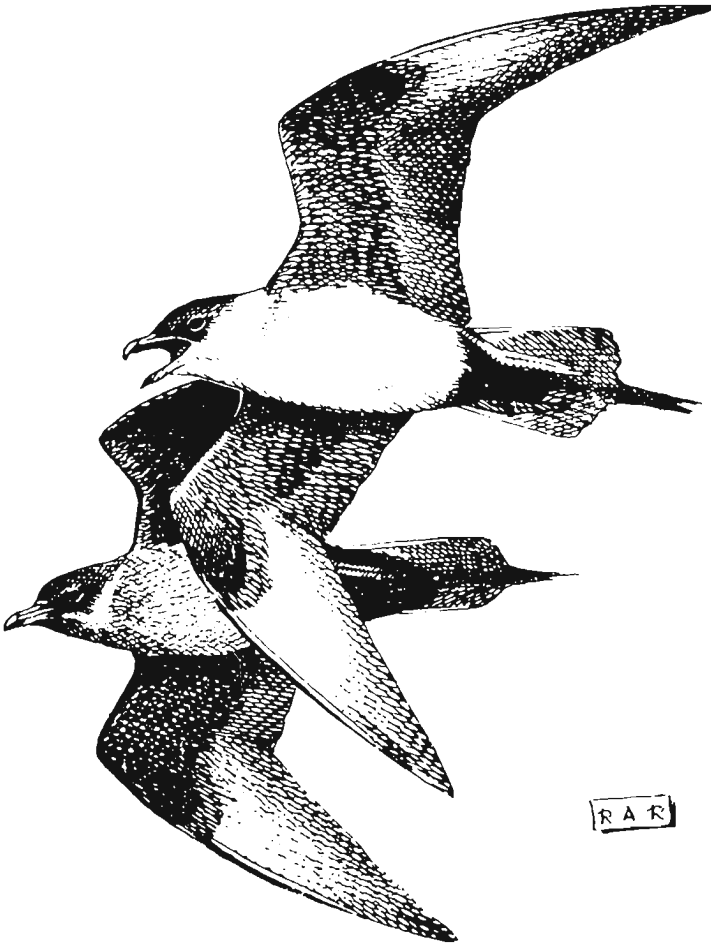


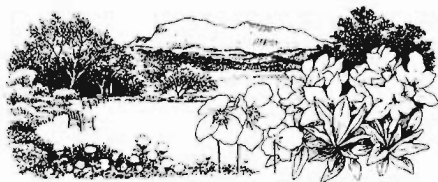
FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Report for 1992



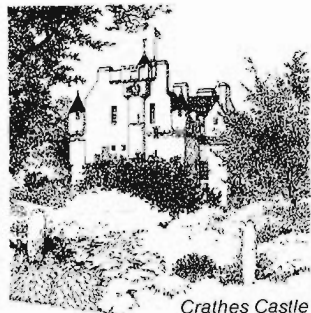
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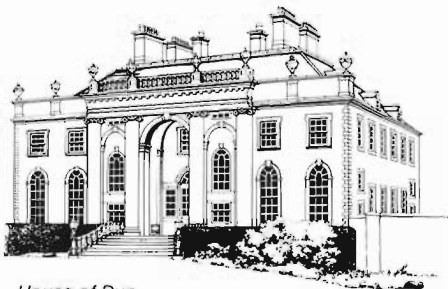
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Fair Isle Bird Observatory

Report No. 45

1992

Edited by Paul V. Harvey & David T. Parkin

CONTENTS

Chairman's Report	Pat Sellar	2
Warden's Report	Paul Harvey	5
The NTS in 1992	Alexander Bennett	8
Fair Isle Crafts - Past and Present	Michael Stout	10
The Development in the North Haven	Peter Fraenkel	12
Ornithology	Paul Harvey	15
Systematic List		
Up-date on BBRC Decisions		
Species Descriptions		
Ringing Details		
Disease States & Causes of Death in Wild Birds	J.C.Waine	
Notable Moth & Hoverfly Records in 1992	N. & E.Riddiford & P.Harvey	
Butterflies on Fair Isle 1990-92	P.Harvey, N. & E.Riddiford	
Fair Isle's Grey Seals	C.J.Orsman	
Cetacean Records in 1992	P.Harvey & N.Thomson	
Publications		
Financial Report & Accounts		
Fair Isle Endowment Fund		
The John Harrison Memorial Fund		

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This is our report for 1992 but I am writing an introduction with the advantage, call it cheating if you like, of looking back from 10th March 1993 which I have to admit represents the normal sort of delay in getting Pat Sellar to put pen to paper. My excuse is that I like to see what others, particularly the warden, have written first so that I avoid undue duplication or, worse still, contradiction.

This time, the delay allows me to pass comment on the Braer oil spill which hit the south Shetland coast just five days into the New Year. Catastrophic at the time, it can now be tentatively viewed as much less devastating than at first feared, thanks to an unprecedented series of gales. I say tentatively for it is impossible at this stage to say what long term effect it will have on our seabirds and mammals. 85,000 tonnes of oil washed into the sea may well have a serious effect on the sand-eel fry, and ultimately on the breeding success of our Arctic Terns which have staged such a wonderful recovery in the last two seasons.

Fair Isle, although fortunately not lying in the path of any oil spillage, will be indirectly affected in two important respects. For both of these we must set about immediately preparing ourselves for action. The first arises from the undisputed advantage Fair Isle has in being already a long-established monitoring location for seabird breeding success. With detailed records extending over the past seven seasons, drawn always from the same colonies and all stored in our new computer, ours must be the top priority location for detecting the first signs of post-Braer effect. But we need the manpower and commitment to maintain the effort and achieve consistent coverage. With the promise of help from the JNCC, we should be well prepared for the 1993 seabird season.

The second is a negative effect in that Shetland is still regarded in the eyes of many continental tourists, perhaps even some UK tourists, as covered in oil. The disaster of Braer striking the rocks, oil pouring into the sea, and fine oil mist permeating the countryside made compulsive reading; the clean-up and subsequent miraculous disappearance of oil, much less so. Shetland as a holiday venue may well suffer and that means fewer visitors to the Lodge. Maurice Mullay, Director of Shetland Tourism, and one of our own directors, is mounting a massive advertising campaign in which Fair Isle will play a part. We have been promised assistance in launching an extensive direct-mailing programme.

One vital thread that runs through both these "post-Braer" consequences is the need for money. We need money to employ staff and we need money to expand our marketing effort. Maurice and his Shetland Tourism are poised to help us and hopefully we will continue to get grant aid from JNCC for seabird monitoring. It is in this context that I am delighted to acknowledge most generous help from three new sources during the 1992 season. Shell UK Ltd. have agreed to spread a substantial grant over three seasons. BP Exploration came forward with a very generous cheque, their manager insisting, quite rightly, on coming to the island to see for himself the extent of our operation. Then early in the spring, too early for hand-over on the island, came the delightful surprise of a Postbus donated by Scottish Post Office. I had the great pleasure of receiving the keys at a hand-over ceremony on Lerwick pier from Kenneth Graham, chairman of Scottish Post Office. It has already proved itself well-nigh indestructible and should see us through several more seasons. To all three donors I convey our corporate unbounded thanks. We will strive to keep them informed of how well we are doing in our operation at the Lodge.

Another major event, and much closer to home, that my "late" pen allows me to report is the departure of Paul Harvey, Elizabeth and their three girls, and the appointment of Paddy Jenks, Megan and their three children as their successors. Paul is to be congratulated on winning his appointment as Assistant Regional Officer (Shetland) for Scottish Natural Heritage in Lerwick. Sad though Paul and his family are to leave Fair Isle after four outstanding seasons, the fresh opportunities offered by the new post in Shetland must be very reassuring for them in these days of high unemployment. It shows, too, how the Fair Isle warden's job is regarded as a proving ground held in high esteem. We owe Paul and Elizabeth a great debt of thanks for all they have achieved during their outstanding tenure of office. The warden's job has so many facets that, viewed from the chairman's seat, it might seem that we need at least three people to perform all the roles satisfactorily. All credit to Paul that he has succeeded and indeed pushed out the frontiers in ringing, field identification and generally enhancing the reputation of the observatory. We have not entirely lost Paul for, in support of the first of my two vital "post-Braer" actions - achieving continuity in our seabird monitoring - he will be back on the island helping Paddy Jenks home in on the study areas.

Paddy and Megan with their eight year old twins Urien and Saoirse and four year old Ellery arrived on the island after a calm crossing on "Good Shepherd" on 9th March (1993). Paddy has wardened another small-island bird observatory - Bardsey - for three seasons after gaining an honours degree in microelectronics and computing at University College of Wales, Abersystwyth. He has wide ornithological experience and natural history interests. He has ringed over 40,000 birds. Megan spent her early life in the USA and has a wide range of wardening and secretarial experience. Both are keen fiddle-players and boat-handlers. I have no doubt that they will be given a great welcome "down the island" and we wish them a long and happy stay at the Lodge.

Reverting to what may fairly belong to 1992, it gives me pleasure to report another outstanding season; outstanding for birds, less so for the number of visitors. 212 species were recorded during the year, a record. Arctic Terns bred more extensively than ever before. Most seabird species had an excellent season. Both spring and autumn migration produced impressive lists of rarities. Hopefully this news will inspire an avalanche of new visitors to the Lodge in 1993. As I have stressed in previous reports, our operating margins are critically tight and we must maintain a high level of occupancy if we are to break even. This season has seen us suffer a small loss despite most careful stewardship on the part of Paul and Elizabeth.

During the summer we received a very generous grant from the National Trust for Scotland, the owners of the island. We are most grateful to them. Without their staunch support over the years, we would by now be operating on a much reduced scale. We cannot count on our finances being bolstered by benefactors or contractors every year, and we must look to our two main sources of revenue - Lodge bookings and Friends' membership. If most Friends covenanted their subscriptions, paid by banker's order and found one new Friend this year, we would be in a far stronger position. Our directors in charge of marketing, Alastair Cunningham and Maurice Mullay have embarked on a major face-lift for our brochure. Copies will be sent to every Friend with an exhortation to encourage new visitors to the Lodge.

Other directors deserve special mention. David Parkin has taken over from Valerie Thom the editing of this report in addition to continuing to encourage the research side of our operation. John Wood is saving a significant portion of our accountants' fees by taking over the VAT returns and the management accounts. Peter Slater has

assumed responsibility for the John Harrison Memorial Fund. David Okill continues to act as the all-important contact in Shetland for the Lodge. Once again I am indebted for the support I receive from the directors but all of that would be to no avail without the wholehearted backing of the islanders. With that foremost in our minds, we broke new ground by holding a directors' meeting on the island in early August. This was judged a great success and helped to strengthen the good relations we have cherished over the years. But of course they would like to see more visitors! Over to you - please turn my thoughts into action.

WARDEN'S REPORT

From an ornithological standpoint 1992 proved to be an exceptional year. The Isle's seabirds enjoyed excellent breeding success, and both migration seasons were packed with incident. With so much to enjoy, it is unfortunate to have to report that visitor occupancy was lower than in any year since 1985. The final figure of 402 visitor weeks is 14.8% lower than the corresponding figure for 1991 and, given that 32 of these weeks were accounted for by contractors involved with breakwater construction, the real decrease is nearer 22%. A great change from the heady days of 1989 and 1990 when visitor weeks topped the 500 mark! With the current recession showing no sign of easing, other than in the minds of a few politicians, it seems likely that FIBOT is facing a period of low occupancy with its consequent financial problems. Escalating transport costs to Shetland and Fair Isle, at a time when holiday companies are offering ever cheaper packages to potential customers in an attempt to acquire more of a decreasing market, does little to help our situation. One bonus, though, is that Kier Construction, the company undertaking developments in the North Haven, have leased the Lodge from mid-October to mid-March, providing a welcome boost to FIBOT's funds.

As usual September was the busiest month, followed by July and October. Bookings in October were in fact higher than in 1991, and there was little change in the numbers visiting in July. Occupancy in all other months was lower than in 1991, but the most notable decrease occurred in June, with nearly 50% lower occupancy than in 1991; surprising considering that the best weather often occurs in June, and seabird breeding activity is at a peak. The reduction in visitors at this time though, undoubtedly resulted in Observatory staff having more time to concentrate upon their seabird research, and this is reflected in the ringing total for that month. The trend of lower occupancy early in the season seems to be continuing, and in 1992 the first fortnight of May - traditionally a busy period, was very quiet. A great shame as there is usually a good number and variety of migrant birds at this time.

A new initiative in 1992 was an increase in the number of days on which the 'Good Shepherd' sailed to Shetland. There were sailings to Grutness on Saturdays, Tuesdays and alternate Thursdays, and to Lerwick on every second Thursday. During the calmer summer months, this gave potential visitors a welcome extra chance of getting to or from the Island. It is unfortunate that Loganair could not match this initiative, with at least some attempt to improve the quality of their service, which remained woefully inadequate. Representations are being made to the Shetland Island's Council, who subsidise the inter-island flights heavily, by both the Lodge and the Island Community regarding the poor quality of the air service.

There were fewer visitors from abroad than in recent years, with the number of American visitors again low. Group visits included the two regular parties from the Young Ornithologists Club in July and late August, and a group from the Duke Institute, North Carolina, in July. A party of sixth form students from Denstone College, Staffordshire, led by Mike Swales, visited in July to carry out various research projects. This is the second group Mike has brought, the first visited in 1989, and following the success of both trips it is hoped that more regular visits will occur in the future. One notable feature of recent years has been the increase in the number of cruise ships visiting the Isle. This trend continued in 1992, with no less than 5 ships including a visit to Fair Isle in their schedule, some on more than one occasion. The vessels were; the 'Polaris', the 'Frontier Spirit', the 'Caledonian Star', the 'Aurora', and the 'Hebridean Princess', and Observatory staff provided guided walks for groups from several of these ships.

It is obviously important for the Lodge and Island to retain a high media profile during these difficult times, and to this end we were again fortunate, through our close links with the Shetland Tourist Organisation, to attract two journalists: Martin Symington from the Telegraph, and Michael Woods, freelance. Such well known figures as birdwatcher Tony Soper and conservationist Sir William Wilkinson also visited the Lodge, the latter accompanied by Ruth Briggs, Area Manager of the newly created Scottish Natural Heritage. We were fortunate to receive visits from nearly all the FIBOT trustees during the course of the year, and the trustees meeting in August, held on the Isle for the first time, proved very successful.

Unfortunately, there was insufficient uptake for either the 'Crofting and Crafts' or an 'Island Insights' course, and, with new European Community legislation being formulated regarding package holidays, such courses have been placed on hold for the foreseeable future. Five young ornithologists received John Harrison Memorial Fund grants to assist with their trips to Fair Isle, and several of them were again of a very high calibre. In recent years this fund has proved very successful in attracting some excellent youngsters to the Observatory. Many of these have contributed enormously to the Observatory's ornithological work, as well as broadening their own experience. Indeed, Steve Votier, assistant warden in 1992, first visited with the assistance of a JHMF grant.

Catering staff for the season were Doris Brookes in the role of Catering Manager, Vicki Duxbury (assistant cook), and Wendy Christie and Kay Ibbetson (domestics). Ann Prior kindly stepped in to replace Doris when she left to take up a degree course at the University of Ulster. We thank them all for their hard work, but, in particular, would like to say a very special thank-you to Wendy Christie for holding the whole catering operation together through some tricky periods. On the ornithological side, Roger Riddington and Steve Votier proved as likeable, hard-working and competent a pair of A.W's as one could hope for. We were pleased to see Chris Orsman again when he took over from Steve, who left to take up a degree course at Newcastle University. Roy Taylor worked on a voluntary basis through June and July, and his infectious enthusiasm and hard work were most welcome.

There were mixed fortunes on the building/machine maintenance front. We managed to get the boiler running well in February, having stripped it down, replaced the capacitor and internal baffles. It has continued to function well ever since. During the winter, Northmen redirected the outflow pipe from the front toilet and much to my relief this produced the desired effect; we did not have to unblock sewers once during the whole season! The whole of the Lodge's external woodwork was re-stained in the late summer. On the debit side, both power systems failed during the year. The British Telecom 24hr supply failed in early June, meaning we were without heating and lighting for a few days. Fortunately, light was not a problem as mid-summer was approaching, but providing hot water was more problematic - and necessitated carrying saucepans to visitors rooms! The 25kw generator required a lot of attention. A small control timer and the solenoid needed replacing, while the starter motor and alternator needed refurbishing.

The fire alarm system developed a fault late in the year and Malakoff's (a Shetland-based company) were able to fix it. They will now takeover the maintenance of the system - a far more satisfactory situation than having an Edinburgh company responsible for maintenance, as has previously been the case. The only other major problem encountered during the season, was that the moving parts of two windows malfunctioned. No great problem in itself, but it took about 6 months for a replacement to arrive - and that didn't fit! It is likely that more problems will be experienced with the

'new' observatory windows as the years pass. The problems with the hot water and central heating systems, identified in last years report, are still waiting to be addressed.

We were very fortunate to receive a refurbished and resprayed postbus from Scottish Post Offices in May. The official presentation took place in Lerwick and after a short wait, the bus arrived at the Isle aboard the 'Filla' - it being a little too large for the 'Good Shepherd'. After the last three seasons it has been a pleasure to have a vehicle that has required little more than routine maintenance! The life of this bus should be prolonged, too, if plans to build a new access road, running west from the main road across the front of the wardens flat to the turning area, reach fruition. The present, steep approach road has proved impossible to maintain properly, and inevitably takes its toll on vehicles.

As usual many of the islanders were a great help during the season, but special thanks are due to: Kenny Stout, who continued to provide help at an instant when a problem defeated observatory staff; the late Jerry Eunson, for help with generators and a host of other things; Brian Wilson, for offering advice on building matters; Neil Thomson, for assisting with the repair of the 24hr power supply; and Stewart and Triona Thomson, and latterly Iain Stout, for tending the Skadan sheep flock. Shetland-based help came from: Malcolm Adamson, who again cast his eye over the generators as well as offering advice on other electrical matters; Chris Donald, Hugh Harrop, Martin Heubeck, Dave Okill, Kevin Osborn and Dave Suddaby, who all put various items to boats and planes.

Once again the main thrust of our ornithological work was aimed at seabirds, particularly ringing and the work connected with the J.N.C.C. seabird monitoring contract. The importance of our ongoing seabird work has already been illustrated with the recent seabird/sandeel problem. Anyone who wishes for more proof of its value, need only look as far as the fate of the 'Braer' and the impact of its spilt cargo of crude oil on the environment. To carry out the existing level of seabird work really does require a huge input of staff time, and we could not achieve all that we do without the help of many other people. Deserving of special thanks in 1992 were: David Butler, Wendy Christie, Chris Donald, Nick Dymond, Ian Grier, Karen Hudson, Kevin Osborn, Jackie Savery, Brydon Thomason and Howard Towll. We were also grateful to receive £5000 from B.P. towards this work. The cheque was presented in September by Rod Walker, Manager of the Sullom Voe Terminal, who visited the Isle with his wife Jennifer, and Public Relations Officer Peter Guy.

On a completely different note, Elizabeth and I would once again like to say a big thank-you to Sigrid Stout for looking after our children for a third consecutive summer. We would also like to thank Sarah Bryant for filling this role so ably before Sigrid arrived.

The time has now come for us to leave Fair Isle and move back to mainland Shetland. We have made many friends during our stay at the Observatory; islanders, visitors and trustees alike. We would like to thank them all, and hope that they will find time to call in and see us when next on route to the Island. It is, though, the islanders that we will miss most, and we would like to express our sincere thanks to them for their friendship and help, and particularly for the wonderful send off they gave us.

Finally to end on a sad note, an abiding memory of 1992 will be the death of Jerry Eunson. We considered him a very dear friend, always willing to listen and help, and we will miss him greatly.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

FAIR ISLE 1992

This time last year, I looked forward to a great opening ceremony for the breakwater. Well, at the time of writing, the breakwater is complete, but, sadly, due to recent adverse weather conditions, the completion of the Quay has been much delayed. However, hopes are high that the construction will be complete in the spring. The effects of the breakwater have already been seen to benefit the North Haven during the recent atrocious weather, so Fair Isle can look forward to a safe haven for the Good Shepherd, and a bright future for the various maritime activities, both leisure and business, that take place in the North Haven.

Life is never dull or uninteresting on Fair Isle, and I have never yet felt there was little to do. Quite the opposite! If there is an apparent lull it is simply because other things are being planned to keep us busy in the future. This year's building and maintenance programme, although the quietest I have known for a number of years, does not reflect any less commitment by the Trust, but simply some difficulties we have had in achieving our targets. However, the Trust will be springing back in 1993 with a big programme of renovations starting with Taft croft house, then Barkland immediately thereafter, and the installation of temporary housing to accommodate the Ross-Smith family who will be moving to Fair Isle in the spring. The Ross-Smiths will be building their own house, and setting up their own business on the Isle, having been successful with their stained glass in Midlothian for a number of years. We all look forward to welcoming them to Fair Isle, and feel sure they will contribute to the many aspects of island life.

The recent atrocious weather has also taken its toll on the structure of various buildings around the Isle, not least being Field croft house which suffered major roof damage in January. This means that the proposed renovations to the house will be brought forward to this year, and the roof will be replaced as soon as possible.

Research and understanding of the ecology of Fair Isle is very important to its future management. In advance of the Management Plan review which is due this year, we undertook, through the Macauley Land Use Research Institute, an investigation of the status of heather on the Isle (in particular the hill) to try to determine the reasons for its die-back and the subsequent erosion of the soils. The conclusions were quite clearly put down to climatic conditions and over-grazing was not implicated. This investigation gave us a clearer understanding of the ecology of the hill, and hopefully continued monitoring will ensure that things do not deteriorate further.

In addition to the Macauley's work, Nick Riddiford, our resident ecological consultant, undertook the most thorough and wide-ranging ecological survey ever undertaken on Fair Isle for the Trust. The result is the most complete survey of vegetation types on the Isle, along with an assessment of their conservation value. This included specific reference to Fair Isle's marine environment, its fragile ecosystem, and an assessment and recommendations to safeguard it for future generations. The research will go a long way to help Fair Isle and the Trust prepare prescriptions for the future management of the Isle, and to ensure that nature conservation continues to play a significant role in the social development of the island.

The review of the Management Plan will include all aspects of nature conservation, and equally importantly will look closely at the future housing needs of the Isle. At the instigation of Shetland Islands Council, an island-led housing forum comprising four islanders will form the link between the Trust and the Isle in assisting with policy and local decision-making concerning the future trends of population and the consequent housing needs. The same forum will look closely at the Management Plan on behalf

of Fair Isle, and I foresee that the result will be a Management Plan designed to look at the more specific needs of Fair Isle as a growing vibrant community working hand in hand with its fragile ecology.

Lastly, I would like to record the loss to the Fair Isle community of Jerry Eunson of Upper Leogh. During conservation, Jerry had the ability to give me and many others food for thought. After a conversation with Jerry, I always felt the need to give greater thought to some of the more fundamental problems of the Isle, and that nothing should be taken for granted. Thanks to Jerry's foresight, the heather research programme on the hill took place, and I hope that his dreams will be fulfilled, and that future management regimes for the land will take careful note of our recent findings.

Alexander Bennett

FAIR ISLE CRAFTS - PAST AND PRESENT

Fair Isle has probably always had its share of "crafts" people; such an isolated community either had to supply much of its own needs, or go without. Even within living memory, the list of crafts practised on the island includes such diverse skills as kishie-making and cobbling, and a hundred other manual arts necessary for life wrung from land and sea.

Knitting remains Fair Isle's most famous craft, and is a good example of how a necessity (if you have sheep and need warm clothes, spinning and knitting solve the problem) became a source of income. Small numbers of high quality, hand-knitted garments were sold to ornithologists and travellers, the first "tourists" to the Isle, and this passing trade continued, becoming an important source of income. The introduction of hand-frame knitting machines in the seventies brought with it the potential for expanding the volume of knitwear produced and it was at this point that the Fair Isle Crafts Co-operative was set up. This has maintained the desired high quality and yet at the same time, through workshops and displays, has increased sales of knitwear, to provide a part-time source of income for many of the islanders, employed as both knitters and finishers. Orders are still dependent upon "passing trade" and although there is no shortage of orders due to the increase of visitors in recent years, the Co-operative does not have the capacity to supply a "bulk" market. One other effect of its success is that although originally set up to promote all crafts on the Isle, the knitting has required so much effort that other crafts have perhaps been neglected. Anyone with the time and skills has tended to concentrate upon the production of knitwear.

