

SCOTTISH BIRDS



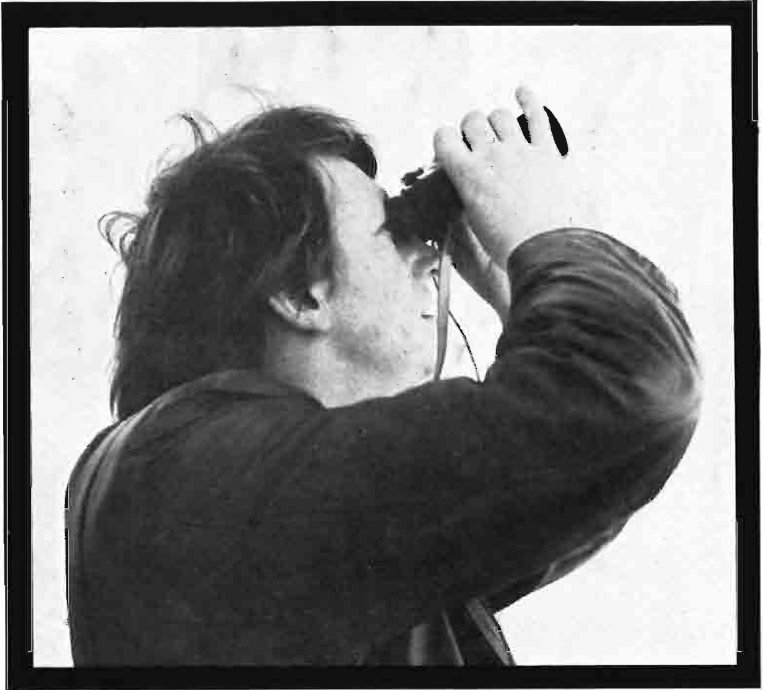
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Volume 7 No. 2

Summer 1972

Edited by Tom Delaney, assisted by D. G. Andrew

Editorial

People pollution? The past two decades have seen considerable expansion of popular interest in birds. Previously very much a minority pursuit, birdwatching now appeals to a wide public, whose interest ranges from passing to passionate. Over the same period there has been a great increase in leisure and mobility, while improvements in communication have made accessible places that were formerly isolated and seldom visited. In Scotland in recent years considerable growth has been seen in the number of tourists going to even the remotest parts, often visiting bird reserves and other sites of special ornithological interest.

This trend seems likely to continue; it is part of the wider growth of interest in wildlife and outdoor activities and, in so far as it is a sign of interest in conservation, is to be welcomed. In some places, however, the influx of birdwatchers and other visitors and the consequent disturbance they cause represent a significant pressure on the birds they come to see. This is a factor that increasingly is having to be taken into account in conservation planning. New reserves are required at a number of sites in Scotland to protect vulnerable species from determined enthusiasts: in other places the provision, away from the site, of alternative attractions such as nature trails or picnic places should be considered as a means of absorbing those whose interest in the birds may only be marginal. Publicity and education are, of course, important factors in generating interest, and more sophisticated policies may help in controlling the pressure of people on particularly vulnerable localities.

In recognizing this problem serious field ornithologists too, both professional and amateur, working on reserves and elsewhere, should nowadays consider even more carefully the pressures their studies and techniques may impose on their subjects and, especially in the case of vulnerable species, whether the value of the information sought justifies any disturbance involved in obtaining it.

After the Atlas. The fifth and last season of fieldwork for the BTO Atlas project is drawing to a close, and many observers

will already have returned their final record cards. At the beginning some birdwatchers viewed the prospect of concentrating for five years on the birds of a 10-kilometre square with less than total enthusiasm. As it has turned out, however, it seems evident that most observers, apart from making their contribution to the project, have also got a lot of enjoyment and value out of their Atlas fieldwork, gaining a detailed knowledge of the birds in their squares and often producing data that could only have been obtained by such continuous and concentrated study.

The Atlas seems to have drawn many observers into organized fieldwork for the first time and indeed seems to have generated quite an appetite for such work. This seems largely because the project had a clearly worthwhile and attainable objective, was well planned and well organised.

It is to be hoped that the impetus and keenness thus created will not be lost for want of suitable future projects both national and local that will catch the interest and imagination of this network of observers.

Aspects of seabird movement off northeast Scotland

N. ELKINS and M. R. WILLIAMS

Regular seawatching was carried out at Rattray Head, Aberdeenshire, from summer 1968 to summer 1971, with occasional observations from Buchan Ness, some ten miles to the south. A summary of the results up to February 1970 has been published elsewhere (Elkins & Williams 1970); the present paper provides a more complete picture of the three years work, and gives some of the more interesting data that have come to light since the earlier summary. The status is given for each species mentioned, and diurnal variation in movement, and weather effects are discussed for the majority of species. Although some 700 hours of watching were achieved (mainly by MRW), the data are still too limited for definite conclusions, and those put forward here are only tentative. Details of all counts have been deposited with the Seabird Group.

Divers

Divers were mainly winter visitors and passage migrants, although a few birds were seen in summer. Red-throated Diver was by far the commonest species, with some movements exceeding 50 birds per hour. Great Northern Divers were less common, usually fewer than 20 per hour. Only occasional Black-throated Divers occurred. During the period the largest autumn passage south was in 1968, from the end of August to

mid October, with only very small numbers in later years. Divers were recorded wintering in the area in varying numbers, and there were occasional sizeable movements associated with bad weather. The spring passage north, from April to early May, was small in 1969 and 1971, but in 1970 both the commoner species were more frequent, with movements of up to 40 birds per hour.

During autumn and winter both Red-throated and Great Northern Divers were observed to move mainly in the morning, from dawn to 1200-1300 hrs GMT. In spring, passage was confined to the period between 0600 and 0730 hrs GMT, with a small peak in early afternoon.

During both spring and autumn passage birds had a strong tendency to move only when there were headwinds. Perhaps this suggests that as they are weak fliers, it is necessary for them to obtain as much lift as possible when making long flights.

Shearwaters

All four regular British shearwaters were recorded, with Manx and Sooty being most common. A few Great and Cory's Shearwaters occurred in late summer and autumn.

In spring Manx Shearwaters were observed from mid April to mid May, generally up to 60 per hour, but in 1971 none was seen until 18th May. Although no spring movement occurred in 1971, the summer produced many more birds than in previous years, with 290 in two hours on 22nd June, far more than the 15 to 20 per hour that had occurred in other Junes (see also Fulmar).

Both Manx and Sooty Shearwaters were common in autumn, though not necessarily at the same period. Manx occurred mainly from mid July to the end of August, with numbers up to 70 per hour, but Sooty Shearwaters were later, from the end of August to mid October, with numbers no higher than 45 per hour. As late as November there were records of all four species, and on 2nd November 1970 a movement south occurred of four Great, two Cory's and one Sooty, with one Manx Shearwater moving north.

Shearwater movements, except for a tiny minority, were northerly at all seasons. Much has already been written about the direction of shearwater movement in the North Sea (Phillips 1963, Oliver 1971), and it would appear that in autumn, at any rate, birds are moving north to pass round the north of Scotland. However, a probable passage of Sooties southwest through the Straits of Dover in autumn has been described by Oliver (1971), and, since this occurs much later than the passage in northeast Scotland, it may indicate that birds reaching

the southern North Sea may not return north but take the short cut into the English Channel.

Although Phillips and Lee (1966) noted no regular diurnal variation of numbers of Manx Shearwaters during two autumns off western Ireland, definite dawn and dusk movements of both Manx and Sooty occurred off northeast Scotland at all seasons. Few birds moved at all between 0800 and 1800 hrs GMT, except for a small afternoon peak between 1200 and 1530 hrs GMT.

Table 1. Number of counts of passage of selected species at Rattray Head, Aberdeenshire 1968-1971, according to weather conditions

	N-NW winds	Onshore winds (NE-S)	Offshore winds (S-NW)	Anticyclonic light or variable winds	Counts tabulated
Shearwaters	39	12	4	0	All seasons 10+ per hour
Gannet	8	6	3	16	All seasons 100+ per hour
Cormorant	0	0	1	9	Spring & autumn passage 50+ per hour
Kittiwake	20	23	35	74	All seasons 250+ per hour
Terns	0	1	6	17	Autumn passage 50+ per hour

Two distinct weather situations appeared to produce shearwater movement: moderate to strong north to northwest winds, often in clearing weather to the rear of a front or depression; and onshore winds between northeast and southeast associated with bad weather, when birds appeared to be drifted near the coast (see table 1). Numbers usually dropped with a decrease of wind. The former situation has been described elsewhere as being the most common weather to precipitate movement, and in northeast Scotland probably sweeps birds south into the North Sea. An example of this occurred in August 1970: Sooty Shearwaters peaked at Fair Isle on 17th, with up to 200 recorded; a vigorous depression moved east into the North Sea on that date, bringing strong north to northwest winds; large movements north began at Rattray Head on 18th, and off northwest Scotland birds were also noted moving west on 23rd (Dennis 1971).

Phillips & Lee found that in August the peak density of Manx Shearwaters also occurred in anticyclonic conditions. At Rattray Head this was most uncommon. Anticyclonic weather, although fine, invariably gave light or variable winds, and it was usually then that passage ceased almost entirely.

Fulmar

Fulmars occurred all the year round, with much passage recorded in spring from early March to early May, though mostly from mid April, and in autumn from early August to mid September. Most passage was northerly, with up to 1200-1500 per hour in both seasons. There were small numbers in winter, except for some larger movements probably associated with bad weather. Variable numbers passed in summer.

➤ A sudden drop in passage associated with the autumnal exit occurred in mid September in both 1968 and 1969; there are insufficient data to determine whether this phenomenon recurred in 1970. A pre-laying exodus was observed in 1970, with no birds seen at all between 11th and 16th May, but with passages of over 100 per hour immediately before and after this period. In 1969 there was a lack of data for this period, and in 1971 only a brief decrease in numbers was seen. Dunnet *et. al.* (1963) showed that on Eynhallow, Orkney, in 1960-62 Fulmars decreased in numbers on the cliffs in early May. They reached a minimum between 11th and 14th and then increased rapidly to a peak by the last week of May.

Although summer movements were usually rather small, no more than 60 to 80 per hour, the second half of June 1971 produced far larger movements of up to 1600 per hour, and these were in conjunction with large Manx Shearwater passages. The weather situations that produced Shearwater passage appeared to stimulate Fulmar movement, and indeed the June movement noted above occurred in fresh north to northwest winds behind two consecutive active depressions. One assumes therefore that these were not local birds but were from more northerly colonies (as the Manx Shearwaters most certainly must have been) and were returning north after having been drifted south while feeding.

A sudden cessation of movement was noticed at times at the onset of heavy rain.

In spring and autumn, morning movements predominated, mostly northward, with little towards the south; more passage after midday was noted in spring than in autumn. Most of the small movements in winter were southward between 0830 and 1215 hrs GMT, and Dott (1968) found that on the East Aberdeenshire cliffs at this time of the year maximum numbers of Fulmars occurred in the morning.

