphairn (JND), the first three had arrived at Caerlaverock (ELR), and there were at least 16 at Bridge of Dee (RBT). With the Fieldfare movement at Glas Maol on 10th there were about 400 Redwing (ADKR); whereas at Menteith this species was in the majority, passing at the rate of 1000 per hour (VMT). In Edinburgh birds could be heard passing over after dark on various dates between 8th October and 4th November (TCS).

Ring Ouzels lingering into October were two at Gullane Point on 2nd (JSO); and one, a female, seen at Fife Ness on 3rd and 10th (MFMM, DWO), and what was possibly the same bird seen on the coast between Anstruther and Crail, Fife, on 30th (WJE). The last **Wheatears** seen were one at Largoward, Fife, on 7th November (DWO), and one on Whalsay, Shetland, on 11th (JHS).

It is gratifying that wintering **Stonechats** are on the increase again: late records are of a pair at Tynninghame on 16th October (AM); an adult male at Blackhill Farm, Glasgow, on 24th October (WMME); and at least one at Dunnet, Caithness, on 14th and 21st November (Caith Gp). Also late in the year, but an uncommon visitor anyway, was a female **Black Redstart** seen at Village Bay, St Kilda, on 20th and 24th October and on 2nd November (PG). Excluding Fair Isle, where three were present during the first half of October, two **Bluethroats** were reported. One was perched and flirting its tail briefly at the roadside near Thurso, Caithness, on 20th October (PM). The other, a freshly dead male **White-spotted Bluethroat**, well marked with a big satin white spot, was found on the grass edge of the beach near North Berwick, East Lothian, on 2nd October. Its identity was confirmed by RHD and at the Royal Scottish Museum, where the skin is preserved. There were big falls of migrants, especially in East Anglia, at this time, but the date is very unusual for this central and south European race (CT).

Migrant **Blackcaps**, and some wintering birds, have been a female at Gladhouse on 10th October (EMS); a pair in a garden in Gullane on 20th (CPRs); a female in Thurso on 27th (Caith Gp); a male in Montrose on 7th November (JD); another at Duns, Berwickshire, on 27th and 28th (SJC); and another in a garden in Edinburgh on 21st December (per GW). There were small numbers at Fair Isle throughout October and one was seen there as late as 14th November (RHD). Five were at Barns Ness, East Lothian, on 2nd October as part of a fall resulting from rough weather the previous day. An immature **Barred Warbler** was also there on 2nd and 3rd (AM, KSM), and another was at Fair Isle on

3rd and 4th (RHD). Other migrant warblers in October included a **Whitethroat** seen and heard at Yetholm on 10th (RSB), and there was a **Lesser Whitethroat** at Fife Ness the same day (DWO). Single **Yellow-browed Warblers** were seen at Fair Isle on 2nd, 10th and 12th October and there was a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** there on 9th (RHD).

A **Grey Wagtail** was seen at the Eden Estuary on 4th December (DJN, DWO), and a **Yellow Wagtail** of undetermined race was at Gullane Bay on 16th October (KM, DWO, JSO).

There are more reports of **Great Grey Shrikes** than usual:

Whalsay, Shetland—1 on 5th and 22nd Oct (JHS).

Kingussie, Inverness—1 on 19th Oct (TSK).

Blairgowrie, Perth—1 on 27th Oct (JWC).

Balmakin, near Colinsburgh, Fife—1 in roadside tree on 9th Nov (DWO).

Peppermill—1 on 20th Nov (MC, JP, IT).

Port Ellen, Islay—1 on 19th Oct (per HK).

Newton Mearns, Renfrew—1 on 4th Nov (RWF).

Browhouses, near Annan, Dumfries—1 on 12th Oct (WA).

Laurieston, Kirkcudbright—1 on 12th Dec (RMr).

A juvenile **Red-backed Shrike** was seen at Yetholm on 3rd October and there was an adult male on the mainland of East Lothian opposite Fidra on 24th (RSB).

Siskin passage at Fair Isle extended from 4th September to 16th October with a peak of 31 birds present on 2nd October (RHD). The larger flocks reported from elsewhere have been of eight birds at Earlsferry, Fife, on 31st October (DWO); 16 over Portmore Reservoir, Peeblesshire, on 7th November (ADKR); and about 60 near Aberuthven, Perthshire, on 19th December (RSB, FMM). It is surprising, but two seen at Aberlady on 4th November seem to be only the second record for the reserve (1: 508) (MJE).

Flocks of **Redpolls** appeared in Shetland from 20th October and many of the birds lingered unusually long (RJT). A large invasion took place on Fair Isle from 20th October, and the majority of the birds involved were very pale (RHD): most were 'Mealy', some were 'Coue's' and one was thought to be 'Hornemann's'; officially these last two races are considered to be a separate species—the Arctic Redpoll—and the records have to be considered by the Rarities Committee. Most of the races interbreed to some extent, forming hybrid swarms of birds with intermediate characteristics, so that exact identification of races is difficult. Other reports are of eight at Griminish, Benbecula, six of which were 'Mealy', on 4th November (DL, GW); seven including two 'Mealy' at Aberlady on 4th December (DWRM, MAM, RLS); four including one 'Mealy' at Bush estate, Midlothian, on 14th November (ADKR); and single pale birds at Dunbar on 17th October (MFMM), and at St Kilda on 4th November (PG).