Originally, spinning and dyeing were necessary chores before any knitting could take place, with great importance placed on the gathering of flowers and other organic material used for dyeing, but now the yarn is mostly bought in from commercial mills in Shetland. Recently, however, spinning has regained some popularity. The pressure of necessity now lifted, it can be pursued as much for relaxation as anything else, although the very low price offered for the raw wool shipped off the Isle, and the recent interest shown in hand-made rather than commercially produced goods has given a financial incentive to spin. Exciting new developments include spinning, dyeing and knitting using angora fibre produced on rabbits kept at the Auld Haa by Linda Grieve, who also spins with silk. At Schoolton, Elizabeth Riddiford follows the process from the sheep's back to the finished knitted garment, and also offers spinning lessons through the summer.

In the fifties, a weaving instructor came to the Isle with several old hand looms and up until the seventies, tweed and rugs were sold to visitors. Unfortunately the reduction of the ship trade, along with the increasing cost of yarn and of the dressing of the tweed, saw the demise of this particular craft. Although a long difficult apprenticeship is required, it would be a shame if the looms were never used again. I have many memories of the almost antique machines in use, with their unique noise and rhythm, and the magic rituals of threads and knots, warp making and tying and the almost imperceptible creep of finished cloth on to the roller.

Another craft which has progressed from necessity to a source of employment, albeit with a break of a generation or two, is that of boat-building. Up until the thirties, a steady stream of replacement yachts were constructed for the fishing industry, which at its peak had around two dozen in use. The hard usage gave the lightly built boats a life of only a few years, before the fastenings stretched and the boat became too leaky for use. In some ways, the construction of a boat that men would have to trust

their lives in, from little more than driftwood with few tools and no plans, was surely one of the ultimate tests of a person's skill.

The general run-down of fishing and the change in the island's dependence upon the sea, as well as a decreasing population, saw the expertise of the old men disappear. Following a course in traditional boat-building in Norway, however, Ian Best is back building wooden boats on Fair Isle as part of his living. He has recently returned from a stay in Unst, where he was building a replica "sixareen". Ian has the skills to produce a variety of wooden boats, although a Fair Isle yoal built to an original form as possible would be an interesting project.

Constructing the ultimate Fair Isle yoal is also one of my interests although on a smaller scale. My father started the hobby after he became disabled, and I have carried on since his death, making 1/12 scale models. It is a time-consuming but interesting business, especially finding out about the background and details of actual yoals and their crews.

Ian also attended a course in Devon studying furniture making, and has already made many items of furniture for people off and on the Isle. It serves as a means of employment between boats.

Fiddle-making may not have been a commonly practised craft on Fair Isle, although playing them probably was, and we now have another young islander combining both in this "new" craft development. After learning his trade at Newark College, Ewen Thomson has moved back to Fair Isle to make and repair fiddles and other musical instruments. Ewen's grandfather, Stewart at Shirva, has always worked with wood and has recently concentrated on making traditional spinning wheels.

For a tree-less island, Fair Isle seems to attract very wood-orientated crafts people. Derek Grieve, a tree surgeon by trade, is producing a variety of turned items from his workshop, both for sale locally and further afield.

Sealskin curing, which provided the material for Fair Islanders' original slippers, called rivlins, may be a dead art, but producing sheepskins is a newer craft. Utilising the semi-worthless by-product of our home butchery of Shetland lambs, these often multi-coloured hand-cured skins are sold to visitors. Again, the high quality and variety that comes from home-curing, rather than commercially produced skins, attracts customers.

Exotic and imaginative jewellery has also been produced recently by Sigrid Stout and Inge Thomson, with an interesting mix of materials and techniques; and the latest of Fair Isle's long list of craft skills looks set to include stained glass work, with the impending arrival of the Ross-Smiths.

It was exciting to see the hall full of displays of these crafts and many more, in the summer when the cruise ships visited. It certainly reflected the varied and high quality of the craft scene on Fair Isle. Unfortunately, as I write, Shetland is four days into a catastrophic oil-spill disaster which, apart from all the other tragic consequences it will have, will inevitably hinder attempts to attract tourists to the islands. With several islanders now dependent upon the summer flow of visitors for their income, this will come as a severe blow to the economy of the Isle. It is to be hoped that the developing craft scene, which has even enabled young islanders to return to the Isle with some guarantee of security, as well as providing interest and income to many of us already here, will not receive a set-back now.

Michael Stout.

THE DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH HAVEN

The construction of the Breakwater and Marine Works in North Haven finally got underway in July 1992. In addition to providing design and construction supervision services to Shetland Islands Council, Peter Fraenkel BMT Ltd were also involved in obtaining the necessary permissions, consents and licenses for the works.

Although it was intended to start the construction in April, the Council's Parliamentary Agents, Messrs Rees and Freres, advised in early January that a Harbour Revision Order was needed before the works could proceed. The order was required to establish a new harbour area at North Haven within which the Council would exercise harbour jurisdiction in accordance with the Zetland County Council Act 1974. The order would enable the Council to carry out works necessary for improvement, maintenance or management within the new harbour area. In the event, the application to the Secretary of State to make a Harbour Revision Order was advertised on 28.02.92. It was subsequently made on 18.05.92, laid before Parliament on 20.05.92 after the General Election, and came into effect on 29.06.92.

In the meantime, Peter Fraenkel BMT Ltd progressed with the preparation of the tender documents with a view to initiating the tendering procedure and selecting a Contractor for the works before the order came into force. The Contract was duly advertised in the Official Journal of The European Community as well as the Construction News and The Shetland Times in accordance with E.C. procedures. Of the 22 Contracting firms who responded to these advertisements, 6 were short listed and placed on the Tender List. With the Council's approval the 6 Contractors were invited (on the 26.03.92) to tender for the works with a 6 week tendering period. All tenders were duly returned on time except for one, which had to be disqualified in accordance with the Council's standing orders. From a detailed examination of the technical and financial content of the tender submissions that of Kier Construction looked the most favourable. After some further discussions, Kier's were issued with a letter of intent on 12.06.92. The award of the contract was made on 29.06.92 in the sum of approximately £2.24M. The scope of the works involved the construction of a breakwater and roundhead, the dredging of the existing seabed to provide a basin and the construction of a quay comprising precast concrete units together with some miscellaneous ancillary work. Kier Construction's sub-contractors for the various elements of the work are:

Dredging	Holland Dredging.
Diving	C & R Diving.
Precast Concrete	Aberdeen Concrete.
Drilling & Blasting	Rockfall Drilling Company.
Electrics	Ness Engineering Ltd.

Work started on site on the 10.07.92 before the arrival of the main contractor's personnel, when the Holland Dredging Ltd's representatives carried out the pre-dredge survey witnessed by Peter Fraenkel BMT personnel. The dredger 'Colossus' comprising a large hydraulic excavator mounted on a spudded-pontoon subsequently arrived in North Haven on 19.07.92, and commenced dredging on 24.07.92 after some trial digs.

The mobilisation and the setting-up of the camp and offices, comprising 13 portakabins and the associated equipment commenced on the 20.07.92. The cabins and sundry other equipment to include 2 generators, trailer, fork-lift truck, mobile

crane, railway sleepers, explosives magazine and a container for stores arrived via the barge 'Clark Avon' and the coaster MV 'Kava Sound', on 20.07.92 and 21.07.92 respectively. The establishment of the camp and offices was completed with the able assistance of the Northmen and Kenny Stout on 27.07.92. Prior to this the new temporary inhabitants of Fair Isle were accommodated at various locations over the Island.

The dredging, which commenced on 24.07.92, involved excavating the existing seabed to a depth of 4.80m below Ordnance Datum on a plan area of approximately 2500 sq.m. to form a basin in front of the proposed quay. In addition it was necessary to dredge a trench some 62m long x 6m wide 4.80m to 6.10m below O.D. to accommodate the foundation bed for the quay wall. The depth of the water provided within the dredged basin at low water is 4.0m. The dredged material was loaded directly into MV 'Pluto', a 1250 tons capacity split hopper barge, by the 'Colossus', whence it was disposed of at sea in the designated spoil ground to the north-east of Da Nizz in some 43m of water having a rocky bottom. Part of the dredging work involved the removal of bedrock and rock outcrops by drilling and blasting. A total quantity of some 9200 cu.m. of material consisting of boulders, cobbles, weathered rock, gravel and sand was dredged during the 5 week dredging programme, with 'Colossus' and MV 'Pluto' being demobilised and leaving Fair Isle on 24.08.92.

The second phase of the work, the construction of the breakwater and roundhead, commenced on 16.08.92 with the first arrival from Norway of the 9000 ton capacity rock barge, 'Larvik'. The crane barge 'Cosiven' equipped with a Manitowoc ringer crane (capacity 162 tons at 8.5m radius) to be used for the breakwater arrived at Fair Isle on 05.08.92. The now completed breakwater and roundhead runs westwards from the cliffs of Bunes to the Stack 'o' North Haven and then extends beyond the stack into the approach channel to the harbour. The width of the channel at this point, with 5.0m minimum depth of water, is 40m. The rock used in the construction originated from two Norwegian quarries at Espervik and Larvik, and consisted of 5T to 12T core material, 8T to 15T berm material and 15T to 18T armouring. All of the rocks were placed individually to the prescribed level and profile. Whilst the core material was placed by grab, the berm and armouring materials were lifted and placed by lifting eyes cast into the rocks at source.

A total of some 26000 tons of rock was used all of which was brought in on Messrs Larvik Armourstone's flat topped barge (90m x 30m) in 3 shipments towed by a Russian supply vessel MV 'Birkut'. The construction of the breakwater and roundhead was successfully completed on 13.09.92 only two days behind programme.

The final element of the works comprises the construction of the quay in hollow rectangular precast concrete units founded on a prepared underwater granular bed and placed one on top of another. After stacking, the units are coupled together with vertical threaded ties, filled with granular material, grouted up and then backfilled to formation level behind the quay wall. Each stack (4.0m deep x 2.0m long) consists of a solid bottomed base unit, four intermediate units, and a top unit capped with a precast deck slab (4 x 2). The quay wall, which is 60m in length, will have a total height of about 8.0m with 4.0m of water alongside at low water. The quay will be equipped with vertical rubber fenders, access ladders and bollards. The area behind the concrete apron will be paved with concrete paviments laid in a herringbone pattern on 50mm thick sand bed. Access to the new quay will be from the root of the existing pier via the slipway.

The contract also provides for the installation of a Port Entry (Sector) Light to

facilitate navigation in the hours of darkness, area lighting of the quay via 3 8.0m highlighting columns, a navigation buoy marking the entrance to the basin, and a new 10/15 KVA diesel generator to replace the existing one located in the winch house. In addition rockfall netting is to be installed along the cliff face to the back of the quay together with a catch fence to prevent injury to quay users in the event of falling rock.

Whilst the dredging and the construction of the Breakwater and Roundhead finished on time, the construction of the Quay is currently running behind programme and is now unlikely to be completed before the end of March 1993.

As at present, the camp and offices have been demobilised with the last of the Portakabins being shipped out on 27.11.92. All site personnel are now comfortably accommodated for the winter in the Lodge. Some will be celebrating Christmas and the New Year on Fair Isle, as the work will continue through the Festive Season.

Peter Fraenkel BMT Ltd.
Fair Isle Site Office.

ORNITHOLOGY

The 1992 season can only be described as exceptional. The Isle's seabirds enjoyed another excellent breeding season, and both the spring and autumn migration periods were full of incident.

Sandeels were readily available to seabirds in the vicinity of Fair Isle for the second successive year, and this was undoubtedly a key factor in allowing Shags, Kittiwakes and Arctic Skuas to produce more chicks/pair than in any year since monitoring began. The Arctic Tern population showed another spectacular increase, with 1100 pairs attempting to breed, and there was renewed growth in the number of breeding Gannets. More unexpected were the population increases shown by both Arctic and Great Skuas.

A record 214 species were recorded during the year, nine more than the previous highest total. Six species were additions to the Island list, more than in any year since 1961. A Brown Flycatcher in July, was new to Britain and Ireland; a Semi-palmated Sandpiper in May, was the first for Scotland; and a Solitary Sandpiper in September, the first for Shetland. Pacific Golden Plover, Ring-billed Gull and Montagu's Harrier were the other 'new' species; while there were second records for Bonelli's Warbler and Eyebrowed Thrush, and the first Cory's Shearwater since 1965.

Throughout the period mid-May to early June the wind blew from the eastern quarter producing, arguably, the best spring ever. There was a phenomenal series of falls of Spotted Flycatchers, the best Whitethroat passage for over 20 years and record counts for a number of scarce migrants. Some rarities too arrived in unprecedented numbers, most notably Red-throated Pipit (9), Subalpine Warbler (7), and Black-headed Bunting (5); while rarer in Fair Isle terms were the first Stone Curlew since 1974 and first Nightjar since 1976.

Almost inevitably the autumn was a little less exciting, with thrush numbers particularly disappointing. There was however a superb fall of Robins and record numbers of Goldcrests, as well as an exceptional run of rarities occurring from early August to mid November.

Other unusual species recorded during the year were: Mute Swan, Red-footed Falcon (3), Dotterel (3), Pectoral Sandpiper, Great Snipe, Short-toed Lark (2), Woodlark, Shorelark, Richard's Pipit (5), Olive-backed Pipit (5), Pechora Pipit, Citrine Wagtail, Thrush Nightingale (2), Eastern Stonechat, Lanceolated Warbler, Paddyfield Warbler, Great Reed Warbler, Booted Warbler, Melodious Warbler, Greenish Warbler (5), Pallas' Warbler (3), Firecrest, Golden Oriole, Woodchat Shrike (2), Arctic Redpoll (2), Hawfinch, Otolan (3), Rustic Bunting, Little Bunting and Yellow-breasted Bunting.

SPRING MIGRATION

Full coverage commenced in mid-March by which time Skylark passage was already well underway with 190 present on 16th, when a record 360 Turnstones and 3 Glaucous Gulls were also seen. A strong westerly airstream persisted for the next week virtually suppressing migration. An Iceland Gull and a Goldeneye on 17th and an exceptionally early Collared Dove and a Mistle Thrush on 20th, were the most notable observations. Seventy-five Snow Buntings served as a reminder of the cold northerly wind on 24th, but as conditions improved next day the first Puffins appeared offshore.



*Pallas'
Warbler*

The wind switched to the south-east on 28th, and gradually backed north-east over the next few days. The first Wheatear of the year on 29th was followed by a moderate fall next day. A Hawfinch at Schoolton caused most excitement, but 2 Black Redstarts, a Stonechat, 2 Linnets, 6 Chaffinches, 20 Goldcrests and the first significant arrival of Meadow Pipits (35) made for an interesting days birding. Goldcrests increased to 55 on 31st when thrushes were much in evidence, with 75 Blackbirds, 180 Song and 3 Mistle Thrushes. Other arrivals included 28 Robins, 15 Dunnocks, 3 Greenfinches, 2 Chiffchaffs, 3 Black Redstarts and a Grey Wagtail; while 3 Whooper Swans flew north. The wind was now reaching gale force but remained in the north-east. Song Thrushes continued to flood in totalling 260 on 1st April, when 6 Mistle Thrushes were also present, and no less than 400 on 2nd. Other increases noted on 2nd were Chaffinch (17), Wood Pigeon (21) and Blackbird (95). A northerly gale seriously hampered birding on 3rd, but appropriately 3 Glaucous Gulls were found. A Rook was a new species for the year next day.

A return to south-easterlies on 6th precipitated a reasonable arrival of thrushes next day. Blackbirds numbered 500 and Fieldfares 125, while the local Starling population was certainly augmented by migrants with 1120 counted. Two Yellowhammers were new for the year. The wind remained south-east and further arrivals occurred on 8th. Robins were occupying every croft, with 125 logged, Fieldfares increased to 250, Redwings to 100, Dunnock to 17, Chaffinch to 20 and Woodcock to 15. More unusual were 4 Black Redstarts, 3 Linnets a Stonechat and 5 Whooper Swans. The 9th saw a marked clear-out with a male Lapland Bunting the only arrival of note. This was joined by a second on 11th, when 2 Water Rails, a Jack Snipe and a Moorhen were other notable observations.

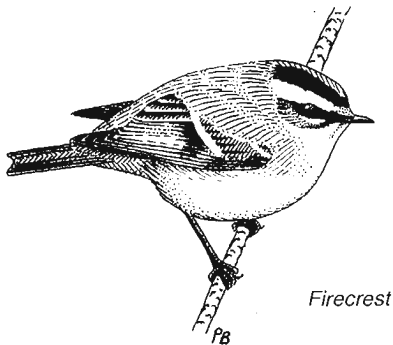
A week of north-westerlies commenced on 12th, and the arrival of the first Arctic Skua, on 13th was the most notable event of a quiet few days. Things livened up a bit on 16th, when 3 Lapland Buntings and a pair of Gadwall were recorded. Wildfowl remained in the limelight with a drake Goosander flying passed North Light on 17th and 5 Whooper Swans heading north on 19th. There was an air of anticipation as the wind moved into the eastern quarter on 20th, where it was to remain for a few days.

The first Willow Warbler of the year appeared along with 35 Wheatears and a Sparrowhawk. New species for the year were now arriving daily: a Whimbrel and 4 Ring Ousels on 21st, Pintail, Pink-footed Goose, Tufted Duck and Swallow on 22nd, and Redstart and Blackcap on 23rd. Numbers of common migrants also increased and by 23rd there were 52 Golden Plovers, 470 Common Gulls, 450 Fieldfares, 175 Meadow Pipits, 150 Wheatears, 70 Bramblings, 35 Robins, 10 Ring Ousels and 10 Chiffchaffs. Common Sandpiper and Grasshopper Warbler were new for the year on 25th; Grey Wagtail, Kestrel, Peregrine and Merlin were also present and Wheatears increased to 185. The 27th produced a 'black' Spotted Redshank, 7 Tree Pipits and an influx of Corvids - 9 Carrion and 6 Hooded Crows. Jackdaw and Lesser Whitethroat were new for the year on 28th.

The wind was by now firmly back in the western quarter although this did not prevent an exciting finale to the month. A super Goldfinch sang at the Haa on 28th, the first House and Sand Martin of the year were seen and a new Grasshopper Warbler recorded. On 29th a routine early morning Tystie monitoring count produced a real surprise for one observer, when a large frosty Arctic Redpoll paused briefly at Busta Geo. Fortunately a male Oortolan gave more prolonged views at Upper Stoneybrake. The only Green Sandpiper of the spring was found, and a summer plumaged Slavonian Grebe was in Furse.

The wind remained in the western quarter for the opening 10 days of May. As a result migration was slow but there was a sprinkling of new arrivals. On 1st a Peregrine, 6 Linnets and 5 Siskins were found. An exceptionally early Wood Warbler and a Common Scoter were highlights of 3rd and the first Arctic Tern appeared on 4th. The 5th, saw a pronounced arrival of Icelandic breeders, with 63 Purple Sandpipers, 40 White Wagtails, 130 Meadow Pipits and 80 Wheatears. The first Wood Sandpiper of the year also appeared. Pipits featured prominently on 6th with 15 Tree and 170 Meadow counted, plenty for the 2 Merlins to prey upon. A male Hen Harrier was a surprise find next day, when the year's first Knot also occurred. Raptors continued to provide the highlights with single Ospreys flying north on both 10th & 11th and a further Hen Harrier, this time a ring-tail, also on 11th. Arctic Terns arrived en-masse too, with 800 present, and among them were the first 3 Common Terns of the year. A Sanderling was new for the year on 12th.

Overnight south-easterlies produced the first real arrival of 'summer migrants' on 13th. Among them were the first Whitethroats (3), Whinchat and Garden Warbler of the year, plus 60 Swallows, 12 Tree Pipits, 2 Redstarts, 6 Willow Warblers, 3 Blackcaps, 15 Reed Buntings and 2 Wood Sandpipers. The biggest prize though was discovered on a small temporary pool north of Field. A small 'peep' soon confirmed as Scotland's first Semipalmated Sandpiper!



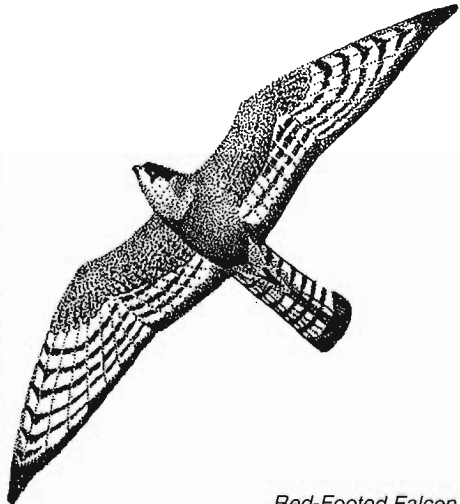
Firecrest

Attention centred on the sandpiper again next day but 2 Spotted Flycatchers and 3 Sedge Warblers were new for the year. Continuing southerlies produced another scattering of summer migrants on 15th. The first 2 Cuckoos and 2 Turtle Doves of the year were recorded; Tree Pipits numbered 20, House Martins 70 and Willow Warblers

12. Much rarer though, was the island's third Firecrest, which remained elusive in the Gully, and a record breaking 6 Gadwall, at Hesti Geo. An early Rosefinch and the first Pied Flycatcher of the year were the best finds of 16th and a return to south-east winds augured well for forthcoming days. Observers were not to be disappointed with a stunning Red-throated Pipit, found at the Bull's Park, and a Bluethroat, in Gilsetter, competing for attention on 17th. Good counts comprised 100 Swallows and 25 House Martins, while a male Grey-headed Wagtail and a late Glaucous Gull were also noteworthy. Migrants continued to arrive on 18th when a Short-toed Lark found at the base of Malcolm's Head during the afternoon induced most excitement, followed closely by 3 Bluethroats. Notable counts of common migrants were: 25 Willow Warblers, 12 Chiffchaffs, 25 Tree Pipits, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 3 Common Sandpipers and 23 Dunlins.

A continuing gentle, easterly airflow over the next few days kept observers on their toes, and despite the depredations of fog a host of exciting arrivals occurred. The 19th produced a second Red-throated Pipit; and the first Wryneck, Red-backed Shrike, Reed Warbler and Swift of the spring. There were 2 Hen Harriers, and the first Coot since 1986 was found in Hesti Geo. Next day a female Nightjar was a stunning early morning capture in the Gully, it being the first since 1976! Two Wood Warblers were also found. The 21st brought a male Subalpine Warbler, 3 Bluethroats and a Wryneck, while on 22nd, Bluethroats increased to 4 and a Grey-headed Wagtail appeared. Fog again impaired observations over the next two days but a Corncrake and a Black-tailed Godwit provided excitement on 23rd, and amazingly, a third Red-throated Pipit appeared on 24th. To unanimous relief it was clear at dawn on 25th; at last the Isle could be covered properly! A bevy of migrants awaited. The best find was a super female Rustic Bunting which performed well at the Reevas, although rarer in Fair Isle terms, was the Canada Goose that paraded up and down the Isle. Red-backed Shrikes arrived in style, with 9 found, and there was a spring record 3 Ruff. Other counts included 60 Swallow, 70 House Martin, 7 Black Redstart, 6 Whinchat, 20 Spotted Flycatcher, 10 Lesser and 6 Common Whitethroat, 6 Sedge and 9 Garden Warbler. Incredibly, the easterly winds were forecast to continue and excitement reached fever pitch. On the 26th common migrants were again scattered throughout the Isle and 2 Icterine Warblers and a Crossbill were found. The evening though, produced the greatest excitement, with a super first-summer Red-footed Falcon eventually settling at Boinni Mire, and 2 Dotterel on Hoini. Those who had decided to remain at the Observatory after tea, to take a well earned rest, had a rather hectic evening!