Gannet

Autumn passage of Gannets occurred from the end of August to the end of November, though mainly in October, and was mostly northward. In 1968, with over 200 birds per hour on occasions, this passage was far larger and more pro-

tracted than in 1969 or 1970, when there were very few large movements. Only small numbers, generally fewer than 75 per hour, occurred from December to mid January. A passage south was recorded in late January and early February, mainly of small numbers. There were variable, sometimes sizeable, movements after this, but in May and June there was little movement.

Little marked diurnal variation was noted. In autumn birds moved freely north throughout the day, with a peak around midday. Those moving south were fewer and moved mainly at dawn and in early afternoon. Most winter movement was in the morning. Movement in spring, as in autumn, was spread throughout the day. The lack of birds in summer may indicate that few breeders reach here from the nearest colony, 110 miles to the south, at the Bass Rock, though Nelson (1964) mentioned that they may travel up to 400 miles from the colony in the breeding season. He also stated that Gannets did not fly at night, and indeed a few birds have been recorded roosting on the lighthouse at Rattray Head.

Numbers seemed to be higher in poor visibility, signifying coasting. Nelson suggested that Gannets navigate by landmarks. As in several other species, Gannets seemed to move more in fine weather (see table 1).

Cormorant and Shag

Both species were regular, and various movements were recorded in autumn, winter and spring. Little passage of either was seen in summer. Shag movements have been described in detail elsewhere (Elkins & Williams 1971 and in press), and it is enough to say here that considerable feeding movements were recorded in winter, with some northward passage in spring.

Cormorants showed marked passage north in spring, from March to early April, and south in September, occasionally from mid August. Spring passage was variable, with up to 200 per hour in 1969. Birds often flew over the dunes at Rattray Head, however, and were not counted from the lighthouse; in particular, large numbers were noted moving north over the dunes between 8th March and 6th April 1970.

In 1970 autumn passage of Cormorants occurred earlier than in the previous two years, with numbers rising to over 150 per hour in both 1968 and 1970. In winter, especially early winter, feeding movements occurred of Cormorants and Shags together, with numbers of each often over 100 per hour, but few such movements occurred in winter 1970/71.

From ringing recoveries Coulson and Brazendale (1968) have shown that winter birds in northeast Scotland come from

colonies in both Orkney and Wigtownshire. Orkney birds, however, are distributed south to the Forth while those from Wigtownshire reach the edge of their range in north Aberdeenshire. Thus regular passage past Rattray Head would consist of birds from Orkney, and probably Shetland, as indeed direction of movement showed.

Passage in spring and autumn always occurred in fine anti-cyclonic weather, generally in the morning (see table 1). Feeding movements in winter were northward in the morning and southward in the afternoon. Some birds must roost on the cliffs to the south, and flocks regularly occur on the River Ythan and also outside Aberdeen harbour, with up to 120 at the latter point.

Sea ducks

Long-tailed Ducks were regular in winter in small numbers, usually arriving in October and departing in April. They were commoner in the winter of 1970/71, when a flock of 611 was present on 24th November.

Scoter movements were regular in autumn, winter and spring, Common Scoter being the more frequent. Flocks of scoters spend both winter and summer off east Scotland, and the irregularity of the movements was probably due to feeding parties associated with these flocks. Some diurnal variation in movement was noted in autumn and winter, with most of the passage being between dawn and 1000-1200 hrs GMT.

Skuas

Pomarine Skuas occasionally occurred in autumn, and one or two Long-tailed Skuas were recorded in summer. Arctic and Great Skuas were mainly spring- and autumn-passage migrants with a few in summer. Spring passage occurred from mid April to mid May, with up to four of each per hour, but none was seen in 1971 until June. This was unusual, especially as a large skua passage was recorded off the west coast in mid May (Bonham 1971). Autumn passage lasted longer, from mid May to September, and was heavier, with up to 20-30 of each per hour. Great Skuas tended to move later than Arctic Skuas.

Whereas Great Skuas moved predominantly north at all seasons, Arctic Skuas moved north in spring, and mainly south in autumn. In autumn 1970, however, more Arctic Skuas were seen moving north than south. Although ringing recoveries show that this species moves south through the North Sea (Williamson 1965), it may be that the birds moving north were heading for tern feeding grounds where food would be abundant. Indeed the cessation of the main passage north in August 1970 (about 24th), shows a close correlation with the onset of the main tern passage south on 26th.

The northward movement of Great Skuas at both seasons is difficult to explain. Northwest passage in autumn has also been noted by Dennis (1970), who recorded large numbers passing Fair Isle in mid September 1969, although Thomson (1966) showed that dispersal of first-year Shetland birds occurs south through the North Sea and English Channel.

It is difficult to correlate any Skua passage with weather, although in August 1970 there were northward movements of Great Skuas associated with a return passage of shearwaters forced south by bad weather.

Kittiwake

Large movements of Kittiwakes occurred throughout the year, except from early December to mid February, but with no definite pattern.

The largest movements of all were in autumn, when numbers reached 25000-30000 per hour. At all other times of the year, except mid winter, movements over 1000 per hour were quite common.

A general diurnal rhythm was noted, showing peak movements throughout the year from dawn to mid morning, and again in the afternoon, with a small peak from 1800 to 1900 hrs GMT, especially in spring. Little pattern in the variation of direction with time of day was observed, and no doubt birds passing during the breeding season were from several different colonies. There are large colonies on all the coasts of northeast Scotland. There was some correlation in April and May with Myres' (1963) observations in Shetland, where he found movements north in the evening, away from the colony, and a southward return in the morning.

The main return to colonies in early spring, the departure in early autumn and the larger movements in summer occurred in quiet, anticyclonic weather (see table 1). Large movements other than these, and outside the breeding season, often occurred in strong to gale-force winds, and passage on these occasions was mainly north. However, these winds were not always onshore, and the birds may have been moving to more sheltered feeding areas, perhaps in the Moray Firth, rather than being merely wind-drifted. Birds were recorded on occasions moving, presumably by coasting, during dense fog.

Terns

Common, Arctic and Sandwich Terns were all regular passage migrants, with small local breeding populations of the first two species, which, however, were not specifically separated during counts.

Spring passage lasted from mid April to mid May, mainly northward with numbers up to 60-70 per hour. In 1971, however, all species were noted moving south from 3rd May to

12th May, many counts giving over 100 per hour. This movement probably comprised birds returning from unsuitable breeding conditions in colonies further north, and indeed a colony at the mouth of the Findhorn in Morayshire was abandoned at this time, with a consequent increase in the numbers of birds at the Forvie colonies (W. R. P. Bourne pers. comm.).

Only small numbers were observed in mid summer, with autumn passage south beginning in mid August and generally finishing by mid September. All species were much less common in autumn 1969 than in 1968 or 1970. Occasional northward movements were also noted in autumn, a few of which were fairly large; off Arbroath on 16th August 1970 M. Nicoll (pers. comm.) saw 400-500 terns move north in two and a half hours. These movements may have involved the pre-migratory dispersal of young birds as noted by Thomson (1943) and Langham (1971).

A marked diurnal variation of passage was noticed in autumn, with movement taking place mainly at dawn and dusk, with little between 0800 and 1700 hrs GMT; birds were also heard passing at night. These dawn and dusk movements, also noted in shearwaters, suggest that much of the migration of these species may be nocturnal, whereas Gannets rarely move at night and thus have a different diurnal variation.

The larger tern movements in autumn invariably began in anticyclonic weather (see table 1), and birds were recorded following the coast in dense fog, even at night, when they were presumably above the fog.

Auks

Razorbill and Guillemot were by far the commonest auks but were not specifically separated during counts; Puffins passed in small numbers.

The first two species moved in variable, sometimes substantial, numbers throughout the year, except from early August to early October, when they were no doubt well out to sea. In late autumn and winter northerly passage predominated, with some large, probably bad-weather, movements of over 2000 per hour. In spring numbers were again high, except in 1971, when an isolated peak of 145 south in half an hour was the only major movement. In summer regular and sometimes large movements were observed, which ended quickly as birds left their colonies in late July.

Puffin movements followed this general trend, but numbers were smaller, and there were long periods with none. This suggests that, although several colonies exist in eastern Scotland, their occupants fly further out to sea than the commoner auks, and are therefore not recorded.

The larger auk movements in summer and autumn were confined to the period around dawn and the evening. Between October and March most passage occurred in the morning, whereas in spring it continued throughout the day.

Devlin (1966) mentioned that in spring, good movements of auks occurred in fine anticyclonic conditions, with smaller numbers in poor weather. However in northeast Scotland it was found that the largest auk movements in spring were associated with northerly winds, and there was little movement in fine weather. Over the whole year there was a strong tendency for auks to fly in headwinds, perhaps for the same reason as that suggested for divers, for auks too are inefficient fliers. In poor weather associated with variable winds, for example near troughs and depressions, no preferred direction of flight was noted, and movements were rather confused.

In the winter half of the year Black Guillemot and Little Auk occurred, mostly singly. In January and early February 1970, however, Little Auks appeared in large numbers and associated with other auks. Unfortunately, their appearance coincided with severe oil pollution, and many were found dead on beaches south of the area (Greenwood *et. al.* 1971). It is interesting to note that there were higher numbers of Little Auks than normal in the vicinity of Fair Isle in November and December 1969 (Dennis 1970).

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the many observers who helped by sending us notes from other parts of east Scotland, especially J. A. Love and M. Nicoll, and hope that this paper will stimulate further seawatching activity along the east coast.

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Isle of May Bird Observatory and Field Station Report for 1971

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

The Observatory was manned for a total of 184 days between 1st April and 8th November 1971. The number of observer-nights was 734. Coverage of spring migration was complete apart from two short gaps, and the Observatory was almost continuously manned throughout the summer and into the autumn, the only gap in cover being a major one in mid October. There was a cold spell in late spring, and migration began early and continued late. Winds were easterly for much of April, producing a good variety of migrants, especially in early and late April and early May. Other good spells were 7th-8th, 16th, 21st-22nd May and best of all 24th-26th May. Autumn migration began promptly (on a small scale) in early August, and the best spells were late August, 6th-10th and 26th-27th September, and early October. There was one new species for the island, a Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* on 9th-10th September. Other highlights were a Scarlet Grosbeak, a Firecrest and a Tawny Pipit, all recorded in September. There were very few Chaffinches, no Sedge Warblers and only 3 Spotted Flycatchers all autumn.

Spring

Observers were on the island from 1st to 12th April, 20th April to 5th May and from 8th May onwards.

April The month started well, with easterly winds for the first nine days. Observers reaching the island on the 1st found a good mixture of migrants awaiting them—about 20 Blackbirds, 12 Fieldfares, a few Skylarks, Siskins, Goldcrests, Song Thrushes, a Woodcock, a Wheatear and a Chiffchaff. This mixture set the scene for the next few days, with a few varia-

tions. Four Goldfinches arrived on the 2nd along with a few Meadow Pipits and another Wheatear. On the 3rd, 9 Golden Plovers were seen flying northwest, and a Red-throated Diver flying south. Other new arrivals were a Dunlin and an *alba* Wagtail.