It has also been a good autumn for **Bramblings** with

passage at Fair Isle throughout October and to 18th November reaching peaks of 110 on 5th and 150 on 20th October (RHD). A great many small flocks have been seen all over the country: some of the biggest have been 25 at Stirkoke, Caithness, on 19th December (Caith Gp); about 20 at Alyth, Angus, on 31st October (RJ); good numbers with about 50 in one flock near Eddleston, Peeblesshire (MGW); large numbers in the Duns area, Berwickshire, from 7th November onwards (DGL); and about 50 at Whittingehame, East Lothian, on 12th December (TCS).

Reports of **Lapland Buntings** are of one on Fetlar on 3rd October (RJT) and of at least one heard calling at Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, on 15th November (MFMM).

Further evidence of the spread of the **Tree Sparrow** is provided by the sighting of three at Riverside, Wick, Caithness, on 21st November (Caith Gp), and three at Stormont Loch, Perthshire, on 13th October (HBs).

Earlier observations—before 1st September 1965

A count of 146 **Canada Geese** at Charleston, North Kessock, on the Beaully Firth on 16th July (DCH), exceeds the highest previously quoted for last year (3: 423). A further summering **Whooper Swan** has also come to light—one which was on Loch Gowan, Achnasheen, Ross, between June and August (DCH).

A **Honey Buzzard** has already been recorded from Orkney on 6th June (3: 423). About the same time one was at Fair Isle from 27th to 29th May (*Bird Study* 12: 340), and one was at Sumburgh Head in the south of Shetland on 2nd June (RR per PED), possibly the same bird.

A **Quail** seen on St Kilda on 29th July was the second to appear there last year (see 3: 430) (MJ).

What is apparently the first occurrence of the **Herring Gull** breeding in East Inverness-shire took place in an unusual site in Inverness last summer. On 17th May the birds were found to have built a nest on top of a disused chimney stack which they were sharing with a young rowan tree. The chicks hatched but were unfortunately blown out of the nest in bad weather on 12th July (JFW per JMcG).

The surprisingly frequent assumption by textbooks that **Nightjars** breed throughout Scotland is completely unjustified—the discovery of one reeling at Ben Eighe Nature Reserve, Wester Ross, on 13th June is therefore worth recording (DCH).

Corrections

- Vol. 3: 424 The Quail at Thornhill was in Perthshire, not Stirlingshire.
 Vol. 3: 426 The Gladhouse record listed under Curlew Sandpiper refers to a Green Sandpiper and should be transferred to p. 425.

Reviews

Birds of Town and Village. Paintings by Basil Ede. Text by W. D. Campbell. London, Country Life, 1965. Pp. 156; 36 seven-colour litho plates. 126/-.

The publication of a lavish bird book of this nature in these days is an event of more than ordinary interest and merits consideration. Concerned frankly with the popular and aesthetic side of birdwatching, the idea of picking 56 birds the majority of which can be seen almost anywhere throughout Britain in the nesting season is a happy one. To commission specially, as we are told, 36 paintings by one artist to suit the letterpress is another matter.

If it is also the purpose, and a laudable one, to make known the merits of Basil Ede as a painter of birds to a wider public, it must be said that it seems a hard way for the painter. One would have preferred to see a selection of the artist's own, picked by him, to offer the fairest target for opinion on his status as a bird painter if we are to attempt to compare his work with that of the great bird painters of the past. Comparisons may be odious but they are unavoidable. Our first impressions were most favourable—excellent botanical backgrounds, eye-catching rich colouring on every plate—have we here a worthy successor to Archibald Thorburn, following that master's style?

We have to say that on closer study this impression was not maintained. The best feature of Mr Ede's pictures is his plumage work, which is at times as good anything we have seen. But there are too often faults in the drawing. For instance on the very first plate, of the Rook and Carrion Crow, the birds are too short; in the second plate the Jackdaw somehow fails to look crow-like; and the studies with extended wings of the Magpie and particularly the Jay are not very successful. In the Starling plate again the characteristic pose of the bird is lacking, and so on throughout the plates.

With some of the smaller birds Mr Ede is more successful. The plates of the Goldfinches, Chaffinches and Tree and House Sparrows are very good indeed and the plate of the Skylarks is excellent. Then we come to the plate of the wagtails—the Pied completely misses the sharp perkiness of this bird so familiar to us all as he struts about our lawns, and the female Grey Wagtail for some reason looks much bigger than the male. The titmice and warblers are very good indeed, perhaps the best pictures in the book. The Turdidae, if we except the Song Thrush and Redwing, are disappointing—the Fieldfare is not big enough, the Mistle Thrush not grey enough, the cock Blackbird not black enough and the yellow of his bill too weak. Plate 25 gives us a good picture of a Swallow and a poor one of the Swift—not in the least like this black, aggressive, menacing, screaming pirate of a bird as it swoops among terrified House Martins.

And so on. Perhaps Mr Ede has tried too hard—no doubt as a result of the special commissioning. We feel sure that something more spontaneous would show his work to better advantage.

W. D. Campbell's text is informative and very readable, although it is doubtful if his efforts to rename the spotted woodpeckers will meet with much approval. After all we still talk about the Black-headed Gull, and who would want to change that at this date?

The book is excellently printed and the plates are on the whole well produced by seven-colour litho, although there are signs of difficulty

with the greens and blues at times.

At six guineas the book is unavoidably somewhat expensive and it must therefore be judged against the highest standards but all things considered it may be regarded as good value, and a worthwhile addition to the titles of well illustrated books on British birds. The future development of this gifted bird artist will be watched by many of us who feel that it would be a great misfortune if the bird artist were ever completely superseded by the colour photographer. There is plenty of scope for both in the field of bird illustration.

RITCHIE SEATH.