Whatever the delights of the 26th no-one was prepared for the feast of birds awaiting us next day. Spotted Flycatchers were everywhere with a record breaking 350 logged. Twelve Wood Warblers and no less than 11 Icterine Warblers also represented record breaking counts. Two



Red-footed Falcon

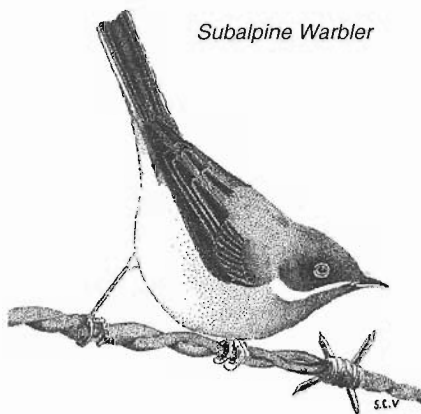
Subalpine Warblers appeared, a female at Haa and a male at Charlies Trees. Red-backed Shrikes numbered 20, Bluethroats 8 and there was barely time to double-check 2 Nightingales. A Shorelark was found on the Houll, whilst searching for a possible Bonelli's Warbler, 3 new Red-throated Pipits were located and 4 Rosefinches found. A Sandwich Tern was new for the year. As for common migrants the most notable counts were, 12 Lesser and 30 Common Whitethroats, and 60 Garden and 8 Sedge Warblers. The evening produced 2 Marsh Warblers and a superb Honey Buzzard, the latter pausing briefly before continuing north. It was approaching midnight before the log was completed - with an incredible 94 species recorded!

The 28th could not quite live up to the previous day, although it was still memorable. Spotted Flycatchers again numbered 350 (ringing indicating that there had been a considerable turnover of birds). A new male Subalpine Warbler, showing characters of the eastern race *albistriata*, was found at the top of Ward Hill. Fair Isle's first ever spring Barred Warbler was seen fleetingly at the Shop, and there were 2 new Marsh Warblers and another Nightingale. Five Rosefinches included 2 red males; a record 15 Wood Warblers were found along with 20 Red-backed Shrikes, 8 Bluethroats, 9 Icterine Warblers and 6 Grey-headed Wagtails. In the evening the now regular raptor chase occurred, this time the culprit was the spring's first Hobby.

The wind remained a gentle easterly and the 29th brought yet more surprises. The seventh Red-throated Pipit of the spring was found at Busta, and there were 2 new Red-footed Falcons: another first-summer male and a stunning female. Among common migrants there were increases in Redstart (15), Whinchat (12) and Willow Warbler (40). Incredibly, there were still 350 Spotted Flycatchers to be found. The number of common migrants decreased a little next day when highlights were a second Hobby, this time an adult, 3 Sandwich Terns, 2 Marsh Warblers and 6 Rosefinches. Bird of the day was undoubtedly a singing Greenish Warbler at the Reeva, although unfortunately it was seen by only one observer. Almost inevitably the 31st was duller, but still it produced the eighth and ninth Red-throated Pipits of the spring, along with 280 Spotted Flycatchers and a record 9 Rosefinches. Most observers fortunate enough to have been present on the Isle during the last week of May, agreed that it ranked as one of the best weeks birdwatching they had experienced anywhere in the world! Surely June could not match May?

With high pressure persisting over Scandinavia, the airflow at Fair Isle continued to be light and from the eastern quarter for the first ten days of June. On 1st, what was presumably the Greenish Warbler first seen on May 30th was relocated beneath Shirva. Curiously it exhibited a strong median covert bar on one wing. A Golden Oriole at the base of Malcolm's Head and a record count of 12 Rosefinches, maintained the pace of late May. Common migrants, too, were still present in good numbers, with 180 Spotted Flycatchers, 40 Garden Warblers, 30 Whitethroats and 9 Whinchats logged. Icterine Warblers still numbered 7 and there were 3 Red-backed Shrikes left. On 2nd another Greenish Warbler was trapped in the Vaadal, and a rather bedraggled male Subalpine Warbler was found at the Field Gate. Incredibly a different male was present at Wester Lothar next day; although a Red-breasted Flycatcher, trapped at the Observatory, and 5 Marsh Warblers, attracted more attention. The 4th proved to be a frustrating day. It started well enough with 11 Icterine and 5 Marsh Warblers, 6 Rosefinches and 5 Red-backed Shrikes counted, but just before lunch a 'lesser' Golden Plover was seen on Bunes. Unfortunately its stay was all too brief, and those lucky enough to see it didn't get quite enough to identify it to species. Inevitably the numbers of migrants decreased over the next few days but a Thrush Nightingale trapped at the Plantation on the 5th more than compensated. There were still 7 Icterines and 3 Marsh Warblers present on 6th. Three new

Rosefinches appeared on 8th, along with a rather belated addition to the year list in the form of a Greenshank.



For the fortunate few present the 9th was 'the day of the spring'. The wind was still in the south-east and towards the end of what by recent standards had been a quiet morning, a female Black-headed Bunting was found in Sukka Mire. Initially after lunch the bunting was the focus of attention until, that is, one observer came sprinting across the Airstrip yelling about a warbler "not even identifiable to genus". After the ensuing panic had subsided, all present arrived at Charlie's Trees to be greeted by a Paddyfield Warbler! After tea, the pace quickened. The first Stone Curlew since 1974 was located at South Green - an absolutely stunning sight as it flew north before settling at Lower Stoneybrake. A Quail was flushed from the Meadow Burn and

a Dotterel located on Brecks 'o' Busta, before the final 'find' of the day, a Great Reed Warbler along the Hill Dyke. It is easy to forget that Greenish Warbler, Grey-headed Wagtail, Stonechat, Long-eared Owl, Marsh Warbler, 10 Icterine Warblers, 6 Rosefinches and a Red-backed Shrike were also present - as well as a good scattering of common migrants. Next day 3 new Black-headed Buntings were found, including two together at Taing, with the other highlight, a male Rosefinch in which all the usual red pigment seemed to have been replaced by yellow!

There was almost a sigh of relief when the anticyclone that had produced so many memorable days slipped away on the 12th, allowing us a rest and a chance to tackle the backlog resulting from a hectic fortnight! Nonetheless, despite a predominantly westerly airstream for the next three weeks the period was not without incident. The seventh Subalpine Warbler of the spring, a male, was found at Barkland on 12th; when a Nightingale and Quail were other notables. On 14th, a new male Black-headed Bunting was at the Haa and a flighty Spotted Crake frequented Schoolton. A female Black or Red-headed Bunting defied identification at Bull's Park on 18th, at which time most of us felt the spring was over. However, an anticyclone briefly re-establishing itself over Scandinavia at the end of the month produced the ultimate prize: Britain's first Brown Flycatcher at the Plantation on 1st July. The mega-rarity that had threatened all spring had finally arrived! Next day a Red-backed Shrike, Marsh Warbler and the Island's first Pacific Golden Plover, a stunning summer plumaged individual, rounded off what must rank as the most spectacular Fair Isle spring ever!

AUTUMN MIGRATION

Typically the first evidence of autumn migration occurred in mid-July, when gulls and waders were on the move. Sixty-nine Curlew and 8 Whimbrel flew south on 13th; there were 24 Lapwings counted on 19th, and 20 Knot and 4 Sanderling were seen on 23rd. A record 275 Black-headed Gulls were logged on 25th along with 10 Sanderling. An early Sedge Warbler and 2 Crossbills, on 22nd, were the first passerines of interest, while a single Leach's Petrel on 5th, and 2 on 18th, enlivened Good Shepherd crossings.

August opened with a quiet week, the most notable observations being a Sooty Shearwater on 1st, an early Barred Warbler on 2nd and a Sandwich Tern on 6th. Later in the month a series of Atlantic depressions passed to the south of Fair Isle, producing several spells of south-easterly wind and a series of exciting records. The first of these occurred on 8th, when an adult Melodious Warbler was found along the Double Dyke wall. Two Green Sandpipers were also seen, presaging what was to be a record autumn for the species. Continuing south-easterlies brought more migrants on 9th, when 2 Barred and an Icterine Warbler and a Spotted Redshank were the highlights. Common Gulls reached a very creditable total of 1800, and other migrants in evidence were 10 Willow Warblers, 5 Whinchats, a Cuckoo, 30 Golden Plovers and 6 Green Sandpipers. The spell of excellent birding continued on 10th when a Spotted Crake, near Pund, and 2 Marsh Warblers vied for attention. Another Icterine was found and Willow Warblers increased to 18. Waders included 8 Green Sandpipers, 4 Greenshank and a Bar-tailed Godwit. The 11th was a little quieter although the first Rosefinch of the autumn and 12 Ruff were new.

With another depression tracking south of Fair Isle the wind again backed into the south-east, and the 12th proved to be another memorable day. A Greenish Warbler initially found at the Reevas was eventually relocated at Busta. Common Gulls were again on the move and among a flock of 500 at Meoness a gull with a distinctly paler mantle, proved to be Fair Isle's first Ring-billed Gull. Just yards away from the gull 2 adult Curlew Sandpipers fed, while 8 each of Ruff, Green and Common Sandpipers were logged. Amidst all the excitement 2 new Icterine Warblers were almost forgotten. With the wind backing north-east on 13th and increasing in strength, attention focussed on the sea where 43 Stormies flew north. Three Barred Warblers proved to be the onshore highlight. A spell of north-westerlies then marked a quiet period, although an Icterine Warbler was found on 15th and Green Sandpipers continued to increase with a record breaking 15 on 16th. A Corncrake performed well for assembled admirers on 17th when Barred Warblers increased to 4. With renewed south-easterly winds, Barred Warblers increased yet further on 18th, with 5 present. Two Icterine Warblers and a Rosefinch were other highlights, while Wheatears proved to be the migrant most in evidence with 260 logged.

With yet another depression tracking to the south of the Isle there was more south-easterly wind on 22nd when Wheatears increased to 500. A Pintail and 2 each of Wryneck, Barred Warbler, Rosefinch and Pied Flycatcher were other notables. Next day brought the best fall of the month. Wheatears increased to 550 and Whinchats to 45. Other pronounced arrivals included 40 Tree Pipits, 50 Willow Warblers, 30 Garden Warblers, 4 *flava* Wagtails, 6 Redstarts, 9 Pied and 3 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Reed and 3 Sedge Warblers and 4 Lesser Whitethroats. Most attention, though, focussed on 5 Wrynecks, a Red-backed Shrike and a Bluethroat. Wading birds too, were much in evidence, with 14 Herons, 7 Green and 14 Common Sandpipers, 12 Ruff and the first Little Stint of the year. There were fewer migrants on 24th, but a Greenish Warbler was trapped in the Hjondyke and 19 Cormorants flew south.

Despite a further south-east blow, the 25th was a little disappointing with an Icterine Warbler the highlight. Events of the 26th however, more than compensated. After breakfast a juvenile Woodchat Shrike was flushed from the Plantation, and a little later an Oortolan was found at Upper Stoneybrake. A Wood Sandpiper was seen up north, and 2 Wood and 3 Barred Warblers and 2 Wrynecks appeared. After lunch a Great Snipe was claimed at Taing. All observers present were lined up and marched across Da Water. Sure enough a superb Great Snipe, the first since 1987, was flushed several times, giving excellent flight views. The wind had veered westerly by the evening, and 3 Wood Warblers were the most notable event of 27th. There was a

decidedly westerly bias to arrivals on 28th, when 300 Meadow Pipits and 50 White Wagtails were logged. A fierce south-easterly blow and heavy rain seriously hampered birdwatchers on 30th but 3 Barred Warblers were found, and the third Greenish of the autumn was trapped at the Plantation, just before tea. The month ended with a flourish when a small juvenile Harrier with orange underparts, first flushed from Taing, led observers a merry dance before finally giving good enough views to enable identification as Fair Isle's first Montagu's Harrier - the fourth new species of the year! Other arrivals included: 60 Tree Pipits, 28 Whinchats, 20 Garden, 5 Reed and 25 Willow Warblers, 5 Wrynecks and 7 Pied Flycatchers.

Almost inevitably, given the largely favourable weather of August, September opened with 10 days of wind from the western quarter. Highlights of 1st were 35 Whinchats, 2 Sedge and a Grasshopper Warbler and 2 Kestrels. Three Barred Warblers were present next day, while the most notable observations on 3rd were 3 Rosefinches and 6 *flava* Wagtails. Seventeen Cormorants flew south on 4th and a Grey Wagtail was seen. There was a touch more promise on 5th when the wind fell light and variable, with optimistic individuals even claiming an easterly component! Twenty Willow and 3 Barred Warblers were a good sign and 2 Lapland Buntings were new. Late afternoon though, produced most excitement, when a buzzy wagtail flushed from South Light was eventually tracked down at South Harbour, where it proved to be a Citrine. Unfortunately it didn't remain long enough for more than a lucky few to get to grips with.

A gale force southerly on 6th meant that many observers turned their attention to the sea, an easterly bound Leach's Petrel was their reward. On land a Nightingale, something of an autumn rarity, was trapped. A rather quiet spell followed, punctuated by, 4 Pintail and a Little Stint on 7th, the first Snow Bunting of the autumn on 9th and an Icterine Warbler on 11th. Seawatching was again order of the day on 12th when a gale force south-westerly blew. Thirty-nine Storm Petrels flew south and 10 Pink-footed Goose were seen. Wildfowl again featured prominently on 13th when 47 Pink-feet and 39 Wigeon were recorded. Twenty-two Cormorants flew south and other arrivals included 360 Meadow Pipits and 2 Sedge and 13 Garden Warblers. Sparrowhawks peaked at 3 and Turtle Doves at 2. The Field byre became the unlikely focus of attention during the afternoon, as a stunning juvenile Solitary Sandpiper fed within a few feet of its assembled admirers - surely one of the most unexpected finds of the autumn! By evening the wind had started to blow from just east of south and this augured well for the 14th. True to form the hoped for rarity did not take long to find. A super, but rather elusive, Booted Warbler skulking in the Upper Stoneybrake oats. A Rosefinch was the first for a week, while other arrivals included 600 Meadow Pipits, 275 Twite, 60 Wheatears, 20 Blackcaps and 2 Barred Warblers. A westerly wind had returned by the evening with a Pintail, a Little Stint and 30 southward bound Cormorants the highlights of the next two days.

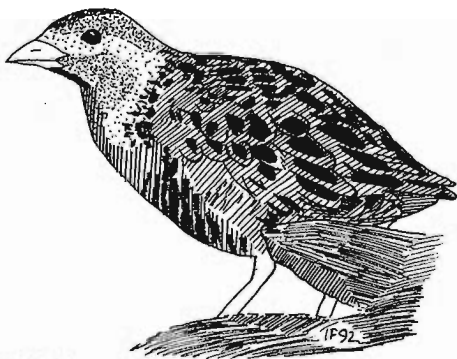
The wind backed east of south overnight on 16th, and observers looked forward to more 'goodies' next day. It was soon obvious that there had been a huge arrival of Skylarks, the final tally reaching 1000! Other finds included 3 Lapland Buntings and single Icterine and Barred Warblers, but it was not until late afternoon that the much hoped for rarity materialised. A long overdue Yellow-breasted Bunting was found at Setter. Unfortunately it disappeared immediately, but to everyone's relief was relocated at Upper Soneybrake some two hours later. With a continuing south-easterly airflow, the 18th proved another exciting day. The identification of an elusive 'nightingale' at Upper Stoneybrake was the subject of much discussion over lunch. Any controversy was soon ended with a mist net, the bird proving to be a first-winter Sprosser. Later in the afternoon a super male Red-breasted Flycatcher entertained

everyone at Stensi Geo, until news of a Pectoral Sandpiper sent everyone scurrying to Easter Lother. Other arrivals included: Yellow-browed Warbler, 2 Rosefinch, a new Barred and 5 Reed Warblers and 5 Pied Flycatchers. Despite continued south-east winds the next couple of days were a little disappointing. On 19th, a flighty *Locustella* warbler led everyone a merry dance before a mist net put paid to the antics, confirming identification as Grasshopper Warbler. A Bluethroat provided no such identification problems, while Meadow Pipit was the migrant most in evidence with 400 counted. Next day a Richard's Pipit was the best find and Skylark the most abundant migrant, with 850 logged. A flock of 14 Herons was also notable.

A new Bluethroat, a Red-backed Shrike and 2 Wrynecks aroused most interest on 21st but there was also a good selection of common migrants: Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper, 7 Jack Snipe, 3 Short-eared Owls, 3 Grey Wagtails, 8 Redstarts, 30 Song Thrushes, 5 Reed Warblers, 25 Blackcaps, 6 Spotted and 8 Pied Flycatchers and 9 Siskins. Visible migration was the most exciting feature of 22nd, when 2 Great Northern and 3 Red-throated Divers and 103 Pink-feet flew over. Most land-based interest centred on a Yellow-browed Warbler. An overnight switch to north-east wind heralded a few new arrivals on 23rd, although much to the chagrin of most newly-arrived observers rarities remained absent. The second Woodchat Shrike of the autumn was the best find, while 70 Blackcaps represented the most significant arrival. Other migrants noted included 4 Common Sandpipers, 8 Redstarts, 6 Spotted Flycatchers, a Mistle Thrush, 250 Twite, 2 Redpoll and 4 Lapland Buntings. The 24th was, for the most part, a day of decreases; although Icterine and Barred Warbler, Grey Plover, and 25 Snow Buntings were noteworthy.

An anticyclone was now building over Scandinavia and there was much excitement and expectation as the wind backed into the east on 26th. It was to remain there until the end of the month. Twenty Cormorants flew south, 3 Water Rails were seen and raptors featured prominently, with 2 Kestrels, 2 Merlins and a Peregrine. The 27th was one of those magical Fair Isle days all visiting birdwatchers hope for; birds were simply dropping out of the sky, until dense fog shrouded the island putting a halt to proceedings from mid-morning. Seven Yellow-browed Warblers were a signal of things to come, and as news of a Lanceolated Warbler at North Light spread, all available vehicles seemed to be cajoled into heading north. Those who decided to proceed in a more leisurely fashion were treated to the spectacle of a Honey Buzzard flying east across the Isle. Unfortunately the Lanceolated Warbler showed itself to just its finders, and a few others, before disappearing over the cliff edge never to be seen again.

Other good finds were Slavonian Grebe, Corncrake, Great Spotted Woodpecker and 3 new Richard's Pipits; while obvious arrivals included 75 Lapwings, 100 Song Thrushes, 1000 Redwings, 300 Bramblings, 40 Siskins, 35 Blackcaps, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 10 Lapland Buntings and 10 Redpolls. One is left to speculate as to what might have made landfall on the island if the fog had only stayed away for a few more hours!



Corncrake

The 28th saw increases in some species, namely, Tree Pipit to 15, Redstart to 8, Chaffinch to 100, Siskin to 65 and Reed Bunting to 45; while 12 Dunnocks were the first of the autumn. Incredibly though, despite all the south-east wind some observers had spent their tenth day on the Isle without seeing a 'BB-rarity'! Again the 29th proved frustrating in this respect. Common migrants were everywhere. There were 15 Jack Snipe, a Long-eared Owl, 50 Robins, 8 Redstarts, 8 Ring Ousels, 250 Song Thrushes, 100 Goldcrests, 300 Bramblings, 85 Siskins and 55 Reed Buntings. Ducks, too, were much in evidence with 55 Wigeon, 21 Teal and the first Shoveler of the year. At last, on 30th, two rarities appeared: a super but elusive adult Red-throated Pipit near the Bull's Park, and Fair Isle's second Bonelli's Warbler at Linni Geo. Other scarce migrants included 4 Richard's Pipits, a Great Grey Shrike, a Red-breasted Flycatcher and 3 Yellow-browed Warblers. Numbers of some common migrants also denoted increases, notably, 62 Wigeon, 12 Ring Ousel, 250 Song Thrush and 150 Goldcrest.

The wind remained easterly for the first few days of October and, as a consequence, the Island remained smothered in migrants. On 1st the Red-throated Pipit settled at Kennaby, giving those who had missed it the previous day a second chance. An Olive-backed Pipit, seen briefly at Shirva, eventually performed well in the Meadow Burn and 2 Yellow-browed Warblers were seen. Totals of some common migrants were spectacular: 400 Robins, 50 Ring Ousels, 500 Song Thrushes, 600 Redwings, a record 500 Goldcrests, 190 Siskins and 300 Bramblings. Other highlights included a ring-tail Hen Harrier, 5 Kestrels, 2 Merlins and 15 Jack Snipe. The following day a Short-toed Lark put in an all too brief appearance on Yessness, 26 Barnacle Geese flew south and 6 Short-eared Owls and 900 Redwings represented increases. Frustration was evident on 3rd, as despite the sustained south-easterly airflow no real 'mega-rarity' had been found. A second Olive-backed Pipit did however join the first in the Meadow Burn; 90 Barnacle Geese flew south, Richard's Pipits increased to 3 and Redwing to 1000. Just before lunch though, inspiration arrived in the guise of a superb Pallas' Warbler that had the good sense to feed inside the Setter polytunnel!

The 4th dawned calm and sunny, even tempting the Pallas' Warbler to forsake the polytunnel for the more varied surrounding croft. A third Olive-backed Pipit was located at Easter Lothar during the morning, and an incredible 4 were seen together at North Light in the afternoon! Seven Yellow-browed Warblers, 12 Short-eared Owls and 2 Hen Harriers added to the interest. Good numbers of common migrants were still present, with 8 Tree and 310 Meadow Pipits, 30 Dunnocks, 150 Robins, 8 Redstarts, 50 Blackcaps and 20 Chiffchaffs. The major scoop occurred during the late afternoon, when two lucky observers found a stunning Eye-browed Thrush on the north face of the Houll.

On 5th the wind blew from the western quarter for the first time in ten days, signalling the gradual departure of many of the common migrants. Conditions were to remain this way for over a week. Nevertheless an Eastern Stonechat, a new Rosefinch and 3 Peregrines aroused plenty of interest on 6th. Goose passage though, was to be the dominant feature of the period. On 6th, 187 Greylags and 60 Barnacles flew south, along with 2 Whooper Swans and 15 Red-breasted Mergansers; and on 7th, 200 Greylags and 44 Barnacles followed them. With the wind reaching near gale force on 8th, several observers turned their attention to the sea. They were amply rewarded with 2 adult light phase Pomarine Skuas flying south. Encouraged by these sightings seawatching was again order of the day on 9th. Another adult light phase Pomarine Skua was seen and 60 Long-tailed Ducks flew south. The best moment though undoubtedly occurred when the first Cory's

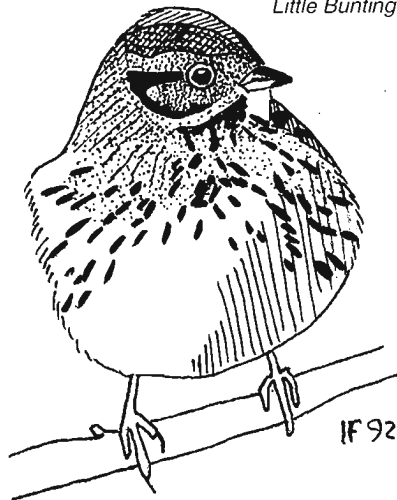
Shearwater since 1965 glided south - unfortunately only one observer was able to savour it! Geese were again on the move, with 400 Greylags heading south, and a freshly dead Corncrake was found on Bunes. A further 450 Greylags flew south on 10th; while 3 Merlins and 12 migrant Ravens were the highlights of 11th. A breath of overnight north-east wind was enough to deposit a Yellow-browed Warbler on 12th along with 400 Redwings.

