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SCOTTISH BIRDS



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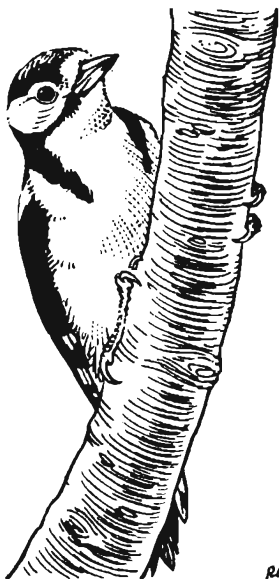
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RSPB Scottish News



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EGG COLLECTING

Eagles in the Highlands again suffered from the attentions of egg collectors. In one relatively small area three eyries were robbed. RSPB staff working with police apprehended four egg collectors and two clutches of eggs were returned to the eyries. One of these eggs hatched and so far the chick is still doing well.

The cases of four egg collectors are not fully concluded but at the time of writing the youngest (18 year old) was fined £400.

FALCONRY

A considerable number of peregrine chicks have been disappearing from eyries all over Britain in the last few weeks and yet again they appear to be changing hands for large sums of money.

This upsurge in chick stealing may well be prompted by the forthcoming new controls on falconry. This year we have recovered more young peregrines than ever before and several prosecutions are pending.

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The RSPB and YOC held a Sponsored Neighbourhood Birdwatch on the 5th May and birdwatchers throughout Scotland and Britain took part. This is a popular and fun way of raising money, and at the latest count nearly £60,000 was raised for the Society's work throughout Britain.



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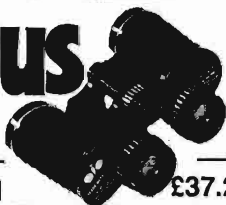
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Vol. 11 No. 3

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Edited by D. J. Bates

White-tailed Eagle reintroduction on the Isle of Rhum

J. A. LOVE

(Plates 9-12)

In 1968 four young White-tailed or Sea Eagles from Norway were set free on Fair Isle in an attempt to re-establish the species in Britain (Dennis 1968). One male disappeared soon afterwards, the other died a year later; the two females left the island during that period (Dennis 1969) but one or both may yet survive.

Seven years later the Nature Conservancy Council decided to repeat the experiment but this time on the Isle of Rhum—an island with several advantages over Fair Isle. Not least is its location in the heart of the species' former range and close to the last known nest in Britain. This is said to have been on Skye in 1916 (Baxter & Rintoul 1953). The last breeding attempt on Rhum was barely a decade earlier in 1907 (Love 1978 and in prep.). Fish are still reasonably plentiful in the waters of the Inner Hebrides, while Rhum itself has respectable colonies of auks, gulls and Shags but relatively few Fulmars. The oil spat out by young Fulmars was instrumental in bringing about the demise of one of the two male Fair Isle Sea Eagles (Dennis 1969). Rhum is especially noted for its extensive mountain-top colonies of Manx Shearwaters, estimated by Wormell (1976) to number over 100,000 pairs. Red Deer (1,500) and feral goats (180) contribute to a seasonal abundance of carrion on the island; there are no sheep, Rabbits nor hares.

Complications and dangers arise in transporting eggs, or implanting either eggs or young into the nests of foster parents (such as Golden Eagles) or even in attempting to catch and translocate established pairs from their breeding territories. It was decided to adopt the technique employed on Fair Isle, essentially that of the falconers' hacking-back. The young are retained until they familiarize themselves with their

new surroundings. Once free they return to the vicinity of their cages and utilize food dumps which are continually replenished. Thus they gradually learn to fend for themselves.

With appropriate licences from the Norwegian authorities and the generous aid first from Dr Johan Willgohs and subsequently from Capt Harald Misund, young aged six to eight weeks are taken from eyries in northern Norway. Latterly it has proved possible to take a single chick from broods of two so that the adults can successfully complete their breeding cycle. The convenient air base at Bodö, together with the kind co-operation of the RAF, permit the swift and safe transport of the chicks to Kinloss in Scotland. From there they are taken by car to Mallaig, and thence by boat to Rhum. This whole journey is completed within 12 hours incurring the minimum of stress to the birds.

Once installed in their individual, paired cages on the remote coast of Rhum, the young are fed on a 'natural' diet of locally-caught fish, gulls and Crows (shot with a rifle) and meat/offal from deer and goats (Love 1979). After a statutory month in quarantine, and a further one or two months in captivity when they would normally be still fully dependent on the parents, the eagles are released. Each is first weighed, measured and provided with a BTO ring on one leg and an individual combination of colour rings on the other. Fuller details of these stages of the operation are presented by Love & Ball (1979).

The first eaglets were imported from Norway to Rhum on 26th June 1975. Unfortunately, the only male died shortly afterwards, apparently from kidney failure. The three females were successfully reared, and the first was released on 27th September. She regularly fed and roosted on top of one of the occupied cages. The second, set free on 29th October, was seen only sporadically but on occasions fed alongside the first. After the final eagle was released on 1st November sightings ranged over a wider area, and about this time the first must have left the island. In mid November she was found dead at Morvern (Argyll) some 60 km to the south, apparently lying under power cables.

The other two females were often seen on Rhum at deer carcasses and grallochs (the discarded entrails of shot deer) until the following February. One returned briefly to the island at the end of April. An immature Sea Eagle seen in Orkney on 6th May 1976 is unlikely to have been from Rhum. One was certainly sighted at Arisaig on the nearby mainland on 3rd August. Presumably it was this bird that returned to Rhum on 9th December and frequented Canna during April and May 1977. It may have moved south, for on 24th February 1978 a Sea Eagle in third-year plumage was seen on Islay and later

the following May just across the water on the Antrim coast of Northern Ireland.

A further ten eaglets were received in June 1976, and eight of them were placed in cages; the other two were held in the open on running tethers. There were several initial problems with this latter technique and on separate occasions that autumn both birds escaped. But by watching them going to roost at night and later dazzling them in a powerful torch beam they were both recaptured in a long net almost immediately.

The first caged pair was released on 23rd November and the female was returning to the food dump within two days; the male was seen only rarely. They were seen feeding together at a deer carcass at the end of January, while in March—three months after their release—they regularly frequented Kilmory Glen in the north of the island.



SEA EAGLE REGURGITATING A PELLET
J. A. Love

A second male was released on 24th January 1977 and another on 28th February: they frequented the food dump for only two or three weeks. A female released on 15th April was prevented altogether from locating the dump by inadvertent human disturbance, persistent mobbing by Crows and by unexpected bad weather: her decomposing remains were washed up on the shore at Canna about one month later. A sixth eagle, another female, was set free on 1st May. She was observed regularly during the succeeding weeks and on 27th May was seen to bathe in the shallows of a freshwater loch. Thereafter sightings of any of the 1976 birds became rare, although two were seen in the Lochailort area during the summer of 1977. On 7th August one was seen at sea between Rhum and Skye, where it landed momentarily on the water amongst a flock of auks.

The remaining caged pair was shifted alongside the tethered pair in a fenced enclosure on the open hill. It was intended

to retain these four until mature and thence to use them in a captive-breeding programme. Any young thus produced would supplement the release of imported young. But on 4th May 1977 a male called Beccan (after a monk who lived on Rhum in the seventh century) made a second escape and thereafter eluded all attempts to recapture him. He did however return periodically to feed with his still-captive siblings, and within a month could capture and kill gulls for himself. He has retained a short length of leather attached to one leg which functions as an excellent recognition feature: thus a detailed picture of his movements has been assembled. Although spotted up to 30 km away he has remained mostly in the immediate vicinity of Rhum. In retrospect his escape has proved a fortuitous event for he has since provided many interesting and exciting interactions with several of the released eagles.

Only four were imported in 1977 and one of these was retained on tethers to replace the escaped Beccan. A pair was released on 18th October but only the female, Vaila, returned to use the food dumps. A radio transmitter weighing about 20 gm was mounted on a tail feather of the other female (weighing 6½ kg). She was released a few days later on 4th November and for five days her movements were followed from dawn to dusk. Thereafter signals became scattered and infrequent but she remained on the island until mid February 1978. Vaila returned to accompany and display to the new releases from 24th November 1978 to January 1979, and again the following winter.

Three males and five females were taken to Rhum in June 1978. Within two weeks one female while engaged in active wing exercises suffered fractures to both tibia. She received treatment at the Glasgow Veterinary College, and then convalesced in—appropriately—Eaglesham, under the care of Mrs Carol Scott and George Watt. On her return to Rhum in October complications arose with swollen wing joints which left her unable to fly properly. She exhibited some improvement when tethered out in the open but ultimately she succumbed during a period of wet and stormy weather in September 1979.

The other seven fledged successfully and the first was released sporting another tail-mounted radio. Beccan reappeared at this time and he sometimes fed alongside the young female. The 29th September was a very stormy day with driving rain and the plumage of the young bird became waterlogged. She had come down to feed alongside the tethered eagles but I managed to catch hold of her when she experienced difficulty clearing the surrounding fence. She fed

in the comfort of her cage and was released a second time three days later. A male which had been released with a radio on 16th September immediately joined up with her. However, one week later both radios suddenly and simultaneously ceased to function, presumably due to leaks in the waterproof casing. The male remained around and associated with the other eagles as they were released during October and November. This flock of up to six with Beccan as its nucleus came to feed alongside the tethered eagles and roosted on a crag nearby. They also quickly located other food: two were found feeding at a deer gralloch within an hour of the beast having been shot.

On one occasion Beccan had to yield food to a noisy and persistent young male: he left the youngster to feed and went off to procure himself a second helping. The 1977 female, Vaila, who had also joined the flock, was similarly harried but she neatly countered by soaring to a height and devouring her prey on the wing! Later one of the youngsters also achieved this feat but with less accomplishment and



SEA EAGLE EATING PREY IN FLIGHT J. A. Love

at a lesser height. The 1978/9 winter was rich in such interactions and despite the prolonged cold weather at least four of the seven new releases remained together in February. They then moved *en masse*, with Beccan, to another locality, where some of them have remained. Beccan himself regularly commutes back to Rhum.

In October 1978 one of the tethered females (then two and a half years old) took ill suddenly with a bacterial or viral infection, and she died a day or so later. About that time too it had been finally decided, for a variety of reasons, to abandon the captive-breeding programme, and to release the remaining three tethered birds. The first male was set free on 8th February, but disappeared almost immediately and must have died soon afterwards: his remains were found two months later on the beach at Canna.