The Woodpigeon. New Naturalist Special Volume 20. By R. K. Murton. London, Collins, 1965. Pp. 256; 17 plates (one in colour) and 22 figures. 25/-.

We have come a long way since Collinge, who graded the economic importance of birds according to the proportions of useful and useless seeds and harmful, neutral and beneficial insects they ate. Since there is no basis for comparison between the taking of, say, grain and wire-worms, the approach is of very limited value.

The modern method is first to ask why the animal is a pest at all and what is the precise nature of the damage done. For example, grain found in the crop of a bird may have come from fields just sown, from feeding troughs, from standing crops, from stooks, from experimental plots, or from stubble. The economic significance of grain taken from these sources is very different. Second, the modern biologist, looking for means of controlling a pest animal, goes back to square one and learns as much as he can about the ecology, biology and physiology of the animal. By so doing he may well find an unsuspected weak link in its life history which can be exploited; and he may well expose the inadequacies of current control schemes.

This book is about just this. Its twelve chapters cover pigeons in general and British pigeons in particular—food and feeding ecology, behaviour, breeding, population dynamics, migration, diseases, the Woodpigeon as a pest, and its control. The approach is in the best tradition of the Ministry of Agriculture's field station in Surrey, where Dr Murton works.

Most people expect birds to have young in the nest in spring and early summer and most do. The Woodpigeon is an exception since most young are in the nest in July, August and September, and Dr Murton relates this to the availability of grain, on which it feeds its young. The concurrence of young in the nest and grain in the fields could be coincidental but Dr Murton goes on to show that young in the nest in May and June do less well than those in the nest from July to September. April-hatched young, although few, do well—an exception which proves the rule, since sown grain is available in that month. The inference is that Woodpigeons depend on grain to feed their young and that there is selection against those parents which breed at the wrong time.

The observational method of investigating feeding ecology was developed at Oxford by P. H. T. Hartley and John Gibb in the 1940s and time and time again it has shown its great worth. Dr Murton uses this approach, supplemented by crop analyses, behavioural studies, enclosure plots, measurements of the food available, and experimental feeding. The result is a fascinating account, with statements on such niceties as the threshold of abundance of food at which Woodpigeons give up searching and try elsewhere.

Dr Murton writes that flocking enables intra-specific competition to be

more efficient by the operation of a dominance hierarchy in relation to food resources. But a non-flocking species could achieve the same effect by a territorial system which excluded some individuals from the necessities of life. Later Dr Murton dismisses homeostasis in the Woodpigeon, maintaining that the environment kills them. But the Woodpigeons are acting positively to portion out the food unequally under stress of shortage (see also *Bird Study* 3: 180-190 for the same in Rook and Jackdaw) and this is surely a homeostatic or negative feed-back device.

By ingenious calculations Dr Murton estimates that the average Woodpigeon does 3/- worth of damage a year and that it costs at least 1/6 to shoot each bird. National schemes for control are proved valueless, since winter shooting rarely kills as many as are going to die anyway before they can do the most serious damage. For the moment, control measures concentrate on the prevention of local damage, but experiments with cheap selective bait continue.

The Woodpigeon is presumably intended for a wide and non-specialist public. If so, I think the text is often too involved with fine detail; and the citing of references, which can disfigure a page so easily, may upset those who are not used to this convention. Likewise, although the photographs are excellent, the tables are too complicated, most of them trying to put across several points simultaneously.

Nevertheless this is a good book and should be read by anyone interested in birds as birds; in birds in relation to man-made habitat; and in pest control.

J. D. LOCKIE.

The Bird Table Book. By Tony Soper. Illustrated by Robert Gillmor. Dawlish, David & Charles (and London, Macdonald), 1965. Pp. 140; 20 photographs (12 plates) and 49 line drawings. 21/-.

'Bird gardening' is by no means a neglected aspect of ornithology, and there are countless people who enjoy seeing birds in their gardens but would not lay claim to even the modest title of birdwatchers. Books dealing with birds and gardens are virtually non-existent, however, and up till now we have had to rely on scattered sections in more general works and a growing pile of pamphlets for information and advice. All this has changed with the publication of this book; here at last is a comprehensive manual about birds and gardens.

It is no easy task to write a book on anything and combine a conversational style with a concise account of the subject—but Tony Soper has done just that. Chapter by chapter he tells us how we can attract birds to our gardens (and encourage those that already come), what natural foods we can make use of and how we can supplement them, and how we can improve natural nesting sites and add to them by supplying nest boxes. All sorts of problems and queries arise with feeding birds, and with erecting bird tables and nest boxes—and all the answers are here in this book. In addition, useful advice is given on the problems of predators and poisons.

There is a growing interest in garden visitors other than birds, and the author provides for this to some extent in a chapter dealing briefly with various insects and toads and, in greater detail, with hedgehogs.

The latter half of the book is devoted to notes on most of the species which can be expected to occur in British gardens, and to a comprehensive series of appendices dealing with 'recipes,' 'bird furniture,' birds which will use feeding stations and nest boxes, life-spans of the commoner

species, treatment of casualties, organisations connected with birdlife, birds and the law, and recordings of bird song. There is also an extensive bibliography.

There can be no doubt that this book is made all the more worthwhile by its numerous illustrations. The series of photographs is first class, even if that opposite page 70 seems to be a Spotted and not a Pied Flycatcher. As a change from the more normal garden species, there is even a photograph of a Myrtle Warbler opposite page 106. Robert Gillmor has surpassed himself in illustrating this book; his line drawings—whether portraits, diagrams or cartoons—are all in that refreshingly simple style which we have come to know so well and admire so much, adding a final touch to what must already be an irresistible book.