Visible migration continued to provide most excitement over the next couple of days, with 3 Red-throated and 1 Great Northern Diver, 33 Whooper Swans, 150 Greylags and 7 Barnacle Geese on 13th, and 15 Whooper Swans and 160 Greylags on 14th; when a late Common Tern was in Finniquoy. It seemed that 140 southward bound Greylags were going to be the highlight of 15th too, until that was, a Little Bunting was unearthed at Leogh. It proved difficult to get to grips with in the windy conditions and most observers opted to try again after lunch, especially given that transport was provided! Two observers remained behind though, deciding instead on a leisurely trap round, only to find themselves confronted by a Pechora Pipit in the Plantation! It was swiftly captured and panic broke out at Leogh as the news reached the 'bunting-watchers'. Just over half an hour later, everyone having had 'in the hand views', the pipit was released back at the Plantation, where it performed well in the adjacent heather. A well deserved 'tick' for those who had worked so diligently during the previous week!

By now few common migrants were left on the island, but 2 Jackdaws and an Iceland Gull on 16th, and the first Little Grebe since 1989 on 17th, were noteworthy. The wind had decreased markedly by 18th, when a belated 'year-tick' in the guise of a Tree Sparrow was found. There had also been an obvious arrival of rather pale, Mealy Redpolls, and among a small flock at Upper Stoneybrake was a stunning Arctic Redpoll, looking positively snowball like amongst its close cousins. A late Lesser Black-back Gull and a Yellowhammer were the best finds on 19th, and 13 Whoopers, 3 Glaucous Gulls and 17 Redpolls were highlights on 20th.

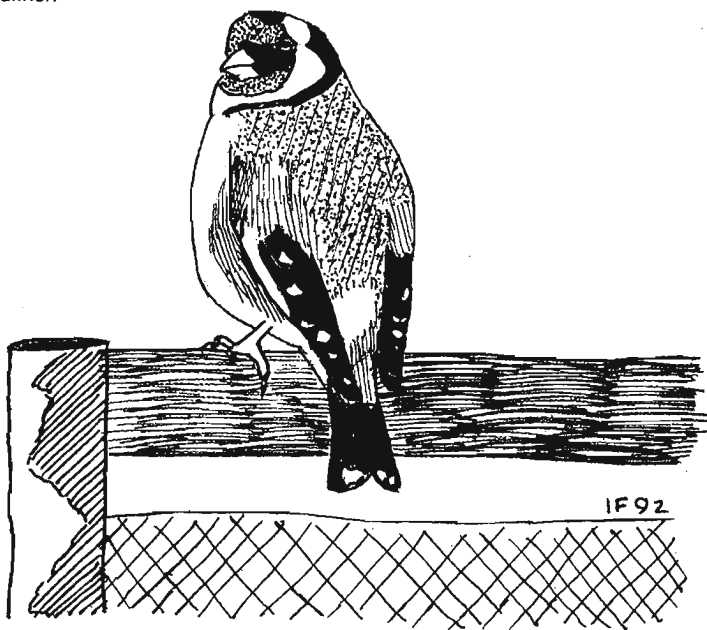
The wind backed south-easterly for the first time in a while on 21st, producing 150 Fieldfare and 350 Redwing. It continued overnight and a Pallas' Warbler at Da Water was undoubtedly the highlight of 22nd. A Yellow-browed Warbler in the Gully, 10 Woodcock, 50 Blackbirds, 200 Fieldfares and 20 Bramblings comprised the supporting cast. A late Lesser Whitethroat and a new Yellowhammer aroused most interest on 24th and a Stock Dove was the best find next day. With the wind backing in east again on 27th, a Long-eared Owl appeared in the Plantation; while a small fall on 28th comprised 16 Woodcock, 75 Brambling and 450 Redwing. A stunning male Bullfinch was the star of 29th, ably supported by 30 Woodcocks, 11 Blackcaps, 45 Bramblings and 110 Snow Buntings.

Little Bunting



November was not without incident. A Goldfinch appeared outside the Observatory on 2nd, when 100 Fieldfare and 400 Redwing were counted. Then a spell of south-easterly wind on 8th-9th produced the third Pallas' Warbler of the autumn at Quoy, on 8th, and a Long-eared Owl next day. The best fall of the late autumn occurred on 10th, when 150 Woodcock, 200 Blackbirds, 160 Snow Buntings and a late Lapland Bunting were present; a super Woodlark found at Field though, was a most unexpected bonus. A flurry of Geese occurred on 14th, when 56 Greylags flew south; a further fall of 50 Woodcock occurred on 17th, and a long awaited Waxwing put in a brief appearance on 26th. Even December produced one notable surprise, when a Mute Swan, only the third ever, was found on 22nd in the South Haven. The 214th species of a memorable year.

Goldfinch



SYSTEMATIC LIST

* Details of all birds preceded by an asterisk are still being considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*. The first on 26th May was followed by another next day, and then singles on 1 date in June and 2 dates in July. Autumn passage occurred from 27th August-13th October, with 1-3 on 12 dates and 5 on 27th September.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*. All records related to birds flying over, with 2 on 22nd September and singles on 13th, 14th & 17th October.

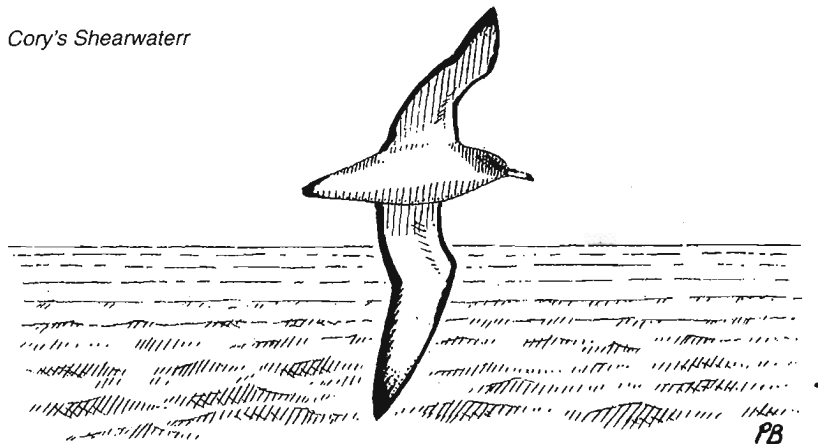
LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*. One on Golden Water on 17th October was the first since 1989.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*. Records comprised one in summer plumage on 29th April, one moulting out of summer plumage on 27th September-2nd October and one in winter plumage on 30th September. A good showing.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*. Present all year with 'blue' phase individuals seen in most months. At monitored plots breeding productivity averaged 0.55 chicks fledged/Apparently Occupied Site.

CORY'S SHEARWATER *Calonectris diomedea*. One flew south off Bunes on 9th October. Incredibly what must be assumed to be the same individual was seen circling just off South Light on 12th October. This is only the second year in which the species has been recorded from the Isle, a total of 88 being seen in 1965.

Cory's Shearwater



SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus*. There were 1-2, seen from the Isle or the Good Shepherd, on 9 dates 1st August-11th October; 3 off Bunes on 25th August and 5 on the crossing of 1st September. A poor year.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*. Singles were recorded from the Isle on

8th May and 12th & 16th September, and from the Good Shepherd on 5 dates 14th May-13th September.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*. Small numbers were recorded on crossings between 26th May and 13th September, max. of 11 on 22nd August. Good movements were noted from the Isle on 13th August, when 43 flew north, and 12th September, when 39 flew south. Fewer than usual were attracted to tape lures during the summer, possibly as a result of increased illumination at the Havens due to the construction of the breakwater. Four juveniles were found grounded in September, all were later released successfully.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. Sightings from the Good Shepherd comprised singles on 5th July & 13th September and 2 on 18th July. One flew east off South Light on 6th September and singles were attracted to tape lures on 22nd & 23rd July. An excellent year.

GANNET *Sula bassana*. Following two years in which the breeding population remained fairly stable, 1992 saw a renewed increase, with 781 occupied nests counted (13.7% greater than 1991). Productivity at monitored nests was 0.73 chicks fledged/nest.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*. What was probably the same individual was seen on 8 dates 9th January-20th February. A poor spring passage comprised singles on just 5 dates 30th March-8th May. Autumn passage occurred from 18th August-17th October with frequent records of 1-5, and higher counts of 19 on 24th August and 17 on 4th, 22 on 13th, 30 on 16th & 20 on 26th September. Occasional singles were recorded until the end of the year.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Present all year. Breeding productivity at monitored nests averaged 1.65 chicks fledged/nest, the best performance since monitoring began in 1986.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*. One on 28th January was the first record in that month since 1986. In spring there were 1-2 on 30 dates 16th March-30th May. Post breeding dispersal/autumn passage commenced on 10th July with almost daily records 9th August-27th October, max. of 14 on 23rd August & 20th September. One remained throughout November-December with 2 recorded on 26th November.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*. A first-winter in South Haven on 22nd December was seen in Finniquoy next day. The third record for the island, the last having occurred in 1985.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*. Two over-wintered, remaining until at least 28th January. Spring records comprised 3 on 31st March and 5 on both 8th & 19th April. Autumn passage spanned 6th October-14th November, with 1-7 on 13 dates and higher counts of 33 on 13th, 14 on 14th and 13 on 20th October. Singles on 21st-22nd and 27th December were the only later records.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*. Spring records comprised one on 22nd-29th April and 2 on 27th-28th May. Main autumn passage occurred from 12th-25th September, with 1-12 on 4 dates and 47 on 13th and 103 on 22nd. Two on 5th and one on 13th October were the only later records.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*. In spring a flock of 13 on 17th March was followed by records of 1-2 on 14 dates to 17th May, and a later single on 5th June. Autumn passage occurred from 24th September-29th October, with heaviest movement from 6th-15th when over 140 were counted on 7 dates, and a max. of 450 occurred on 10th. In November, 10 remained until 11th and there was a small movement on 14th, when 56 flew south. Six were still present on 21st with a single remaining until 30th. A further spate of records occurred in mid-December with 16 on 17th, 9 on 19th and 30 on 20th.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*. One flew up and down the island on 25th May before eventually settling on Vaasetter. Only the eighth record, but recorded for the second year in succession.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*. Seven on 9th January represented the first mid-winter record since 1984. In autumn one on 27th-29th September preceded main passage 2nd-13th October, with the best counts 90 on 3rd and 60 on 6th. One on 27th-28th December was the only later record.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*. There were just two records. A juvenile at South Harbour on 18th July and one flying over on 30th September.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*. Recorded in mid-winter for the third successive year, with a male from 16th-29th January and a female on 9th February. In spring there were 1-2 on 5 dates 10th April-15th May, and 3-4 daily 22nd-28th May, with one remaining on 29th. Autumn passage commenced on 22nd August, with daily records from 5th September-16th October, max. of 63 on 3rd October. 1-2 on 4 dates 28th October-2nd November were the only later records.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*. A pair at Hesti Geo on 16th April was followed by a record count of 6 (3 males and 3 females) at the same locality on 15th-17th May, with 3 remaining until 25th and 2 on 26th May. The best ever showing.

TEAL *Anas crecca*. Light spring passage comprised 1-3 on 16 dates 19th March-23rd May, with 6 on 23rd April. In autumn 2 on 19th July preceded almost daily records 9th August-31st October, with heaviest passage from late August-early October, max. of 21 on 19th & 29th September. Two on 4th & 6th November and 3 on 16th December were the only later records.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*. The pair resident at Field were joined by a female on 9th January. All 3 remained throughout the spring. Spring passage was light, max. of 5 on 24th May. Following last years unsuccessful breeding attempt in the Gully 13 chicks were hatched this year, with 12 being raised to a flying age. This appears to constitute the first successful breeding on the Isle. The presence of local bred birds complicated the autumn passage picture but a max. of 17 was recorded on 24th August. Nine 'local' birds remained into the New Year.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*. In spring there were 4 (2 males and 2 females) on 22nd April and a male on 9th-12th May; autumn records comprised singles on 22nd August, 12th, 15th & 19th September, and 4 on 7th September. Another good year for this species.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*. A male on 29th September and 2 females next day were the only records.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*. Spring records comprised a male on 22nd-24th April, 3 (2 males and a female) on 15th-18th May, with 2 still present on 20th; and a male on 23rd-25th May. In autumn there were at least 6 individuals; singles on 31st July, 3rd & 5th-12th August, on 10 dates in September and on 7th-9th October, and 2 on 27th September. A drake on 31st December was the only later record.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*. Present all year, with a max. of 550 on 7th October.

Long-Tailed Duck



LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. A few over-wintered with a max. of 8 seen on 17th January. Spring records comprised 1-6 almost daily 17th March-22nd April, with later singles on 29th-30th April, 18th-19th May and 3rd June. One on 1st October preceded marked autumn passage 6th-25th October, with heaviest movements of 60 on 9th and 16 on 12th. Singles on 31st October and 12th November were the only later records.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*. A poor year, with single males on 3rd-4th May and 2nd & 7th August, the only records

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*. In the early part of the year there were females recorded on 15th January, 20th February, and on 7 dates 16th March-10th April; with 2 on 7th April. In autumn 2 on 29th September were the earliest since 1985 and were followed by 1-2 on 11 dates 12th October-28th November.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*. In mid-winter there was a redhead on 5th and a drake on 7th & 9th January. Spring records comprised one on 16th April, 1-4 on 5 dates 14th-29th May and 2 on 9th June. July records comprised 1-4 on 5 dates 3rd-13th. In autumn one on 6th September preceded regular records from 17th September-17th October, max. of 15 on 6th. A redhead on 16th December was the only later record.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*. A drake flew passed North Light on 17th April. Recorded for the second year in succession after a four year absence.

HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*. One on 27th May landed briefly at Hesswalls and Vaasetter before flying off north, and a juvenile flew east on 27th September. The first records since 1989 and the first in autumn since 1985.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*. In May a male on 7th was followed by a ringtail on 11th and 2 ringtails on 19th-20th, one remaining until 23rd. In October a ringtail on 1st was joined by a second on 4th. Both remained until 7th with one present next day. Six individuals represents the best showing since 1983.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*. A juvenile, probably female, quartered the Isle on 31st August-1st September. The first confirmed record for Fair Isle. It is interesting to note that Utsira in Norway had its first record, also a juvenile, on 4th September. Weather conditions at the time favour the theory that these two records may relate to the same individual.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*. Light spring passage spanned 12th April-31st May, with 1-2 on 11 dates. In autumn, 1 on 3rd and 2 on 4th September preceded almost daily records of 1-3 on 11th September-4th October. One on 15th November was the only later record.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*. Singles flew north on 10th & 11th May. The first since 1990.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*. Singles on 3 dates in January presumably relate to the same individual. Light spring passage occurred from 16th April-13th June, with 1-2 on 25 dates. Autumn singles on 5th-6th & 16th August preceded almost daily records from 25th August-8th October, with 1-2 on most days, but 3-5 present on 1st-4th October. One was seen regularly through November and December.

RED-FOOTED FALCON *Falco vespertinus*. The late spring saw an unprecedented influx of this species into the British Isles and three individuals eventually reached Fair Isle. First-summer males were recorded on 26th-27th & 29th-30th May and a first-summer female was present from 29th May-2nd June. There are only two previous island records, in June 1955 and June 1984.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*. Light spring passage occurred between 3rd April-5th June, with 1-2 on 17 dates. In autumn one on 5th August preceded regular records of 1-2 from 3rd September-18th October, with 3 on 11th October. Singles on 30th-31st October, 14th & 28th November and 11th December were the only later records.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*. A first-summer present from 28th May-1st June was joined by an adult on 30th-31st.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*. One on 9th January was the sole mid-winter sighting. An immature was seen daily 21st-24th March. Sightings on 15 dates 6th April-30th May probably related to 2 individuals, a first-summer female and an unsexed adult. Further unsexed adults were seen on 23rd July & 5th August. These were followed by almost daily records of 1-3 from 24th August-16th October, comprising 4 individuals (a juvenile, a first-summer male, a first-summer female and an adult male). Thereafter there were occasional records until 28th November, with an adult female present in December.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*. There were two records, both in June. One flushed from the irises along the Wally Burn on 9th and another at the base of Malcolm's Head on 12th.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*. Individuals over-wintered at Field and in the Boini Mire. In spring there were singles on 16th & 26th March and 9th & 12th April, with 2 on 11th April. Autumn passage spanned 21st September-4th November with regular records of 1-2, and 3 on 26th September. At least 2 individuals were present in late December.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*. One below Schoolton on 14th June was the first record in that month, and only the sixth ever in spring. In autumn a juvenile frequented the ditches south of Pund on 10th August.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*. One near the Plantation on 23rd May was the only spring record. Autumn records comprised one near the Plantation on 17th August, one at the Kirk on 27th September and one found freshly dead on Bunes on 9th October.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*. A poor showing with spring singles on 31st March-4th April, 19th April and 24th May; and just one autumn record on 10th November.

COOT *Fulica atra*. One in Hesti Geo on 19th May was the first since 1986.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*. The first individual returned on 10th February, with the first large arrival of 34 occurring on 20th February. Numbers increased thereafter reaching a spring peak of 195 on 23rd March. The breeding population was censused at 87 pairs. Flocks of non-breeders or failed breeders built up from late May, with May max. of 125 on 31st; June max. of 147 on 5th; and July max. of 147 on 14th. In autumn there were daily records until 10th October, max. of 137 on 1st August. Numbers dropped off markedly after mid-August, with September max. of 10 on 2nd, and October max. of 3 on 4th. Singles on 13th, 17th & 18th October were the only later records.



Stone Curlew

STONE CURLEW

Burhinus oedipnemus. One found at South Green on 9th June eventually settled in the Pund/Barkland area where it remained until 16th. The sixth island record and the first since 1974.

RINGED PLOVER

Charadrius hiaticula. 1-2 reported on 4 dates in January-February indicate over-wintering for the first time since 1982. The first spring arrivals occurred in late February, with 5 on 25th and 12 on 26th, with a peak spring count of 25

on 29th March and 1st April. The breeding population numbered 17 pairs. Autumn passage was evident from early August, with daily records until 10th October. Monthly max. were: 20 on 16th August, 10 on 5th September and 12 on 3rd October.

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*. A pair were on Hoini on 25th May. The male appeared to have an injured leg and remained until 7th June, commuting between Hoini and Ward Hill. Another individual (a bright male or dull female) frequented the Brecks of Busta from 9th-12th June. The first records since 1988.

***PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis fulva*. The first for Fair Isle, a superb summer plumaged individual, spent the 2nd-3rd July between Barkland and Pund. Another 'lesser' Golden Plover on Bunes briefly on 4th June was not identified to species.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*. In spring, recorded regularly from 16th March-

10th June, with heaviest passage in late April and early May, max. of 61 on 26th April. There were occasional records of 1-2 in July prior to almost daily records from early August-31st October. The heaviest autumn passage occurred through September and early October, with monthly max. of 30 on 9th August, 46 on 29th September and 35 on 10th October. There were several records of 1-8 in November, and 1-2 on 4 dates in December.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*. One on 25th-27th May was only the thirteenth spring record. In autumn there were 2 individuals; one on 25th September, the other from 29th September-8th October.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*. 1-4 seen on several dates in January suggest successful over-wintering. Fourteen on 26th February constituted the first main arrival with spring passage peaking at 45 on 29th March. Fourteen pairs attempted to breed, the highest number since the early 1960's. Marked autumn passage occurred from 16th September-24th October, max. of 75 on 27th September. There were regular reports during November, with an influx of 19 on 21st, building up to 24 by 30th and 27 by 9th December. Although some departed, following a moderate snowfall on 19th December, a dozen were still present at the end of the year.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*. Spring records comprised singles on 7th, 18th & 22nd May and 7th June, with 2 on 23rd May. Autumn passage commenced on 13th July with regular records through to 30th September. Heaviest passage occurred on 20th-27th July, max. of 20 on 23rd & 24th, with August max. of 9 on 2nd and September max. of 5 on 5th.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*. In spring there were almost daily records of 1-5 from 12th-29th May. Autumn passage spanned 13th July-22nd September and was heaviest on 21st-25th July, max. of 12 on 21st; with August max. of 5 on 1st-2nd and September max. of 4 on 1st.

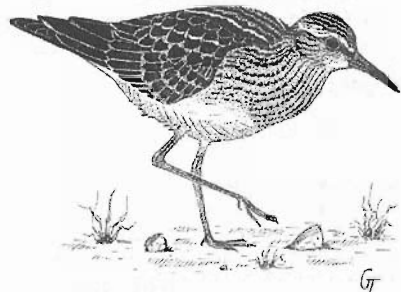
SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPER *Calidris pusilla*. A summer plumage individual was found on a small pool north of Field on 13th May. The pool had evaporated by the following afternoon, the bird moving to Field Croft where it remained until 15th. The first record for Scotland.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*. Seven juveniles were recorded in autumn. They occurred on 23rd August, 7th, 12th, 15th, 19th & 21st September and 1st-5th October.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*. A juvenile was present at Easter Lother on 18th-20th September. The fourteenth island record and seen for the second year in succession.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*. Two adults on Meonesse on 12th August were the first to be seen in summer plumage since 1981. Single juveniles followed on 23rd August & 21st September.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*. Recorded in almost all



Pectoral Sandpiper

months, with a marked spring passage in early May. Monthly maxima were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
20	10	27	29	75	0	6	10	23	17	25	15

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*. Spring passage spanned 2nd May-4th June and was heaviest 16th-27th May, max. of 23 on 18th. Occasional reports of 1-2 followed, prior to almost daily autumn records from 13th August-9th October. There were two main periods of passage; 13th-27th August, max. of 15 on 13th & 27th, and 23rd September-4th October, max. of 30 on 29th & 1st. The only later records were of singles on 30th October and 4th November.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*. Three on 25th May constituted a record spring count. Two were present next day. In autumn 1 on 6th August preceded almost daily records from 9th August-14th September, with good counts of 12 on 23rd & 30th August and 15 on 11th September. These were followed by 1-2 on 8 dates to 1st October.

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus*. There were mid-winter singles on 6th January & 3rd February and spring singles on 1st & 11th April. In autumn 1-2 on 5 dates 2nd-10th September, preceded almost daily records 13th September-26th October, with heaviest passage on 29th-4th when 10-15 daily. 1-2 were seen regularly in November and occasionally in December.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*. Present all year. The spring max. of 50 occurred on 23rd April. Twenty seven drumming birds were recorded during the spring census. The main autumn passage occurred in late September, max. of 80 on 27th, with an October max. of 50 on 20th and various influxes of 30 or more individuals in November-December.

***GREAT SNIPE** *Gallinago media*. One was flushed at close range several times from Taing and Da Water on 26th August. What was presumably the same bird was seen again on 31st. The first since 1987.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*. In spring 1-2 were recorded on several dates 18th March-28th April, with 15 on 8th and 6 on 23rd April. Singles on 4th & 7th October preceded the main autumn passage from 9th October-17th November, with the largest arrivals 30 on 29th October and 150 on 10th & 50 on 17th November. There were regular reports of 1-2 in December.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*. There were two records, both in spring. One on 23rd-24th May and one on 3rd-4th June.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*. All records were in autumn with singles on 15 dates 5th August-29th September, and 3 on 7th September.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. Almost daily spring passage occurred from 21st April-9th June, max. of 10 on 4th May. Autumn passage spanned 2nd July-9th September, being heaviest in late August with a max. of 15 on 23rd.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*. 1-9 recorded regularly in January-February suggest a small number over-wintered. There were small numbers daily from 16th March, with a spring peak of 14 on 4th May. Seven pairs attempted to breed. Autumn passage was evident from mid July with 69 on 13th. There were fewer in August, max. of 34 on 21st, and fewer still in September, max. of 15 on 3rd. 1-5 were recorded regularly in October with occasional records of 1-3 in November-December.