Beccan was soaring above as the only female, Sula, was being freed from her tethers. He stooped at her excitedly, and she responded by flipping over to present talons. She finally came to land, and later bathed in a pool, while Beccan watched nearby. Thereafter Sula remained on the island feeding on seabirds. Catching the occasional Fulmar soon resulted in her acquiring an oily patch on her breast; fortunately constant preening appears to have cleaned it off.

The final tethered male, Ronan, was set free on 24th April 1979 and within six weeks he had killed several gulls, two Eider and a day-old deer calf. Ronan's predatory skills were developed at an early age for, while still in captivity, he caught and killed a Hooded Crow which was boldly stealing scraps within too close a range of the eagle's tethers.

Sula, Ronan and Beccan were present during August and September 1979, while six eaglets (acquired that June) were being released. As in the previous year up to six eagles often associated together and frequently indulged in attempted talon-grappling.



SEA EAGLES TALON-GRAPPLING
J. A. Love

In the summer of 1978 six of the 13 then released could still be accounted for. In February 1979 at least four of the seven released four months previously were known still to be alive. To date a total of 29 Sea Eagles have been released on Rhum—13 males and 16 females. Only three, one male and two females, have been recovered dead—all having died within two months of release, indicating this to be a critical period. But those that successfully utilize the food dumps and survive the first few months would seem to have much better chances of subsequent survival. Fifteen of the 29 have been confidently identified four or more months after their release—some of them as much as three or four years later; others have been seen but not recognized individually. Thus a *minimum* survival of around 50% may not be an unreasonable estimate.

The technique tried and tested on Fair Isle has proved adequate to implant young Sea Eagles into a vacant habitat. Their subsequent survival has been good, and seems to be

enhanced by the presence in the vicinity of the food dumps and of 'decoy' birds awaiting release. The brief period spent in captivity is adequate to imprint at least some of the young upon their release site. It is interesting however that the three most tenacious in this respect were retained on tethers for one to three years. Most of the eagles have eventually left the island but such dispersal is to be expected amongst immatures. It is particularly encouraging that some have since returned and now demonstrate strong attachment to particular areas. All but three of the accepted sightings have been within an 80 km radius of Rhum.

Not only does the gregarious habit of the young bring them back to food dumps located near still captive eagles, but it also attracts them to congregate at natural carrion. In this respect too, Crows and Ravens act as important indicators of a potential food source. The older, more experienced birds have even been recorded giving up food to food-begging youngsters.

The young learn to hunt for themselves at an early age and without any parental example. Their diet contains considerable carrion, mostly deer but also goat, seal and sheep. Over four seasons careful observation on one sheep walk has failed to demonstrate any live lambs being taken. One eagle did kill a day-old deer calf which was known, however, to have been deserted by its mother. On neighbouring islands Rabbits have featured in the diet. There is only one observation of a fish being carried (at an inland freshwater loch) but doubtless the eagles feed on stranded fish or may pirate fish from gulls and Otters, as is frequent in Norway (Willgohs 1961). Live seabirds are an important constituent of the diet—mainly gulls but also Fulmar and Eider. One eagle learnt to snatch Kittiwake chicks by alighting momentarily on the nest ledges. The eagles are frequently seen to chase Crows, and Crow feathers have been found in pellets. Thus it has been shown that the western seaboard of Scotland is still eminently capable of sustaining Sea Eagles.

However, one or two problems remain to be overcome. Since the Sea Eagle ceased to breed in Britain many territories have become tenanted by Golden Eagles. Frequent mobbing by this smaller but more aggressive species has failed to deter the Rhum Sea Eagles however. At present coastal Golden Eagles are experiencing poor reproductive success so this may prove an opportune moment to replace them with Sea Eagles. The main cause, which is shared with coastal Peregrines, appears to be an accumulation of DDT and PCBs through the marine food chain, until the top predators receive doses sufficient to impair breeding (Corkhill 1980). This of

course immediately raises a doubt as to whether the reintroduced Sea Eagle will be able to breed normally. But perhaps it may prove less vulnerable since part of its diet—fish—is derived from lower down the food chain, and terrestrial carrion forms a very important constituent of its diet. There are also indications that pollutions levels may be ameliorating slightly, for on Rhum Peregrines are poised to make a comeback, and in 1977 five pairs of Golden Eagles (instead of the usual four) succeeded in rearing an unprecedented total of three young.

The young Sea Eagles show a strong tendency to interact with one another, and frequently attempt to talon-grapple even on their maiden flight. Not surprisingly it is the older birds that are most accomplished and are now completing the whole manoeuvre of screaming, interlocking talons in mid air, tumbling and disengaging. During the autumn of 1979 and the ensuing spring one or two of the older eagles have been observed carrying an occasional stick to ledges on sea cliffs but have yet to reach full adulthood. Sea Eagles will attain sexual maturity at an age of about five years. Those seen regularly on Rhum or its vicinity include two males and a female each four years of age, and a female aged three. The signs are indeed encouraging that the ultimate goal of the reintroduction project is in sight—that Sea Eagles will once again breed upon our shores.

Postscript Eight chicks arrived on 23rd June 1980 for release this autumn, and importations are planned to continue for several years.

Acknowledgments

The project team consists of Dr J. M. Boyd, M. E. Ball, J. A. Love and R. T. Sutton of the Nature Conservancy Council, Dr I. Newton of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology and R. H. Dennis of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Many others have been involved but in particular we should like to thank Capt Harald Misund, Dr J. F. Willgoos, RAF Kinloss, M. Williams, Mrs C. Scott, G. Watt, Dr M. Marquiss, P. Corkhill and R. L. Swann. The World Wildlife Fund gave financial assistance in 1979-80.

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J. A. Love, Bayview, Isle of Rhum, Inverness-shire

Isle of May Bird Observatory and Field Station report for 1979

Prepared for the Observatory Committee by J. M. S. ARNOTT,
Honorary Secretary

The Observatory was manned from 21st March to 30th October, with the exception of short periods in April and May. Dr M. P. Harris, Mark Tasker and others helpfully supplied observations for these periods and at other times. During the year 147 species were observed, ten down on 1978, and including two new birds for the island, Sabine's Gull and Gyrfalcon.* Other rarities included Pomarine Skua, Roseate Tern, Richard's Pipit*, Marsh Warbler, Icterine Warbler, Subalpine Warbler,* Red-breasted Flycatcher, Scarlet Rosefinch,* and Little Bunting.* A record number of Puffins was ringed, and a record passage of Redwings was seen in the autumn. A pair of Common Terns attempted to breed for the first time since 1957. Tape luring at night revealed the presence of a considerable number of Storm Petrels in August.

Migration highlights

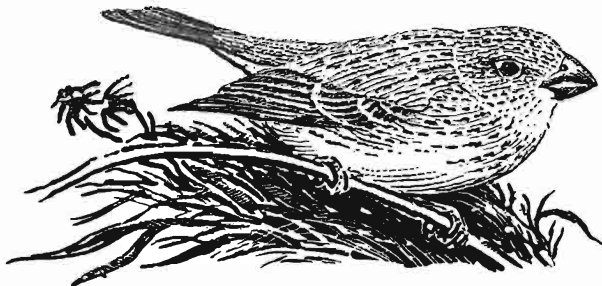
With only a few exceptions in the autumn, migration was on a rather small scale in 1979. After a slow start in spring a slight passage started on 8th April when the northerly winds backed easterly, and this built up on 11th to 200 Blackbirds and 200 Redwings. A white Gyrfalcon* was observed on 13th, and was seen to kill a Puffin. On 16th two Stock Doves arrived, the first of 19 throughout the year, following 14 in 1978 and a gap before that to 1962. There was a small fall on 11th May, a calm, misty day, with 70 Willow Warblers, 15 Wheatears, six Whinchats, four Whitethroats, and the first Grasshopper Warbler and Blackcap. This small movement continued through the westerly winds of 12th and 13th with up to 30 Wheatears, five Tree Pipits, two Yellow Wagtails, two Ring Ouzels and two Cuckoos. The only other highlights of an exceptionally quiet May was the arrival of a Subalpine Warbler* on 23rd, together with three Spotted Flycatchers which were

*Indicates subject to acceptance.

generally down in numbers this year. There were no Pied Flycatchers in spring, and no Wrynecks all year.

The autumn migration began in style with the unusually high number of 154 Swifts on 28th July. On 4th August a Pomarine Skua was seen chasing Kittiwakes along the cliffs, and that night five Storm Petrels were mistnetted with a tape lure at Pilgrims' Haven. In the past these have been seen only very occasionally on the May, and never in August, but during the following week 17 others were caught, one of them previously ringed on the Summer Isles (Wester Ross), and four more were seen. Sixteen of the trapped birds had well formed brood patches, some of them well vascularized. The nearest known colony of Storm Petrels on the east coast is in Orkney, and it now seems possible that there is a colony in the Firth of Forth, perhaps on the Bass Rock.

Returning waders built up to 361 Purple Sandpipers on 16th August and 347 Turnstones on 23rd. Also among waders the high number of 20 Whimbrels passed through on 13th, and two Black-tailed Godwits on 21st. Passerine migration was light until 25th August when about 30 Willow Warblers arrived together with small numbers of Garden Warblers, Whitethroats, Pied Flycatchers, Whinchats and an Icterine Warbler. Passage the following day included 250 Manx Shearwaters and 200 Swallows, and a Scarlet Rosefinch* and one of four autumn Wood Warblers arrived. The 27th had at least ten Sooty Shearwaters, two Little Gulls and, for the second year in succession, a Budgerigar.



SCARLET ROSEFINCH Donald Watson

Meadow Pipit passage peaked at 1,220 on 19th September with a steady stream of birds flying over against a moderate westerly wind in the early morning. Again with a westerly wind, but following strong southeasterlies the previous day, the thrush migration began in earnest on 5th October with over 1,000 each of Song Thrushes and Redwings flying over throughout the day. At least 1,000 Bramblings, 100

Skylarks and 100 Siskins were also seen, as well as 20 Reed Buntings, a Little Stint, an Osprey, and a Yellow-browed Warbler. The wind was from the southeast for the following week but this produced only a slight passage in good visibility, including a Sabine's Gull on 9th, until 13th, a day of poor visibility, when over 10,000 Redwings passed over the island. This exceeded the previous record in a day of 8,000 in 1978. There were also several hundred other thrushes and finches present. Another large number of Redwings occurred on 22nd October, again with southeasterly winds, when over 4,000 arrived, together with 2,000 Blackbirds, 200 Bramblings and 180 Robins.