M. J. EVERETT.

The Young Specialist Looks at Birds. Young Specialist series No. 3. By Heinrich Frieling. Translated and adapted by Winwood Reade. London, Burke, 1965. First published as *Was fliegt denn da?*, Stuttgart 1959. Pp. 127; 40 plates (31 in colour), line drawings. Limp covers 7/6; boards 12/6.

This book has a few virtues. It is cheap, contains several hundred pictures, and gives a brief bird-spotter's note on 396 species, described as being all the birds a beginner is likely to see in Britain or in central Europe.

Unfortunately it cannot be recommended. The standard of illustration is often low: I will buy anyone a pint at the next Dunblane gathering who can identify those 12 seventeenth century warblers facing page 48. Even when the standard of drawing is fairly high, as in plate I of the hawks, it is marred by curious eccentricities such as giving each of the falcons fan-shaped white outer tail feathers that completely falsify the true silhouettes. There is no indication of scale in the drawings: you have to read the text on page 76 to realise that the Little Grebe is smaller, and not larger, than the divers; the Azure Tit is twice as large as the Subalpine Warbler on plate VII but no hint that this is wrong is offered. Plate IV illustrates a Surf Scoter and calls it a Velvet Scoter. There is no picture or note of the Thrush Nightingale, a common breeding bird in east central Europe, though both the Sooty Tern and the Terek Sandpiper reach the notes.

Nor is the text always much better than the illustrations. The Marsh Warbler is said to sing in March (p. 32), the Firecrest to be a "resident and partial migrant" in Great Britain (p. 46). The indications of size are often ludicrous—pity the poor beginner who examines a flock of ducks bearing in mind that the Tufted and Long-tailed are "about same size as Mallard" but the Red-breasted Merganser is "smaller than Mallard"! If instead he turns his attention to the waders he will have to work this out: the Knot is "about same size as thrush," the Dunlin is "about same size as Starling," the Sanderling is "about same size as lark," but the Purple Sandpiper is "smaller than thrush, larger than Dunlin."

There are already several fine books for young beginners in birdwatching. Some are calculated to arouse interest by their attractive presentation: others are meant to help field work by their accurate information. This is neither sufficiently attractive nor sufficiently accurate to count on either score.

T. C. SMOUT.

The Birds of the Isle of Lewis : 1963-1965. By Norman Elkins, 34 Kingsland Road, Alton, Hampshire. Unpublished duplicated typescript. Pp. (1) + 14.

A brief introduction is followed by a valuable personal checklist giving details of 140 species and based on two and a half years working from Stornoway. Copies have been placed in the library at 21 Regent Terrace.

A. T. M.

Letter

SIR,

Notes on the birds of Berneray, Mingulay and Pabbay

Having been stationed at the lighthouse on Berneray in 1956 and 1957 I was very interested in the paper by Diamond, Douthwaite and Indge (3: 397). A few notes on some of the changes on Berneray may be of interest:

Eider Four nests found in 1956 and three in 1957.

Oystercatcher Thirteen pairs in 1957, against 20 in 1964.

Snipe Two pairs in 1957, against one in 1964.

Arctic Tern Two pairs bred unsuccessfully in 1957, so the successful return of nine pairs in 1964 is interesting.

Rock Dove Only two nests were ever found by me.

House Martin A pair bred in 1956, but not in 1957, in the old broch near the lighthouse.

Hooded Crow Bred in both years in gully at southwest corner of island.

Starling Ten pairs were present in 1957, against two in 1964.

K. G. WALKER.

Request for Information

Sand Martin colonies. For six years the B.T.O. has been running a ringing enquiry on this species. Many thousands are ringed in England each autumn on passage and at roosts, and a number of these have been caught in Scotland in subsequent summers. Few ringers have worked the area between the Central Lowlands of Scotland and the Caledonian Canal. Chris Mead, 4 Beaconsfield Road, Tring, Hertfordshire, would therefore be very pleased to hear of any colonies of more than ten pairs recorded in the 1960s in this area, where he hopes to spend three weeks catching Sand Martins in June. He already has details of the colonies reported to Bob Dowsett last year.

The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

SUMMER EXCURSIONS

Important Notes

1. Members may attend excursions of any Branch in addition to those arranged by the Branch they attend regularly.
2. Where transport is by private cars please inform the organisers if you can bring a car and how many spare seats are available. All petrol expenses will be shared.
3. Please inform the organiser in good time if you are prevented from attending an excursion where special hire of boats or buses is involved. Failure to turn up may mean you are asked to pay for the place to avoid additional expense for the rest of the party.
4. Please bring picnic meals as indicated (in brackets) below.

ABERDEEN

For all excursions, please notify Miss F. Greig, 9 Ashgrove Road, Aberdeen (Tel. 40241, Ext. 342, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.), one week in advance.

- Thursday 21st April.** NIGG BAY. Meet Nigg bus terminus 5.45 p.m.
Sunday 15th May. BLACKHALL FOREST (subject to permission). Meet Blackhall main gate 10.30 a.m. (lunch and tea).
Sunday 12th June. DINNET LOCHS (lunch and tea).
Sunday 26th June. FOWLSHEUGH. Meet Crawton 11 a.m. (lunch).
Sunday 4th September. YTHAN ESTUARY AND LOCHS. Meet Culterty 10.30 a.m. (lunch).
Sunday 30th October. LOCH STRATHBEG. Leader: J. Edelsten (lunch).