Visibility deteriorated on the 4th, and some migrants departed, to be replaced by 4 Shelducks, a Linnet, a Chaffinch and a few Wrens and Robins. Similar conditions the next morning produced a better selection: 50 Skylarks, a Wheatear, the first Mistle Thrush, a Yellowhammer, a Water Rail and a Redwing, followed after lunch by a Woodcock, 4 Great Grey Shrikes, 5 Reed Buntings, the first Ring Ouzel, 2 Bramblings, a Jack Snipe, a Northern Bullfinch, 60 Robins, 20 Dunnocks and 34 Twites. Song Thrushes reached a peak of 50. This movement continued throughout the morning of the 6th (which was foggy), producing 3 more Great Grey Shrikes, 4 Mistle Thrushes, a peak of 100 Robins, 20 more Dunnocks, a White Wagtail, 12 Bramblings and a Black Redstart. On the 7th the wind backed to the north briefly before returning to the east and bringing some new arrivals: 8 Snipe, a Woodcock, 30 Fieldfares and 20 Redwings, a few Wheatears and Ring Ouzels. Blackbirds reached a peak of 30. Most of the Twites, Robins and Dunnocks left that day.

The weather over the next few days remained easterly but was calmer, and fewer migrants were seen. Many of the thrushes moved on, and a small passage of Common Gulls, Black-headed Gulls and Meadow Pipits was noted. A rare visitor from the mainland was a male House Sparrow on the 8th. A Sandwich Tern seen on the 9th was the first tern, but there was very little movement thereafter (only small parties of Meadow Pipits, Blackbirds, Linnets and Wheatears). After a gap in observations and a spell of west winds, the last week of the month saw renewed activity, with cold, stormy northeasterly weather until the 27th; species recorded were mainly Wheatears (30 on the 21st and 22nd), Blackbirds, Song Thrushes, Bramblings (25 on the 22nd), Fieldfares (30 on the 23rd) and Redwings (20 on the 24th). Two Chiffchaffs arrived on the 22nd, the first Willow Warblers and Redstarts (10) on the 23rd. Ten Robins, 15 Dunnocks and the first Blackcaps (10) were seen on the 24th.

The wind dropped a bit on the 25th, there was some movement of Fieldfares and warblers, and also the first Pied Flycatchers, a Wryneck and a Lesser Redpoll. The wind backed to northerly next day, and a few more leaf warblers came in, along with the first two Whinchats, and 5 Twites. Some of these migrants remained on the island during the last few days of the month, but the only new arrivals worth noting were a Goldcrest on the 27th and a Grasshopper Warbler on the 28th.

May The first few days had very variable weather, but with enough east winds on most days to produce some bird visitors. The month started well with the first two Swallows and Sand Martins, a *flava* Wagtail, and no fewer than 4 Red-throated Divers on the 1st. Early next morning a marked influx of Wheatears contained several of the Greenland race, and a Whimbrel, a Redpoll and a Collared Dove were seen. Later on the 2nd the only Osprey of the year was seen, and Meadow Pipit numbers built up to 50: later still 2 more Collared Doves and 2 Turtle Doves arrived. On the 3rd were seen another *flava* Wagtail, 2 Tree Pipits, a Corn Bunting and a few more warblers (including the first Sedge Warbler and Whitethroat). On the 4th it was sunny, with sea mist and mainly east winds, and there were two influxes of warblers (overnight and late afternoon), giving totals of 3 Blackcaps, the first Garden Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat, 45 Willow Warblers, as well as 9 Swallows, the first House Martin, 4 Whinchats, the first Spotted Flycatcher, 2 Greenfinches and 6 Redpolls. Most of these birds had gone by next morning and were replaced by a Yellow Wagtail and a Grasshopper Warbler.

Observers returning to the island on 8th May after a short gap found a fresh influx of warblers (4 Sedge, 30 Willow, 3 Chiffchaff, 5 Whitethroats, 1 Blackcap), a few Whinchats, Redstarts and Tree Sparrows, a Sparrowhawk and a Common Sandpiper. The wind returned to the west next day, and most migrants moved on. There was however a small passage of martins, buntings and finches, a Fieldfare and a Goldfinch. On the 10th and 11th movement was similar, but with the emphasis on Swallows (spring peak of 50 on the 11th) and Willow Warblers, accompanied by 2 Redwings, an *alba* Wagtail and a Cuckoo on the 10th, and by a Collared Dove on the 11th.

Despite some east winds there were few arrivals during the next three days, (only a Whimbrel on the 12th, the first Swifts (2) and a *flava* Wagtail on the 13th, a few Wheatears and Whinchats on the 14th). But on the 15th a Bluethroat was trapped in the morning, and next day a good variety of new birds came in: 35 Willow Warblers, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Cuckoo, 2 Redwings, 2 Redstarts and a Short-eared Owl. From 17th to 19th May there was little movement, but an overnight influx in drizzly conditions produced 50 Willow Warblers, 15 Spotted Flycatchers, 10 Whitethroats, 4 Sedge Warblers, a Pied Flycatcher, 2 Redstarts and 3 Whinchats on the 20th. Another slight movement next day brought 3 Redpolls, 2 Yellow Wagtails, a Goldfinch and a Collared Dove.

Despite east winds on the 22nd the only newcomer was a very handsome American visitor—a Lazuli Bunting, whose

immediate origin remains in doubt, since the species is sometimes kept in captivity. It was stormy on the 23rd, but 2 Cuckoos, a Collared Dove, a late Redwing, 10 Sedge Warblers and 10 Whitethroats were seen. Next day, the 24th, was the best day of the spring for migrants, with a moderate east wind and early mist. A remarkable total of 56 species was logged, the highlights being an Icterine Warbler, a Red-backed Shrike, a Wood Sandpiper and a Yellow Wagtail. Other warblers were fairly well represented (10 Sedge, 20 Willow, 2 Garden, 1 Blackcap, 30 Whitethroats, 1 Lesser Whitethroat); there were a few thrushes (including a late Fieldfare), 10 Whinchats, 2 Redstarts, 4 Cuckoos, a Common Sandpiper, a Turtle Dove and a Collared Dove, 7 Spotted Flycatchers and a Pied Flycatcher, a Tree Pipit, a Lesser Redpoll, 2 late Bramblings and a very late Siskin. A passage of 35 House Martins was the start of a movement (15-40 daily) that lasted a week. Most of the migrants had left by 6.30 a.m. next morning, and the only new arrivals were more warblers, flycatchers, a Yellow Wagtail and a Bluethroat.

East winds continued until the afternoon of the 26th, and there was a fresh influx of birds, another Bluethroat, a Collared Dove, a Yellowhammer, the last Redpoll of spring and more warblers. The next three days were mixed in weather, and there were few birds, except for a Nightjar, a Yellow Wagtail and a Tree Sparrow on the 27th and a late Redwing on the 28th. On 30th May a surprising variety of late migrants sought brief shelter on the island during bad weather: 3 Turtle Doves, 2 Cuckoos, another Redwing, a Wheatear, the last Whinchats (2), the last Redstarts (2), the last Sedge Warbler and last Blackcap of the spring, the last 2 Whitethroats and a Garden Warbler.

June After the unusually extended spring migration, it was not surprising that odd migrants turned up in June; among those worth noting were a Turtle Dove and 15 House Martins on the 4th, a Cuckoo and a Tree Sparrow on the 5th, a few Willow Warblers during the first week, a Spotted Flycatcher and a Garden Warbler on the 7th; the last Spotted Flycatcher on the 15th; a Redstart and 2 Common Sandpipers on the 18th. A Garden Warbler trapped on 10th June had been ringed in Heligoland a fortnight previously.

Autumn

The Observatory was manned from 31st July to 14th August, from 16th August to 9th October, from 27th to 31st October and from 3rd to 8th November. A small amount of movement was noted in July (up to 10 Swifts between the 8th and 15th) and some sea passage of terns, Manx Shearwaters (3 on the 3rd), Storm Petrels (on the 11th and 14th) and Whimbrels (on the 13th, 15th and 25th).

August There were a few short periods of easterlies during the first week of the month, and a hint of autumn migration came with the first Willow Warbler on the 1st, an early Tree-creeper on the 2nd, a Spotted Flycatcher, a Whitethroat and a Whinchat on the 3rd, 2 early Fieldfares on the 4th, a Grasshopper Warbler on the 5th, a Garden Warbler, a Swift and another Fieldfare on the 6th, and 45 Wheatears on the 7th. Mostly westerly winds blew on 8th to 12th August; a Cuckoo turned up on the 8th, and Willow Warbler numbers were up to 30 daily. From the 12th to 14th good sea passage was recorded: up to 12 Manx Shearwaters daily, 8 and 7 Sooty Shearwaters on the 13th and 14th respectively, Arctic Skuas (up to 12 on the 13th), 'Comic' terns, and occasional Common, Black-headed and Little gulls. On the 14th, a day of strong east wind, a Reed Warbler and a Garden Warbler appeared, along with a Ringed Plover, a Common Sandpiper, a Whinchat and a Whitethroat.

After a few days of westerlies, east winds returned on the 18th, but only 3 Goldcrests arrived. The next day, after early fog, was better, producing the first Barred Warbler and Pied Flycatcher of the autumn and a Fieldfare. More fog on the 20th brought in 2 Garden Warblers and a few Wheatears during the day and overnight up to 14 Willow Warblers, a Wood Warbler and 4 Tree Pipits (seen on the 21st). East winds continued, and the numbers of migrants increased steadily over each of the next four days. An Arctic Skua, a Green Sandpiper and a Sand Martin were seen on the 22nd, 3 Teal, 3 Wigeon and a Whimbrel on the 23rd, 2 Arctic Skuas and a Wood Sandpiper on the 24th. There were about 10 Wheatears each day. The first 2 autumn Redstarts arrived on the 24th, along with another Barred Warbler. Each day 3 or 4 Garden Warblers were recorded. Single Lesser Whitethroats occurred on the 23rd and 24th, and up to 15 Willow Warblers daily. A maximum of 20 Pied Flycatchers were present on the 24th, and there were 5 Goldcrests and 8 Tree Pipits on the 25th.

Most of these birds had gone by the 26th, but a few more came in with the south wind that day—another Barred Warbler, a Spotted Redshank, and a few more Wheatears and Whinchats. West winds up to the end of August were accompanied by the familiar coastal movement—Swallows (up to 50 daily), House Martins (up to 40 daily), Wheatears (up to 30), terns, Meadow Pipits (up to 50), 5 Ringed Plovers, 2 Arctic Skuas and a few warblers and Goldcrests.