Passage dates of some migrants

Sooty Shearwater 14 Aug-28 Sep, 10 on 27 Aug.
Manx Shearwater 5 Aug-28 Sep, 119 on 7 Aug, 250 on 26 Aug.
Arctic Skua Singles 1st and 23 July, 4 Aug on, 14 on 26 Sep.
Great Skua Singles on 10th and 19 July, 4 Aug-20 Oct.
Sand Martin 11 May-6 Jun; 26 Aug-27 Sep, 47 on 9 Sep.
Swallow One 18 Apr, 6 May-22 Oct, 200 on 26 Aug.
House Martin 13 May-20 Jun; 15 Aug-18 Oct, 145 on 18 Sep.
Tree Pipit 5-29 May; 11 Aug-19 Oct.
Meadow Pipit To 20 May, 200 on 11-12 Apr; 2 Sep on, 1,220 on 19 Sep.
Redstart 15 Apr-30 May; 2 Sep-27 Oct.
Wheatear 3 Apr-16 Jun, 50 on 13 May; 4 Jul-15 Oct.
Blackbird To 26 Apr; 22 Sep on, 2,000 on 22 Oct.
Fieldfare To 19 May; 1 Oct on, 300 on 13 Oct.
Song Thrush To 16 Apr; 27 Sep on, 1,000 on 5 Oct.
Redwing To 20 Apr; 30 Sep on, 10,000+ on 13 Oct.
Sedge Warbler 14 May-8 Jun; 31 Jul-30 Sep.
Whitethroat 11 May-18 Jun; 18 Aug-8 Oct.
Garden Warbler 19 May-6 Jun; 9 Aug-27 Oct.
Blackcap 11-17 May; 21 Sep on, 50 on 2-4 Oct.
Chiffchaff 26 Mar-28 Jun; 8 Sep on, 20 on 13 Oct.
Willow Warbler 15 Apr-27 Jun, 70 on 11 May; 27 Jul-7 Oct.
Spotted Flycatcher 23 May-25 Jun; 12 Aug-6 Oct.
Pied Flycatcher None in spring; 17 Aug-6 Oct.

Unusual occurrences

Storm Petrel 26 during 4-10 Aug, most in any year.
Osprey One 5 Oct.
Gyrfalcon* One 13 Apr.
Water Rail One 3 Oct.
Woodcock 40 on 26 Oct.
Black-tailed Godwit 2 on 21 Aug.
Whimbrel 20 on 13 Aug.
Spotted Redshank One 2 Aug.
Pomarine Skua Singles 4-9 Aug, 17 Sep.
Sabine's Gull One 9 Oct.
Glaucous Gull Singles 22 Mar, 15 Oct.
Roseate Tern One 30 Jun, first since 1966.
Common Tern One pair attempted breeding, first since 1957.
Black Tern One 7 Sep.
Little Auk One 20 Apr.
Richard's Pipit* One 2-5 Oct.

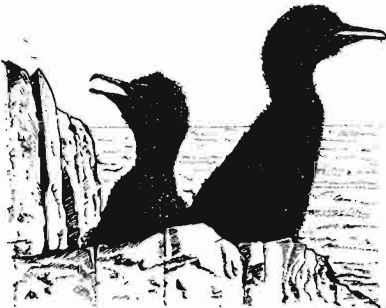
Meadow Pipit 1,220 on 19 Sep.
 Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava* One 29 May, first since 1970.
 Nightingale One 31 May.
 Bluethroat One 17 May.
 Redwing 10,000+ on 13 Oct.
 Marsh Warbler Singles 10th and 13 Jun.
 Icterine Warbler One 25-27 Aug.
 Subalpine Warbler* One 23 May-1 Jun.
 Yellow-browed Warbler 2 on 30 Sep-2 Oct, one 5th and 10 Oct.
 Red-breasted Flycatcher One 17 Oct.
 Common Crossbill One 26-27 Oct, first since 1962.
 Scarlet Rosefinch* One 26 Aug.
 Little Bunting* One 4 Oct.

Rarities in 1978

The records marked with an asterisk in the 1978 report as being subject to acceptance have all been accepted by the *British Birds Rarities Committee*. They were Thrush Nightingale on 6-8 May, Rustic Bunting on 22-24 May, and Yellow-breasted Bunting on 6 September.

Breeding population (all numbers refer to pairs)

Thorough counts by Hector Galbraith and Mark Tasker produced totals of 108 Fulmars and 978 Shags, both up on previous years, and 4,940 Kittiwakes. Three pairs of Shelducks



SHAG CHICKS *Andrew Dowell*

bred and two broods were seen, but the other breeding duck, the Eider, had a bad year. Only 12 young were seen in late July from 286 nests. There were 25 Oystercatchers, and for the fourth year running Lapwings bred. There were six nests with only five males, but no fledged chicks were seen. The annual cull of Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls was undertaken by NCC staff in early June. For the first time since 1957 a pair of Common Terns attempted to breed. One egg was seen at the late date of 27th June, but it disappeared. Other breeding birds were Razorbills, Guillemots, Puffins, feral Rock Doves, Swallows (three), Song Thrush (one), Pied Wagtails (three double-brooded, 24 fledged young), Meadow Pipit (one double-brooded), and Rock Pipits, still depressed at eight.

Ringling

The ringing total of 4,450 (1978 4,995) reflected the lower numbers of migrants, and included another record total of Puffins at 1,993. Since 1973 10,711 Puffins have been ringed. Storm Petrels (22) were ringed for the first time and other unusual captures were Sparrowhawk, Treecreeper, Marsh Warbler, Subalpine Warbler,* and Red-breasted Flycatcher. A record number of 581 Blackbirds was ringed, and other high totals were Fulmar (50), Shag (443), and Long-eared Owl (seven). The lowest figures for many years were recorded for Wren, Fieldfare, Whinchat, Goldcrest, and Pied Flycatcher.

Recoveries

During the year 201 recoveries of 16 species were reported, though 89 of these resulted from culls of gulls on the May and the Farnes. The 44 Shag recoveries followed the usual east coast pattern with the exception of one in Arran and one in Holland. Most of the 14 Puffin recoveries were local, but one was from France and for the first time one came from the west coast at Glenelg. A selection of recoveries follows, with the age code in brackets:

	Ringed	Recovered	
Lesser Black-backed			
Gull (1)	16. 6.76	20. 5.79	Tetouan, Morocco.
Herring Gull (1)	3. 7.72	17.11.79	Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.
Meadow Pipit (2)	3.10.76	28.11.79	Seville, Spain (shot).
Robin (4)	16.10.78	18.10.78	Spurn Point, Yorks (controlled).
Redstart (4)	22.10.79	31.10.79	Seaford, Sussex.
Blackbird (3)	13.10.72	25. 1.79	Colwyn Bay, Denbigh.
Blackbird (3)	12.10.78	21.10.79	Sund, Hordaland, Norway.
Sedge Warbler (4)	29. 5.78	27. 5.79	Edinburgh (controlled, breeding).
Blackcap (3)	15.10.78	18.10.78	Tjome, Vestfold, Norway.
Blackcap (2)	22. 9.76	8. 2.79	Tizi Ouzou, Algeria.
Brambling (2)	14.10.75	17.10.79	Stockholm, Sweden.

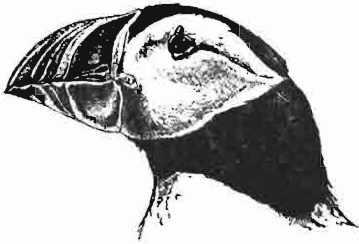
The Storm Petrel controlled on the May on 7.8.79 was ringed on Priest Island, Summer Isles, on 16.8.78.

Research

Dr M. P. Harris of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology continued his long-term study of the Puffin colony, and the Psychology Department of St Andrews University their work on the behaviour of gulls and Puffins. Dr J. L. S. Cobb of St Andrews University supervised a further monitoring study of marine fauna. The NCC's summer Reserve Warden, Mark Tasker, monitored the breeding populations of birds and contributed many useful records to the observatory. To him and

to those other observers who made thorough and accurate records of their observations or who helped in other ways our thanks are due. And it is a pleasure once again to thank our boatman Mr Jim Smith and the Principal Lightkeepers and their staff for their great help.

*J. M. S. Arnott, East Redford House,
Redford Road, Edinburgh, EH13 0AS*



PUFFIN *Keith Brockie*

Birdwatching on the Forth estuary

D. M. BRYANT

It is unlikely that much of the Forth estuary (as distinct from the maritime firth beyond Queensferry) will ever be designated an area of outstanding natural beauty. Fortuitous combinations of earth banking or trees (or mist!) may allow an occasional illusion of wilderness but even a casual glance will usually betray its true character: an industrial landscape. Tall chimneys and massive cranes are obvious to travellers crossing either the famous Forth Bridges which lie at the eastern boundary of the estuary or the Kincardine Bridge in the middle reaches. Plumes of smoke come from power stations, the petrochemical industry, and factories, which along with mining and Grangemouth docks are the foci of industrial activity in the area.

Amidst all this human activity, wildlife can be found and enjoyed. The sight of a mixed flock of Pintail and Shelduck silhouetted at dusk against the flares of the petrochemical works has many elements of the classic scenes of wildfowl at sunset but with less of a taint of cliché. As with all estuaries, a knowledge of tides can make all the difference between success and failure. Visits to the Forth estuary are most productive during the six hours spanning high water.

Summer has rather little to offer visitors apart from Yellow Wagtails in the Grangemouth area, and Common Terns and Shelduck scattered as breeding birds. By July, how-

ever, moulting and passage waders can be seen and Shelduck have begun to congregate at Kinneil. The most rewarding months for birds are August-September and January-February and the main interest the waders and ducks. Rare birds are not a speciality of the area but they have included King Eider, Green-winged Teal, Spoonbill, Gull-billed Tern, Pectoral Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint and Lesser Golden Plover in recent years.

The tidal Forth begins above Stirling, although the river is not generally saline at this point and merely backs up at high water. Not generally rich in this reach it does nevertheless attract flocks of duck when nearby fresh waters freeze over. Goosanders, Goldeneye, Pochard and Tufted Ducks gather at Cornton just to the west of the Auld Brig in the town centre and to the east by the Abbey at Cambuskenneth. Downriver between Stirling and Alloa around 100 Whooper Swans feed on riverside fields and often roost on the river by the disused mine at Manorneuk.