AYR

- Saturday 23rd April.** CULZEAN CASTLE, MAYBOLE (by kind permission of the National Trust for Scotland). Leader: Dr M. E. Castle. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr, 2 p.m. or car park, Culzean Castle, 2.30 p.m. (tea).
Saturday 7th May. DRUMLANRIG CASTLE, THORNHILL, DUMFRIES (by kind permission of the Duke of Buccleuch). Leader: J. F. Young. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr, 1 p.m. or entrance to Queens Drive (near main road), Drumlanrig Castle, 2.30 p.m. (tea).
Saturday 18th June. BALLANTRAE AND NEW GALLOWAY. Leader: R. M. Ramage. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr, 10 a.m. (lunch and tea).
Saturday 30th July. MEIKLE ROSS, SOLWAY COAST, KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE. Leader to be arranged. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr, 9 a.m. (lunch and tea).
Saturday 27th August. FAIRLIE FLATS. Leader: S. I. Hunter. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr, 10.30 a.m. or on road immediately in front of Hunterston Nuclear Power Station 11.30 a.m. (lunch).
Saturday 17th September. ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE. Leader: G. A. Richards. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr, 9 a.m. or Timber Bridge, Aberlady Bay, 11.30 a.m. (lunch and tea).

DUMFRIES

- Sunday, 15th May.** KINMOUNT and WOODCOCKAIR, ANNAN (by kind permission of the Trustees of the late Mr C. Brook). Leader: R. T. Smith. Meet Ewart Library, Dumfries, 1.30 p.m.

Sunday 12th June. ST BEES HEAD. Leader: Ralph Stokoe. Meet Ewart Library, Dumfries, 9.30 a.m. (lunch and tea).

Sunday 10th July. BALCARRY CLIFFS. Leaders: John Young and A. D. Watson. Meet Ewart Library, Dumfries, 1.30 p.m.

Sunday 4th September. CAERLAVEROCK NATURE RESERVE (by kind permission of the Nature Conservancy). Meet Eastpark Farm, Caerlaverock, 2 p.m.

DUNDEE

Members who wish to participate should meet promptly at 9 a.m. at City Square, Dundee, after previously informing the Secretary, J. E. Forrest, 5 Glamis Place, Dundee (Tel. 66664), in order that transport may be arranged.

Sunday 3rd April. THE HERMITAGE, DUNKELD, and beyond.

Sunday 1st May. ST CYRUS.

Weekend 13th-16th May. WHITEBRIDGE, INVERNESS-SHIRE. Provisional booking has been made at Whitebridge Hotel for party of 10. Members should book direct with the hotel, notifying the Manager that they are attending the Branch excursion. Transport to be arranged.

Sunday in June. BASS ROCK (date to be notified later).

Sunday in July. DOTTEREL HUNT (date to be notified later).

Sunday 21st August. MONTROSE BASIN and SCURDYNESS.

Sunday 18th September. FIFE NESS and KILCONQUHAR LOCH.

EDINBURGH

Saturday 7th May. ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE. Leaders: K. S. Macgregor, W. K. Birrell and C. N. L. Cowper. Meet Timber Bridge 2.30 p.m. (tea).

Saturday 21st May. PENICUIK HOUSE GROUNDS (subject to permission of Sir John D. Clerk, Bart.) Leader: Tom Delaney. Meet Penicuik Post Office 2.30 p.m. (tea).

Sunday 5th June. THE HIRSEL, COLDSTREAM (by kind permission of Sir Alec Douglas Home). Leader at Hirsell: Major The Hon. Henry Douglas Home. Excursion by private cars. Applications by 28th May to J. A. Stewart, 109 Greenbank Crescent, Edinburgh 10 (Tel. MORningside 4210), stating number of seats available. Cars leave Edinburgh from square behind National Gallery 10.30 a.m. for Hirsell at 12 noon (lunch and tea).

Saturday 11th June. ISLE OF MAY (numbers limited to 12). Private cars. Applications by 4th June to Alastair Macdonald, Hadley Court, Haddington (Tel. 3204), stating number of seats required or available. Party meets and sails from West Pier, Anstruther, 11 a.m. prompt. Cost of boat about 12s 6d (lunch and tea).

Saturday 12th June. ISLE OF MAY. Arrangements as for 11th June.

Saturday 2nd July. BASS ROCK (by kind permission of Sir Hew Hamilton Dalrymple). Leader: I. V. Balfour Paul. Applications by 25th June to Miss Olive Thompson, Bruntsfield Hospital, Edinburgh. Boat leaves North Berwick Harbour 2.30 p.m. returning about 7 p.m. Tickets (approx. 10s) must be purchased at Harbour Office (tea). If weather is unsuitable for landing an alternative excursion from North Berwick will be arranged.

Saturday 17th September. ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE. Arrangements as for 7th May.

GLASGOW

Saturday 26th March. BARR MEADOWS. Leader: R. G. Caldow. Meet at Lochwinnoch Station Yard 2.30 p.m.

Sunday 5th June. LITTLE CUMBRAE (by kind permission of Little Cumbrae Estate Limited). Leader: D. J. Norden. Applications by 21st May to G. L. A. Patrick, 11 Knollpark Drive, Clarkston, Glasgow. Boat leaves Fairlie 12 noon (lunch and tea).

"The permission to visit Little Cumbrae is granted on condition that the Company does not warrant the safety of the premises and is under no obligation to protect you from injury or damage by reason of the state of the premises. By entering the said premises you will be deemed to have accepted these conditions."

Members participating in this excursion will be expected to sign an acknowledgment that they have read and agree to the said conditions.