September A similar pattern of coastal migration continued in westerly weather for the first five days of the month, noteworthy records being a Whimbrel on the 2nd, a few Arctic and Great Skuas on most days, 7 Manx Shearwaters on the 3rd and a Sparrowhawk on the 5th. The next five days of mist

and east winds were in the best Isle of May tradition, both for quality, and (on the 9th) for quantity. At lunchtime on the 6th, a Whimbrel was glimpsed near the Iron Bridge and there was some sea passage of terns, Manx Shearwaters and skuas. Then the wind backed to the east, and the influx started with the arrival of a Pied Flycatcher (later there were 11 more), some Song Thrushes and a Whitethroat. Next a Barred Warbler was caught, followed shortly by a Scarlet Grosbeak. By the end of the day a Green Sandpiper, a Ringed Plover, another Whimbrel, 2 Whinchats and a Redstart were added to the list of arrivals, and continuing passage of Wheatears, Swallows and Meadow Pipits was noted. Most migrants moved on at once, and a brief return to west and south winds caused a lull on the 7th, the only morning arrival being a Fieldfare. Through the murky easterly weather after lunch an Icterine Warbler appeared, making up for the shortage of expected migrants, and a few more Pied Flycatchers, Garden Warblers and a Short-eared Owl turned up too. The total, 51 species for the day, almost equalled that of the memorable 24th May.

The 8th dawned hopefully with the same low-lying thick sea mist, and good sea passage was observed, as on the previous days. The best new arrival was a Ruff, and there were also more Pied Flycatchers, Meadow Pipits, Swallows and Wheatears, 12 Whinchats and 4 Redstarts. Despite all this excitement, the real red-letter day for the observers came on the 9th, when a strange pipit discovered on the South Ness was identified as the island's first Red-throated Pipit. Many other new migrants were on the island, notably 3 Barred Warblers, at least 50 Whinchats, 50 Pied Flycatchers, 25 Redstarts, 5 Blackcaps and the only Spotted Flycatcher of the month. Visibility improved suddenly on the 10th, and the tail end of this excellent spell of migration produced a Peregrine Falcon, a Siskin, 2 Tree Pipits and a Corncrake (first spotted by Magnus Pearson).

The weather was clearer over the next few days, but migration continued, though at a subdued level. Sea passage was in evidence, and a variety of ducks and waders was recorded (2 Scaup on the 11th, a Golden Plover and a Bar-tailed Godwit on the 13th). Wheatear and warbler passage continued, and there was another Barred Warbler on the 11th and a Red-breasted Flycatcher. Goldcrests (7), Tree Pipits (20), Meadow Pipits (40) and a *flava* Wagtail were the main features of the 12th, with Goldcrest numbers increasing to 20 on the 13th. On 13th and 14th September, sea-watchers were rewarded by seeing up to 12 Manx Shearwaters and up to 13 Sooty Shearwaters each day, as well as Great and Arctic Skuas. The 14th also saw the arrival of the first Snow Bunting of the autumn, a Siskin and an *alba* Wagtail.

For the next four days there was little movement, then on the 18th there was an increase in local coastal passage of Swallows, Wheatears, a few warblers and waders (1 Whimbrel, 2 Golden Plovers, 4 Dunlins, 5 Ringed Plovers). On the 19th there were 40 Meadow Pipits and a Grey Wagtail, then hardly any birds until the 15th, when the wind became easterly again, and 28 Sooty Shearwaters were recorded, also a Whimbrel and 20 Meadow Pipits on passage.

The rest of the month was reminiscent of the first week of September in the quantity and quality of birds seen, but different in content. The highlights on the 26th were a Firecrest, 2 Yellow-browed Warblers and a Red-breasted Flycatcher, but there was also a Green Sandpiper, 4 Siskins, a Brambling, an influx of Pied Flycatchers, Dunnocks and Blackbirds and the first 6 Redwings of autumn. The 27th brought a long list of migrants, topped by a Tawny Pipit, 2 more Yellow-browed Warblers, another Red-breasted Flycatcher, and a Great Grey Shrike. Other newcomers were 3 Jack Snipe, a Bar-tailed Godwit, 2 Common Sandpipers, 20 Skylarks, a Treecreeper, 2 Fieldfares, more Redwings, Song Thrushes, Pied Flycatchers and Wheatears, 5 Whinchats, 30 Redstarts, 2 Blackcaps, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, a Tree Pipit, 2 *alba* wagtails and a Snow Bunting. The 28th was quieter (a few more warblers, 2 Grey Wagtails and 20 *alba* Wagtails and 100 Swallows flying south), and 29th, with west wind, was similar. A brief return of east winds on the 30th was accompanied by an influx of 200 Goldcrests, 4 Redpolls, 120 Swallows and the first Ring Ouzel of the autumn; also recorded on that date were a Black-throated Diver and a Peregrine Falcon.

October Only the first nine days of the month were covered by observers. The weather of the first few days was westerly, with continued sea passage and small coastal movements of Meadow Pipits, Swallows and warblers. Records include a Red-throated Diver, 5 Golden Plovers and 2 Sandwich Terns (the last terns) on the 2nd, Skylarks (40 on the 3rd), Wheatears (numbers dwindling after the 3rd), the last 5 House Martins, the last Sand Martin and Pied Flycatcher on the 2nd, the last Whinchat on the 4th, the last Garden Warbler on the 2nd, the last Whitethroat and Willow Warbler, and 4 Grey Wagtails on the 1st.

With a change of wind on the 5th there was a noticeable influx and passage of autumn birds, including 600 Redwings, 15 Skylarks, 30 Song Thrushes, 20 Bramblings, a Jack Snipe, a Siskin and a Ring Ouzel. Most of these migrants soon moved on, and a few more were seen until the 8th, when the only Stonechat of 1971 was recorded along with the last Redstart, a Golden Plover and 60 Goldcrests. Strong west winds prevailed over much of the rest of the month, and no major

falls of migrants occurred during the absence of observers. Small numbers of thrushes and Meadow Pipits were recorded at the end of the month, and the last Wheatear was seen on the 30th.

November Records between the 4th and 8th contained the usual trickle of Skylarks, Goldcrests, Snow Buntings, the occasional Woodcock, Linnets, Bramblings and thrushes, augmented at midday on the 5th by 500 Blackbirds, 500 Redwings, 2 Mistle Thrushes and 400 Fieldfares, most passing on quite soon. Finally, on the 9th the departing observers recorded a flock of 300 Woodpigeons and a single late Swallow.

Unusual occurrences

Black-throated Diver One, 30th September-1st October. Fourth record, first for 11 years.

Red-throated Diver Four, 1st May. Largest number recorded together.

Storm Petrel One each, 11th and 14th July. First records for nine years and first in July.

Sooty Shearwater More than usual recorded, mainly in September. Maximum in one day—28 on 25th September.

Osprey One, 5th May.

Wood Sandpiper One, remained from 24th August until 14th September.

Nightjar. One, 27th May. Eleventh record.

Swallow One, 8th November. Latest record.

Treecreeper One, 2nd August. Earliest of the eight records of the British race.

Song Thrush One pair bred, rearing at least two young. First breeding record since 1938.

Redwing One each, 28th and 30th May. Latest spring records.

Grasshopper Warbler. One, 5th August. Earliest autumn record.

Icterine Warbler One, 24th May. Third spring record.

Yellow-browed Warbler Four, 27th September (largest number recorded together).

Firecrest One, 26th September. Fifth record.

Spotted Flycatcher One, 4th May. Earliest spring record.

Tawny Pipit One, 27th-28th September. Third record.

Red-throated Pipit One, 9th-10th September. First record.

Grey Wagtail Four, 1st October. Largest number recorded together.

Great Grey Shrike Four, 5th April, three more on 6th April (all ringed). Unusually many together, and only fifth spring record.



PLATES 5-7, A selection of photographs by Sydney J. Clarke. *Above* Oystercatcher at nest, Ayrshire, 1969 (plate 5a). *Below* Pintail, Berwickshire, 1970 (plate 5b). *over* Arctic Tern, Shetland, 1964 (plate 6a); Little Tern, East Lothian, 1969 (plate 6b); Black-headed Gulls, Berwickshire, 1969 (plate 7a); Common Sandpiper, Berwickshire, 1969 (plate 7b).









PLATE 8. Temminck's Stints breeding in Scotland (see page 94).

Photographs by C. G. Headlam.

Siskin One, 24th May. Latest spring record.

Bullfinch One, 5th-7th April (Northern race). First spring record.

Scarlet Grosbeak One, 6th-7th September.

Corn Bunting One, 3rd-5th May. Sixth and earliest spring record.

Tree Sparrow One, 5th June. Latest spring record.

***Lazuli Bunting** One, 22nd-23rd May. First record (possible escape).

Breeding populations

No estimates were made of the populations of the larger gulls, the auks or the Shags. A count of Kittiwakes' nests was made in June; the total of 3436 is more than 400 above the 1969 total. Durham University's gull research programme was interrupted in May by the sudden tragic death of Margaret Emmerson. Her work on recruitment and behaviour was taken over and continued by other members of the University, who also carried out studies of the Shag population. About 100 pairs of Eider Ducks nested, and one pair of Shelducks reared young. Two pairs each of Blackbirds, Dunnocks and Swallows nested, and one pair of Song Thrushes for the first time since 1938.

Ringings and recoveries

2164 birds of 68 species were ringed, about a quarter of this total (556) being Shags. Record ringing totals were Kittiwake (82), Goldcrest (172), Spotted Flycatcher (25), Pied Flycatcher (87) and Great Grey Shrike (7). The total of Dunnocks ringed (70) was the second highest ever, and there were third highest totals for Puffin (59) and Wren (46). Low totals were Wheatear (6), Sedge Warbler (17), Chiffchaff (8), Meadow Pipit (11, the lowest since 1947) and Chaffinch (3). Two Crows were the first ringed since 1953. The Firecrest was the third ever ringed, and another unusual species ringed was Scarlet Grosbeak. No Tree Pipits, Linnets or Bramblings were ringed.

The total of 126 recoveries (just over half the 1970 total) included 44 Shags and 52 Herring Gulls.

The foreign recoveries and controls are listed below :

		Ringed		Recovered
Herring Gull	Pull	17. 6.66	Insel Trischen, Schleswig Holstein, Germany	29. 5.71
Blackbird	Ad ♂	13.10.70	Store Faerder, Vestfold, Norway (control)	10. 4.71

*Subject to confirmation by the Rarities Committee

		Ringed		Recovered
Blackbird	1st Y ♀	14. 4.67	Møvik, Notteroy, Vestfold, Norway	28. 3.71
Blackbird	Ad ♀	23. 4.67	Gullmarsforden, Lysekil, Goteborg, Sweden	26. 6.71
Robin	1st Y	6. 9.70	Maché, Apremont, Vendée, France	31.12.70 10.5.71
Robin	2nd Y	5. 4.71	Dogger Bank, North Sea	
Robin	PJ	18. 4.68	De Klinge, E. Flanders, Belgium	10.12.69
Blackcap	PJ ♀	20.10.69	Montilla, Cordoba, Spain	6.12.70
Blackcap	FG ♀	16.10.70	Akbou, Setif, Algeria	14. 3.71
Blackcap	FG ♂	10.10.69	Wilsele, Herent, Brabant, Belgium	27. 6.71
Dunnoek	PJ	6. 4.71	Revtangen, Klepp, Rogaland, Norway (control)	7. 5.71

Foreign-ringed birds controlled on the Isle of May are listed below :

		Ringed		Controlled
Blackbird	1st Y ♂	25.10.68	Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg	22. 4.71
Blackbird	Ad ♂	6.11.69	De Koog, Texel, Holland	7. 4.71
Robin	Juv	20.10.69	near Warnemunde, Rostock, E. Germany	5. 4.71
Garden Warbler	FG	26. 5.71	Heligoland	10. 6.71

A Collared Dove ringed in April 1970 and shot in January 1971 at St Cyrus, Kincardineshire, was the island's first recovery of this species. The first recoveries of Kittiwakes were also reported—two of the island's breeding population were found to have been ringed as pulli on the Farnes and Craigleith in 1963 and 1967 respectively. A Chiffchaff ringed on North Ronaldsay on 28th September 1971 was controlled on the May ten days later, on 8th October. Two more Farnes-ringed Puffins were recorded from the Isle of May colony.