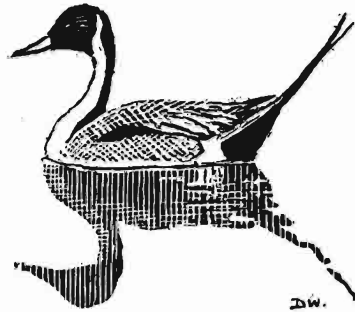
At nearby Tullibody Island and along the Baneath foreshore many wildfowl gather during the winter. The hard spell in early 1979 saw upwards of 3,000 ducks and geese, with Goosanders and Tufted Duck prominent, illustrating the importance of the site as a winter refuge. Formerly of international importance as a refuge for Teal, numbers have declined with the clean-up of the Cambus Distillery effluent: an example of the dynamic effect of industry on wildlife, so conspicuous on the estuary as a whole and deserving more study by birdwatchers. A good way to see the birds near Tullibody Island is to walk eastwards along the north bank of the Forth from the village of Cambus (where a cul-de-sac allows easy access to the riverside) along to the old railway bridge which now serves on occasions as a populous roost for up to 100 Cormorants.

Until recently, the mouth of the River Black Devon was an excellent spot for migrant waders. Sadly it has been embanked for dumping rubbish and its important function as a nursery for Shelduck has been lost. On the estuary as a whole, reclamation poses the greatest threat to the viability of the area. Between Alloa and Kincardine Bridge the mudbanks and river are best viewed from the southern sea wall by walking westwards from the bridge. Geese, ducks and waders occur in surroundings relatively free of industry which makes for a good compromise between birdwatching and a healthy stroll.

Skinflats, a reserve of the RSPB, lies between Kincardine Bridge and Grangemouth Docks. Over the past decade it has gathered an impressive species list, numbering over 140, and with wader numbers often exceeding 10,000 it must be reck-

oned the best birdwatching site on the estuary. The sea wall is an excellent vantage point on flow and ebb tides. At high water, however, care should be taken to avoid disturbing the waders roosting on the saltmarsh. Skinflats is a good site for plovers at migration times with Grey and Ringed numbered in hundreds and Golden Plovers in thousands. Raptors are frequent and include Kestrel, Sparrowhawk, Merlin, Peregrine and Short-eared Owl. Twite and occasionally Snow Buntings can be found on the seaward side of the wall and Corn Buntings behind. The saline lagoons lying just behind the embankment at the southern end of Skinflats appear ideal for passage waders but have tended to be rather disappointing in recent years even though records from the late sixties were outstanding. By taking a car from the centre of Grangemouth along the West Docks Road excellent views of the large flocks of Shelduck, Knot, Redshank and Dunlin can be expected.

To the southeast of Grangemouth Docks the Grangeburn empties into the Forth via a partly enclosed pan. It is one of the most reliable autumn sites for Curlew Sandpipers when rising tides herd feeding waders into the burn mouth or encourage them to roost on the adjacent reclaimed land. Telescope watching from the East Docks Road can reveal a wide variety of ducks, including Red-breasted Merganser and Pintail on the open pools, and perhaps also a Merlin or Kestrel perched on a prominent stake, or Snipe and Shoveler on the reed fringed pool within the docks area.



PINTAIL *Donald Watson*

The best views of Kinneil mudflats, which lie between the docks and Bo'ness, are from the southern boundary. Access is via the sewage works track, which runs north from the main Bo'ness-Grangemouth Road. Large flocks of Great Crested Grebes are present in autumn and late winter, a flock of Scaup is frequent and Shelduck can be seen the year round. The tightly packed autumn moulting flock, with over 2,000



PLATES 9-12. White-tailed Eagles on Rhum (p. 65).

J. A. Love

PLATE 9 (above) 4th year ♂ (Ronan), December 1979.

PLATE 10 (overleaf) (a) 4th year, ♀ (Sula) in flight, March 1980. (b) The same bird in 3rd year plumage, January 1979.

PLATE 11 (a) 3rd year ♀ (Colla), August 1978. (b) ♂ (Ronan) in 3rd year plumage, January 1979.

PLATE 12. 1st year ♂ (Beccan), July 1976.

In flight the outline differs from Golden Eagle by more massive, squarer wings, wedge-shaped tail, and well projecting head. The bill too is bigger. The tail becomes white when adult.







Shelduck shoulder to shoulder, is as thrilling a sight as their high tide flights from the feeding grounds to the dockside roost in winter. The small sewage settling tank just to the east of the Avon mouth is attractive to stints, Ruffs and Common Sandpipers in autumn and the large enclosure nearby is a good viewpoint for waders. It is not unusual to see over 5,000 waders here in winter, mostly Knot and Dunlin.

In some years, when several thousands of terns, mainly Common and Sandwich, have come to the estuary after breeding, the plunging and chasing of six species of terns and three species of skuas is especially spectacular. Arctic, Roseate and Little all occur at Kinneil, although Skinflats is the best for Black Terns. Little and Glaucous gulls are also seen regularly in the Grangemouth area, although the most reliable site is Longannet on the north shore.

Blackness Castle overlooks a sandy bay to its east, where a good selection of shorebirds may be seen. Usually more impressive, however, in terms of the number and variety of waders and ducks, is Torry Bay on the north shore. This area can be worked well by foot or visited more fleetingly by car. The track along the northern perimeter gives excellent views of the foreshore: rocky, sandy and muddy in different parts. Mallard, Wigeon, Red-breasted Merganser, Redshank, Curlew, Knot, godwits (Bar- and Black-tailed) and Dunlin are the most conspicuous but all of the more frequent estuarine species will generally be found. The *Zostera* beds scattered across the bay are exploited by the Wigeon flocks and have recently attracted Brent Geese in small numbers. To the east of Torry Bay, the foreshore is built up yet pleasant and attracts small numbers of most species, although Turnstone and Oystercatcher are the most noteworthy.

Immediately adjacent to the Forth Road Bridge is a reed covered marsh, attractive to dabbling ducks and roosting waders, known as Cultness or St Mary's Hope. It was the site of Europe's first Wilson's Phalarope, and among commoner waders, Ruffs are regular. Its attractiveness to wading birds appears to have declined recently: perhaps it is a site which deserves active management to encourage passage, wintering and breeding birds.

Two very important wader roosts lie on the north shore of the Forth between Torry Bay and Kincardine Bridge: the ash settling pans of Kincardine and Longannet Power Stations. It is necessary to obtain permits to visit these sites but at high water on spring tides they can hold many thousands of waders and provide rewarding views of flighting and resting flocks. The ash pans of Longannet Power Station (lying off Culross Village) also regularly hold over 1,000 Sandwich Terns roost-

ing in autumn and raptors are regular in their pursuit of the finch flocks which feed on the sparse vegetation.

Large groups of Cormorants gather near the Forth bridges. Similar dense flocks can be seen diving near Kincardine Bridge and hundreds frequently move into the upper estuary near Alloa for a short period. All movements appear to be related to the run of the tide but much work needs to be done to understand exactly what is going on. Seabirds such as Kittiwakes, Gannets and Manx Shearwaters also come into the estuary during gales. The relationship between wind direction, strength, time of year and the species occurring would make a valuable study. Closely linked to this question, and perhaps most intriguing of all, is the overland movement of seabirds. There is good evidence that Kittiwakes, Gannets, skuas, Fulmars and others fly westwards from the Skinflats area, but the conditions under which this occurs and the reasons for it remain obscure.

These and many other questions will undoubtedly remain to provide a background to any birdwatcher's visit to the estuary, providing of course that the estuary itself and its wildlife are not destroyed. There is intense pressure from industrial concerns to reclaim land in the most important part of the estuary, the Grangemouth area, and the threat of oil and other forms of pollution is always present.

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Short Notes

Black Stork in Outer Hebrides

On 27th August 1974 in North Uist (Outer Hebrides) my wife and I met a birdwatcher who described an 'odd heron-like bird' he had just been watching at Vallay Strand. Being convinced from his description that the bird must have been a Black Stork we immediately went to the spot but despite an extensive search could not find it. We did establish however that what must have been the same bird had been seen the previous evening (26th) by the local postman. We eventually caught up with the bird on 30th August feeding in a small reeded loch 3km southeast of Grenetote. Identification as an adult Black Stork was immediate by size, shape and plumage.

Description Head, neck, upper breast, back and wings glossy black with greenish sheen particularly noticeable on mantle and wing coverts. Remaining underparts white, just extending around carpal joints in a small notch. Long legs deep red; bill also deep red and giving impression of being very slightly upturned due to straight upper edge

of upper mandible but curving lower edge of lower mandible; narrow patch of bare red skin extending from bill just around eye.

When seen briefly in flight the wings seemed both longer and narrower than those of White Stork. The plumage generally was very fresh and the soft parts brightly coloured, thereby showing no signs of being an escape from captivity. The bird fed by wading through water about 30cm deep with slow, deliberate steps, occasionally shooting its bill into the water; it never kept still like a heron. Whenever a small fish was caught it would carry it to dry land to adjust its head first for swallowing. On one occasion when a fish was caught in the centre of the pond the stork flew to the bank to do this. Towards dusk the bird flew north towards the estuary and was not seen again. This record is the third for Scotland.

J. B. O. ROSSETTI

[Breeds Iberia and from eastern Europe to Pacific, also southern Africa; may be extending range into central Europe; European birds winter mainly in Africa. British records have increased, becoming annual since 1974, mostly in spring. There was at least one more in Scotland in 1977.—Ed.]

Unusual food of Shelduck

During the severe winter of 1978/9 Shelduck feeding ecology was investigated on the Clyde estuary (Thompson in prep.).

At Finlaystone Point on 20th January 1979 several Shelduck dabbled on a pool edge. Although *Hydrobia* snails were in the pool bottom the Shelduck were apparently feeding on exposed tubes (0.5-1.0cm long) of the tube worm *Tubifex costatus* abundant at the edge. On many days around high tide Shelduck often ran fronds of *Fucus* through their bills. They did not, however, appear to break off pieces of this alga.

At Woodhall the shore is crossed by wooden stakes encrusted with barnacles *Balanus balanoides* and small numbers of Edible Periwinkles *Littorina littorea*. On 14th February the mud surface was frozen. Shelduck did not feed on the mud or in the water as they would normally have done. Instead the flock of 83 floated 150m offshore where eight of them fed by running their bills up and down the stakes. If more than two attempted to scrape feed on a stake the third was chased off by one of those already present. Subsequent examination revealed very fragmented *Balanus* on which the Shelduck must have been feeding. The continuous nature of the feeding action indicated they were not selectively picking off *Littorina*.