Saturday 11th June. LOCH LOMOND NATURE RESERVE (by kind permission of the Nature Conservancy). Leader: T. D. H. Merric. Meet Gartocharn Post Office 2 p.m. (tea).

Wednesday 15th June. HORSE ISLAND (by kind permission of the R.S.P.B.). Leader: D. J. Norden. Applications by 21st May to G. L. A. Patrick (address above). Boat leaves Ardrossan Harbour 6.30 p.m. Fare approx 5s.

Saturday 25th June. HORSE ISLAND (by kind permission of the R.S.P.B.). Leader: R. G. Caldwell. Applications by 4th June to G. L. A. Patrick (address above). Boat leaves Ardrossan Harbour 2.30 p.m. Fare approx. 5s (tea).

INVERNESS

Private car transport and picnic flasks for all excursions. Applications to the Outings Secretary, Melvin Morrison, 83 Dochfour Drive, Inverness (Tel. 32666).

Saturday 7th May. MUNLOCHY BAY HERONRY. Meet Ness Bank Church, Riverside, Inverness, 2 p.m. or North Kessock 2.45 p.m.

Sunday 15th May. LOCH-AN-EILEAN, ROTHIEMURCHUS. Leader: Hon. Douglas N. Weir (organiser Speyside Predator Survey). Meet Station Square, Inverness, 10.30 a.m. prompt.

Sunday 5th June. CULTERTY FIELD STATION, NEWBURGH. Meet Station Square, Inverness, 9.30 a.m. prompt.

Saturday 25th June. BUNCHREW WOODS and BEAULY FIRTH (Canada Geese). Meet at Ness Bank Church 2 p.m.

ST ANDREWS

Applications, not later than one week before each excursion, to Miss M. M. Spires, 2 Howard Place, St Andrews (Tel. 852).

Saturday 21st May. KILCONQUHAR LOCH (by kind permission of Nairn Estates). Meet North Lodge 2.30 p.m. (tea).

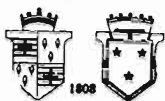
Saturday 28th May. DUNBOG and LINDORES. Cars leave St Andrews Bus Station 2 p.m. (tea).

Sunday 12th June. ST SERF'S ISLAND (subject to permission of Kinross Estates). Boats leave the Sluices, Scotlandwell, 11 a.m. (lunch and tea).

Saturday, 18th June. TENTSMUIR. Cars leave Bus Station 2 p.m. (tea).

GLASGOW BRANCH ANNUAL DINNER

The Glasgow Branch Annual Dinner will be held in the Grosvenor Restaurant, Gordon Street, Glasgow C.1, on Thursday 28th April at 7.30 for 8 p.m. Tickets, 27s 6d, on sale from the Secretary, Glasgow Branch.



SUTHERLAND ARMS HOTEL

GOLSPIE
SUTHERLAND
SCOTLAND

Telephone : Golspie 216

Situated on the main North Road near the sea, Golspie offers invigorating open air holidays to all.

In addition to its unique golf course, it has fine loch fishings, sea bathing, tennis, bowls, hill climbing, unrivalled scenery, including inexhaustible subjects for the field sketcher and artist and is an ornithologist's paradise. It is, indeed, impossible to find elsewhere so many natural amenities in so small a compass.

The B.T.O. Regional Representative, who lives in the village, will be pleased to offer local advice regarding the astonishing diversity of bird life in the vicinity and to receive lists of birds from visitors.

The Hotel is fully modern, but retains its old world charm of other days, and enjoys a wide renown for its comfort and fine cuisine. Including birdwatching, will

Fully descriptive brochures, gladly be forwarded on request.

Proprietor, Mrs F. HEXLEY

Central Heating
A.A. R.A.C. R.S.A.C.
GARAGE AND
LOCK-UPS AVAILABLE



Cruise
to a
bird-watching
holiday in

ORKNEY & SHETLAND

from LEITH & ABERDEEN

Study, at close hand, an extraordinary variety of birds which never come south. Unforgettable scenery. Modern ships. Good food. Comfortable hotels. Glorious holidays. Send for **FREE** 48-page book for all details to:



NORTH OF SCOTLAND, ORKNEY
& SHETLAND SHIPPING CO LTD
Dept. 14, Matthews' Quay,
Aberdeen.

Fair Isle

Fair Isle Bird Observatory welcomes bird watchers (beginners or experts) and island lovers. Fair Isle offers large and accessible seabird colonies, unique variety and numbers of bird migrants, and magnificent cliff scenery.

Prospectus from

ROY H. DENNIS

Bird Observatory

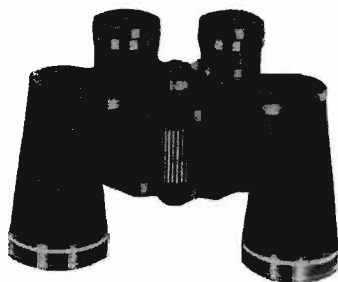
FAIR ISLE - SHETLAND

Telephone 8

EITHER WAY YOU NEED A SWIFT® BINOCULAR



AUDUBON - FOR A CLOSE LOOK



Field of view 445 feet at 1000 yards. Focus down to 12 feet. Designed to the suggested specifications of an internationally known group of ornithologists, this is one of the finest nature-study binoculars available.

The 'AUDUBON' has all the unique features of the SWIFT 'BCF' range.

- * Straw-coloured 'Ve-coated' lenses for 'white image.'
- * Retractable eyecups for spectacle wearers.
- * Long cylindrical focus wheel.
- * Tripod adaptor built into the base of the centre spindle.
- * Top quality hide Ve-slot case.