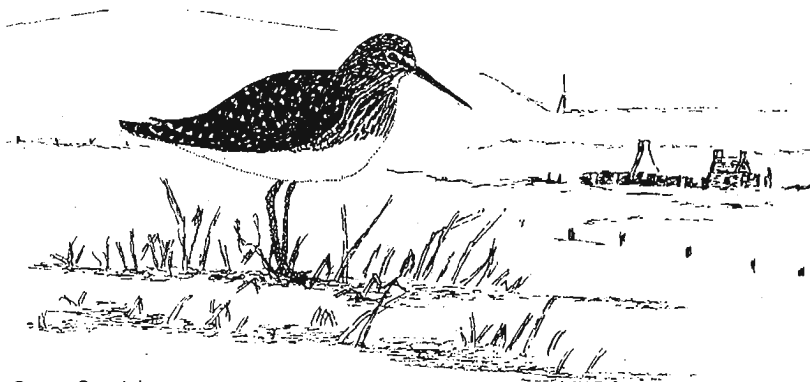
SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*. A summer plumage individual on 26th April was only the ninth spring record. In autumn there were singles on 9th & 27th August.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*. Recorded in all months. About 45 over-wintered. The peak spring count was 55 on 16th March. Numbers were much reduced by May, with occasional records of 1-2 in June and early July. First signs of autumn passage were 47 on 11th July, with an autumn max. of 145 recorded on 25th August. This the second highest autumn count on record. At least 75 remained well into December.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*. The poorest spring showing since 1980 saw just one record on 8th June. In contrast, the autumn passage was good with one on 12th August preceding almost daily records of 1-5 from 7th August-5th September, and later singles on 10th & 21st September.

***SOLITARY SANDPIPER** *Tringa solitaria*. An extremely confiding juvenile frequented the Field byre from 13th-15th September. The first Fair Isle and Shetland record and only the third in Scotland.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. With just one individual recorded on 29th April the spring passage was the poorest since 1981. In contrast the autumn passage was exceptional. There were almost daily records from 8th August-17th September, with more than 5 recorded on 14 days in August, and a record 15 present on 17th. There were fewer in September, max. of 4 on 1st & 3rd.



Green Sandpiper

J. CHITEN

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. All four spring individuals occurred in May. There was 1 on 5th-8th, 2 on 13th with 1 remaining until 17th, and another on 25th-31st. One on 26th August-1st September was the only autumn record. The best showing since 1988.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*. In spring there were 1-3 on 29 dates 25th April-14th June. In autumn there were daily records from 9th August-5th September, max. of 14 on 23rd August; followed by 4 on 23rd and one on 24th September.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. Recorded in all months. Monthly maxima were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
150	100	360	175	140	12	60	80	100	190	280	200

The count of 360 on 16th March is a new island record.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*. Three light phase adults were recorded flying west off South Light in October, 2 on 8th and one on 9th.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*. Two on 13th April were followed by daily records from 17th. Numbers increased gradually with 10 on 23rd and 50 by 27th April. The breeding population increased to 109 Apparently Occupied Territories and breeding success was excellent with 1.2 chicks fledged/A.O.T. The main exodus took place in early August, with 25 remaining on 21st, 8 left on 2nd September and the last on 10th. One from the Good Shepherd on 19th September was the only later record.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*. An early individual on 18th March was followed by daily records from 25th. Numbers built up gradually with 10 present on 9th April and in excess of 100 on 17th. Surprisingly after several years of stability the breeding population showed a marked increase with 110 A.O.T's recorded, 39.2% more than last year. Breeding success was estimated to be in the region of 0.5-0.8 chicks fledged/A.O.T. Departures occurred from early September with 25 still present on 25th, 8 remaining on 11th October and the last seen on 21st. The only later record was of 3 migrants on 26th October.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*. Sporadic records of 1-6 in January-March preceded almost daily records from early April to mid-June. Marked passage occurred in late April-May, max. of 49 on 6th. Autumn passage was evident from mid July, with 105 on 12th, a record count of 275 on 25th, and 106 on 1st August. Numbers decreased markedly from mid-August, with 11 or fewer daily until 4th October. There were occasional records of 1-4 later in October, with 1-2 on 3 dates in November-December.

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*. A second-winter present in a flock of 500 Common Gulls on Meoness on 12th August was the first record for the Isle.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*. Small numbers were present January-March, max. of 13 on 12th January. Spring passage occurred in April-May, with marked movement between 20th-27th April, max. of 470 on 23rd. Ten pairs nested but all failed with several chicks found pecked to death by Arctic Terns. Autumn passage commenced in mid-July and was heaviest from 26th July-23rd August, max. of 1800 on 9th. There were fewer in September, max. of 160 on 27th, and October, max. of 30 on 1st, with regular records of 1-3 in November-December.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*. The first appeared on 21st March with numbers building up slowly thereafter. There were no large influxes in autumn with the max. of 30 recorded on 30th July & 3rd August. Records were almost daily until 13th September, with late adults on 30th September & 19th October.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*. Present all year. The largest count of birds ashore was 5000 on 28th October.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*. A second-winter on 17th March and single first-

winters on 16th October, 27th November and 16th December were the only records.

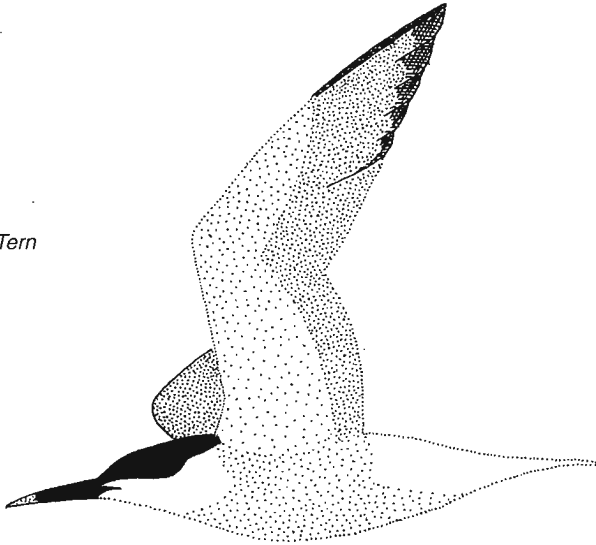
GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*. Records comprised 1-3 on 9 dates 20th February-10th April, 1 on 17th May, 1-3 on 6 dates 16th-28th October, and 1-2 on 6 dates 5th-18th December.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*. Present all year. The largest count of birds ashore was 1000 on 28th October.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*. The first birds were ashore at breeding colonies from mid-February. A total island census revealed 18159 Apparently Occupied Nests, 6.1% lower than the last census in 1988. Breeding success was excellent with productivity at monitored plots averaging 1.30 chicks fledged/A.O.N, the highest figure since monitoring commenced in 1986. There were regular sightings offshore until 26th October, with a max. of 60 on 9th October, and occasional records of 1-3 in November-December.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*. Records comprised 1 on 27th May, 3 on 30th May and 6th June, 2 on 28th June and 1 on 6th August. The best showing since 1980.

Sandwich Tern



COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*. The first 3 arrived on the rather late date of 11th May. For the first time since colonisation in the early 1970's breeding did not take place on the Stack 'o' North Haven. It seems likely that after repeated loss of chicks to predation (probably by Herring Gulls) at that site the birds decided to move to Bunness. A wise action given that Breakwater construction commenced in late July! The breeding season was successful with about 1 chick fledged/pair. Post-breeding dispersal occurred from late July, with 10 still present on 13th August. There were occasional records of 1-3 until 12th September with a very late adult on 14th October.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*. The first individual arrived on 4th May with numbers increasing rapidly to 160 on 9th and over 800 on 11th. The population showed another large increase with an estimated 1100 breeding pairs. Another successful breeding season saw about 1 chick fledged/pair. The post-breeding exodus occurred in late July, with just 8 left on 13th August. There were occasional records of 1-3 until 8th September.

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*. Present at colonies on fine days from late January. Numbers attending monitored plots showed a significant increase for the second successive year. Breeding success was good with 0.74 chicks fledged/apparently incubating adult at monitored plots. Most breeders had departed by late July, with occasional sightings offshore in August and more frequent sightings in September-November. Hundreds were noted offshore and many were present at the colonies during a spell of calm weather in late December.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*. Present at colonies on fine days from late January. Breeding success at Easter Lothar was estimated to be 0.55 chicks/breeding pair. Breeding birds had departed by the end of July with occasional records of 1-5 offshore between 20th August-20th October.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cephus grylle*. Present all year. Breeding productivity at monitored nests was 1.00 chicks fledged/nest.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*. Records comprised 3 on 21st January, singles close to the Isle from the Good Shepherd on 4th & 10th November, 1 caught by a cat on 28th November and 3 moving east off South Light on 4th December.

PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*. The first 2 were seen offshore on 25th March, followed by 60 on 30th. First noted at colonies on 5th April. Breeding success was again high with 0.75 chicks fledged/occupied burrow. Most had departed by mid-August, although seen regularly until 3rd September. Singles on 9th & 10th October and 28th December were the only later records.

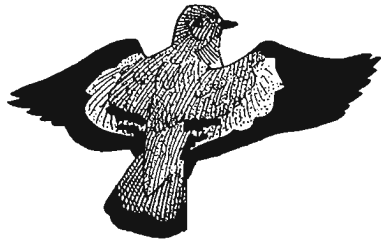
ROCK DOVE *Columba livia*. Present throughout the year. Monthly maxima were:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
37N/C	25	25	35	49	N/C						
3055	11	12	8								

Far fewer were present in October-December than in recent years. The number of individuals showing signs of impurity is undoubtedly increasing.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*. One in the Gully on 29th April and one in the south of the Island on 25th-29th October were the only records.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*. One on 19th January was unusual. In spring, singles on 5 dates 21st-29th March



Stock Dove

preceded daily records 31st March-30th April, max. of 21 on 2nd. 1-3 were recorded regularly in May with occasional records of 1-2 in June & July. A very poor autumn passage comprised singles on 20 dates 10th August-27th October and a late individual on 26th-27th November.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. One on 20th March was the earliest occurrence since 1978. Then, 1-2 on 25th-26th April and one on 9th May preceded daily sightings 15th May-19th June, max. of 9 on 12th June. Later records comprised 1-4 regularly until 27th July, and 1-2 on 10 dates 11th August-2nd October.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*. Spring records comprised 2 on 15th May, 1-3 daily 26th May-5th June, and later singles on 9th & 14th June. In autumn one on 17th July was followed by one on 9th-10th September; 2 on 13th, and a further single on 29th-30th September.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*. In spring 2 on 15th-16th and one on 22nd-23rd May, were followed by 1-2 daily 27th May-11th June. One on 9th August was the first in autumn since 1988. A more typical showing after two poor years.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*. Spring records comprised singles on 9th, 17th & 27th April, 2nd-3rd June and 8th June-2nd July. A poor autumn comprised singles on 5 dates 29th September-4th October, and on 4 dates 27th October-17th November; with 2 on 8th December.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. In spring there were 1-2 on 28 dates 2nd April-10th June. Mid-summer records comprised singles on 28th June and 3rd & 24th July. In autumn one on 26th August and 1-3 on 9 dates 12th-29th September, preceded heavier passage in early October, max. of 12 on 4th. Regular sightings of 1-2 followed until the end of the month.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*. A female trapped in the Gully on 20th May was seen flying around Homisdale after its release. Unfortunately it was found badly Fulmar oiled on 26th and had to be destroyed on 28th. The first record since 1976.

SWIFT *Apus apus*. There were fairly regular sightings from 19th May-15th September with a late single on 24th September. Counts were usually of 5 or less, with a max. of 9 on 21st July.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*. A very poor spring passage with just 2 individuals recorded in May; on 19th-25th and 31st. Autumn passage was better with 2 on 22nd, 5 on 23rd, one on 24th, 2 on 26th & 5 on 31st August, and 2 on 21st September.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*. One flew south passed Midway on 27th September, disappearing in the fog never to be seen again.

***SHORT-TOED LARK** *Calandrella brachydactyla*. In spring, one commuted between the base of Malcolm's Head and Meoness on 18th-19th May; in autumn, one paused briefly on Yessness on 2nd October.

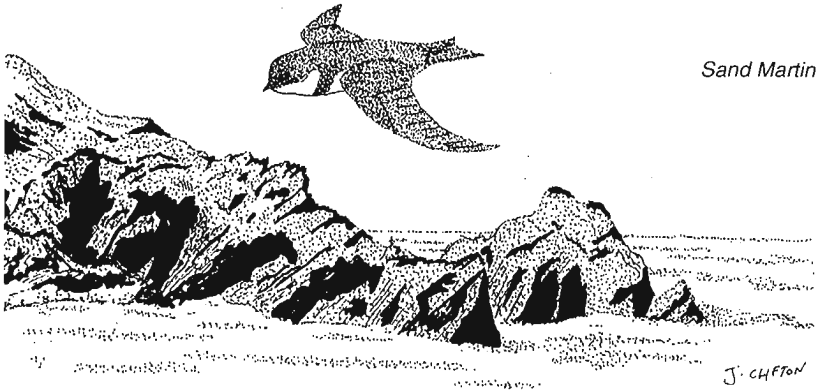
WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*. There was one at Field from 10th November until at least 24th December. Recorded for the second year in succession after a five year absence.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*. About 15 over-wintered. Up to 35 were recorded

regularly in February prior to the main spring passage in mid-March and April, max. of 190 on 16th March & 12th April. Autumn migration commenced in early September and was heaviest in mid-month, max. of 1000 on 17th, this the second highest autumn count in FIBO history. Numbers declined rapidly in October, max. of 300 on 1st, with 50 remaining well into November and 25 still present in mid-December.

SHORELARK *Eremophila alpestris*. One on the Houll on 27th-29th May was the first in spring since 1987.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*. Spring passage spanned 28th April-9th June, with 1-3 recorded regularly and 5 on 17th May. Autumn records comprised 1-2 on 16 dates 30th July-23rd September, with 4 on 13th September.



Sand Martin

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*. Recorded regularly from 22nd April-4th October. Spring passage was heaviest from 11th May-1st June, with 50 or more on 8 dates, and a max. of 100 on 17th May. One pair bred successfully fledging one chick. Autumn passage was light with a max. of 25 on 27th August.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*. In spring one on 28th April was followed by daily records from 13th May-10th June, max. of 70 on 25th & 28th May. There were occasional records of 1-5 throughout the rest of June and July. A typically meagre autumn passage comprised one on 27th-28th August, 1-2 almost daily 20th-29th September, and one on 4th-5th October.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. In September, one on 20th-25th was followed by 3 on 27th, increasing to 4 on 30th. Three remained until 3rd October with 2 present until 6th and 1 until 8th. At least 5 individuals were involved.

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT *Anthus hodgsoni*. Another good year with a minimum of 5 individuals recorded, all in October. One at Shirva on 1st was joined by another in the Meadow Burn on 3rd. The next morning a new individual was found at Easter Lother and in the afternoon, 4 were together at North Light while one was still at Shirva. Four remained on 5th with 2 present until 7th and the original bird still present on 15th.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*. In spring there were daily records from 26th April-3rd June, with heaviest passage in mid-May, max. of 25 on 18th-19th. Later singles occurred on 7th, 15th & 25th June. In autumn one on 10th August was followed by

almost daily records 23rd August-9th October, with heaviest passage late August-early September, max. of 40 on 23rd August & 1st September. There were occasional later singles until the last on 20th October

***PECHORA PIPIT** *Anthus gustavi*. One trapped at the Plantation on 15th October performed well in the vicinity of the trees after its release. This is the latest arrival date in FIBO history. After a 6 year absence the species has now occurred in 6 of the last 8 years.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*. Regular records of 1-5 in January suggest successful over-wintering. The first main arrival of 15 occurred on 21st March with daily records from 30th. Heaviest spring passage occurred in late April-early May, max. of 175 on 23rd April. Autumn passage commenced in mid-August with main movements of, 300 on 28th August, 600 on 14th & 400 on 19th September and 310 on 4th October. Numbers decreased markedly after 6th October with regular sightings until 11th November, and late singles on 28th November and 4th, 8th & 15th December.

RED-THROATED PIPIT *Anthus cervinus*. An unprecedented arrival, involving a minimum of 9 individuals, occurred in May. One at Bull's Park on 17th was joined by a second individual in Gilsetter on 19th, where one remained until 23rd. A different individual frequented Bull's Park on 24th-25th. On 27th one flew north high over Setter while another settled at Busta, and a third individual frequented Taing, the latter 2 remaining next day. New individuals were located on Ward Hill on 29th, at the Plantation on 30th-31st and at Wirvie on 31st. In autumn there was an adult, commuting between Pund and Kennaby, on 30th September-1st October.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*. Present all year. Four individuals showing characters of the Scandinavian subspecies *A.p.littoralis* were recorded in April. One on 4th, 2 on 8th and one on 20th.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*. In contrast to recent years both the spring and autumn passage were excellent. In spring one on 23rd April preceded records of 1-2 on 10 dates 5th-25th May. A period of heavier passage then ensued with 4-10 daily 26th May-1st June, followed by 1-3 on 8 dates to 16th June. Most records involved the subspecies *M.f.thunbergi* (max. of 7 on 29th May), but single *M.f.flavissima* were recorded on 5th-6th & 30th May and 8th June, and single *M.f.flava* on 21st-24th May & 10th June. In autumn one on 10th-12th August preceded daily records of 1-6 from 23rd August-14th September, followed by 1-2 on 7 dates to 1st October.

***CITRINE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla citreola*. A first-winter spent the afternoon of 5th September around South Harbour. Recorded for the eighth year in succession.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*. Spring records comprised singles on 31st March, 2nd, 7th-8th, & 25th April and 15th June. In autumn there were singles on 4th & 22nd September and 2nd, 5th, 11th & 20th October, with 3 on 21st September

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*. 1-2 on 6 dates 17th-24th March preceded daily records 29th March-17th October. All individuals belonged to the race *M.a.yarelli* until 12th April. The main spring passage occurred in early May, max. of 50 on 5th (all *M.a.alba*). Three pairs attempted to breed and 8 juveniles were present in early August. Autumn passage commenced in mid-August and was heaviest later in the month, max. of 50 on 28th-29th (all *M.a.alba*). Numbers declined through September with *M.a.yarelli* predominating from mid-month.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*. One flew south, calling, on 26th November.

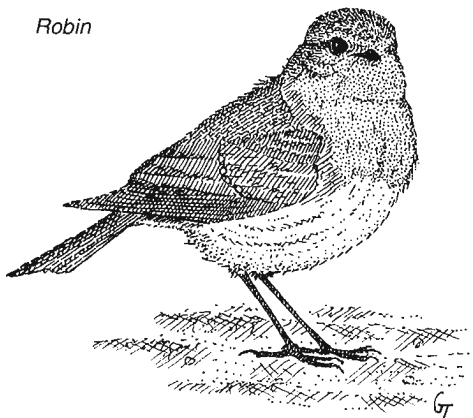
WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Present all year. Census work revealed 33 singing males. Several migrants of the nominate race were present in early October.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*. A ringed individual over-wintered successfully. In spring, singles on 18th & 23rd March preceded almost daily records 30th March-3rd June. There were two main periods of passage; 31st March-11th April, max. of 17 on 8th, and 21st-23rd April, max. of 12 on 22nd. Numbers were lower in May, max. of 6 on 7th. Autumn passage spanned 28th September-31st October and was heaviest in early October, max. of 30 on 4th. One remained until at least 5th December.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*.

Robin

Three over-wintered. Spring records spanned 20th March-10th June, with two periods of heavy passage; 31st March-10th April, max. of 125 on 8th, and 23rd-29th April, max. of 25 on 23rd. Autumn passage commenced on 15th September and was heaviest from 29th September-7th October, with the max. of 400 on 1st the largest autumn fall since 1980. Several remained through November-December, max. of 8 on 15th November.



THRUSH NIGHTINGALE

Luscinia luscinia There were two records. A first-summer trapped at the Plantation on 5th June and a first-winter, also trapped, at Upper Stoneybrake on 18th-20th September. The first records since 1989, and only the third ever in autumn.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*. In spring there were 2 on 27th May, a different individual next day and another on 12th June. One on 6th September was only the fifth autumn record. The best ever showing.

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica*. In spring there were almost daily records from 17th May-1st June, max. of 8 on 27th & 28th, and later singles on 9th & 10th-11th. Autumn records comprised singles on 23rd-24th August and 19th & 21st September.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*. In spring 2 on 30th & 3 on 31st March, and 4 on 8th April were followed by singles on 6 scattered dates, before daily records of 1-7 from 24th May-4th June. Later singles occurred on 10th, 12th & 13th June. Scarce in autumn with singles on 11 dates 30th September-19th November.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. In spring a male on 23rd-26th April preceded regular records from 13th May-9th June, max. of 15 on 29th. Light autumn passage spanned 23rd August-8th October, and was heaviest from 18th September-4th October, max. of 8 on several dates.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*. Spring passage spanned 13th May-11th June, with daily records from 25th May-2nd June, max. of 12 on 29th. A good autumn with

almost daily records from 9th August-22nd October. Heaviest passage occurred over two periods; 23rd August-5th September, max. of 45 on 23rd-24th, and 20th-24th September, max. of 20 on 24th. One on 27th October was the last record.

***STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata*. Spring records comprised males on 30th-31st March, 2nd-4th April and 9th June, and females on 8th April and 30th May. This the first June occurrence since 1978. The only autumn record on 6th October involved an individual belonging to one of the eastern races *S.t.maura/stejnegeri*,

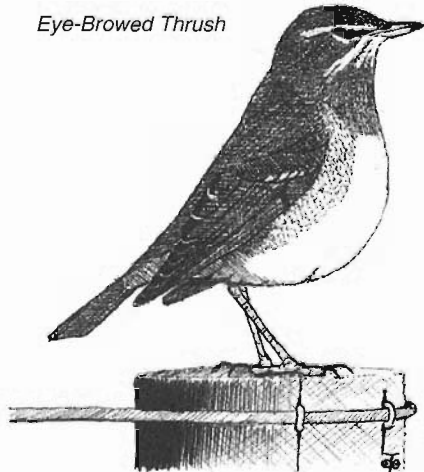
WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*. A male on 29th March was followed by almost daily records until 15th October, with a late single on 23rd. Heaviest spring passage occurred in late April to mid-May, max. of 185 on 25th. Autumn passage commenced in mid-August with heaviest movement on 22nd-23rd August, when 500 & 550 respectively. After 100 on 1st September, numbers decreased markedly, with an October max. of 20 on 4th.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*. In spring, daily records of 4-10 on 21st-24th April, were followed by frequent sightings of 1-3 until 26th June. There were almost daily sightings in autumn from 27th September-13th October, with a late single on 29th October. The heaviest passage occurred in early October with a max. of 50 on 1st.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*. Up to 15 over-wintered. Spring passage was evident from mid-March and heaviest in early April, max. of 500 on 7th. Seventy on 23rd April was the only later significant arrival, with occasional records of 1-5 in May and odd singles in June & July. A poor autumn with singles on 5th & 15th September preceding daily records from 23rd September. The largest fall was of 200 on 10th November, with 80 on 29th October the next biggest arrival. There were several smaller influxes in December, with over 50 on 4th, 8th & 16th; 20 remained at the end of the month.

***EYE-BROWED THRUSH** *Turdus obscurus*. A first-winter was found at the Houll late on the afternoon of 4th October. The second Fair Isle record, the first having occurred in 1987.

Eye-Browed Thrush



FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*. About 50 over-wintered. There were two periods of heavy spring passage; 7th-10th April, max. of 250 on 8th, and 21st-29th April, max. of 450 on 23rd. Numbers decreased rapidly in May with 1-5 seen regularly until 10th June. In autumn 1-2 on 3 dates 21st-27th August preceded daily records from 11th September, with heaviest passage in late October, max. of 220 on 28th. At least 20 remained until late December.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*. There were occasional singles in January-February. An excellent spring passage spanned mid-March to early June with the heaviest movement occurring from 31st March-9th April, max. of 400 on 2nd. One bird summered in the Furse area. In autumn there were daily records from 17th

September, with heavy passage from 27th September-7th October, max. of 500 on 1st. There were fewer than 12 daily after 10th October, with up to 10 regularly in early November and scattered singles remaining well into December.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*. Up to 25 over-wintered. Spring passage got underway in early April, with 145 on 19th the largest count. There were regular records of 1-4 in May and singles on 3rd & 4th June. Daily in autumn from 18th September, with the largest falls, 1000 on 27th-28th September and 3rd-4th October, and 750 on 6th October. Present throughout November, max. of 450 on 6th, with at least 50 remaining into December.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*. Spring records comprised one on 20th March, 1-6 daily 30th March-3rd April and 3 on 8th April. Singles on 23rd & 26th September and 4th October were the only autumn records.