As a food item *Balanus* has not been mentioned in the literature.

In mid November 1978 several Shelduck fed on a field pond 300m from Longhaugh Bay. During early March C. M. Waltho observed Shelduck grazing on fields adjacent to exposed tidal flats at Ardoch.

These observations seem to indicate that Shelduck are opportunist feeders, especially during inclement weather. More observations of this nature would be gratefully appreciated by the author.

DESMOND B. A. THOMPSON

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Montagu's Harrier in Sutherland

On 23rd May 1979 an almost fully adult male Montagu's Harrier was seen from the bothy window on Handa (Sutherland) while it hunted in typical harrier fashion low over the ground. It was watched for about five minutes and then again briefly five minutes later.

Description Head, back and upper tail grey; small paler grey area on rump. Sides of breast streaked dark; several faint bars under tail. Upper wing pale grey; extensive black primaries; broad black bar along edge of coverts, showing through under wing; slight brownish area on upper wing-coverts.

This is the first record on Handa and the first in Scotland since 1963.

R. I. THORPE

Erythristic Herring Gull eggs in Caithness

On 28th May 1977 I found a nest containing two erythristic eggs in a Herring Gull colony in Caithness. Their translucent white background was sprinkled with warm pinkish red blotches, heavier in a band towards the narrow end on one of the eggs.

Another nest was found on 22nd May 1978 only yards from the previous site. These two eggs were darker and duller. The background was dirty white as if soiled during incubation and the blotches were more widespread and more rusty in colour. They were gone on 16th June. None were found in 1979.

A. SUTHERLAND

[I. H. J. Lyster has brought another clutch to light in the Royal Scottish Museum: three taken at Loch Nevis, Inverness-shire, in 1961. For other records and a discussion of erythrism see 9: 143-7.—ED.]

Common Nighthawk in Orkney

On 12th September 1978 while mistnetting in a sheltered valley with low bushes and cattle present 3 km east of Kirkwall (Orkney) I noticed a vampire-like shape quartering the area. The bird was soon lost in the dusk. However, when J. R. Lister Hogarth and I approached the net a nightjar-like bird with a white flash on the wing had been caught. It was taken indoors and photographed and with the help of E. J. Williams we took the following description.

Description General appearance of upperparts brownish with white barring; feathers dark brown to black with brownish white tips, the amount of brownish white increasing towards the tail; one or two feathers had pale rufous brown edges; some feathers had a greenish sheen like a Starling, mostly where the wings met the body; rump brownish with white crescentic bars. Chin brownish black with fairly broad whitish or rufous tips; breast and throat had white inverted V with buff tips to feathers; flanks and belly distinctly barred brownish black and pale buff; under tail-coverts creamy buff with narrow brownish black bars. Tail forked; blackish brown with whitish wavy barring; all feathers rounded and narrowly tipped white. Primaries blackish narrowly tipped white; bold white flash on primaries; secondaries blackish, tips tending to pale brown; alula and primary coverts uniform brownish black; feathers between alula and edge of wing blackish with brownish white fringes; pure white edging just below carpal joint; secondary coverts brownish black with whitish half-bars on distal portion; median coverts brownish with whitish vermiculations forming a pale panel; lesser coverts blackish brown glossed green, variably tipped whitish; underwing blackish brown with buffish barings on coverts. Eye very dark; bill blackish with large nostrils; inside mouth pinkish; short rectal bristles; legs pinkish.

The bird several times uttered a short harsh *churr* in the hand. It was identified as a Common Nighthawk and ringed and released at night near Finstown.

ANDREW D. K. RAMSAY

[The first for Scotland; the six previous British Isles records (seven birds) were also in autumn, all but one in Scilly. Breeds widely in North America; winters South America. It may seem odd to call such a rarity *Common Nighthawk*; it has been known by various names; here we follow current American terminology.—Ed.]

Scottish Crossbills feeding on carrion

On 4th March 1978 we were watching Scottish Crossbills at a Sutherland breeding site which holds six breeding pairs, and at that stage two incubating females and three empty

or incomplete nests had been located. One male was seen to fly to the top of a Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* from where he uttered subsong. No female had been seen and no sounds heard to suggest the presence of one. During previous observations DSW had found similar behaviour to indicate that a female was feeding or building nearby. A close inspection was made of the tree, which was isolated and less than 10m in height. The presence of a female could not be detected from below. After four minutes the male flew to a stand of pines 100m away, where nesting was suspected, following a female which had appeared from a point inside the tree canopy.

From the base of the tree a nest could be seen at 4½m, well sheltered from above by foliage, and GGB climbed to investigate. It was found to be that of a Woodpigeon and on it sat a dead Woodcock, quite well embedded into the accumulation of pine needles. The position of the nest beneath foliage precluded the possibility that the bird had fallen there by chance, for instance after being shot. A tuft of three contour feathers on the Woodcock's back were displaced and protruding from the general contour, obviously having been pulled at quite strongly and not the result of injury. The bird was removed and examined more closely on the ground. The eyes had been burst and the skin of the neck had been exposed and picked at. The skin was actually broken and a slight fresh seepage of blood could be seen. An area about 5cm long on the back had also been exposed and picked at. We do not think the crossbill was gathering feathers for nest building—they are occasionally used but we can recall only ever seeing white ones—and we saw no insects on which she might have been feeding. It appears that the female crossbill had actually been feeding off the dead Woodcock.

Woodcock have been recorded in trees in the past, and the presence of this one in a pigeon's nest may be explained by recent weather conditions at the site. Very severe snowfalls occurred during the last days of January, and the ground in the area was covered by 0.3-1.5m of snow for most of February with the ground cover of heather obliterated. It seems reasonable to suppose that the Woodcock roosted in the nest which at the time would have been the safest type of cover available. The Woodcock showed no obvious signs of decomposition, being quite firm and without smell, suggesting that it had not been dead for too great a time. However, the bird had been in the nest long enough for pine needles to have accumulated and become slightly compacted around it on the nest rim, which could be a result of the severe blizzard and subsequent thaw and rain. This would support the hypothesis that the Woodcock took cover and died in the pigeon's nest at the time of the snows.

At another Sutherland site on 24th March 1976 DSW recorded a female Scottish Crossbill, accompanied by a green male with an orange head, fly down to an old sheep carcass on which a little dried and blackened flesh remained. From 10m she was seen to spend a minute or more picking at the flesh. The male's interest became aroused and he too joined her on the carcass. She then took a strand of wool from the ground nearby and carried it to a nearby pine. Here it was placed in a fork 1.8m from the ground. No other material was present at this time. Later a nest constructed largely of wool and moss was completed. As far as we know it was not laid in. These barren nests appear to be fairly common among pairs showing immature plumage. Even when they do lay, egg laying is often delayed and failure rate is high.

Similar feeding behaviour is not entirely unknown. Nethersole-Thompson (1975, *Pine Crossbills* p. 146) mentions a female nibbling at a Capercaillie skeleton, and another carrying a bone of a Mountain Hare *Lepus timidus*, both during March and evidently for calcium.

G. G. BATES, D. S. WHITAKER

[D. Nethersole-Thompson writes: 'During the build up for egg laying crossbills do need protein and often take insects (see *Pine Crossbills* p. 146). I do not know of a crossbill feeding on carrion, but R. B. Payne (1972, *Condor* 74: 485-6) watched a hen Red (Common) Crossbill collecting fragments of bone from old carnivore faeces and suggested that this was done for egg production. Tordoff's captive Red Crossbills also attacked bones. I think, therefore, that it is extremely likely that these foods are taken to assist in egg formation.']

Reviews

The Gannet by Bryan Nelson. Berkhamsted, T. & A. D. Poyser, 1978, pp. 336, 32 monochrome plates, many text figures and tables, 24 x 16 cm. £9.

This book provides a comprehensive and up-to-date account of the biology of the Gannet. Dr Nelson is undoubtedly the foremost authority on the species and much of the material in this book comes from his own researches. He has in addition brought together a great deal of new information from Europe, North America, South Africa and Australia. The book is written in a beautifully clear, flowing style which makes it a delight to read. Technical jargon has been avoided so that even the most complex ideas will be easily understood by all. The author's enthusiasm and dedication are evident throughout.

The book is in seven chapters, four of which are devoted to the Gannet's ecology and behaviour with the main emphasis on the breeding season. There is an entire chapter on breeding behaviour which is particularly engrossing. A careful read of this before a trip to a gannetry

will make the adventure more rewarding and infinitely more memorable. The ecological sections include a highly detailed account of the Gannet's world distribution and numbers, a substantial chapter on breeding ecology, and smaller pieces on movements and feeding. The remaining three chapters include a fascinating discussion of the species' past and present relationships with man, a brief comparison of the Gannet with other members of the Sulidae and a description of the species' plumage, structure and voice. Each chapter ends with a detailed summary that enables the reader to determine the contents of the chapter at a glance.

The book is very well produced and is illustrated throughout by John Busby's drawings. These are described on the dust jacket as 'brilliant and evocative'. Few could disagree. At £9 this book must surely be a bargain.

I. R. TAYLOR

Ireland's Wetlands and their Birds by Clive Hutchinson. Dublin, Irish Wildbird Conservancy, 1979, pp. 201, many maps, figures, tables, photographs and drawings, 24 x 17½cm, £4.50.

This book is based upon counts of wildfowl and waders obtained during the Irish Wetlands Enquiry from 1971-5 under the auspices of the Irish Wildbird Conservancy; information from Northern Ireland is also included. Details are provided in the form of a register of Ireland's wetland habitats together with wildfowl and wader numbers recorded in these areas, followed by an account of each species involved. A short section also discusses other wetland species e.g. divers, grebes and gulls. Numerous maps, figures and tables illustrate the considerable quantity of information collected. Many illustrations and photographs are also included and although some of these are rather poorly reproduced this is a minor fault in such an economically priced book. It must have been a daunting task to collate and summarize in a highly readable form all the information contained in this book. It should prove invaluable to either the birdwatcher visiting Ireland or as a work of reference for those interested in duck and wader movements. Our knowledge of the birds of Ireland's wetlands has been greatly enhanced and one can only hope that a similar work can be undertaken for Scotland.