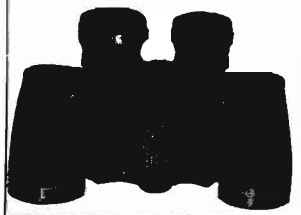
Cat. 6244B. Retail price including P.T. and case **£36**



PANORAMIC - FOR A WIDE VIEW

Although not specifically designed for bird-watching, the fantastically wide field of view (578 ft. in 1000 yds.) together with its shape and weight, make this the glass for the smaller hand. It embodies all the special features of the Audubon, except the short-focus.

Cat. 6044B. Price including finest quality cowhide case and P.T. **£34, 10/-**



Please send me leaflet giving details of the full range of SWIFT binoculars.

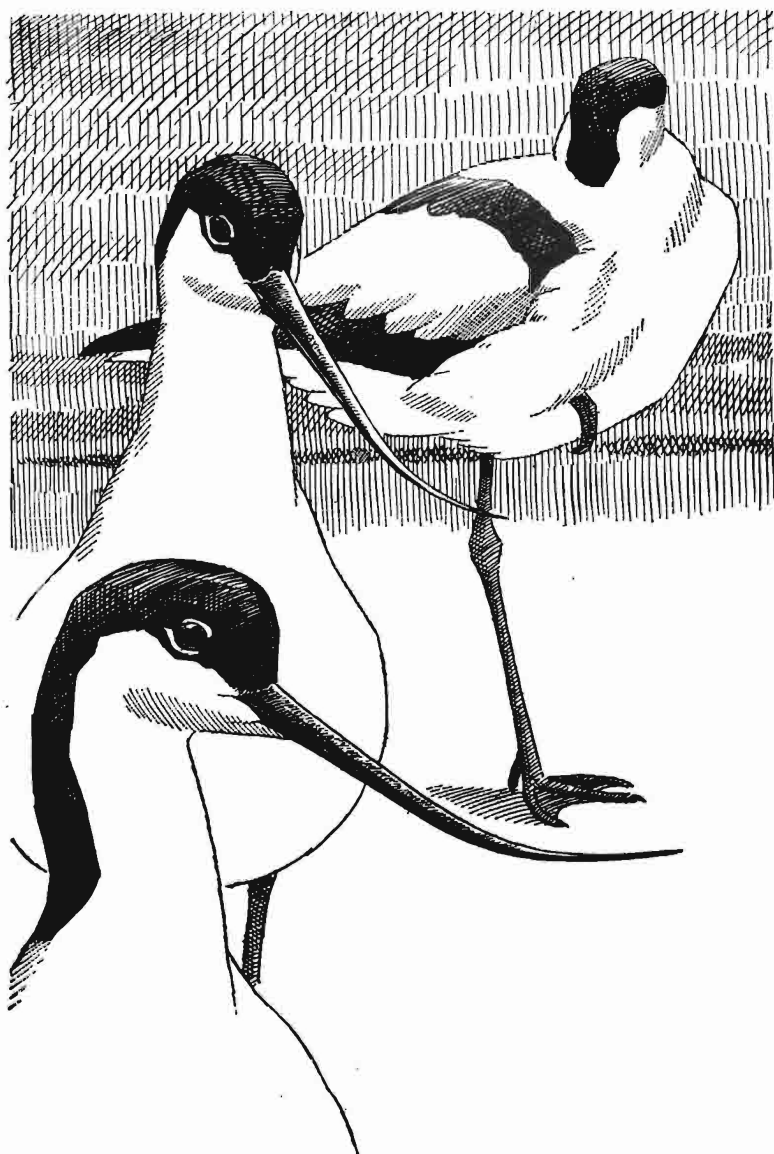
NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

PYSER BRITEX (SWIFT) LTD.
Fircroft Way, Edenbridge, Kent
Edenbridge 2434 (STD OSE 271) SB 103

 **PYSER-BRITEX (SWIFT) LTD**
SOLE IMPORTERS OF SWIFT INSTRUMENTS

FIRCROFT WAY, EDENBRIDGE, KENT. Edenbridge 2434 (STD Code OSE 271)

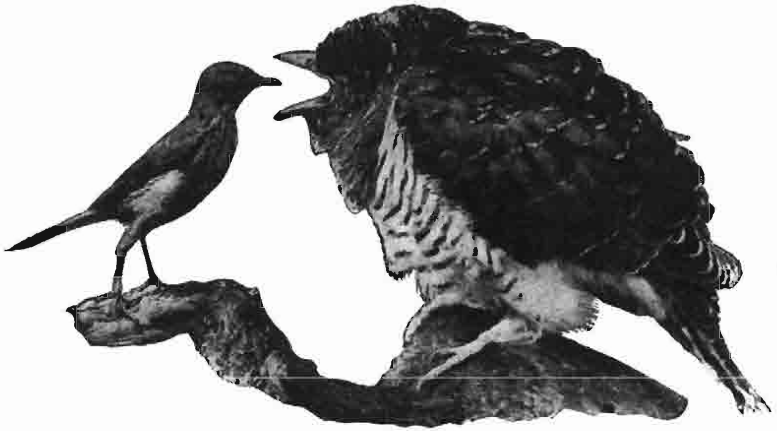


*to 'protect
and conserve'*

RSPB

THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS
21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7

Tel. WAVErley 6042



it's a big job!

Faced with the enormous task of satisfying the appetite of baby Cuckoos which can be three times larger than themselves, Meadow Pipits and many other small birds go about it bravely, and indeed make an excellent job of it.