Other observations

Grey seal numbers remain constant at about 50 individuals. Myxomatosis was in evidence among the rabbit population throughout the year and was particularly widespread in August. The Triggs were in residence for most of the year, continuing the mouse research programme, a progress report on which was received from Dr Sam Berry in the autumn.

Jasper Parsons published a paper, "Cannibalism in Herring Gulls" (*Brit. Birds* 64: 528-536) based on his Isle of May research. John Arnott recorded a programme on the May for his "Afield" series on BBC Radio, featuring Joe Eggeling, George Waterston and some of the island's residents (both human and avian).

Further tree planting in the entrance to the Bain Trap was carried out in April, and a number of other observers contri-

buted repairs to traps and improvements in the Low Light. The Low Light roof was repaired, and new guttering put up by builders from Crail.

The Observatory Committee is grateful to the Principal Keeper, Mr Pearson, and his staff, and to the crew of the *Breadwinner*, for the many ways in which they have given their friendly help or advice throughout the season.

Amendment to 1970 Report (*Scot. Birds* 6: 255-267): Two Thrush Nightingales *Luscinia luscinia* were confirmed by the Rarities Committee; one 9th-16th May, one 17th May.

Short Notes

Hybrid Great Northern Diver x Black-throated Diver in Wester Ross

From early May 1971 ENH kept a close watch on the loch where Great Northern Divers bred in 1970 (*Scot. Birds* 6: 195). Although one bird was seen in mid June, and although there were unconfirmed reports of a pair, there was no evidence of breeding.

On 18th June ENH found a Black-throated Diver with a very small chick in the shallow water of an island bay. With this bird was another, fully a third larger, which at first sight appeared to be a Great Northern Diver. It immediately began a series of shallow dives, uttering throaty guttural growls as it moved into deep water. The Black-throated Diver and chick swam steadily out and eventually joined up with the other bird before disappearing round the end of the island. The lower neck band of the large diver differed from that of a Great Northern Diver, taking the form of a heart-shaped white patch on either side of neck, and being marked with vertical black stripes. The heavy bill was black; the head was black with a green gloss, and the nape had a suggestion of sooty brown. The scapulars appeared to be marked as in Great Northern Diver.

On 20th June this apparent family party was seen again (in the same bay). The larger diver gave a spectacular display, standing on its tail, planing across the water towards the boat, calling, beating its wings and eventually swimming out of the bay. The Black-throated Diver and chick joined it in deeper water, and all three moved off westwards. Usually when one encounters Black-throated Divers with young they swim and dive unobtrusively away from the boat, accompanied by their chicks.

On 22nd June C. K. Mylne, (duly authorised) managed to film the bird with the chick in the usual bay and obtained recordings of its call; R. Balharry photographed it.

The accompanying illustrations by John Busby were made from accurate tracings by CKM from the projection of single frames of his 16 mm film. They show the large diver in threat attitude and two stages of its "pattering dance" across the surface, which CKM described as very similar to that of Great Crested Grebe, but ending with a dive.

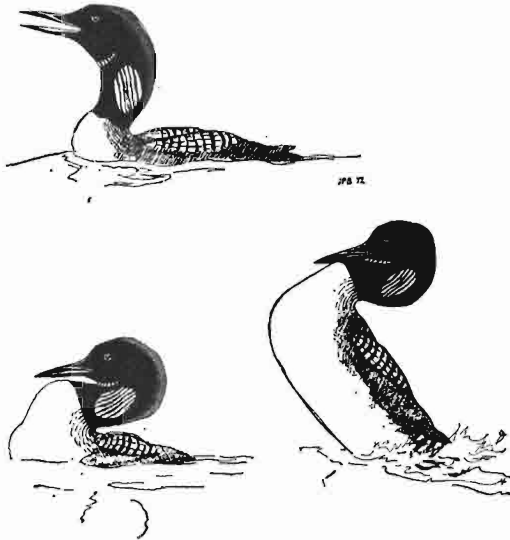
On 25th June the trio were in a secluded waterway with a narrow entrance. ENH watched them for half an hour. The chick, when dry, was fluffy, russet, with white underparts. It was now two-thirds the length of the Black-throated Diver, which in turn was two-thirds the size of the other bird.

On 30th June ENH saw the party several times in the original bay, and on 6th July ENH and RHD examined the trio for 15 minutes in splendid light and flat calm. RHD's first impressions were that the bird was a very large Black-throated Diver, rather dark, with unusual neck markings, though on closer study, characters of both Great Northern Diver and Black-throated Diver were apparent. RHD made the following description :

A noticeably large diver, both on the water and in flight, distinctly larger and heavier than the Black-throated Diver; shape more Great Northern Diver-like, with a large black bill, rather stepped forehead and thicker neck; head black, with a green gloss, shading paler on the back of the head to dark grey on the nape; upper throat showed a necklace of white spots; below it, on the side of the neck, was a rather heart-shaped white patch marked with vertical black lines; neck otherwise black as in Great Northern Diver, though the back of the neck was greyer as in Black-throated Diver. The necklace and patch were similar to those in Great Northern Diver, though the patch was longer and not so wide; throat showed purple gloss; sides of breast marked with dark lines running down from the black neck; upperparts black, heavily spotted white mainly in two areas, the back pattern not exactly matching either species; eye red.

In choppy water or in poor visibility it would have been a difficult bird. Seeing it swimming away by itself, one would probably have put it down as a Black-throated Diver, whereas in company with a Black-throated Diver and head-on or side-on it would probably have been taken as a Great Northern Diver. The views obtained, however, showed that it was neither. It was concluded that the bird was a Great Northern Diver x Black-throated Diver hybrid; it may have been reared locally several years ago, possibly the result of a solitary Great Northern Diver outside its normal breeding range, mated with a Black-throated Diver. Dr I. D. Pennie has drawn attention to such an 'edge-of-range' mating on Bear Island, (Lovenskiold,

H. L. 1964. *Avifauna Svalbardensis*. Oslo). Correspondence with I. J. Ferguson-Lees and Dr Jeffrey Harrison has revealed only one previous case of a presumed hybrid between these two species (*Gerfaut* 21: 157). That specimen was in winter plumage, having been shot on 27th November 1927 at Heerle-Minderhout, Belgium, and so it is not possible to compare the plumage with that of the Scottish bird, though the large size and big bill were similar.



On 13th August ENH saw the hybrid with the young bird, which was then lavender-grey above, with white underparts and an orange-yellow bill.

Without the consent and co-operation of the land-owner and his tenant we would have been unable to make these observations and to them we extend our thanks.

E. N. HUNTER, R. H. DENNIS.

(In the report of breeding of Great Northern Divers at this site in 1970 (*Scot. Birds* 6: 195) only one of the adults was described, and the occurrence of this hybrid has raised the question of the identity of the second adult that year. ENH, RB and EC have confirmed, however, that each of the 1970 adults was individually identified as a Great Northern Diver and that the hybrid described above was not seen in 1970.—ED.)

White Storks in Scotland

During April and May 1971 there were seven reports of White Storks in Scotland, from Argyllshire to Orkney.

The first was reported by Capt. E. A. S. Bailey at Glenuig Bay, Inverness-shire, on 24th April, after a day of strong easterly winds; it turned up at a meet of the Lochaber foxhounds. The same day a White Stork was seen by A. MacColl on his croft at Acharacle, Argyllshire, about six miles away; it was chased by sheep and did not stay long. A report of a White Stork in the Benderloch area two days previously on 22nd April probably also refers to the same bird.

On 11th May at Bridge of Alvah, Banffshire, a White Stork was watched by Mrs A. F. W. Sharp for three-quarters of an hour as it sat in a dead tree. Later it flew off, circling up to a great height.

The Orkney bird was first seen by Mrs Cooper on 20th May near the Loch of Burness on the island of Westray. It was seen again on the 23rd (when it was being chased by "a dozen big gulls") and 24th by Mrs Scott.

On 26th May a tired-looking White Stork was discovered by P. R. James and D. Glass near Dounereay, Caithness. It remained until the 28th, though disturbance by the public made it increasingly wary.

The last record is of a bird seen by Mrs M. Hawkins and others on the evening of 31st May at Tomintoul, Banffshire. It was apparently feeding in a field by a river.

Full details of these occurrences were submitted to the Rarities Committee and all have been accepted. Though it is difficult to say for sure how many birds were involved, this is a remarkable series of records; in recent years the pattern in Scotland has been one occurrence roughly every other spring, mostly on the east side.

The present records include the first for North Argyll, Banff and North Coast and Caithness. The Inverness-shire/Argyllshire bird is the second for the Argyll faunal division; the first was shot near Fort William in April 1889. The only previous Orkney record was in 1840.

EDITOR.

American Wigeon in Fife

On 10th January 1971 at the Eden estuary near Guardbridge I noticed an unusual bird among a flock of Wigeon roosting on the merse. Its forehead was off-white as compared with

the yellow foreheads of the nearby drakes. Its head was yellow-grey, with dark flecks and with dark green ear coverts forming a stripe behind the eye. The flanks and breast were vinous brown, with the white of the underparts extending to form an inverted V-shaped area on the breast. The upperparts were darkish brown, and the wings, tail, bill and feet were all dark, as in Wigeon. The bird was chased by a Wigeon drake and made a brief flight, showing white forewings, and black under tail-coverts banded at the front by white, all as in Wigeon.

I identified the bird as a drake American Wigeon.

D. M. BRYANT.

King Eiders in Bute and Ayrshire

On 2nd April 1971 at Rhubodach on the Isle of Bute I saw a group of Eiders about 50 yards offshore.

A casual look at the group showed one bird rather darker than the others. More detailed inspection showed it to be a mature King Eider drake, with clearly defined grey head, orange shield at the base of the bill, and black back, unlike the common Eider drakes nearby. No sails were seen on the back.

The weather was sunny, with little wind, and the sea, in this confined area, was calm. The flock moved gradually away towards the Colintraive shore.