ALLAN W. and LYNDESAY M. BROWN

Greenshanks by D. & M. Nethersole-Thompson. Berkhamsted, T. & A. D. Poyser, 1979, pp. 275, 20 plates, numerous tables & drawings, maps, 24 x 16 cm. £8.80

This is an account, written in personal, narrative style, and drawing heavily on field notebooks, of a study from 1964 of Greenshanks breeding in Sutherland, with data from a different habitat in Speyside in the 1930s and 1940s (the subject of the senior author's out-of-print 1951 book) and some material from correspondents elsewhere in the species' range. The descriptions of habitat and general behaviour are as evocative as any of Desmond Nethersole-Thompson's work and the accounts of the time and effort in obtaining even small amounts of field information may clarify in readers' minds the difficulties of such work—into which the whole family has been enlisted, apparently without serious rebellion!

While I have nothing but admiration for the authors' dedication, I found the book disappointing. There is a wealth of detail in text and appendices (including some contributions by other workers) but there seems to be a lack of synthesis (exacerbated by poor arrangement of chapters). I found myself wondering where the work was leading. A long term study seems to me to present opportunities for examining

why numbers of Greenshanks are as they are and what affects them: studies of production and survival of young and adults, possible factors affecting this such as food and predation. Yet, despite several suggestions that food supply presented problems in some years, there are no details of variations in prey numbers (although sampling had apparently been undertaken); and a colour marking programme, necessary for the identification of chicks and males in later years and of females away from nests (with distinctive eggs) was not started until 1974. This is all the more surprising because the earlier study identified many of the problems and such work would have helped answer many of the questions raised in the book. The wide topics of 'groups, populations and breeding density' are given only 13 pages of the 215 of text, whereas other topics less dependent on such rarely possible long-term studies are treated in great detail e.g. long descriptions of habitat, nests and eggs (including some repetition) and an excellent section on voice, complete with numerous sonagrams.

Apart from minor quibbles, such as the lack of a map which would clarify many descriptions and the annoying habit of turning assumptions into statements of fact, this is a readable and valuable book, but it is marred for me by the thought that, with a few extra elements—which would have taken virtually no extra time or effort, given that already put into nest-finding—the watchers could have gained so much more information to answer the questions they pose.

M. W. PIENKOWSKI

A Hebridean Naturalist by Peter Cunningham. Steornabagh, Acair, 1979, 71 pp, drawings, 20 x 21 cm. £2.95

This book is not a coherent and comprehensive account of the natural history of the Hebrides. It is a collection of Nature Notes, concentrating on birds, that were originally published in the *Stornoway Gazette*. Though some of the original immediacy of the items is lost, they have a delightful vitality and an authenticity that springs from the author's intimate knowledge of Hebridean birds. Lovers of the Outer Isles will surely wish to have this book by their bedsides, to be dipped into at intervals rather than consumed at one sitting, like a box of rare chocolates.

Arctic Summer: Birds in North Norway by Richard Vaughan. Shrewsbury, Anthony Nelson, 1979, 152 pp, 7 colour, many plain photographs, 2 maps, 23 x 15 cm. £6.25

This is an account of a bird photographer's safari to the Varanger peninsula in northern Norway, just inside the arctic regions and alive with exciting birds. The author has an easy and enjoyable style. He tells us not only about the birds and the people he met but also indirectly about himself. In learning Norwegian, contacting local ornithologists, and not wasting a moment of his time in the field he showed a determination which was rewarded with success. This is not a work of serious ornithology but all interested in the birds of the northlands would do well to read it. One's only criticism is of the standard of reproduction of the monochrome plates: the colour plates are, in contrast, superb.

Population Ecology of Raptors by Ian Newton. Berkhamsted, T. & A. D. Poyser, 1979, 399 pp, many plain photographs, drawings, diagrams and maps, 26 x 16 cm. £10.80

There are those who believe that serious ornithology only makes enjoyable reading for the average birdwatcher if it has been completely watered down. According to this view, histograms and tables must be

expunged, bibliographic references replaced by a brief list of 'further reading', and the material presented as a series of homely tales from nature. Not unexpectedly, Ian Newton has proved what nonsense this is. His book is a thoroughly good read. It is enjoyable and even exciting. Yet it contains 50 graphs, 68 tables, and about 800 references.

The book's success lies not only in the writing but also in the way in which it has been packaged. It is well laid out and illustrated with many photographs and some fine drawings by Jim Gammie. The pictures are not mere decoration (though many are decorative): they show habits and habitats as well as the birds themselves. Poysers deserve to be congratulated on this publication.

This book is much more than a review of the population ecology of raptors. It also presents much work on behavioural ecology and conservation. The relationships between the sexes, breeding strategies and behaviour, and movements are reviewed and shown to be interrelated not only with each other but also with the density and dispersal of populations and with breeding and mortality rates. Observations on raptors from all over the world are drawn together to form the basis of all the discussions. Many of the points covered are relevant to other animals and this book is a useful addition to the ecological literature as well as a fascinating account of an interesting group of birds.

The presentation of so much data in the form of graphs and tables allows the enthusiast to check the author's conclusions for himself. They also show how voluminous are the basic observations and, therefore, how soundly based are the general conclusions. Following Jane Goodall, the 1970s produced a crop of studies in which detailed observations were made of small numbers of individuals of various birds and mammals. Though such work is useful, it is severely limited because the conclusions may be overly influenced by the idiosyncratic behaviour of a few individual animals. It is a relief to find the decade closing with a book in which the broad picture is not obscured by too close a view of individuals—and to find that such a book can be at least as entertaining as the collections of anecdotes with which we have been too often assailed.

JEREMY J. D. GREENWOOD

Birdwatcher at Large by Bruce Campbell. London, Dent, 1979, 272 pp, drawings by Donald Watson, 22 x 13 cm. £7.95.

Many birdwatchers keep records; these vary from bare lists to the more literary accounts of idyllic days in the field. Bruce Campbell has kept careful notes throughout a varied career as a keen amateur and professional ornithologist. He draws on these journals to relive some pleasurable bird outings around Edinburgh, in Argyllshire, Wales, Ireland and Oxford. Various well known birdwatchers figure in these pages but disappointingly one learns very little about them or indeed about the author of this book. This is not quite the autobiography promised on the dustcover but it is a thoroughly enjoyable account of one man's birding.

Wildlife of Scotland edited by Fred Holliday. London, Macmillan, 1979, 198 pp, many colour and plain photographs and drawings, maps, 25 x 19 cm. £8.95

This is an immediately attractive book. It is well produced and beautifully illustrated. There are ten chapters devoted to the main natural habitats and geographical areas in Scotland. Each is written by a well known naturalist who provides a comprehensive introduction to his subject covering the history and the current problems related to con-

servation. These are separate essays standing independently. This inevitably leads to repetition and an eventual sense of frustration in that no topic can be fully developed. The Scottish Wildlife Trust should be proud of this handsome book and grateful to the Gulf Oil Corporation who supported it.

I. T. DRAPER

Current literature Articles and reports on the status and distribution of birds in Scotland are listed here. Strictly biological studies such as ecology or behaviour are excluded, as are references from widely read journals such as *British Birds* and *Bird Study*. Most listed items and many others are in the club library and we are grateful to everyone who has made donations. The library also welcomes copies of ornithological work on any subject published outwith the main bird journals.

Hebridean Naturalist: Magazine of the Western Isles Natural History Society vol 1 No 1/2. I. S. Angus 1978. £1.50.

St Abb's Head Seabird Monitoring: 1st Year Results - 1978. R. Weatherhead 1979. Nature Conservancy Council SE Scotland Region.

St Abb's Head Seabird Sample Counts: 2nd Year Results - 1979. R. Weatherhead & C. O. Badenoch 1979. Nature Conservancy Council SE Scotland Region.

The past and current status of the Greenland White-fronted Goose in Ireland and Britain. R. F. Rutledge & M. A. Oglivie 1979. *Irish Birds* 1: 293-363.

Observations on the Shelduck Population of the Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve. E. M. Bignal 1980. Nature Conservancy Council, South West (Scotland) Region.

The Yellow Meadow Ant as a food source for the Green Woodpecker and Chough. J. Mitchell & J. M. Cameron 1979. *Glasgow Naturalist* 19: 510-511. YOC/ENHS Water of Leith survey 1978. M. Porteous 1979. *Edinburgh Natural History Society Journal* 1979: 18-22.

Forth island bird count 1979. R. W. J. Smith 1979. *Edinburgh Natural History Society Journal* 1979: 22-24.

Borders Bird Report '80 (sic - 1979). R. D. Murray (ed.). 30p. (Berwickshire, Roxburgh, Peebles, Selkirk).

Breeding Seabird Census, 1979: Pennan Head, Lion's Head and Troup Head (Banff and Buchan). S. North 1979.

Grampian Ringing Group Report 2: S. Baillie & J. Hardey (eds.) 1979.

Fair Isle Bird Observatory Report for 1979. G. Waterston & J. Arnott (eds.). £1.25.

Hebridean Naturalist: Magazine of the Western Isles Natural History Society No 3 1979. G. Ponting & F. Thompson (eds.). £2.20.

The Feeding Distribution of Birds on the Clyde Estuary Tidal Flats 1976-77: A Report to the Nature Conservancy Council. J. B. Halliday 1978. Department of Biology, Paisley College of Technology.

Perthshire '79 Bird Report. E. D. Cameron (ed) 1980. Perth Museum & Art Gallery, George St, Perth; 75p post free.

Notices

Seabirds at sea recording project The Nature Conservancy Council and the Seabird Group have launched a project aimed at recording seabirds in the habitat where least is known about them: out at sea. One main aim is to produce an atlas of seabirds at sea, showing the distribution (and perhaps density) of birds on and over the continental shelf waters around Britain and Ireland. A knowledge of the patterns of location and abundance of seabirds at sea is vital in oilspill contingency planning.

Any birdwatcher going out to sea can help towards the completion of the atlas by collecting seabird data on standard forms: you'll enjoy seeing the seabirds, and you'll also contribute towards their conservation. Details of the scheme are available from the Seabirds at Sea Team, 17 Rubislaw Terrace, Aberdeen AB1 1XE.

Whooper Swans On 17 January 1980 52 were marked at Caerlaverock with black-lettered yellow rings and wing tips and tails dyed yellow. Please send records to M. A. Brazil, Dept Psychology, Stirling University, or the Wildfowl Trust.

Isle of May The new bird observatory secretary and SOC local recorder is Bernard Zonfrillo, 28 Brodie Road, Balornock East, Glasgow, G21 3SB. All concerned thank his predecessor J. M. S. Arnott for his incumbency.

The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

ANNUAL CONFERENCE : 24-26 October 1980

The programme and booking form for the 1980 conference was sent to members with the summer journal; it is included with this number for all who joined the club at the start of the 1980/81 session.