***LANCEOLATED WARBLER** *Locustella lanceolata*. One was at North Light briefly on 27th September. Recorded in each of the last nine years.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*. In spring there were singles on 8 dates 25th April-31st May, and 2 on 16th May. Autumn records comprised 1-2 on 15 dates 25th August-1st October, involving at least 5 individuals. An excellent showing.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. A good spring passage saw almost daily records from 14th May-4th June, max. of 8 on 27th May, and later singles on 9th & 10th June. An early individual on 22nd July preceded a light autumn passage with, 1-4 daily 23rd August-1st September, 1-2 daily 13th-21st September and occasional singles to 3rd October.

PADDYFIELD WARBLER *Acrocephalus agricola*. One at Charlie's Trees on 9th-10th June was the sixth record for the Island and the second in spring.

MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris*. An excellent spring with daily records from 27th May-10th June, max. of 5 on 4th, and later singles on 16th June & 2nd July. Two on 10th August were the first in autumn since 1987.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. In spring there were singles on 19th, 25th & 29th May, and 1st, 5th & 6th June. A good autumn passage saw one on 3rd August followed by regular records of 1-5 from 14th August-4th October.

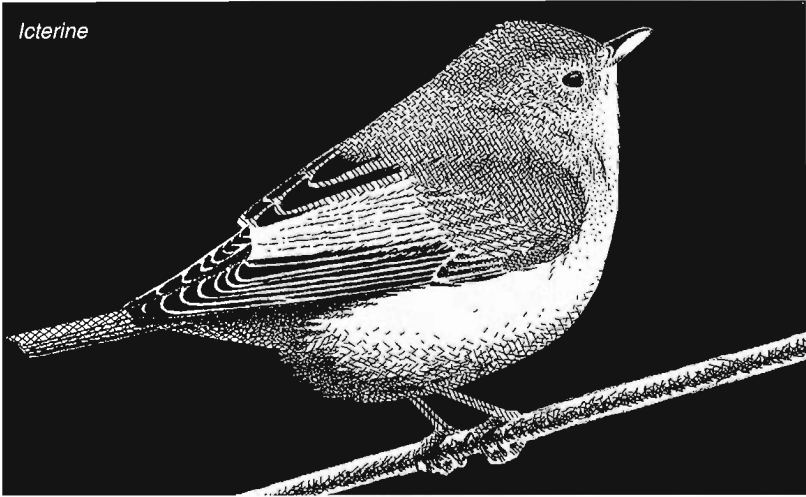
GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*. One along the Hill Dyke on 9th June was the ninth record for the Isle and the first since 1988.

***BOOTED WARBLER** *Hippolais caligata*. A first-winter at Upper Stoneybrake on 14th-16th September constitutes the eighth Island record. The last was in 1989.

CTERINE WARBLER *Hippolais icterina*. A phenomenal spring passage with daily records from 26th May-12th June. The previous record Island count of 8 was exceeded on 6 days, with peaks of 11 on 27th May & 4th June, and 10 on 9th June. Autumn records comprised singles on 19 dates 9th August-28th September, with 2 on 12th August. At least 10 individuals were involved.

MELODIOUS WARBLER *Hippolais polyglotta*. An adult trapped in the Double Dyke on 8th August remained until 10th. The eleventh island record, the last having occurred in 1990.

Icterine



SUBALPINE WARBLER *Sylvia cantillans*. A record seven individuals occurred in spring. In May, a first-summer male trapped at the Observatory on 21st remained until 25th; a female was at the Haa and a male was at Charlie's Trees on 27th, and a male, showing the characters of the eastern race *S.c.albistriata*, frequented the ruins at the top of Ward Hill on 28th. In June there were males at the Field Gate on 2nd, Wester Lother on 3rd and Barkland on 12th.

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*. One at Stackhoull briefly on 28th May was the first spring record. In autumn a very early individual on 2nd August preceded almost daily records of 1-3 from 9th August-27th September, with 4 on 17th August and 5 next day. One on 1st and 2 on 4th October were the only later records. Some 30 individuals were involved.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*. Singles on 27th & 29th April and 11th May preceded main spring passage 14th May-12th June, max. of 12 on 27th-28th. In autumn there were regular records of 1-4 from 10th August-5th October, with later singles on 19th, 20th & 24th October.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*. Daily records of 1-4 on 14th-20th May were the precursor to the heaviest spring passage for over 20 years between 24th May-13th June, max. of 35 on 28th-29th. In autumn 1-2 on 9th-10th August, and 1-4 almost daily 23rd August-6th September, were followed by daily records 13th September-6th October, max. of 7 on 17th.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*. An excellent spring passage spanned 13th May-14th June with two periods of heavy movement; 26th May-2nd June, max. of 80 on 31st, and 8th-11th June, max. of 20 on 9th-10th. A late single occurred on 23rd-24th June. In autumn there were almost daily records between 7th August-6th October, max. of 30 on 23rd August, and a scattering of later singles until 26th October.

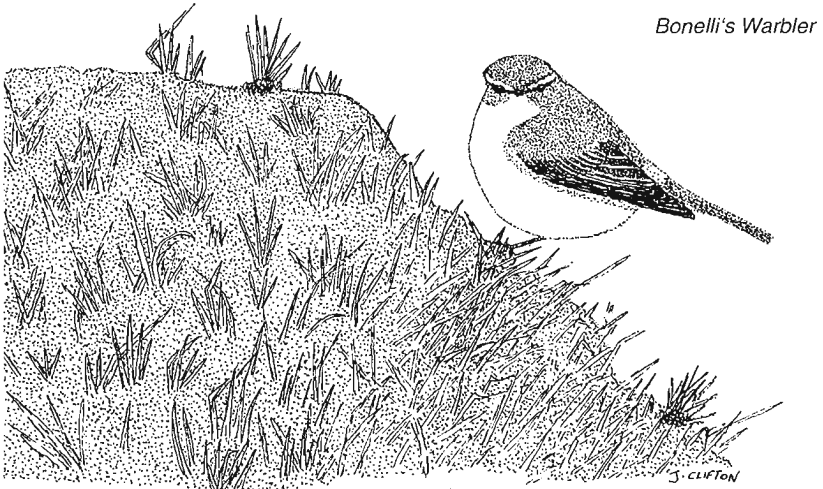
BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*. Light spring passage spanned 23rd April-12th June,

with 12 on 27th May and 8 next day, the only counts in excess of 6. In autumn, 1-2 on 4 dates 27th August-6th September preceded daily records 9th September-3rd November, with heaviest passage in late September and early October. Peak counts were 70 on 23rd September and 50 on 4th October. 1-3 were seen regularly until 17th November.

***GREENISH WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*. There were a record 5 individuals including the second and third ever in spring. One singing briefly at South Reeva on 30th May was relocated below Shirva on 1st June. Another trapped at the Vaadal on 2nd June was presumably the ringed individual seen near the Meadow Burn on 9th! In August there was one at North Reeva then Busta on 12th, one trapped in the Hjondyke on 24th, later relocated below Shirva where it remained until 26th; and one trapped in the Plantation on 30th.

PALLAS' WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus*. There were 3 records, the first since 1987. In October, one found in the Setter polytunnel(!) on 3rd travelled more widely next day, and another was below the School on 22nd. One at Quoy on 8th November was the latest ever and the first record for that month.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*. Singles on 18th & 22nd-25th September preceded an arrival of 7 on 27th September. 1-3 were then recorded daily prior to another good influx, numbering 7, on 4th October. These had all departed by 8th, with later singles on 12th & 22nd October. A good year.



***BONELLI'S WARBLER** *Phylloscopus bonelli*. One in Linni Geo on 30th September was only the second Fair Isle record, the first having occurred in 1961.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. A very early individual on 3rd May and 2 on 20th, preceded the heaviest period of spring passage ever recorded, between 26th May-3rd June. There were 12 on 27th increasing to 15 on 28th-29th, decreasing to 4 by 1st June. The previous record spring count was 8! Late singles occurred on 10th & 16th June. Autumn passage, too, was above average, with one on 2nd-6th August,

followed by regular records of 1-2 on 19th August-21st September; 3 on 27th & 4 on 28th August.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. A protracted spring passage spanned 31st March-22nd June with the largest arrivals, 10 on 23rd April and 12 on 18th May. In autumn one on 1st and 1-2 on 23rd-29th August preceded main passage 15th September-4th November. The heaviest movement occurred in early October, max. of 20 on 4th. One on 9th November was the only later record.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*. Spring records occurred from 20th April-16th June. There were two periods of heavier passage; 15th-19th May, max. of 25 on 18th, and 27th May-1st June, max. of 40 on 29th. One on 2nd-3rd July was unusual. Recorded daily in autumn from 10th August-8th October, with heaviest passage 22nd August-5th September, max. of 50 on 23rd. One on 14th October was the only later record.

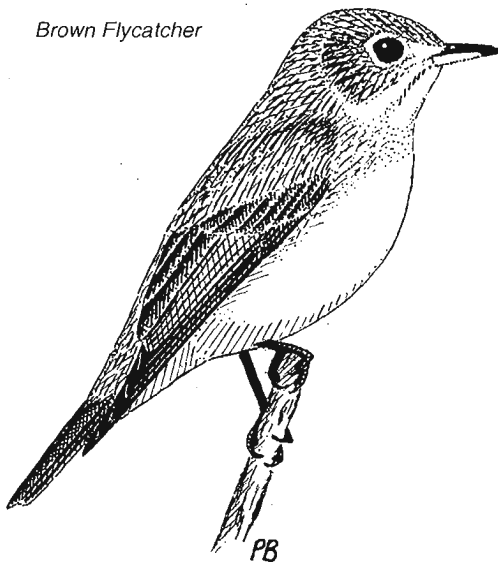
GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*. One on 25th March was followed by an arrival of 20 on 30th, increasing to 55 next day. There were fewer in April, max. of 16 on 5th, and one on May 3rd. In autumn 2 on 23rd August and one on 8th September, preceded almost daily records 14th September-1st November. Very heavy passage occurred from 29th September-5th October, with 100 on 29th, increasing to 150 on 30th, and a new record count of 500 on 1st.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*. A male in the Gully on 15th-17th May represents the third record for the Island. The previous individuals occurred in 1981 & 1989.

***BROWN FLYCATCHER**

Muscicapa dauurica. One at the Plantation on 1st July was trapped and released back at the Plantation, where it remained next day. If accepted by the relevant committees this will be the first record for Britain and Ireland.

Brown Flycatcher



SPOTTED FLYCATCHER

Muscicapa striata. A record spring passage spanned 14th May-14th June. The heaviest movement occurred from 27th May-2nd June, with daily totals of 350, 350, 350, 200, 280, 180, and 100 respectively. Despite trapping record numbers there were only a handful of retraps, suggesting a large daily turnover of birds. The previous record count was 50! Autumn passage was more typical, spanning 10th August-30th September, with a max. of 6 on 21st September.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula parva*. One trapped at the Observatory on 3rd June was the only spring record. There were two autumn records, both in September. A male in Stensi Geo on 18th and one at Burrashield on 30th.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*. A poor spring with 1-3 on 14 dates 16th May-10th June and 5 on 27th May. Recorded regularly in autumn between 9th August-4th October with the best counts, 9 on 23rd & 7 on 31st August and 8 on 21st and 6 on 27th September.

GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*. A first-year female commuted between the base of Malcolm's Head and the Plantation on 1st-9th June. The first since 1990.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*. In spring a male on 19th May preceded daily records 25th May-15th June. Nine arrived on 25th, increasing to 20 on 27th-28th. There were fewer in June, max. of 6 on 11th. Later records involved females on 29th June & 1st July and a male on 2nd July. Scarce in autumn with singles on 23rd August and 21st-22nd September.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*. One on 30th September-4th October was the sole record.

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator*. Two juveniles were seen. One frequented the Plantation/Setter/Pund area from 26th August-4th September. The other, the latest ever, commuted between Taing, Kirk and the Houll from 23rd September-14th October. The eleventh and twelfth autumn records.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*. A very poor year with records restricted to 2 on 27th April and 2 on 16th-17th October.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*. In spring one on 4th and 1-2 on 15th-16th April, were followed by a good influx from 20th April-1st May when recorded daily, max. of 8 on 25th. Thereafter there were 2 on 4th and one regularly until 28th May. For the second year in succession there were no autumn records.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*. Hooded Crows *C.c.cornix* were recorded regularly, with occasional influxes in April-May, max. of 9 on 15th May. One pair attempted to breed but were unsuccessful. At least 2 Carrion Crows *C.c.corone* were present for most of the year with occasional influxes boosting numbers. The most notable of these occurred on 13th-15th May when up to 17 were counted.

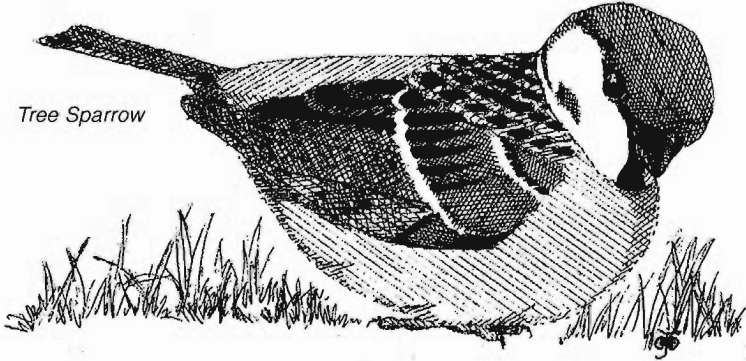
RAVEN *Corvus corax*. Present all year. Five pairs attempted to breed, three were successful, raising 9 chicks to fledging. Small parties of migrants were noted on several days in autumn with the best movement, 12 flying south on 11th October.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*. Present all year. Influxes of migrants occurred in March-April and September-October, most notably 1120 on 7th April and 700 on 19th September.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*. Present all year. The highest post-breeding count was 245 on 26th August. At least 85 were present in early December.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*. One in the Quoy/Midway/Leogh area on 18th-23rd October was the only record.

Tree Sparrow



CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*. A male on 17th January was the first mid-winter record since 1987. Spring passage was light, with daily records 30th March-16th April, max. of 20 on 8th, followed by scattered singles until 24th May and a late female on 15th June. Daily autumn passage spanned 12th September-29th October with heaviest movement occurring from 28th September-4th October, max. of 100 on 28th. There were occasional records of up to 5 until mid-November and a late female on 4th December.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*. Spring passage spanned 30th March-30th May and was generally light, the only notable influx occurring from 23rd-28th April with a max. of 70 recorded on 23rd. In autumn 1-6 daily 18th-24th September presaged a heavy movement from 27th September-4th October, when 300 were recorded almost daily. Numbers decreased thereafter, until another smaller influx of 45 occurred on 29th October. Regular in November until 10th, with a small arrival of 6 on 17th.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*. Spring records comprised 3 on 31st March, with 2 remaining until 2nd April, 1-2 daily 12th-21st April and one on 2nd-10th May. There were no autumn records for the first time since 1974.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*. There were two records. One singing at the Haa on 28th April and one outside the Observatory on 2nd-3rd November.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*. In spring one on 8th April was followed by 1-5 on 20 dates 30th April-3rd June. Autumn passage was the strongest since 1984 with daily records from 21st September-8th October, and peaks of 85 on 29th and 190 on 1st. 1-2 on 3 dates 22nd-25th October were the only later records.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*. After 1-2 on 30th-31st March, recorded regularly in spring between 9th April-2nd June, with April max. of 5 on 28th-29th and May max. of 7 on 4th-5th. One on 13th June was the only later record. For the second year in succession the species was recorded in mid-summer with one on 13th July. A very poor autumn saw singles on 19th & 29th September and 1st-3rd October.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*. Recorded regularly January-February, max. of 17 on 26th January. Numbers began to increase in late March, with 30 on 20th, and peaked in mid-April when 60 on 17th. Autumn passage commenced in mid-August with monthly max. of 150 on 18th August, 310 on 26th September and 240 on 6th October.

Numbers declined from mid October with November max. of 75 on 2nd and December max. of 25 on 4th..

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*. Light spring passage spanned 28th April-2nd June, with main movement 13th-24th May, max. of 10 on 15th. Recorded regularly in autumn between 23rd September-27th October, with notable influxes of 10 on 27th September, 7 on 1st, 12 on 18th & 17 on 20th October. Later singles occurred on 4th & 15th November. Most individuals subspecifically identified referred to the race *C.f.flammea*, but in October, *C.f.cabaret* was recorded on 1st, *C.f.islandica* on 13th, and *C.f.rostrata* on 18th-25th.

***ARCTIC REDPOLL** *Carduelis hornemanni*. A spring individual paused briefly at Busta Geo on 29th April. In autumn, one on 18th October accompanied Mealy Redpolls at Upper Stoneybrake, before moving to Field where it fed alone.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*. A poor year, with a male on 26th May and a pair on 22nd-28th July the only records.

SCARLET ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus erythrinus*. An early individual on 16th-19th May presaged a remarkable series of records from 26th May-12th June, involving over 20 individuals and including at least 4 different red males. Four on 27th May increased to a record 9 on 31st, with 12 on 1st June. All had departed by 5th, only to be followed by another influx of 3 on 8th, increasing to 6 on 9th. An adult male present on the 9th had yellow colouration replacing the usual red pigment. A more typical autumn saw regular reports of 1-2 from 11th August-11th October, and 3 on 3rd September. At least 12 individuals were involved.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. Just one record. A male seen at various places on 29th October-1st November.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. One was in the Quoy/Houll area on 30th March-1st April.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*. A good series of spring records comprised 1-3 almost daily 9th April-16th May. In autumn 2 on 5th September were followed by almost daily records 13th September-24th October, with heaviest passage in late September-early October, max. of 10 on 27th & 1st. Singles on 29th October and 10th November were the only later records.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*. Up to 45 over-wintered. Spring passage was evident from mid-March with 92 on 16th. There were fewer in April, max. of 16 on 2nd, with May singles on 5th & 9th. One on 9th September was followed by daily records from 14th, with the main passage occurring in late October-early November. Monthly max. were 33 on 26th September, 110 on 29th October and 160 on 10th November. Over 30 remained until late December.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*. Two on 7th-8th April were the only spring records. In autumn there were 3 individuals in October; on 19th-21st, 24th-25th & 27th-30th, and a late single from 26th November to 31st December.

ORTOLAN BUNTING *Emberiza hortulana*. A super male was at Upper Stoneybrake on 29th April. In autumn daily records from 26th August-17th September were thought to involve 2 individuals.

RUSTIC BUNTING *Emberiza rustica*. A female was at the Reeves on 25th May.

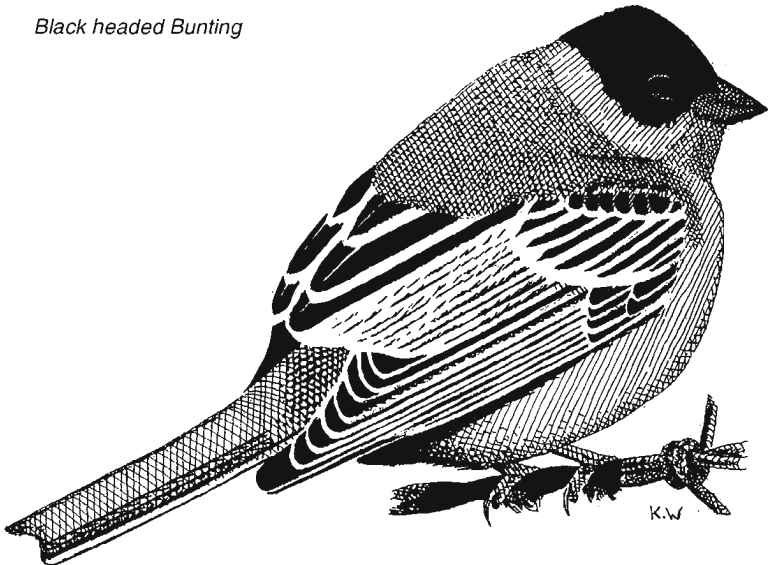
***LITTLE BUNTING** *Emberiza pusilla*. One at Leogh on 15th October was the sole record. The last year when just one was recorded, was 1983.

***YELLOW-BREADED BUNTING** *Emberiza aureola*. One was at Upper Stoneybrake from 17th-20th September. The worst showing since 1982.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*. A male on 12th March preceded regular records from 5th April-2nd June, with main passage occurring 27th April-15th May, max. of 15 on 13th. Autumn passage, spanning 12th September-29th October, generally consisted of small numbers, but there was heavy movement from 28th September-5th October, max. of 55 on 29th. One on 26th November-7th December was the only later record.

BLACK-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza melanocephala*. A staggering series of records occurred in spring. A dull female was in Sukha Mire on 9th June. Next day there was a male in the Setter/Pund area and a pair, the female of which was very bright, together near Da Water. Another male was at the Haa on 14th June. On 18th a female Black-headed/Red-headed Bunting was present at the Bull's Park. Last recorded in 1989, with the only other multiple occurrence in 1973.

Black headed Bunting



UPDATE OF BRITISH BIRDS RARITIES COMMITTEE DECISIONS 1982-1991

1991

All records published in the 1991 report have been accepted by the BBRC except:

PECHORA PIPIT *Anthus gustavi*. 13th September. Not accepted.

1990

TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL *Loxia leucoptera*. All six now accepted.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*. Accepted by BBRC. This and all previous records are currently under review by B.O.U Records Committee.

1989

CITRINE WAGTAIL *Motacilla citreola* 27th August. Not yet submitted.

1988

BLYTH'S PIPIT *Anthus godlewski* 13th-22nd October. Decision awaited.

1982

CITRINE WAGTAIL *Motacilla citreola* 13th-15th August. Decision awaited.

SPECIES DESCRIPTIONS

Although full descriptions of four of the six species new to the Isle will be vetted by the B.B.R.C. this will not be the case with Montagu's Harrier and Ring-billed Gull. For the record therefore, descriptions of these two species, and of the Cory's Shearwater, are included below.

Cory's Shearwater: *9th October - Alan Roberts. (30x telescope)*

About 1450 hrs on Thursday 9th October, I had been seawatching from Bunes for something like half an hour. Most of the birds on view were Fulmars passing at various distances. A scattering of Kittiwakes and Gannets were also moving through. I saw a bird flying north to south at 1/4 to 1/2 mile range which immediately struck me as being brown. It disappeared into a wave trough but quickly came back up and towered. Its flight action was mainly shearing, towering high and spiralling round, before gliding down at a shallow angle for some distance. It moved through very quickly, flapping infrequently, and staying above wave level most of the time. The wings were held bowed and were long and narrow. It was obviously a large shearwater.

I quickly realised that it was a Cory's Shearwater, a bird I am familiar with and have watched in similar conditions in the past, specifically looking for various features at a range of distances. I then began to eliminate the possible confusion species.

The bird was generally 'plain looking' had uniform medium brown upperparts with darker wing tips. The brown extended onto the nape and head. I could not discern exactly where the brown finished on the face, giving way to a white lower face and chin. I could not ascertain the bill colour. The underparts were obviously white and when the underwings were seen, I could see that they were clean white with narrow dark borders.

Although I did not see the bird alongside a Fulmar, if anything, it seemed slightly larger and longer winged. Further it was brown rather than grey and did not show the 'white headed' appearance, or pale 'wing flashes' of the Fulmars passing by. Gannet was ruled out by the birds bowed shearwater shape, lack of long head/neck and tail, as well as plumage differences. Other shearwaters were ruled out by a combination of size and plumage - it certainly did not have a black cap.

12th October - Nick Riddiford. (10x40 binoculars)

I was standing outside Schoolton, gazing aimlessly at the bay beyond Hesti Geo, when I caught sight of the bird. There was plenty of activity in the bay and the light was excellent allowing me to clearly identify the numerous Fulmars, Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls (including immatures) which were in view. At one moment a bird swept into view and as quickly out again as it disappeared westwards below the line of the low cliffs at Hesti. With these brief views my thoughts were that it was a skua, possibly a Pomarine. Almost before I had time to regret the lack of sufficient views, the bird returned from the west and proceeded to soar, circling high over Shalstane (or perhaps over the sea immediately behind). I immediately knew it to be a large shearwater and, from my previous extensive experience of the species, that it was a Cory's. This identification was reinforced by the fact that to my surprise and pleasure, I could see virtually every identification feature (apart from bill pattern!) as it towered

on slightly bowed wings, each circle allowing views of upperparts followed (as it turned) by underparts. In all it must have remained soaring for a couple of minutes before it lost height and disappeared below the cliffs. I hoped it would stay in the bay for others to see, but it was not seen again.