R. C. COAST-SMITH.

On 22nd December 1971 I was counting Eiders at the mouth of the River Irvine; among a pack of about 90 I discovered a drake King Eider. Although the sea was choppy the bird could be clearly seen for short periods about 200 yards offshore.

On the 23rd the King Eider was again with the common Eiders. The birds were sheltering in the river mouth and could be observed in good conditions at about 80 yards. A. G. Stewart confirmed the identification. The bird was last seen on 4th April 1972, by AGS.

Description Slightly shorter than common Eider, with contrasting black-and-white plumage. Most prominent features were the relatively short, bright yellow-orange bill and shield and the pale blue-grey nape and crown. The pale pink suffusion of the white breast was also clearly visible, as were the small black sails on the back.

I. M. DARLING.

(The Bute and Ayr records are the first for their respective divisions, and they also provide the first record for the Clyde faunal area.—ED.)

Temminck's Stints breeding in Scotland

During the summers of 1969-71 Temminck's Stints had been seen displaying on low ground in Easter Ross. On 16th July 1971 two completely downy chicks were found. While the chicks were examined (one was noticeably smaller than the other and had thinner legs) an adult fluttered around, usually within ten feet of the ground, calling with a short, clear, trilling *tirr*. When the observers moved about two yards away the bird alighted, allowing photographs to be taken at close range (see plate 8). The following description was made:

A very small wader (smaller than a Skylark) with the proportions of a Common Sandpiper; all upperparts medium brown; no obvious eye-stripe; most of the feathers on the back dark olive, with thin, lighter edging, not as sharply marked as in Little Stint; neck and breast lighter brown than upperparts; rest of underparts clear white; bill dark but not black; legs dull yellowish green. In flight the white outer tail feathers were clearly visible and a slight wing-bar was seen.

No other adult was seen on this occasion.

On 22nd July only one chick could be found; it was still completely downy on the body but showed the beginning of wing quills. It was ringed and released. After heavy continuous rain on the 24th and 25th, the place was revisited but there was no sign of the adult there, though one was displaying about 200 yards away. During the following week displaying adults were seen both near the original site and at the second one, and it seems possible that two pairs were breeding.

C. G. HEADLAM.

(This is the first sure record of breeding in Scotland and Britain in recent years. The species attempted unsuccessfully to breed on at least three occasions in Scotland: in East Inverness-shire in 1934 (also present in 1935), 1936 (also present 1947) and 1956.—ED.)

Baird's Sandpiper in the Outer Hebrides

On 27th September 1971 I discovered a Baird's Sandpiper, feeding with four Dunlins among decaying seaweed on the high-water mark at Traigh Iar, North Uist.

Description Smaller than a Dunlin and much sleeker; head buff, with slight, whitish eye-stripe extending back from eye; back buff; wings showed a marked scaly pattern, primaries long and pointed in flight, extending well beyond tail at rest; rump dark in centre with pale edges; bill black, short, fine and straight, almost as long as head; legs blackish, usually held flexed.

As it picked for food, the bird was easy to approach. When other birds were disturbed it often crouched on the sand; the

horizontal stance was very noticeable, and it was this that first attracted my attention. It took me some time to make sure that it was not a White-rumped Sandpiper, but when the bird began to preen I had good views of its rump. No call notes were heard.

Alastair Macdonald also saw the bird and checked the bird against my description.

G. CRITCHLEY.

⚡ (This is the second Scottish record and first for the Outer Hebrides division. The first Scottish record was at St Kilda on 28th September 1911 (*Scot. Nat.* 1912: 9)—Ed.)

Red-necked Phalarope in Dunbartonshire

On 28th June 1971 at the Endrick mouth I saw a small, dark wader fly swiftly and erratically just over the surface of the loch. It alighted on the water, and I was able to approach within 20 yards of it. The bird was the size of a Dunlin, with a short, dark bill, black crown and dark upperparts. It had a very plain dark stripe through the eye. The underparts were pale, with slightly darker shading around the neck and upper breast. In flight, which was very erratic, a pronounced pale wing-stripe was seen. The bird always landed on the water and dabbed all around with its needle bill. I heard it call only one once—a short shrill note. The bird was obviously a Red-necked Phalarope.

R. K. POLLOCK.

(There is a previous record for Dunbartonshire, at Summerston on the River Kelvin on 1st October 1962 (*Scot. Birds* 3: 91). D. G. Andrew comments: "The plumage described above is puzzling. It is unlikely that this was a bird of the year, since the date of the record is about the average date of hatching for Britain, and it does not seem like an adult beginning autumn moult (though this can begin very early). A speculative explanation is that this may have been a first-year bird that had come ashore before it was ready to breed. The *Handbook* is silent on first-year plumage, and I can find nothing in the literature to suggest that the bird does not achieve full maturity in the first summer after its birth."—Ed.)

Lesser Grey Shrikes in East Lothian and the Inner Hebrides

On 29th August 1971 at Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve KAM found a Lesser Grey Shrike. It perched on bushes and a fence, flicking its tail occasionally, and sometimes flying low over the ground.

Description Head grey, with a broad, black stripe through the eye and across the forehead, no white above the black; ear coverts very white; back grey; tail black, with white edging; wings black, with white area seen in flight; underparts very light grey; legs black; bill black, small and hooked.

On 4th September at the same place, GLS watched what was presumed to be the same bird for about an hour: in his detailed description he remarked that the bird was of a rather sandy-brown colour, that the black eye-stripe did not extend over the forehead and that the bird most resembled the illustration in the *Handbook* of a first-winter female.

Many other observers saw the bird: on 6th September JM and MM watched it, still at the same spot, and it was last reported on the 11th, by FDH.

K. A. MACKENZIE, G. L. SANDEMAN, J. MOSS,
M. MOSS, F. D. HAMILTON.

During the second week of September 1971 W. Henderson reported seeing a shrike in Kinloch Glen on the Isle of Rhum. On 12th September I saw the bird perched on a fence post. From its upright stance and strong hooked bill it was immediately recognisable as a shrike; it seemed no larger than a Chaffinch.

The bird was timid, but on several occasions I managed to view it at a range of less than 20 yards. It was pale olive-grey above, whitish below. The ear coverts and lores were a darker grey brown than the rest of the head, the tail and wings were dark grey-brown, and the outer tail feathers were white. The dark grey-brown primaries were tipped and edged with pale brown. There was a broad white patch, extending from the front edge of the wing, which was very noticeable when the bird flew away. The scapular patch appeared to be slightly paler than the back, nape and crown. Faint barring was just discernible on the flanks.

The shrike was persistently mobbed by Swallows and later by Chaffinches; the Chaffinches were slightly smaller than it. A Song Thrush also joined in the mobbing; when it perched alongside the shrike the thrush was noticeably larger.

The shrike flew from one perch to another, dipping away from its stance and flying low. On several occasions it caught a moth, returning to its perch and holding the insect with its foot while eating it.

From these characteristics I identified it as a young Lesser Grey Shrike, just acquiring its first-winter plumage.

P. WORMELL.

(The Aberlady record is the second for East Lothian: the Rhum record is the first for the Inner Hebrides.—Ed.)

Rose-coloured Starling in Sutherland

At about 9.30 p.m. on 3rd June 1971 at Droman I saw a Rose-coloured Starling sitting in a small bush with a flock of some 25 Starlings. I watched for about five minutes at 20-30 yards range before the birds moved off to feed in a field some distance away. The flock was restless and continued to move about, giving me good views of the bird in flight. After about 15 minutes my attention was distracted by a Corncrake calling a few yards behind me and walking boldly along a stone wall. After that I lost sight of the Rose-coloured Starling and did not see it again.

The bird was similar to Starling in shape, size and behaviour. Its head and neck were glossy black, with the feathers on the rear of the crown shaggy, giving it a slightly crested appearance. The rest of the body was pink, except for a dark area on the rear of the belly and dark under tail-coverts. The wings and tail were black. In flight the primaries appeared distinctly palish. The legs were pale reddish pink and the bill also appeared pinkish. I thought the flight more swooping and not so direct as that of Starling, but this could have been a result of the strong wind. The pattern in flight of black head and neck, pink back and rump, contrasting with black wings and tail was very distinctive. The plumage looked bright and in good condition; the bird was unringed and showed no particular tameness. It was chased by a female Blackbird, and a male House Sparrow chattered at it while it was sitting in the bush.

P. TIZZARD.

Arctic Redpoll in Orkney

On 11th October 1970 at Holland House, North Ronaldsay, I caught an adult female Arctic Redpoll in a mist nest. The diagnostic characters were: wing length 85mm (Svensson's* method 3); the double white wing-bar formed by the tips of the greater and median coverts; the pretty clear white rump of which 15mm was unstreaked and the central streaks on the remainder of which were faint (the appearance of the rump was intermediate between Svensson's diagrams a and b); the breast was clear white; the flanks showed a few dark streaks; the central under tail-covert had a dark centre, exactly as in Svensson's diagram b; all remiges and rectrices were fresh and unworn.

Immediately afterwards I trapped an adult female Redpoll (probably of the Greenland form); by comparison it was very dark and much streaked on flanks and rump.

The wind had been southwesterly since 5th October; good falls of Redwings and other thrushes occurred on 7th, together

with a few warblers, including Barred and Yellow-browed, and several Great Grey Shrikes.

J. M. B. KING.

*Svensson, L. *Identification Guide to European Passerines*. B.T.O. Publication.

(This is the first record for Orkney. The wing measurement would seem to indicate the subspecies *A. h. hornemanni*.—Ed.)

Obituary

COMMANDER SIR GEOFFREY H. HUGHES-ONSLOW

Geoffrey Hughes-Onslow, who died at his home Alton, Albany, Barrhill, in south Ayrshire on 27th November 1971, had lived a full life of service to his country and his native county. Trained as a sailor, he fought through the First World War as a regular officer in the Royal Navy. In the run-down of the Services that followed victory in 1919, he retired to the estates he had inherited on his father's death in 1914, returning to serve during the Second World War as commander of H.M.S. *Scotia*, a shore training establishment at Ayr.

In the early '20's he began his long stint in local authority work. For 33 years to 1955 he was a member of Ayrshire County Council, and from 1949 to 1955 its Convener. It took great skill, patience and wisdom and wit to keep this council working harmoniously, and Ayrshire was fortunate in having a pilot who had these qualities so abundantly and who was held in such high personal regard by (political) friend and foe alike. In 1950 he became Lord Lieutenant of his native county, the most pleasant and honourable office one can hold, and was knighted in 1959.

Geoffrey was essentially a countryman, and his interest in birds and considerable knowledge of them was part of his wide knowledge and love of the countryside. He was a keen and good shot, but he was also a keen and wise protectionist and was responsible in no small measure for the sanctuary arrangements on Lady Isle. He was an original member of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club when it was a body of only 20 or so keen types—at that time almost all those active in the field in Scotland. He was an original member of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust. It was on a visit to the isle that he saw an albatross circling Sheep Craig, thus maintaining the link, as he was wont to say, between that fabulous bird and the ancient mariner.