44th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA

The 44th annual general meeting of the club will be held in the Marine Hotel, North Berwick, East Lothian, at 5.30 pm on Saturday 25 October 1980. The agenda is :

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Approval of minutes of 43rd annual general meeting of the club held at the Marine Hotel, North Berwick on 27 October 1979.
3. Matters arising.
4. Report of Council for session 43.
5. Approval of accounts for session 43.
6. Appointment of auditor.
7. Election of Honorary President. The council recommends that Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards be elected an Honorary President of the Club.
8. Election of new council members. The council recommends the following elections : D. L. Clugston, B. Stewart and Dr I. R. Taylor to replace Miss N. J. Gordon and Dr J. J. D. Greenwood who retire by rotation, and Mr R. L. McMillan who has resigned.
9. Any other business.

HONORARY PRESIDENTS AND MEMBERS

The SOC constitution states that the club may elect one or more honorary presidents nominated by council in recognition of services to Scottish ornithology. As shown in the agenda for the next AGM printed above, it is with very great pleasure that council has nominated Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards to become an honorary president.

Council is empowered under the constitution to elect those who have rendered distinguished service to Scottish ornithology, up to twelve in number, as honorary members; confirmation of their appointment is not required at an AGM. At its meeting in March council agreed to confer honorary membership on three members and is very pleased to announce

that the following accepted the invitation and are now honorary members of the club :

Dr John Berry, Dr Ian Pennie and Mr Donald Watson.

NEW BRANCH IN THE BORDERS

The Council of the Club announces the formation of a new Branch in the Borders. Following a very successful series of meetings early in 1980 and the recruitment of new SOC members bringing the total in the area to just over 60, Mr Malcolm Ross asked Council to approve the formation of a new Branch of the Club.

The **Borders Branch** will hold its winter meetings in Galashiels; full details of the programme are printed in the 1980/81 lecture syllabus sent out with this journal. The first AGM will be held in April 1981. Anyone interested in local activities should contact Mr Malcolm B. Ross, The Tubs, Dingleton Road, Melrose, Roxburghshire TD6 9QP (Melrose 2132).

The Council welcomes the formation of this new Branch and extends its good wishes for the future. It hopes that members living in the Borders will enjoy the indoor meetings and excursions which have been planned, and will participate in any fieldwork which may be arranged.

BRANCH SECRETARIES

Will members please note the following new appointments :

Borders M. B. Ross, The Tubs, Dingleton Road, Melrose, Roxburghshire TD6 9QP (Melrose 2132).

Edinburgh S. R. da Prato, 38 Carlaverock Grove, Tranent, East Lothian (Tranent 612 015).

Glasgow S. N. Denney, 55 Morar Crescent, Bishopbriggs, Glasgow G64 3DN (041 772 4087).

ENDOWMENT FUND

Members are reminded that the club's Endowment Fund was established for the advancement of ornithology. Any legacy or donation will be very gratefully received and should be sent to the club secretary.

The Fund is administered by the council of the club which is empowered to make grants from the accumulated free income. Applications for a grant should normally be submitted to the club secretary by 31st December each year, so that they can be considered at a council meeting usually held in March. Applications received after 31st January will not be considered for a grant given in the financial year ending on 30th June following.

CLUB TIES, BADGES AND CAR STICKERS

SOC ties, badges and car stickers—all with the club emblem—the crested tit—are available from the club secretary and some branch secretaries at the following prices :

Ties in maroon, dark blue or green—£2.75 each (£2.85 by post).

Badges 50p each (60p by post). **Car Stickers** 15p each (25p by post).

SCOTTISH BIRDS

We would like to thank all those members who responded to our request and returned their copy of the autumn 1979 number (10: 7). We received over 50 copies and we are particularly grateful to those who did not wish to have postage refunded. Copies will still be welcome and should be sent to the club secretary or handed to your branch secretary.

Copies of most back numbers of the journal from Volume 1 No 1 (autumn 1958), and also some complete unbound secondhand volumes, are available; for details and prices write to the club secretary.

WINTER EXCURSIONS

AYR BRANCH

Sunday 5 October 1980 ABERLADY BAY. Leader, Donald Smith. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr 9 am (lunch).

Saturday 1 November TROON, BARASSIE. Leader, Jim Miller. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr 1.30 pm or Gasworks 2 pm.

Sunday 7 December DOONFOOT & PRESTWICK. Leader, Bruce Forrester. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr 1 pm.

Sunday 7 February 1981 CAERLAVEROCK. Leader, Roger Hissett. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr 9 am (lunch).

Sunday 8 March HUNTERSTON & PORTENCROSS. Leader, John Burton. Meet Wellington Square, Ayr 1.15 pm or Hunterston road end 2 pm.

DUNDEE BRANCH

All excursions, except that to Strathbeg, leave Crichton Street at 10 am (bring lunch & tea).

Sunday 19 October 1980 LOCH OF STRATHBEG. Leave 8 am Lindsay Street (bus outing).

Sunday 16 November LINTRATHEN. Leader B. Pounder.

Sunday 7 December DUNKELD AREA.

Sunday 18 January 1981 TENTSMUIR POINT and MORTON LOCHS.

Sunday 22 February TAY REED BEDS. Leader B. Lynch.

Sunday 22 March MEIKLEOUR. Leader S. Laing.

Sunday 26 April CRAWTON. Leader B. Pounder.

Conference News

SOC northern meeting, Inverness, April 1980

The opening film on Friday evening, 'Highland Winter' by Alister Brebner, followed by sounds of moorland birds presented by Derek McGinn, and impressive slides by Malcolm Harvey of Inverness-shire glens, established the northern flavour of this second northern conference (the first one was in 1962). Roy Dennis's talk on Canada Geese of the Beaully Firth, telling us that they came from other places, chiefly Yorkshire, for the moult, acknowledged that places outside the Highlands existed.

The talk on Saturday morning by Bob Swann on waders in the Moray Firth was complemented by Roger Broad with his talk on ducks of the Moray Firth. The developments in such places as Nigg Bay, with all the associated pressures, provided the impetus for both surveys—as regards waders by the Highland Ringing Group, and the ducks by Greg Mudge. Roy Dennis wound up this session by talking about Goldeneyes. In Scotland nestboxes were introduced in the 1960s and the first brood appeared in 1970, and by 1979 there were 21 sites at which 16 were successful, producing 110 chicks.

The charms of Chanonry Ness were reinforced by the discovery that it was a good place to watch birds from your car, and whilst waders and Eiders were in rather short supply, Douglas Willis painted a wonderfully evocative picture of divers coming in in groups early on a winter's morning, whilst the description of Manx Shearwaters ahead of an approaching squall merited a painting by Keith Shackleton. Fol-

lowing outings on Saturday afternoon, Doug Weir spoke on Alaska with the subtitle 'Examples of environmental problems faced by Alaskan birds and relevance to recent "colonization" of Scotland'. We were given food for thought with the suggestion that a comparative study of the Redwing and Song Thrush in Scotland would probably prove interesting.

On Sunday morning we were 'taken' to Priest Island by Tony Mainwood where 20,000 Storm Petrels have been ringed since 1975 and where possibly 2,000 pairs breed. This was followed by a 'visit' to the Insh Marshes by Russell Leavett, with particular reference to the Whooper Swan, whose arrival in October each year coincides with the first floods. The peak count of 184 represents 7.3% of the British wintering population. Martin Cook then spoke on Crested Tits which, having only the previous day spent two hours relentlessly searching Rothiemurchus to discover one specimen, we were crestfallen to find could reputedly be seen without difficulty at the hotel rubbish bins at Coylumbridge. Our final talk was by John Love on the Sea Eagles on Rhum where 29 birds have been released since 1975, and it is felt that the prospect for breeding now looks quite good.

S. SHIMELD

Current Notes

These notes include unchecked reports and are not intended as a permanent record, nor will they be indexed. Please send reports via local recorders at the end of March, June, September and December.

Departing and lingering wintering visitors

Black-throated Diver 59+ St Andrews (Fife) 16 Mar—exceptional count; 3 Harray (Ork) 18 May; singles Westwater resr (Peeb) 26 May, Tynninghame (E Loth) 22 Jun. **Long-tailed Duck** 2 ♀♀ on fresh water St Abbs (Ber) 8 Jun. **Brunnich's Guillemot** 2 dead Aberlady (E Loth) 9 Feb (preserved); one dead Burrafirth (Shet) 24 Feb. **Brambling** Fair Isle 13 Jun. **Common Crossbill** one dying Buravove (Shet) and pair killed by car Islay (I Heb) 17 Apr. **Lapland Bunting** Fetlar (Shet) 4 Apr; Fair Isle max 3 on 26 Apr. **Snow Bunting** Fair Isle 19 Jun (none reported from breeding sites this year).

Spring migrants and rarities

Bittern booming in Borders reedbed 9 Jun. **Snow Goose** Kirkwall (Ork) 11 May; Lewis (O Heb) 15 May. **American Wigeon** Stenness (Ork) 12 May. **Gadwall** Scatness (Shet) 15 Apr; pair South Ronaldsay (Ork) May/June. **Teal** pair of Green-winged *carolinensis* St Kilda (O Heb) 26 Apr. **Garganey** South Uist (O Heb) 22 May. **Ring-necked Duck** Asta Water-Tingwall L (Shet) from 23 Mar, 2 late Apr. **Steller's Eider** Papa Westray (Ork) May-Jun. **Surf Scoter** Burray (Ork) 4 May. **Ruddy Duck** pair Holm (Ork) 3 May. **Red Kite** Strathbeg (Aber) 10 Mar; Peebles early June. **Marsh Harrier** Islay 13 May; Fair Isle 16 May; 2 Aberdeenshire in May. **Montagu's Harrier** Isle of May mid May. **Rough-legged Buzzard** with (Common) **Buzzard** Birsay (Ork) 12 Apr. **Osprey** Evie (Ork) 9 May; Islay 15 May; Fair Isle 29 May. **Quail** St Ola (Ork) 23 Apr; Fair Isle 9 Jun, 24 Jun. **Corncrake** 1st Sanday (Ork) 16 Apr; Fair Isle 13 May only. **Crane** 2 Stenness (Ork) 13 Apr; 2 Ormiclate (S Uist) 18 May. **Avocet** Pool of Virkie (Shet) 29 Mar-1 Apr. **Little Ringed Plover** Lochwinnoch (Renf) 12 May. **Dotterel** 1-2 trips Dumfriesshire in May; 3 Fair Isle 12 May. **Temminck's Stint** Fair Isle 17-18 May, 4 Jun; L of