An even greater task is the one cheerfully undertaken by Haith's who, it is estimated, feed more than a million birds each day. We can offer an unrivalled range of foods and seeds to satisfy the requirements of birds of all species, and to please even the most demanding of ornithologists.

Just a few of our products are listed here, but a comprehensive list will gladly be sent on request.

- WILD BIRD FOOD** (contains only cultivated seeds—no wild seed used) 3½ lb 6/-, 7 lb 8/6, 14 lb 14/-, 28 lb 19/6, 56 lb 34/-, cwt 65/-
- FOOD FOR TIT FAMILY** 3½ lb 8/-, 7 lb 12/6, 14 lb 22/6, 28 lb 35/9, 56 lb 67/-, cwt 130/-
- SONGSTER FOOD** for Blackbirds, etc., 3½ lb 6/9, 7 lb 9/9, 14 lb 17/-, 28 lb 25/6, 56 lb 46/-, cwt 88/-
- SUNFLOWER SEEDS** (mixed) 3½ lb 7/3, 7 lb 11/-, 14 lb 19/9, 28 lb 31/6, 56 lb 57/-, cwt 110/-
- MONKEY NUTS IN SHELL** (for bird feeding) 3½ lb 9/-, 7 lb 14/9, 14 lb 26/-, 28 lb 42/9, 56 lb 82/-, cwt 160/-
- PEANUT KERNELS** (for bird feeding) 3½ lb 8/-, 7 lb 12/6, 14 lb 22/6, 28 lb 35/9, 56 lb 67/-, cwt 130/-
- WALNUT KERNELS BROKEN** (for bird feeding) 3½ lb 7/3, 7 lb 10/9, 14 lb 17/6, 28 lb 27/9, 54 lb cases 47/-

ALL POST OR CARRIAGE PAID

JOHN E. HAITH LTD.

Dept. S.B., PARK STREET, CLEETHORPES

The Scottish Ornithologists' Club Tie

Illustrated is the official Club Tie, of which R. W. Forsyth's are the sole suppliers. The 'Terylene' tie is in blue, green or maroon, with the bird motif in silver.



Forsyth's also provide warm clothing for bird watchers: gloves, scarves, underwear, shoes, caps, weatherproof trousers, jerkins, raincoats and overcoats.



R. W. FORSYTH LTD. PRINCES STREET EDINBURGH Waverley 3335 & AT GLASGOW

FAIR ISLE and its birds

KENNETH WILLIAMSON

The position of Fair Isle, starkly isolated between the North sea and the Atlantic ocean, makes it a focal point for migrating birds. Kenneth Williamson, the first director of the Fair Isle Observatory, writes this account of the eight years he spent there, during which time the station became internationally famous for its contributions to ornithological knowledge. This book is largely concerned with the author's researches into bird migration which formed the main part of his work on the island. A valuable feature of the book is the check list of the birds of Fair Isle contributed by Peter Davies.

30s

OLIVER & BOYD

A SELECTION OF BINOCULARS AND TELESCOPES SPECIALLY RECOMMENDED BY MR FRANK

The new LEITZ TRINOVID is indisputably the binocular of the century. It is of revolutionary design and performance, and the 10 x 40 model, which we particularly like, is extremely light and wonderfully compact. Price with soft leather case is £81.14.2. Illustrated descriptive leaflet on request or, better still, try them without obligation.

A SPECIALIST BINOCULAR FOR THE BIRD WATCHER. The Swift 'AUDUBON' 8.5 x 44 designed to the specification of the world-renowned Audubon Society of America. Unusually wide field of 445 ft. at 1000 yards. Extra close focusing of down to 12 ft. enables feeding activities etc., to be watched as from 18". Included amongst other features are retractable eyecups for spectacle users, built-in Adaptor to suit any camera tripod. This outstanding binocular has easy positive focusing by cylindrical control, weighs 3.84 oz. and the height closed is 6 3/4". Price with fine leather case, £36.

SWIFT BINOCULARS. Good quality instruments which embrace many interesting features including retractable eyecups for spectacle wearers, tripod bush etc. Recommended models are:

8 x 30 Apollo	£16.18.6
7 x 35 Triton	£18. 0.0
8 x 40 Saratoga	£19.19.0
10 x 50 Newport	£25. 0.0
7-12 x 40 Zoom	£30.10.0



Any instrument willingly sent on approval.



SEND FOR NEW ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE
CHARLES FRANK LTD.
 67-75 Saltmarket Glasgow C1.
 Phone. BELL 2106/7 Est. 1907

Britain's greatest stocks of New, Used and Ex-Govt. Binoculars, Telescopes and Navigational Equipment.

NIPOLE binoculars from Japan are made to our specification and are imported exclusively by us. Performance is excellent and we have sufficient faith in them to guarantee them for five years. The 10 x 50 costs £15 10s 0d and the 8 x 50 £10 19s 6d (both with case).

In EX-GOVERNMENT binoculars, the following deserve special mention:

7 x 50 CANADIAN NAVAL (made under licence to Bausch & Lomb). Ideal for wild-fowling. Probable cost today about £60. Price £24.

7 x 42 BARR & STROUD. The most desirable of the Barr & Stroud Naval glasses and more compact than the older 7 x 50 model. Cost about £50. Price £21.

General purpose 5 x 30 binoculars with waterproof web case. £7 15 0 to £10 15 0, according to condition.

We have a host of portable telescopes but the NICKEL SUPRA is worthy of special mention. This fine portable instrument closes down to 12". Power can be smoothly zoomed from 15x to 60x. Bushed for camera tripod. £39. 8. 0.

Accredited agents for Ross, Barr & Stroud, Wray and Zeiss (both East & West Zones)