Geoffrey typified all that was, and is, best in the Establishment. Those of us who knew him were the better for it and are the poorer for his death.

A.B.D.

Reviews

The Status of Birds in Britain and Ireland. Prepared by the Records Committee of the British Ornithologists' Union. Oxford and Edinburgh, Blackwell, 1971. Pp. xviii + 333; 69 line drawings by Robert Gillmor; endpaper maps. 21½ x 14 cm. £3.

The 1952 BOU *Check-List*, an essential work of reference, was a 7/6d paperback. The 1971 list is a handsome £3 book enlivened with Robert Gillmor's vignettes. Its publication, after years of unseemly disagreement, has been accompanied by just as much criticism as greeted the former one.

The detailed status summaries are altogether more informative and useful than the previous brief statements, and it is in this feature that it differs most from the 1952 list; indeed it is no longer just a list. For each genus details are given of world distribution (by zoogeographical regions), number of species, how many breed in Europe, and how many breed or occur in the British Isles. For each species there is a summary of world breeding distribution, migrations and wintering areas, with notes on the distribution of those races recorded in the British Isles. Assisted transatlantic passage, if not too obvious, is acceptable; the Hastings Rarities are not.

British and Irish distribution is given in some detail, with an indication of relative abundance. This section owes a great deal to the work of J. L. F. Parslow. Separate paragraphs outline breeding, passage and vagrant status. The basis was a special BOU enquiry as long ago as 1964/65, but other sources have been used, with records to the end of 1968 included; 1969 and 1970 are surveyed in an appendix by I. J. Ferguson-Lees and Dr J. T. R. Sharrock.

The basis on which Whooper Swans are reported to have bred in Scotland in 1968 is unknown to the author of the 1968 Scottish Bird Report or the editors of *Scottish Birds*; unless satisfactory details are published, such imprecise records of rarities are merely tantalising and likely to be ignored by future workers.

Species in the main list are categorised according to whether they have been recorded in the past 50 years (the main category, A), or only before that (B), or have been successfully introduced (C). A fourth category (D), listed separately, embraces a small selection of possible escapes and unestablished introductions, but is intended also for ship-assisted waifs and tideline corpses—not to be forgotten, but the selection is somewhat arbitrary and of uncertain value.

The English names, unlike those in the 1952 list, conform to current usage. One notes *Red Kite* with approval (*Grey Heron* is not yet in), and the spelling of *Greylag Goose* with interest (farewell to the old idea of the *Grey Lag Goose*). *Scarlet Grosbeak* or *Scarlet Rosefinch* or now *Common Rosefinch* remains a muddle.

The members of the BOU Records Committee were mainly not specialists in taxonomy, and it was decided, disastrously, that the BOU Council should deal with matters of nomenclature and sequence. After protracted and heated controversy, which seriously delayed publication, it was decided to follow Vaurie's nomenclature (with variations) and Peters's sequence (with variations). In general the scientific nomenclature will be acceptable. Mistakes in original orthography (i.e. spelling) have been corrected, though the 1952 spellings are retained for *White-tailed Eagle* and *Jack Snipe*, despite *Ibis* 98: 168.

It is the sequence adopted that has aroused such universal opposition. The 1952 list was by no means perfect (with, for instance, the type species listed first in each genus regardless of their natural affinities),

but ultimately it was very widely adopted in this country (and notably by editors of the numerous local bird reports). For anyone seeking or collating records this is most convenient, as one knows at once where to look. Although the sequence in which species are listed is normally intended to indicate their affinities, it is not so much a matter of scientific fact as a man-made tool. There is no absolute need to use one sequence rather than another, and there is therefore the most powerful argument for not altering an established sequence unnecessarily. Frequent changes are highly inconvenient and the view is widely and strongly held that until international agreement can be reached on a European (or Holarctic, or World) sequence we should retain the 1952 sequence. Two BTO conferences of local bird report editors passed strong resolutions to that effect.

Despite all warnings and opposition, even from its own authors, the BOU Council has gone ahead with its new sequence, thereby attracting fundamental criticism and demands that some other body should be responsible for future lists. One regrets the need for this criticism of an otherwise useful and well presented volume, but the new sequence only adds to the existing confusion of sequences, so pointedly described in a letter to *British Birds* (64: 130), and it seems likely to be largely ignored, thereby sadly damaging the scientific authority and standing of the BOU. The BTO has produced a revised version of the 1952 sequence (*A Species List of British and Irish Birds*, BTO Guide 13), which though unsatisfactory in various details is likely to be widely followed.

ANDREW T. MACMILLAN.

The Swans. By Peter Scott and the Wildfowl Trust. London, Michael Joseph, 1972. Pp. x + 242; 48 plates, many text illustrations. 26 x 21 cm. £4.20.

This is a prestige publication by the Wildfowl Trust, describing much of the existing knowledge about all swans throughout the world. It is authoritative and comprehensive, and is profusely and beautifully illustrated, with many line drawings by several artists in addition to nearly 50 excellent and well chosen photographs. There is a colour frontispiece by Peter Scott. The chapters are written by different authorities from within the Trust, edited by George Atkinson-Willes, with the birds' classification described by Hugh Boyd, sections on distribution, behaviour, food and causes of death partly or wholly by Malcolm Ogilvie, Janet Kear, Myrfyn Owen and John Beer. Some of these authors contributed to more than one chapter. These scientific sections are supplemented by three others on art and mythology by Mary Evans and Andrew Dawnay, on exploitation by Andrew Dawnay, and on conservation by Geoffrey Matthews. There are nine factual appendices, and a useful bibliography of 350 titles. A nicely written introduction by Peter Scott in his typically lucid style describes his experiences with swans and especially the Trust's well known recent studies on the Bewick's Swans at Slimbridge.

The book's main achievement is to bring together, critically but rather briefly, comparable information on many aspects of the biology and mythology of swans on a world scale in a style acceptable to both scientist and general ornithologist. Much of this information was previously inaccessible to most of us. The chapters on mythology and exploitation, running to 34 pages, will interest many whose attention may wander in the sections on classification and disease. However, with a publication of this sort the reviewer will inevitably ask for whom it is intended. The price is high, and whose shelves will the book adorn? Are the people interested in biology sufficiently interested in a polished product to pay

£4.20 for this kind of book? Are people interested in mythology also interested in science at this price? The book undoubtedly enhances the prestige of the Trust, but will the eloquent message of conservation by Professor Matthews fall mainly on the ears of the already converted? I am sure that members of the SOC will enjoy the book and will learn much from it, but many (and not only Scotsmen) may hope that time may transform this swan into an ugly pelican or penguin.

DAVID JENKINS.

Gulls in Britain. By Richard Vaughan. London, H. F. and G. Witherby, 1972. Pp. 96; 54 black-and-white plates. 25 x 19 cm. £1.75.

This is basically a picture book, including photographs of our six common species in all sorts of postures, striking, interesting and sometimes even new, plus portraits of two scarcer species for good measure. The text that fills some of the space between the pictures recounts some better known statements about the birds without adding many new ones, and there are 50 references at the end. The level of accuracy is rather higher than usual in such works, but some old chestnuts are repeated: the "immature" Common Gulls are approaching breeding condition; the Kittiwakes at Lowestoft are not the only ones breeding between Flamborough Head and the Isle of Wight, as a good many observant Channel-crossers should be aware; and Franklin's Gull is not the only transequatorial migrant in the group, being greatly outdistanced by Sabine's Gull. It is also a pity that the author seems to have overlooked some of the more outstanding recent major works such as those by Borodulina and N. G. Smith.

W. R. P. BOURNE.

Handbook of the Birds of Cyprus and Migrants of the Middle East. By D. A. and W. Mary Bannerman. Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1971. Pp. xvi + 237; 27 coloured plates. 23½ x 15½ cm. £3.

This good book is somewhat of a mystery; ostensibly an amplification of the authors' 1958 work, it is most useful in containing all the valuable information of the intervening years, which greatly clarifies the breeding distribution and occasional occurrences of birds in the island. As the authors gracefully acknowledge, this new material comes from the Cyprus Ornithological Society, but why the book, for the use of Cypriots and of visitors, has not been confined to 100 pages or so and priced at 50 new pence or so is odd.

There are also new illustrations, but for purposes of bird identification the islanders will have to look elsewhere: the present reviewer (who knows both species well) had to read the text opposite to find out what the pictures of Red-breasted Flycatcher and Spectacled Warbler were meant to be.

The standards of identification are a little old-fashioned, and I do not take it as a compliment to be told that I cannot identify a Chiffchaff unless I hear it sing. One must attribute to a slip of the pen the statement that the Ruff "is strikingly smaller than his mate".

Where the Bannermans really come into their own and show all their experience and skill is in the introductory chapters to the different avian families. For the general reader, who perhaps has no particular interest in Cyprus and may never feel inclined to go there, these are absolutely masterly, but we must still doubt whether Archbishop Makarios will ever learn to identify the Spectacled Warbler.

M.F.M.M.

The Birds of Zambia. C. W. Benson, R. K. Brooke, R. J. Bowsett & M. P. S. Irwin. London, Collins, 1971. Pp. 414; 12 colour plates, 8 black-and-white plates. 19½ x 13 cm. £2.50.

The design of the dustcover and the layout of the text and illustrations tend to create a first impression that this is a field guide. In fact, it is not an identification book but a check list, giving surprisingly comprehensive notes on habitat, status, distribution, breeding records and migration of Zambia's 700 bird species. The colour plates are excellent, though only 120 species are illustrated.

Appendices include a bibliography, a gazeteer, records of ringing recoveries, a series of distribution maps and lists of scientific and English names.

T. DELANEY.

A Guide to the Birds of South America. By Rodolphe Meyer de Schauensee. Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1971. Pp. xiv + 470; 31 colour plates, 19 black-and-white plates; 22 text illustrations. 23½ x 16 cm. £7.00.

In his introduction the author rightly points to the need of the ornithologically minded traveller for a handy illustrated guide to the birds of South America; although it is stated that the book was written with this need in mind, it is a pity that the impressive amount of information it contains is presented in a form that seems unlikely to be of much assistance in the field.

The text lists almost 3000 species in 93 families. For each family there is a general description of its status, distribution, behaviour and appearance, and in most cases an "aid to identification" intended to help sort out the members of the family by an elimination key based on field characters. For each species the entry consists of some highly condensed notes on description, range and habitat. The birds are named in English; scientific names are also given, but Spanish and Portuguese names are not. The 50 plates grouped in the centre of the book illustrate 676 species, of which more than 100 are represented by head-and-shoulders portraits only.

T. DELANEY.

Highland Summer. By Seton Gordon. London, Cassell, 1971. Pp. 182; many line drawings. 22 x 14 cm. £2.10.

This is a collection of some 50 short essays, written, it seems, in the last 15 years. Considering the mental and physical vigour that these imply, it is amazing to realise that Seton Gordon is now in his 85th year.