Upperparts: Uniform dull brownish-grey throughout. This included the head, neck and down to the rump, ie there was no hint whatsoever of any white or pale band either across the neck or rump/uppertail-covert area. The only contrast on the upperparts was the wings and tail, which looked marginally darker.

Head: The tone of the upperparts continued up without apparent contrast to include the crown and extended right down over the sides of the head, i.e. the head appeared "hooded" with grey and not "capped". There tends to be a subtle contrast between head and rest of upperparts (grey vs brownish grey) but this was not possible to see in the views I had.

Underparts: The whole of the underparts was white. This included the underwing (which I could see well when the bird banked away from me) which appeared uniformly white apart from dark leading and trailing edges - I looked for, but could make out no darker area or lines interrupting the white, which I feel certain would have been evident in the views obtained. The white of the underparts continued upwards to the chin which, however, if white was only narrowly so. This combined with the grey sides to the head contributed to the "hooded" appearance of the head.

Size and shape: It was not easy to judge size relative to the many other birds flying around because the gulls were a radically different shape and most of the Fulmars were a little farther out. However, it appeared distinctly bigger than the Fulmar and, more crucially, longer winged and tailed. The wings were held in a typical shearwater fashion, both looked relatively broad (e.g. proportionately, compared with Manx), slightly bowed and with a slight kink at the carpal joint, most evident as the bird banked and accelerated (as it lost height). This last character was instrumental in making me think "skua" when I first saw it. In comparison with Fulmar, the carpal kink did not appear as marked, probably because the wings were proportionately slimmer and longer from the wrist (distal portion of the wing).

Potential confusion species: these include other shearwaters, Fulmar, light phase skuas, immature Gannet and immature large gulls. This bird was seen so well that Great (and other shearwaters) can be ruled out on plumage characters and the wing shape - particularly the slight kink. It's flight behaviour "towering" in a leisurely spiral is typical for Cory's and rare in other shearwaters of British waters. Fulmars can behave in a similar fashion but all those on view (both near and far) were different in shape and, more significantly, they all looked blue-grey in upperparts tone, banking in relation to the light only producing a change of tone from dark to whiter blue grey; and the head and tail were clearly and contrastingly whiter.

When the light was not directly on this bird's upperparts, they looked dark enough to be not too dissimilar from the upperparts of some first-winter large gulls which were also soaring over the Shalstane area. However apart from their completely different shape and size, I could see that their upperpart plumage was chequered and with contrasting paler areas, particularly on the tail, in total contrast to the uniform nature of the Cory's upperparts. Skuas were clearly ruled out by shape and plumage characteristics. Immature Gannet may be a confusion species for a distant bird, poorly seen, but was clearly out of the question in this case for reasons of size, shape and plumage characteristics.

Montagu's Harrier: 31st August - Steve Volter. (10x binoculars)

At about 1030 on 31st August during a routine census of the south-east of the island, my attention was drawn to a flock of local Starlings acting in a manner that suggested a bird of prey was nearby. The culprit was a medium sized raptor flying low across the heather near the Kirk. Through binoculars I could see that the bird was clearly a 'ringtail' harrier and further scrutiny revealed that the plumage and structural features were wrong for Hen Harrier. At this point the bird alighted on the heather, allowing the well marked face pattern and deep orange red underparts to be seen clearly. It was clearly a Montagu's or Pallid Harrier and I now alerted other birders. Unfortunately the bird soon took off and flew southwards, disappearing from view. After several further brief glimpses it finally gave Paul Harvey and myself good enough views to enable it to be identified as a juvenile Montagu's Harrier. The following description was compiled:

Structure: clearly a harrier with long fairly broad wings and prominently fingered primaries, slim body and long square ended tail. It appeared very buoyant in flight, frequently quartering fields with wings held in a shallow V. Differences from Hen Harrier were: wings slightly longer and slimmer, with the outer section of the wing (the hand) being proportionately much longer and narrower. The wings appeared at their most narrow when in rapid level flight; when soaring the primaries were held more loosely, creating a fuller wing shape. The body lacked the heavy chested appearance of Hen Harrier, the tail was also longer and narrower, contributing to a less robust or stocky appearance than in Hen Harrier. It was considered however that the structure of the bird indicated it was a female, males often looking remarkably slim, almost rakish and falcon like.

Plumage: the crown appeared dark with no notable features and the forehead slightly paler. The face pattern was distinctive, consisting of a small triangular area of white just behind the eye, bordered by a broad black crescent which joined with the dark of the crown and also with the dark moustachial region. The effect was striking with the white area prominent at some range. The throat, belly, flanks and vent were all uniform deep rusty red/orange, the colour appearing very intense in good light, or simply dark in poor light. The undertail coverts were not noted. The axillaries and

underwing coverts were also a deep rusty orange red. These contrasted markedly with the secondaries, which showed 3 to 4 broad dark bars, being broadest on the trailing edge of the wing. The exact patterning of barring was difficult to observe in the field as often the whole area appeared quite dark. The primary pattern was also difficult to observe although the primaries had blackish tips with pale off white bases, the latter forming an obvious pale patch. The nape, mantle, back and whole of the upperwing appeared dark tawny brown, except for an extensive pale golden buff area on the forewings - the rear lesser and median coverts. The greater coverts were dark brown except for narrow golden-buff tipping, forming an



*Montagu's
Harrier*

upperwing bar. The tail was similarly dark brown, but barred broadly black. This contrasted with the fairly narrow white rump, which at range could be surprisingly inconspicuous. No detail could be seen on the bareparts, except for the small hooked bill and the long looking legs.

The combination of the deep orange rufous underparts, the well marked face pattern and the narrow white rump eliminate Hen Harrier; the face pattern, particularly the lack of a pale neck collar, eliminated Pallid Harrier.

Ring-billed Gull: *12th August - Paul Harvey. (8x binoculars)*

I was approaching Koolin when I noticed a large flock of mainly adult Common Gulls on the north face of Meoness. As usual I decided to check through the gulls. My attention was quickly drawn to one with very restricted white scapular and tertial crescents. The bird also had a distinctly paler mantle than the accompanying Common Gulls and I began to suspect it was a Ring-billed Gull. Unfortunately it was roosting, its head being held under its wing, so I could not check its bill pattern. I decided to approach more closely in an attempt to disturb the bird enough to cause it to raise its head. This it soon did, to reveal a yellow bill with a distinct black band - the confirmation required. I then went to alert other observers and after arriving back with Nick Riddiford, Roger Riddington and Steve Votier among others, the bird was soon relocated. We watched it for about 10 minutes before it flew off with the flock of Common Gulls. The following description was taken:

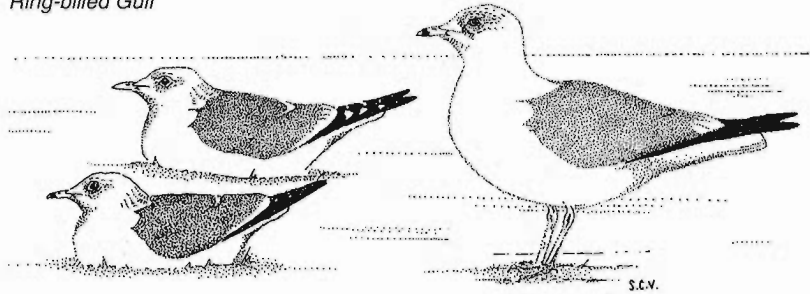
Size and Structure: It was as big as the largest Common Gull present, although it differed structurally in having; a fuller, deeper chested look; a flatter headed appearance; and a broader, longer winged look in flight. It also appeared slightly longer legged than the nearby Common Gulls and had a heavier, more parallel sided bill.

Plumage: Head whitish, with some light flecking/mottling on crown and nape. Mantle and back, greyish, distinctly paler than adjacent Common Gulls. Rump and tail white. When perched, the coverts and inner primaries and secondaries appeared uniform with the mantle. The outer primaries appeared blackish with no white tips or mirrors evident in the closed wing. The white tertial crescent was much narrower than in adjacent Common Gulls, and there was no apparent pale scapular crescent. The underparts were white.

The bird was not seen that well in flight, being in the centre of a large flock, but appeared to have extensive black on the primary coverts and an absence of dark marks on the tail or secondaries. There appeared to be one white mirror in the outer primaries, although again, flight views were poor. The outer two or three primaries appeared as though they might not be fully grown.

Bareparts: The bill was a bright yellow, with a well defined black band just behind the tip. The tip itself was paler, more straw coloured than the base. It was heavier and more parallel sided than in adjacent Common Gulls. The greenish yellow legs appeared slightly longer than in adjacent Common Gulls. The iris colour was the subject of much dispute; some observers thought it dark, others a pale muddy colour, and others yellow! I could not really ascertain a pale colour but something about the eye made the bird look distinctly different and more squint-eyed than the Common Gulls.

Ring-billed Gull



RINGING DETAILS 1992

10787 individuals of 117 species were ringed in 1992, the second highest ringing total since the Observatory was established.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
0	1	40	248	422	4450	3521	1022	445	534	95	9

For the second year in succession our seabirds enjoyed excellent breeding success. Although the weather was unpredictable, the presence of several highly experienced seabird ringers at appropriate times during the summer meant ringing totals were again high. A record 1851 Arctic Terns were ringed and we have already received details of several found subsequently, including 2 in Africa. Record totals were also achieved for Gannet, Great Skua, Great Black-backed Gull and Razorbill. A large effort was again targeted at Storm Petrels although the catching rate was well down on recent years, possibly due to the additional lighting resulting from the construction of the breakwater.

The exceptional spring migration resulted in the best ringing totals for many species of common migrants for some years, as well as new record totals for Icterine Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher. Unprecedented autumn movements of Green Sandpiper and Black-headed Gull led to new record totals for those species too. A good series of controls, for many of which we await details, and recoveries, were forthcoming during the year. Further details are given below.

Arctic Tern was the most commonly ringed species with others in the top ten, Guillemot 1496, Storm Petrel 1402, Fulmar 798, Shag 554, Starling 524, Razorbill 490, Kittiwake 409, Puffin 375 and Great Black-back Gull and Blackbird 210. Rarely ringed species were Little Grebe, Heron, Mallard (2), Tufted Duck, Goldeneye, Golden Plover, Greenshank, Nightjar, Pechora Pipit, Red-throated Pipit, Booted Warbler, Melodious Warbler, Greenish Warbler (3), Golden Oriole, Woodchat Shrike and Goldfinch. A Brown Flycatcher ringed in July was the only addition to the Island ringing list

The traps wintered reasonably well with the exception of the Single Dyke, the roof and west side of which needed complete rewiring. Otherwise minor patching work was required on several traps.

Finally I would like to thank S.O.T.E.A.G, the J.N.C.C and B.T.O for financial assistance with aspects of the ringing and seabird work.

Night jar

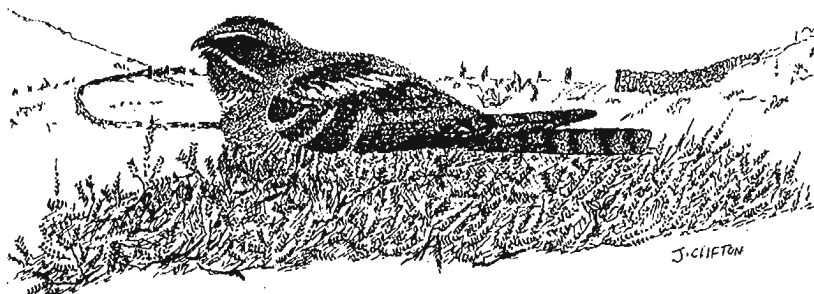


TABLE OF RINGING TOTALS & RECOVERIES

a) Species ringed in 1992

SPECIES	RINGED AS		TOTAL		RECOVERED	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	1992	1948-92	1992	1948-92
Little Grebe	1	-	1	10	-	-
Fulmar	81	717	798	15109	1	131
Storm Petrel	1402	-	1402	17551	82	507
Leach's Petrel	2	-	2	34	-	-
Gannet	1	23	24	193	-	4
Shag	37	517	554	18534	14	464
Grey Heron	1	-	1	20	-	-
Teal	2	-	2	42	-	2
Mallard	2	-	2	12	-	1
Tufted Duck	1	-	1	14	-	-
Eider	5	-	5	137	-	-
Goldeneye	1	-	1	16	-	1
Sparrowhawk	13	-	13	244	-	17
Kestrel	1	-	1	44	-	8
Merlin	1	-	1	173	-	11
Water Rail	4	-	4	265	-	3
Corncrake	2	-	2	37	-	2
Oystercatcher	4	22	26	1287	1	63
Ringed Plover	6	6	12	527	-	6
Golden Plover	1	-	1	20	-	-
Lapwing	-	281	-	3	5	5
Purple Sandpiper	1	-	1	151	-	1
Dunlin	16	-	16	478	-	7
Jack Snipe	1	-	1	121	-	3
Snipe	7	-	7	352	-	4
Woodcock	11	-	11	336	1	18
Curlew	-	3	3	106	-	5
Redshank	5	-	5	243	-	2

SPECIES	RINGED AS		TOTAL		RECOVERED	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	1992	1948-92	1992	1948-92
Greenshank	1	-	1	9	-	-
Green Sandpiper	8	-	8	48	-	1
Common Sandpiper	3	-	3	47	-	1
Arctic Skua	-	127	127	3255	1	45
Great Skua	1	102	103	1183	3	23
Black-headed Gull	8	-	8	45	-	1
Common Gull	1	7	8	176	-	2
Lesser Black-back Gull	10	17	27	1325	1	30
Herring Gull	21	79	100	3976	2	88
Great Black-back Gull	8	202	210	2132	2	85
Kittiwake	100	309	409	5811	1	28
Common Tern	-	10	10	455	-	3
Arctic Tern	-	1851	1851	3183	7	12
Guillemot	100	1396	1496	21426	13	701
Razorbill	130	360	490	5857	2	160
Black Guillemot	8	50	58	1482	-	17
Puffin	217	158	375	11097	-	29
Rock Dove	-	1	1	25	-	-
Wood Pigeon	2	-	2	52	-	2
Collared Dove	4	-	4	214	2	3
Turtle Dove	1	-	1	67	-	2
Cuckoo	3	-	3	93	-	1
Long-eared Owl	3	-	3	201	-	12
Nightjar	1	-	1	4	-	-
Wryneck	2	-	2	190	-	-
Skylark	12	-	12	787	-	3
Swallow	2	-	2	236	-	2
Tree Pipit	11	-	11	588	-	-
Pechora Pipit	1	-	1	7	-	-
Meadow Pipit	127	-	127	8621	-	44
Red-throated Pipit	1	-	1	7	-	-
Rock Pipit	152	-	152	8475	1	28
White Wagtail	20	-	20	561	-	4
Wren	25	-	25	688	-	-
Dunnock	61	-	61	2047	-	6
Robin	184	-	184	6898	-	33
Thrush Nightingale	2	-	2	24	-	-
Nightingale	2	-	2	26	-	-
Bluethroat	3	-	3	225	-	2
Black Redstart	2	-	2	129	-	-
Redstart	21	-	21	1541	1	1
Whinchat	7	-	7	555	-	2
Wheatear	165	-	165	14988	1	71
Ring Ousel	10	-	10	457	-	8
Blackbird	210	-	210	19458	-	308
Fieldfare	1	-	1	606	-	1
Song Thrush	46	-	46	2330	-	29
Redwing	106	-	106	7533	-	69
Grasshopper Warbler	4	-	4	94	-	-
Sedge Warbler	8	-	8	379	-	2
Marsh Warbler	7	-	7	87	-	-

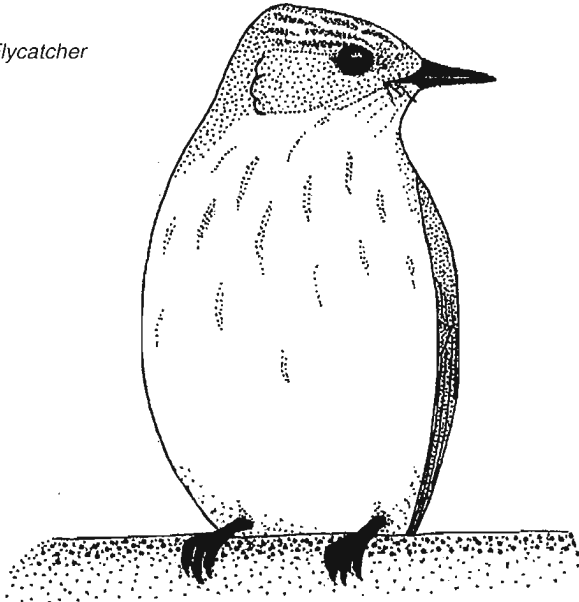
SPECIES	RINGED AS		TOTAL		RECOVERED	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	1992	1948-92	1992	1948-92
Reed Warbler	10	-	10	170	-	1
Booted Warbler	1	-	1	7	-	-
Icterine Warbler	13	-	13	89	-	-
Melodious Warbler	1	-	1	11	-	-
Subalpine Warbler	1	-	1	22	-	-
Barred Warbler	8	-	8	344	-	1
Lesser Whitethroat	20	-	20	558	-	1
Whitethroat	30	-	30	810	-	-
Garden Warbler	111	-	111	2879	-	3
Blackcap	150	-	150	4091	2	17
Greenish Warbler	3	-	3	19	-	-
Wood Warbler	4	-	4	91	-	-
Chiffchaff	35	-	35	882	-	2
Willow Warbler	65	-	65	3010	-	5
Goldcrest	50	-	50	1288	-	2
Brown Flycatcher	1	-	1	1	-	-
Spotted Flycatcher	121	-	121	668	-	3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	1	-	1	49	-	-
Pied Flycatcher	12	-	12	810	-	5
Golden Oriole	1	-	1	7	-	-
Red-backed Shrike	10	-	10	174	-	-
Great Grey Shrike	1	-	1	109	-	1
Woodchat Shrike	1	-	1	13	-	-
Starling	263	261	524	21899	2	177
House Sparrow	32	-	32	1337	-	3
Chaffinch	29	-	29	2280	-	11
Brambling	47	-	47	2727	-	12
Greenfinch	3	-	3	159	-	-
Goldfinch	1	-	1	6	-	-
Siskin	6	-	6	286	-	1
Linnet	3	-	3	136	-	1
Twite	65	-	65	4810	1	4
Redpoll	9	-	9	580	-	1
Common Rosefinch	5	-	5	121	-	-
Bullfinch	1	-	1	41	-	-
Lapland Bunting	1	-	1	44	-	-
Snow Bunting	3	-	3	518	-	3
Reed Bunting	15	-	15	369	-	2
TOTALS (all species)	4564	6223	10787	249681	142	3416

b) Species ringed/recovered 1948-92 but not ringed in 1992 (totals 1948-1992)

Great Crested Grebe	1/0	Red-necked grebe	1/0
Slavonian Grebe	3/0	Cormorant	7/0
Whooper Swan	33/6*	Bean Goose	1/0
Pink-footed Goose	11/1	White-fronted Goose	3/1
Greylag Goose	20/7	Barnacle Goose	3/0
Shelduck	4/0	Wigeon	15/0
Pintail	1/1	Shoveler	1/0
Pochard	2/0	Ring-necked Duck	1/0
Scaup	4/0	Long-tailed Duck	15/1
Velvet Scoter	2/0	Red-breasted Merganser	3/0
Goosander	3/1	Hen Harrier	2/0
Goshawk	1/0	Red-footed Falcon	1/0
Peregrine	6/1	Quail	5/0
Spotted Crake	17/0	Little Crake	1/0
Baillon's Crake	1/0	Moorhen	89/3
Coot	13/1	Great Bustard	1/0
Little Ringed Plover	1/0	Dotterel	3/0
Knot	83/2	Sanderling	89/0
Western Sandpiper	1/0	Little Stint	1/0
Temminck's Stint	2/0	White-rumped Sandpiper	1/0
Baird's Sandpiper	1/0	Pectoral Sandpiper	5/0
Curlew Sandpiper	5/0	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1/0
Ruff	33/1	Great Snipe	1/0
Black-tailed Godwit	1/0	Bar-tailed Godwit	9/2
Whimbrel	15/0	Spotted Redshank	3/0

(continued)

Spotted Flycatcher



(continued)

Wood Sandpiper	16/0	Turnstone	72/0
Red-necked Phalarope	6/0	Grey Phalarope	3/0
Pomarine Skua	1/0	Iceland Gull	1/0
Glaucous Gull	35/1	Little Auk	9/0
Snowy Owl	1/1	Short-eared Owl	17/0
Swift	17/1	Hoopoe	3/0
Great Spotted Woodpeck.	24/0	Short-toed Lark	7/0
Woodlark	2/0	Shorelark	5/0
Sand Martin	8/0	House Martin	148/1
Richard's Pipit	10/0	Tawny Pipit	3/0
Olive-backed Pipit	8/0	Yellow Wagtail	10/0
Citrine Wagtail	5/0	Grey Wagtail	26/1
Waxwing	36/0	Dipper	12/0
Siberian Rubythroat	1/0	Red-flanked Bluetail	1/0
Stonechat	53/0	Pied Wheatear	1/0
Black-eared Wheatear	3/0	Rock Thrush	1/0
Grey-cheeked Thrush	2/0	White's Thrush	1/0
Eye-browed Thrush	1/0	Dusky Thrush	1/0
Black-throated Thrush	1/0	Mistle Thrush	22/1
Pallas's Grasshopper W.	6/0	Lanceolated Warbler	24/0
River Warbler	5/0	Savi's Warbler	2/0
Aquatic Warbler	22/0	Paddyfield Warbler	4/0
Blyth's Reed Warbler	1/0	Great Reed Warbler	6/0
Thick-billed Warbler	1/0	Sardinian Warbler	1/0
Arctic Warbler	27/0	Pallas's Warbler	2/0
Yellow-browed Warbler	94/0	Radde's Warbler	1/0
Dusky Warbler	4/0	Bonelli's Warbler	1/0
Firecrest	1/0	Collared Flycatcher	1/0
Coal Tit	1/0	Blue Tit	2/0
Great Tit	7/0	Treecreeper	1/0
Isabelline Shrike	1/0	Lesser Grey Shrike	6/0
Jackdaw	3/0	Rook	5/0
Carrión Crow	44/0	Raven	26/0
Daurian Starling	1/0	Rose-coloured Starling	2/0
Tree Sparrow	97/1	Arctic Redpoll	17/0
Two-barred Crossbill	1/0	Common Crossbill	455/2
Parrot Crossbill	37/0	Hawfinch	10/0
Tennessee Warbler	2/0	Song Sparrow	3/0
White-crowned Sparrow	1/0	White-throated Sparrow	2/0
Savannah Sparrow	1/0	Pine Bunting	2/0
Ortolan Bunting	18/0	Cretzschmar's Bunting	1/0
Yellowhammer	53/0	Yellow-browed Bunting	1/0
Rustic Bunting	12/1	Little Bunting	25/0
Chestnut Bunting	1/0	Yellow-breasted Bunting	6/0
Pallas's Reed Bunting	2/0	Black-headed Bunting	3/0
Corn Bunting	3/0	Red-headed Bunting	5/0

* Two Whooper Swans ringed on Fair Isle in 1991 were recovered in 1992. These are included in this table.

RECOVERIES in 1992

A total of 142 recoveries away from the Isle were reported during the year. Information on these is presented below. The international code of symbols denoting method of recovery and age is used.