Mey (Caith) 1 Jun; Irvine (Ayr) 7 Jul. **White-rumped Sandpiper** Musselburgh (Midl) 31 May-1 Jun—spring records are exceptional. **Pectoral Sandpiper** Fair Isle 4 Jun. **Ruff** pair displaying Orkney 21 Jun (none 22nd). **Spotted Redshank** Aberlady 27 May; Fair Isle 16 Jun. **Wood Sandpiper** Lewis 31 May. **Wilson's Phalarope** L of Mey 1-6 Jun. **Red-necked Phalarope** 1st Outer Hebrides 14 May. **Arctic Skua** early one St Andrews 14 Feb. **Long-tailed Skua** Fair Isle 5-7 Jun. **Franklin's Gull** sub-adult Irvine 2-6 Jul—1st Scottish record. **Ivory Gull** freshly dead Unst (Shet) 27 Apr. **Snowy Owl** Fair Isle 21 May. **Hoopoe** Royal Botanic Garden (Edinburgh) 2 Jul. **Wryneck** max 6 Fair Isle 18 May. **Short-toed Lark** Fair Isle 17-18 May, 3 Jun. **Skylark** 350 Fair Isle 1 Apr. **Shore Lark** Fair Isle 13 Apr. **Yellow Wagtail** max 5 Aberlady 10 May; Grey-headed *thunbergi* Fair Isle 4 Jun. **Nightingale** 4 Fair Isle during 14-27 May. **Bluethroat** Fair Isle 11-30 May—6 on 18th; 2 Isle of May mid May; St Abbs 17 May; ♂ singing Highlands mid June. **Black Redstart** max 5 Fair Isle 17 May. **Whinchat** 21 Fair Isle 12 May. **Wheatear** 200 Fair Isle 14 Apr. **Black-eared Wheatear** Isle of May 2-23 May. **Sedge Warbler** 32 Fair Isle 16 May. **Marsh Warbler** Wick (Caith) in May. **Icterine Warbler** Fair Isle 4 Jun. **Subalpine Warbler** Fair Isle 16 May; Isle of May 24 May. **Lesser Whitethroat** 13 Fair Isle 17 May. **Willow Warbler** 70 Fair Isle 12 May. **Firecrest** singing Deeside (Aber) late May; Bass Rock (E Loth) 7 Jun. **Red-breasted Flycatcher** Isle of May early June. **Collared Flycatcher** Stronsay (Ork) May/June. **Golden Oriole** Fair Isle 29 May. **Red-backed Shrike** Fair Isle 17 May-19 Jun—5 on 18th and 30 May; singles Isle of May mid May, Mainland (Ork) 21 Jun. **Rose-coloured Starling** Orkney 17 Jun. **Two-barred Crossbill** reported on bird table near larch wood Auchterarder (Perth) late May. **Scarlet Rosefinch** 2 Fair Isle during 30 May-6 Jun. **Hawfinch** Kirkwall (Ork) 10 Apr. **Ortolan Bunting** Fair Isle 16 May. **Rustic Bunting** Fair Isle 25 Apr; reported Islay late May. **Little Bunting** Fair Isle 11 May. **Yellow-breasted Bunting** Fair Isle 4 Jul.

Breeding and summering birds

Red-necked Grebe pair built nest in C Lowlands but perhaps no eggs laid. **Black-browed Albatross** returned to Hermaness (Shet) gannetry 15 Mar (still unmated!). **Osprey** 21 pairs bred with good success rate. **Temminck's Stint** possibly 3 pairs again breeding at one site; single birds at 2 other sites. **Purple Sandpiper** pair at Highland site where 2 broods last year. **Wood Sandpiper** 3 nests in 200m at one site. **Red-necked Phalarope** 2 (both ♂♂?) at a mainland site again. **Roseate Tern** only c20 pairs Inchmickery (Forth) with little success. **Wryneck** birds singing in E Highlands as usual—2-3 at one Aberdeenshire site. **Yellow Wagtail** breeding reported Westray (Ork). **Grasshopper Warbler** widespread; 14 singing Lochwinnoch.

Late news **Black Stork** Aberuthven (Perth) 3 Aug. **Temminck's Stint** Gladhouse (Midl) 21 Jul. **Pomarine Skua** Turnberry (Ayr) 10 Jul. **Laughing Gull** St Kilda from 30 Jun, noted feeding on 'sausages, army, fried.' **Tawny Pipit** Aberlady 20-21 Jul. **Red-backed Shrike** St Andrews 17 Jun.

D. J. BATES

SYLLABUS OF LECTURES - 1980/81

STOP PRESSS Ayr, Borders and Wigtown branches

Michael Densley very much regrets that he is unable to visit these branches. A speaker for the November meeting will be announced locally.

WILDFOWL COUNTS IN SCOTLAND

For more than 20 years the task of organising the winter Wildfowl Counts in Scotland was undertaken by a succession of dedicated SOC members; first by Miss Rintoul and Miss Baxter, then by Miss Betty Garden and finally by Miss Valerie Thom. When Miss Thom resigned in 1971, no overall Scottish Organiser could be found to continue the work centrally, and so a number of Regional Organisers were appointed who deal direct with the Wildfowl Trust in Slimbridge. The Club agreed to be responsible for appointing Regional Organisers when necessary in future, and a copy of the counts for all parts of Scotland is maintained in the Club's Reference Library in Edinburgh.

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. If there is none please contact Slimbridge.

Shetland D. P. P. Eva, 6 Westerloch Brae, Lerwick.

Orkney P. Reynolds, Creyer Cottage, Evie, Orkney.

Wester Ross, Inner and Outer Hebrides A. Currie, Glaiseilean, Broadford, Isle of Skye, IV49 9AQ.

Outer Hebrides N. Buxton, 42 Aird, Tong, Isle of Lewis, Western Isles.

Caithness S. Laybourne, Old Schoolhouse, Harpsdale, Halkirk, Caithness, KW12 6UN.

Inverness-shire, Easter Ross, Sutherland (East) C. G. Headlam, Dallachie, Fearn, Ross-shire, IV20 1TN.

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

Aberdeenshire, Kincardineshire A. Duncan, 12 Cairncry Avenue, Aberdeen, AB2 5DS.

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

Perthshire (East) E. D. Cameron, Strathclyde, 14 Union Road, Scone, Perth, UH2 6RZ.

Argyllshire Vacant.

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

Clackmannanshire, Perthshire (West), Stirlingshire R. Keymer, N.C.C., 12 Hope Terrace, Edinburgh, EH9 2AS.

Dunbartonshire, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire R. A. Jeffrey, 1a High Calside, Paisley, Renfrewshire.

Bute J. B. Simpson, Estate Office, Rothesay, Bute.

Lothians R. W. J. Smith, 33 Hunter Terrace, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SJ.

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

Borders A. Bramhall, 28 Blakehope Court, Tweedbank, Galashiels, Selkirkshire, TD1 3RB.

Dumfriesshire, Kirkcudbright, Wigtownshire Vacant.

Notices to Contributors

Papers, longer articles and short notes

1. The high cost of production and distribution means that it is of the utmost importance that contributions are concise, interesting and readable to justify their publication. Authors of papers are advised to submit a draft to an expert referee before offering it to the editor. Material should be typed on one side of the sheet only, in duplicate, with double spacing and wide margins.

2. Authors are urged to consult recent issues of *Scottish Birds* for style of presentation, in particular of headings, tables and references. Headings should not be in capitals nor underlined. Tables and figures must be designed to fit the page. Tables should be used sparingly and be self explanatory, and, like figure captions, typed on a separate sheet.

3. Short notes, if not typed, must be clearly written and well spaced.

4. English names of species (but not group names) of birds, other animals and plants, except domestic forms, have initial capitals for each word, except after a hyphen. English names and sequence of birds follow Voous (1973-7) 'List of recent Holarctic bird species' (*Ibis* 115: 612-638; 119: 223-250, 376-406). Scientific names are generally unnecessary for species in this list but they are required (underlined, with no brackets) for subspecies, species not in the list, and for other animals and plants, except domestic forms, where these receive significant mention.

5. Proofs are sent to all contributors and these should be returned without delay. Authors of papers and longer articles are entitled to 25 free copies of the journal but these must be requested when returning proofs. Extra copies can be supplied at cost.

6. Illustrations of any kind are welcomed, whether alone or to illustrate an article. Drawings and figures should be up to twice the size they will finally appear, in Indian ink, neatly lettered, on good quality paper separate from the text. Photographs, either glossy prints or colour transparencies, should be sharp and clear with good contrast.

Scottish Bird Report

1. Records should be sent to the appropriate local recorders, a list of whom is published regularly, but in cases of difficulty they can be forwarded by the editor.

2. These records should be on one side of the sheet only, well spaced and in species order, following the Voous sequence (see 4. above). The only exception is that Aberdeenshire and north Kincardineshire records should be in place and date order. Observers should consult previous reports for the sort of information required. To avoid duplication of records by the recorders, names of other observers present should be given where appropriate.

3. Notes for the year should be sent promptly, generally in early January, but some recorders prefer more frequent records and regular contributors are asked to consult local recorders about this. Reports of occasional visits to areas outwith the observer's regular territory, such as holiday lists, should usually be sent to recorders as soon as possible. Records of rarities, including species only locally rare, should be sent to recorders without delay.

4. The editor will be glad to receive, preferably via the local recorders, records of special interest for publication in Current Notes. Please send them at the end of March, June, September and December for publication in the issues following.

5. To save recorders' (often considerable) time and expense, correspondents should enclose a stamped addressed envelope or indicate that no acknowledgment is required.

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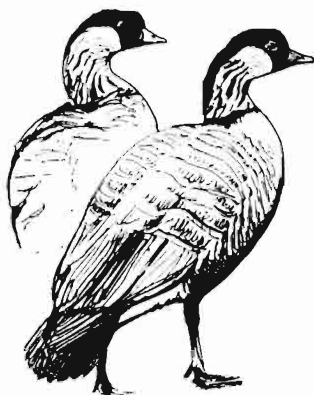
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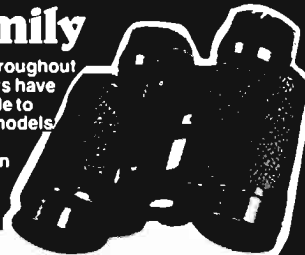
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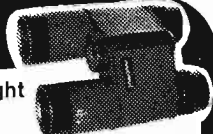
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