Most of the pieces and the accompanying drawings concern birds, and *Highland Summer* is a pleasant bedside book for the ornithologist. (Those interested in the mysteries of piping will also enjoy it). The descriptions are plain rather than poetic, and the author is always willing to pause for the sake of accurate observation and information. Eagles are, of course, his passion, but he writes with affection of the other birds that are the regular, though sometimes retiring, inhabitants of the Highlands.

This is an unpretentious book, directed not at the specialist but rather at the lover of things natural and the fast disappearing remoteness.

H.J.L.

A Tangle of Islands. By L. R. Higgins. London, Robert Hale, 1971. Pp. 207; 17 black-and-white plates, 7 maps. 22 x 14 cm. £2.30.

Mr Higgins takes as his subject a series of holidays he spent, sometimes with his family, sometimes alone, on a variety of Scottish islands, including Shetland, St Kilda, the Shiant, and the Summer Isles.

One admires his practical achievement in living alone for weeks at a time on uninhabited islands, but the perpetual lightness of tone is surprising.

Though he is not primarily a naturalist (his previous books, we are told, were on motorcycle racing) he enthusiastically investigates the bird life of all the islands he visits. An appendix lists the birds he saw on the Shiant, the Treshnish Isles and the Summer Isles.

H.J.L.

The World Wildlife Guide. Edited by M. Ross-Macdonald. London, Thresh-old Books, 1971. Pp. 416. 23 x 12 cm. £3.50.

Continent by continent, country by country, this naturalist's Baedeker describes more than 600 sites where the traveller or tourist can see some of the world's wildlife specialties. The sites listed are mainly managed ones, including national parks, nature reserves, sanctuaries and refuges. Details given include a general description, lists of animals, birds and plants to be seen (there are many excellent black-and-white photographs) and information on such practical points as access, accommodation, transport etc. For each continent there is a general introduction and a list of its animals and birds, giving the places where they can be looked for.

Although the list of sites has some important omissions, and fault might be found with the species list, nevertheless the book is an excellent achievement and will prove of value and interest whether the reader is planning a world tour, a package holiday or is merely hoping one day to see a bit more of the world and its creatures.

T. DELANEY.

Request for information

Purple Sandpiper Enquiry As part of the BTO/Hilbre Bird Observatory enquiry on this species, N. K. Atkinson of the Tay Ringing Group has been colour-ringing Purple Sandpipers on the east coast of Scotland. During the spring of 1972 some 51 birds were ringed on the Isle of May, and it is hoped that all observers in Scotland will watch out for colour-ringed individuals of this easily approachable species. The scheme will continue over the next few years. It is requested that records of all sightings, with date, exact place and details of the combination of rings should be sent to: Prof. J. D. Craggs, Dept. of Electrical Engineering and Electronics, Liverpool University, Brownlow Hill, P.O. Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX.

CORRECTIONS

Characteristics of Pheasant x Capercaillie Hybrids. In table 4 (*Scot. Birds* 6: 316) for *Onycophoron* read *Phalangid*.

Communal roosting of Hen Harriers in southwest Scotland. In the legends to figs. 1 and 2, (*Scot. Birds* 7: 28 and 29) the symbols for males and ring-tails are transposed. The dotted line in both figures refers to males and the dashed line to ringtails.

The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 25th Annual Conference and 35th Annual General Meeting will be held in the Hotel Dunblane Hydro, Perthshire, on 27th-29th October 1972. Bookings should be made direct with the hotels. The full programme will be given in the next issue of *Scottish Birds*. The registration fee will be 75p, and the Annual Dinner (with wine or soft drinks) £2.20.

Hotels in Dunblane

Hotel Dunblane Hydro (tel. 0786 82 2551). Special Conference charge £7.85, inclusive of 10% service charge, bed and all meals (except tea on Saturday afternoon and the Annual Dinner) from Friday dinner to Sunday lunch, and after-meal coffee. For less than a full day, bed and breakfast is £2.75, lunch £0.75 and dinner £1.00, all with additional 10% service charge. Rooms with private bathroom have a supplementary charge of £1.00 per room per day.

Ardleighton Hotel (near Hotel Dunblane Hydro gates) (tel. 2273). Bed and Breakfast from £1.50.

Stirling Arms Hotel (tel. 2156). Bed and Breakfast from £2.00.

Hotels in Bridge of Allan

Allan Water Hotel (tel. 2293). Bed and Breakfast from £2.90.

Old Manor Hotel, Henderson Road (tel. 2169). B & B from £2.60-£3.00.

Queen's Hotel, Henderson Road (tel. 3268). B & B from £2.10-£2.40.

Royal Hotel (tel. 2284). B & B from £3.00.

Strathallan Hotel, Henderson Road (tel. 3293). B & B from £1.25-£1.75.

Prices, except for the Conference Hotel, are provisional and should be confirmed when booking.

BRANCH MEETINGS 1972/73

Will members please note that the dates of the first Meetings of Branches next winter will be as follows:

September 26th Edinburgh and Inverness
27th Ayr, Dumfries, St Andrews and Thurso
28th Dundee and Stirling

October 2nd Aberdeen and Glasgow

Ayr Meetings will take place in the Loudoun Hall, Ayr at 7.30 p.m.

Dundee Meetings will take place in the Tower Extension Lecture Theatre, University of Dundee at 7.30 p.m.

The venue and starting times of lectures in all other Branches will be the same as last winter.

AYR BRANCH WINTER EXCURSIONS - 1972

Sunday 8th October. IRVINE FLATS. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr 1 p.m. or Bogside Racecourse Stand 1.30 p.m.

Saturday 4th November. CAERLAVEROCK. Coach leaves Wellington Square, Ayr 9 a.m. Bring picnic lunch. Book with Ayr Branch Secretary (see below) by 30th September.

Saturday 2nd December. PRESTWICK-NEWTON on AYR SHORE. Meet west end of Maryborough Road, Prestwick 1.30 p.m.

For further details, including Leaders of the excursions, contact the Ayr Branch Secretary, R. M. Ramage, 57B St Quivox Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire KA9 1JF (tel. Prestwick 79192). Send s.a.e. if writing.

DUNDEE BRANCH WINTER EXCURSIONS - 1972

Sunday 8th October 1972 ISLE OF MAY (weather permitting). Leader : P. N. J. Clark. Applications with s.a.e. and boat fare, £1.00, to Mrs Ann Noltie by 26th September. Money refunded if weather causes cancellation.

Sunday 12th November LOCH LEVEN NATURE CENTRE. Leader : J. E. Forrest.

Sunday 10th December TENTSMUIR. Leader : B. Pounder.

All excursions leave City Square, Dundee at 10 a.m. For further details contact the Dundee Branch Secretary, Mrs A. Noltie, 14 Menteith Street, Broughty Ferry, Dundee DD5 3EN (tel. 0382 75074). Send s.a.e. if writing.

Wildfowl Counts in Scotland

For more than 20 years the task of running the winter Wildfowl Counts in Scotland has been undertaken by a succession of dedicated central organisers, firstly by Miss Rintoul and Miss Baxter, then by Miss Betty Garden, and for the past nine years by Miss Valerie Thom.

Miss Thom resigned at the end of last winter, and in future years there will be no overall Scottish Organiser. During the past two years Miss Thom has arranged for a number of Regional Organisers, and they will now deal direct with the Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge. The Club has agreed to be responsible for appointing Regional Organisers when necessary in the future.

A list of the Regional Organisers is given below, and anyone who is interested in helping with the counts is asked to write to their nearest Organiser.

Shetland L. Johnston, Brake, Bigton, Shetland.

Orkney E. Balfour, Isbister House, Rendall, Orkney.

Caithness P. R. James, 9 Hakon Road, Thurso, Caithness.

Sutherland (West) Dr I. D. Pennie, Varkasaig, Scourie, Sutherland.

Moray Firth C. G. Headlam, Foulis Mains, Evanton, Ross-shire.

Banffshire, Morayshire, Nairnshire J. Edelsten, 14 South High Street, Banffshire, AB4 2NT.

Aberdeenshire, Kincardineshire Dr R. S. Bailey, Cairnaquheen, Torphins, Aberdeenshire, AB3 4JS.

Angus B. Pounder, 64 Forfar Road, Dundee, Angus.

Perthshire (East) Miss V. M. Thom, 19 Braeside Gardens, Perth.

Perthshire (West), Stirlingshire Dr C. J. Henty, 3 The Broich, Alva, Clackmannanshire.

Argyllshire Miss M. P. Macmillan, An Fhuaran, Clachan Seil, Argyllshire.

Fife, Clackmannanshire, Kinross-shire Mrs J. R. Grant, Brackmont, Crail, Fife.

Clyde R. A. Jeffrey, 5 Victoria Road, Paisley, Renfrewshire.

Bute R. Milligan, Estate Office, Rothesay, Bute.

Lothians R. W. J. Smith, 33 Hunter Terrace, Loanhead, Midlothian.

Ayrshire A. G. Stewart, 31 St Andrews Avenue, Prestwick, Ayrshire, KA9 2DY.

Borders Dr J. I. Meikle, Bridgeheugh, Lindean, by Galashiels, Selkirkshire.

Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbrightshire, Wigtownshire R. T. Smith, Applegarthtown, Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

1. General notes (not of sufficient importance to be published on their own as Short Notes) should be sent to the appropriate local recorders for inclusion in their summary for the annual Scottish Bird Report, not to the editor. A list of local recorders is published from time to time, but in cases of doubt the editor will be glad to forward notes to the right person. All other material should be sent to the editor, Tom Delaney, 31 Starbank Road, Edinburgh, EH5 3BY. Attention to the following points greatly simplifies the work of producing the journal and is much appreciated.

2. If not sent earlier, all general notes for January to October each year should be sent to the local recorders early in November, and any for November and December should be sent at the beginning of January. In addition, local recorders will be glad to have brief reports on matters of special current interest at the end of March, June, September and December for the journal. All other material should of course be sent as soon as it is ready.

3. All contributions should be on one side of the paper only. Papers, especially, should be typed if possible, with double spacing. Proofs will normally be sent to authors of papers, but not of shorter items. Such proofs should be returned without delay. If alterations are made at this stage it may be necessary to ask the author to bear the cost.

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

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

DICK, G. & POTTER, J. 1960. Goshawk in East Stirling. *Scot. Birds* 1: 529.
EGGELING, W. J. 1960. *The Isle of May*. Edinburgh and London.

6. English names should follow *The Handbook of British Birds* with the alterations detailed in *British Birds* in January 1953 (46:2-3) and January 1956 (49:5). Initial capitals are used for names of species (e.g. Blue Tit, Long-tailed Tit) but not for group names (e.g. diving ducks, tits). Scientific names should be used sparingly (see editorial *Scottish Birds* 2:1-3) and follow the 1952 B.O.U. *Check-List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland* with the changes recommended in 1956 by the Taxonomic Sub-Committee (*Ibis* 98:158-68), and the 1957 decisions of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (*Ibis* 99:396). When used with the English names they should follow them, underlined to indicate italics, and with no surrounding brackets.

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

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

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

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

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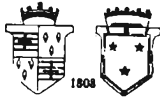
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