Manner of recovery:

- v - caught or trapped by man and released with ring.
- vv - ring number read in the field / sight record of identifiable colour rings
- vB - breeding where recaptured
- + - shot or killed by man
- x - found dead or dying
- xF - found freshly dead or dying
- xL - found dead (not recent)
- () - caught or trapped alive and not released, or released without ring
- /?/ - manner of recovery unknown

Age when ringed: this is given in the EURING code:

- 1 pullus/nestling
- 2 fully grown, year of hatching unknown
- 3 hatched during calendar year of ringing
- 4 hatched before calendar year, but exact year unknown
- 5 hatched during previous calendar year
- 6 hatched before previous calendar year, but exact year unknown
- J denotes bird still in juvenile plumage

Sex: m = male f = female

The co-ordinates of Fair Isle are 59°32'N 1°37'W

FULMAR An adult ringed on Fair Isle in 1966 was found dead in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, over 25 years later.

STORM PETREL Eighty-two individuals ringed on the island were controlled elsewhere. The number controlled at each site is given below.

Scatness, Shetland	1	Eilean Nan Ron, Highland	4
Quarff, Shetland	2	Kyle of Tongue, Highland	1
Lerwick, Shetland	5	Sanda, Kintyre, Strathclyde	1
Noss, Shetland	3	Ardglass, Down, N. Ireland	1
Foula, Shetland	8	Vagsoy, Sogn og Fjordane, NORWAY	3
Yell, Shetland	44	Runde, More og Romsdal, NORWAY	1
South Ronaldsay, Orkney	7	Herynken, Nordland, NORWAY	1

Full details of the longest movement are given below

2409901	4	06.08.91	Fair Isle
	v	16.08..92	Herynken, Rost, Nordland, NORWAY
			67°26'N 11°52'E 1101km NE 376 days.

SHAG Fourteen individuals were found dead away from the island. All were ringed as chicks and in only one case was the cause of death known. That individual was shot at a salmon farm. One ringed in 1980 was found dead on Auskerry, Orkney; singles ringed in 1983 and 1984 were found dead in Shetland, one at Cunningsburgh and one at Burra Isle; and one ringed in 1990 was found dead in Grampian. Of 10 ringed in 1991, 3 were recovered in Shetland, 4 in Orkney, and one each in Highland and Grampian. Full details of the longest movement are given below.

1279220	1	02.07.91	Fair Isle
	x	26.10.91	Brem Sur Mer, Vendee, FRANCE 46°36'N 1° 50'W 1437km S 116 days.

Although there has been one previous recovery of a Fair Isle ringed Shag in France, this is the most southerly recovery to date.

WHOOPEE SWAN First-winter birds ringed on Fair Isle on 24.11.91 and 29.11.91 and still present on 29.01.92, were found dead together on Sanday, Orkney on about 15.02.92.

OYSTERCATCHER

FV06646	1	28.06.78	Fair Isle
	8	19.07.87	Fair Isle (caught by hand, waterlogged)
		v	31.08.92 Ynyslas, Borth, Dyfed, WALES 52°30'N 4°4'W 796km S 5178 days.

A Fair Isle breeder at, or on the way to, its wintering area.

WOODCOCK

EK66746	4	13.11.84	Fair Isle
		+	26.12.91 Jurby East, Isle of Man. 54°22'N 4°30'W 600km SSW 2599 days.

Shot on its wintering grounds a day to late for christmas dinner!

ARCTIC SKUA

EH67626	1	17.06.81	Fair Isle
	x	21.08.92	Vega Island, Nordland, Norway. 65°38'N 11°47'E 962km NE 4083 days.

There is just one previous recovery in Norway, that being found on 2nd September. Was this individual breeding in Norway, or had it left Fair Isle to prepare for its autumn passage?

GREAT SKUA Three were recovered away from the Island. All were ringed as chicks. One ringed in 1991, was found oiled on the Isle of Wight in April 1992. One ringed in 1985 was found dead on Sanday, Orkney in May 1992 and another ringed in 1983 was found dead near Longhope Orkney, also in May 1992. Two chicks raised on Fair Isle appear to have recruited to the Orkney breeding population.

GREAT BLACK-BACK GULL

HW26008	8	25.11.73	Fair Isle
		xca.01.07.90	Austnesfjord, Nordland, Norway.
			68°15'N 14°42'E 1250km NE 6062 days.

A typical recovery of a bird dazzled in winter on Fair Isle. Another ringed as a first-summer on on 24.07.92 was recovered in Grampian in September.

HERRING GULL Two were recovered away from the Isle. One ringed as a second summer in July 1990 was found dead in Banff in April 1992, the other ringed as a pullus in 1991 was found dead at Finstown, Orkney in July 1992.

KITTIWAKE

ER36091	1	14.07.91	Fair Isle
	x	27.12.91	Harrington, Cumbria
			54°36'N 3°34'W 560km S 166 days.

A juvenile that survived to leave the breeding colony but got little further.

ARCTIC TERN Two chicks ringed on 30.06.92 were controlled on North Ronaldsay on 01.08.92. Full details of 5 more chicks ringed in 1991 and 1992 and recovered subsequently are given below.

XR72032	1	24.06.91	Fair Isle
	x	12.01.92	Torra Bay, Skeleton Coast N.P. NAMIBIA
			20°19'S 13°14'E 8978km S 202days.
XR72246	1	28.06.91	Fair Isle
	x	07.04.92	Brighton, Durban, Natal, SOUTH AFRICA
			29°56'S 31°1'E 10401km SSE 284 days.
SX26487	1	22.07.91	Fair Isle
	x	15.11.91	Ajumo Bend, Nr. Lagos, NIGERIA
			6°22'N 4°23'E 5930km S 116 days.
SX32008	1	22.06.92	Fair Isle
	v	01.09.92	Half-assini, GHANA
			5°3'N 2°53'W 6054Km S 71 days.
SX32696	1	22.06.92	Fair Isle
	v	10.09.92	Lome, TOGO
			6°10'N 1°21'E 5935km S 80 days.

Evidence of both the startling population increase on Fair Isle and the success of recent breeding seasons! The individuals caught and released in Ghana and Togo probably travelled in excess of an average of 200km a day after leaving the Northern Isles!

GUILLEMOT An adult ringed in 1985 was recovered in Denmark in January 1992. Of the 13 recoveries, 6 were found drowned in fishing nets, 3 were oiled and 4 were found dead on the beach. Recoveries of individuals ringed as nestlings are tabulated below.

		Age at recovery							
		<1	1	2	3	4	5	6	>6
Iceland						1			
Norway		2	2						
Sweden							1		
Denmark		2							
Germany		1							
England		1							
Scotland			1	1					
GJ83746	1	21.06.83		Fair Isle					
	xF	15.05.88		Mouth of Berufjordur, Sudur Mula, ICELAND					
				64°40'N 14°12'W 867km NW 1790 days.					
T44841	1	20.06.92		Fair Isle					
	xF	30.08.92		Sondervig, Jylland, DENMARK					
				56°7'N 8°7'E 690km SW 71 days.					

For the second year in succession a bird ringed as a chick on Fair Isle was recovered in a subsequent summer in Iceland, while T44841 illustrates the speed at which fledglings can swim across the North Sea.

RAZORBILL One ringed as a chick on Fair Isle in 1982 was found dead in Jylland, Denmark in March 1992. Full details of the other control are given below.

M26038	6	28.06.76	South Gunnawark, Fair Isle
	vv	15.04.92	Skomer Island, Dyfed, Wales
			51°44'N 5°19'W 897km SSW 5770 days.

Given that the ring number was read correctly on Skomer, this really is a remarkable record. This individual was retrapped in South Gunnawark in 1983 & 1985, being with its chick on the latter occasion. It was present on Skomer until at least 20.05.92 when it was "nesting". There is no other evidence of a Fair Isle breeder having bred at another colony either previously, or subsequently.

COLLARED DOVE

EP88667	4	23.05.90	Fair Isle
	x	22.05.92	Dunnet Head, Highland, Scotland
			58°40'N 3°22'W 139km SW 730 days.
ER36141	4	19.07.91	Fair Isle
	x	03.07.92	Elgin, Grampian, Scotland
			57°38'N 3°18'W 233km SSW 350 days.

The only previous recovery of a Fair Isle ringed bird was of one ringed on 23.06.77 found dead at Scarborough, Yorks on 01.07.82.

ROCK PIPIT

NB84561	1	06.06.91	Fair Isle
	v	24.12.91	Fraserburgh, Grampian, Scotland 57°42'N 2°0'W 205km S 201 days.

Most of those that do leave Fair Isle in the winter appear to spend it in Orkney and Northern Scotland.

REDSTART

F177008	4f	14.05.89	Fair Isle
	x	29.04.92	Degache, TUNISIA 33°59'N 8°13'E

The first ever recovery of a Fair Isle ringed Redstart and the first British ringed individual to be recovered in Tunisia.

WHEATEAR

NK76132	3	05.09.90	Fair Isle
	x	20.05.92	Off Sidugrunn, Reykjavik, ICELAND 63°40'N 17°30'W 955km WNW 623 days.

Surprisingly this is the first recovery from Iceland, although we know it to be the origin and destination of many of our migrants.

BLACKCAP A first-winter male ringed on 25.10.91 was killed by a cat in Kirkwall, Orkney on 06.11.91 and a first-winter female ringed on 23.09.92 was controlled on North Ronaldsay, Orkney five days later.

STARLING One ringed as a juvenile male on 22.07.91 was killed by a cat in Fraserburgh, Grampian on 17.11.91. Another ringed as an adult male on 31.07.91 was controlled at Wick, Highland on 14.12.91. Again a suggestion that some Fair Isle breeders may disperse south in winter.

TWITE

F177576	3J	23.07.90	Fair Isle
	x	15.03.92	Milton of Drumbeck Farm, nr Ellon, Grampian 57°21'N 2°9'W 245km S 601 days.

There have only been 3 previous recoveries of Fair Isle ringed Twite (from North Ronaldsay, Orkney mainland and a ship plying between Germany and Denmark) and none of these were of known Fair Isle bred birds. A clue to the wintering area at last?

CONTROLS

Details were received for 51 birds in 1992 which had been ringed elsewhere and controlled or recovered on Fair Isle.

STORM PETREL Forty-three individuals were controlled on Fair Isle. These were ringed at:

Mousa, Shetland	1		Tynemouth Pier, Tyne & Wear	3
Foula, Shetland	3		Whitburn, Tyne & Wear	2
Whalsay, Shetland	3		Flamborough, Humberside	1
Yell, Shetland	11		Ardglass, Down, N.Ireland	1
North Ronaldsay, Orkney			2	Runde, More og
Romsdal, NORWAY	3			
South Ronaldsay, Orkney			4	Flo, More og Romsdal,
NORWAY	2			
Noss Head, Highland	1		Male, More og Romsdal, NORWAY	2
Muchals, Grampian	1		Stigen, Nolsoy, FAROES	1
Isle of May, Fife	1		Roland, Nolsoy, FAROES	1

The Mousa bird was ringed on 08.08.73 and controlled on 15.07.92!

ARCTIC SKUA Three adults found dead in the breeding colony were all ringed as chicks on Foula; two in 1982 and one in 1985.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

GG61612	10	18.04.89	Gloucester Landfill, Gloucestershire
			51°51'N 2°21'W
	v	03.08.92	Fair Isle, 855km N 1203 days.

PIED WAGTAIL A male ringed as a juvenile on North Ronaldsay in 1988 was controlled on 16.04.92. A White Wagtail ringed in Iceland is our only previous control.

BLUETHROAT A first-summer female ringed on North Ronaldsay on 27.05.92 was controlled on Fair Isle next day. Our only previous control was ringed in Sweden.

WILLOW WARBLER

2T3792	3	01.09.91	Hawksdale Pasture, Cumbria
			54°49'N 3°0'W
	v	15.05.92	Fair Isle, 531km N 257 days.

Caught on its first autumn migration and then again during its first spring migration. The only previous control was ringed on Heligoland, Germany.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE

VK27063	6m	09.06.92	Spurn Head, Humberside,
			53°34'N 0°6'W
	v	15.06.92	Fair Isle, 671km N 6 days.

An individual that had drifted to the east of its intended route on two occasions, or that had made a deliberate movement up the British east coast after an initial displacement?

LONGEVITY

A series of longevity records for Fair Isle ringed birds appeared in the 1990 report. The list is updated below, incorporating 1991 and 1992 retraps.

SPECIES	Age at ring	Date Ringed	Date Retrapped/ Recovered	Time between ring & ret/rec		
				Yrs	Mon	Day
Fulmar	1	10.08.61	Ret. 04.06.89	27	9	25
Storm Petrel	4	13.08.68	Ret. 27.07.92	23	11	14
Shag	1	29.06.74	Ret. 21.06.92	17	11	23
Eider	3	06.09.66	Rec. 03.05.88	21	7	27
Oystercatcher	1	22.06.63	Rec. 15.07.88	25	0	23
Arctic Skua	3	08.08.64	Rec. 16.06.90	25	10	8
Great Skua	1	07.07.72	Rec. 07.07.92	20	10	0
Kittiwake	1	23.06.74	Ret. 01.05.92	17	0	8
Guillemot	8	07.07.60	Ret. 24.06.83	22	11	17
Razorbill	6	25.06.64	Ret. 19.06.92	27	11	25
Black Guillemot	1	31.07.70	Ret. 29.07.92	21	11	29
Puffin	1	11.07.62	Ret. 25.06.92	29	11	14

DISEASE STATES AND CAUSES OF DEATH IN WILD BIRDS

Despite work by a number of researchers in the past, relatively little is known about the diseases and causes of death of wild birds. Furthermore, with each year, alterations in the environment and in bird populations result in changes to the type and impact of diseases on different birds. For the past four years, with the help of a number of people, I have been examining wild birds whose bodies have been found in a variety of situations, for signs of disease, parasitism and, if possible, to ascertain the likely cause of death. This article describes some of the methods I have used and some of the findings that have resulted from this work.

A number of bird observatories around the coast have been particularly helpful, especially the staff and visitors of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory who have saved 68 carcasses of 36 species found on the island and posted them onto me.

Having received the body, the plastic bag in which it arrived is first examined for any signs of parasites from the skin and feathers. The body is then checked for external wounds, feather damage, parasites and external signs of disease, and the physical state of the bird is assessed. The bird is then weighed and a number of biometric measurements are taken including maximum chordal length, minimum tarsal length and a variety of head and bill measurements. The body is X-rayed if circumstances warrant, then dissected and examined internally. A check list of organs enables me to ensure that nothing is missed. Any internal parasites are collected and stored for future identification. Regrettably, because of the inevitable delay from the time of death to the time of the autopsy, most laboratory tests are of no use. However, samples from suitable species are sent to the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology for examination of background poison residues. Stomach contents can prove very interesting (did you know for instance that Grey Herons will eat large quantities of frog spawn?). Finally, parts of the body, especially head, wings and legs may be retained for reference purposes. A report is then prepared and a copy is sent back to the person from whom the specimen originated. All details are recorded on a computerised data base for future analysis.

Nationally, the number of different species of bird examined bears little relationship

to actual populations, as relatively uncommon but high profile birds outnumber other much more common species. However, the most common bird examined was the Blackbird - probably because its single-mindedness during courtship and territory defence results in a high mortality from traffic collisions. Mute Swans too are very commonly presented, in this case they are "high profile" birds whose bodies tend to be very obvious. Regrettably lead poisoning is still the commonest cause of death in those swans examined by me, although the situation is improving. Power cable collisions and damage from fish hooks and line are also common causes of mortality in swans. Penetrating wounds in the gizzard caused by foreign bodies have been seen in other species as well as the swan. Possibly the most unusual was a severe peritonitis caused by a penetrating stick in a juvenile Great Skua! There have been other bizarre incidents recorded. For instance, quite recently a Great Black-backed Gull sent from Fair Isle proved to have choked to death on a fish. The fish in the gullet weighed 248 grams, nearly 15% of the weight of the bird trying to eat it! (I am considered to have a very healthy appetite but I would have severe difficulty in finishing a meal weighing 28 pounds - 15% of my body weight). We have had a Wheatear with streptococcal meningitis and a Manx Shearwater with a heavy infestation of worms that normally live in seals and dolphins, and, as a result of ending up in the wrong animal, had damaged the bird's stomach with fatal consequences. A significant number of birds have been shot including some very sensitive species. One poor Brent Goose had been shot on at least three different occasions, the last one proving fatal. Two Arctic Skuas from Fair Isle became entangled (either through courtship or fighting) with fatal consequences to one.

Other information has also been gained from examining these birds with, for instance, all parasites retained for further examination. Normally, adult female birds have only one ovary (the egg producing apparatus) but we have had three birds now with two functional ovaries - two Sparrowhawks and one Mute Swan. This anatomical abnormality has only rarely been recorded in the past, and, as far as I can ascertain, never in the Mute Swan.

Receiving bodies from a single location, as is the case with Fair Isle, results not only in a wide variety of species but also the opportunity to examine numbers of one species. This has proved particularly instructive in the case of Fair Isle because of the large Arctic Tern colony. We have now examined 14 Arctic Terns including pulli, juveniles and adults. It is quite apparent that this species has a high mortality from trauma with a significant number suffering injuries to the head and bill. This presumably caused by head-on collisions, not just with vehicles, but fences, each other or even the ground? Does this reflect their aggressive behaviour or do they suffer problems of balance? Death in these cases is often by secondary starvation, although bill injuries and deformities do not automatically prevent feeding even in specialist feeders. One Oystercatcher I examined had a grossly deformed bill, over twice the normal length and with the ends crossed over in a scissor shape. This bird had died of starvation during a particularly hard spell of weather but it had been recorded, apparently surviving quite happily, during the previous four winters.

These are just a few of the stories from some 850 post-mortem examinations performed so far. I rely heavily on people in the field sending me carcasses, so if you find any whilst on the Island please take them to the Observatory staff. If you feel you would like to help by sending me bodies you find elsewhere, then please contact me at:

97 Mount Pleasant, Redditch, Worcs. B97 4LZ Tel. 0527 550111.

J.C.Waine B.Vet.Med., M.R.C.V.S

NOTABLE MOTH AND HOVERFLY RECORDS IN 1992.

Two moth traps were again operated in 1992: at Schoolton on all suitable nights from late April to mid-October, and at the Observatory from August. This year, we also embarked upon a study of hoverflies, another group of insects well known for migratory members. Our observations, and relevant previous records, are summarised below.

MOTHS: The regular deployment of the Schoolton trap earlier in the year than before paid dividends with a number of interesting records. The first of these was a Swordgrass *Xylena exsoleta* on 23rd April. It, a Heart and Dart *Agrotis exclamationis* on 11th June and a Thistle Ermine *Myelois cribrella* the following day were all new to the Isle, and the most northerly ever recorded in Britain. The Thistle Ermine, a beautiful little moth of the pyralid family, was indeed a remarkable occurrence. Goater (1986) gives its British distribution as "England south of Lincolnshire and Herefordshire", though records on the islands of Guernsey and Scilly indicate that it is a migrant. Brian Wilson made another sensational find when he captured a Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* in the Houll workshop on 27th May. Previously unknown at Fair Isle and virtually so in Shetland, it constituted one of a substantial influx to Britain including three in other parts of Shetland. A larger proportion of moth visitors choose to fly to the Isle than their human counterparts, but one taking the alternative was an Emperor *Saturnia pavonina* which hitched a lift with a cruise ship, being released ashore at the first port of call - Fair Isle - on 30th May. The final spring addition to the Fair Isle moth list was Dusky Brocade *Apamea remissa* with one on 13th June, 2 on 14th June, one on 30th June and one on 17th July. Other interesting spring captures included 4 Shears *Hada nana* between 18th May and 10th June and a Marbled Coronet *Hadena confusa* on 17th June. Further trapping effort may show these last three species to be normal components of the late spring moth fauna.

We had to wait until 13th August for the next addition to the Fair Isle list, a Crescent *Celaena leucostigma* at Schoolton. It was the typical subspecies and thus more probably from the continent than from the nearest British sites where the subspecies is the rather different *C.I.scotica*.. This was followed by a small series of The Brick *Agrochola circellaris* (singles on 19th, 24th and 28th September, 2 on 6th October) and Large Wainscot *Rhizodra lutosa* (on 3rd, 6th and 7th October), all at Schoolton. Other interesting records included the Isle's second Convolvulus Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli* found dead at Wirvje on 13th September (our only share of a remarkable influx to the Northern Isles), the second Red-green Carpet *Chloroclysta siterata* at Schoolton on 12th October and the third Small Wainscot *Photodes pygmina* at the Observatory on 28th August. Most other trap captures confirmed the abundance and flight periods of now familiar species. However, we have still to deduce the status of scarcer species such as Setaceous Hebrew Character *Xestia c-nigrum* (one on 24th July) and Angle Shades *Phlogophora meticulosa* (one on 6th October).

Finally, we extended our activities this year to include pursuit of moths in their natural habitat. This resulted in a number of "micros" being netted. Apart from confirming that *Agriphila stramineella* and *Eana osseana* were super-abundant at their respective times of main emergence, a number of firsts for Fair Isle were obtained. They were (with first dates): *Aphelia viburnana* (28th June), *Glyphipterix thrasonella*

(29th June), *Epinotia mercuriana* (16th July), *Phaulernis fulviguttella* (21st July), *Ephestia elutella* (22nd July), Large Pale Clothes Moth *Tinea pallescentella* (31st July) and *Rhigognostis senilella* (9th August).

So, the Fair Isle list continues to expand - by 15 species (16 with the Emperor) in 1992.

HOVERFLIES: Surprisingly perhaps, published records for Fair Isle hoverflies date back to the beginning of this century (Grimshaw 1906).

We can report that five of the six species recorded by Grimshaw - *Rhingia campestris*, *Platycheirus manicatus*, *Platycheirus albimanus*, *Eristalis arbustorum* and *Helophilus pendulus* - are still present (and common). We failed to encounter his sixth, *Eristalis tenax*, but frequently found *Eristalis intricarius*, a species first reported in 1982 (David Gibbs, FIBO card index). *Rhingia campestris* and *Eristalis arbustorum* were recorded again in July 1957 by Angela Davis who also added *Episyrphus balteatus* and *Scaeva pyrastris* to the list. We did not encounter the latter in 1992, but small numbers of *Episyrphus balteatus* were seen visiting flowers in oat crops from 16th-17th July. This species is one of the best known of all hoverfly migrants.

The others found in 1992 were firsts for Fair Isle. They were (with first dates): *Neoascia podagrica* (19th June), *Syrirta pipiens* (26th June) *Metasyrphus corollae* (10th August) and *Scaeva selenitica* (4th October). The first two were common in gardens during the summer and may prove in subsequent years to be established members of the fauna. The *Metasyrphus corollae* was caught on consolidated shingle on the coast at Skadan. It is a known migrant and if this inactive individual was one, it was in good company, appearing after a couple of days of light south-east winds which brought Barred Warblers, Marsh Warblers, Icterine Warbler, Melodious Warbler and Spotted Crake.

The abundant garden and crop hoverfly fauna of mid-summer was long forgotten when the next flush occurred. This began on about 4th October, definitely involved migrants and was dominated by an unexpected species - *Scaeva selenitica*, described by Stubbs and Falk (1983) as "rather scarce and probably at least a partial migrant with records as far west as Ireland and north as Orkney". There were also small numbers of *Episyrphus balteatus* and *Metasyrphus corollae*.

The Fair Isle hoverfly list currently stands at 13 species, four of which were added in 1992. These figures may be of more than just academic interest. The Isle appears to be playing host to far more aphids than in past years, including in 1992 the first ever aphid plague of the oat crops (fortunately short-lived). A number of hoverfly species are predators of aphids. With climatic change on everyone's lips, knowledge of the status of Fair Isle hoverflies may be of great relevance in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: We are indebted to Ian Lorimer (moths) and Simon McKelvey (hoverflies) for confirming identifications, and to Mike Pennington for his comments and help with Shetland information.

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Nick & Elizabeth Riddiford and Paul Harvey.

BUTTERFLIES ON FAIR ISLE 1990-92

The three year period produced a number of highlights including first breeding records, some exceptional migrants and the two best years for butterflies in over a decade (1990 & 1992). To allow comparison with previous years (cf. Harvey 1989)), the number of sightings and number of species accepted in the three years were:

	1990	1991	1992
Number of sightings	58	16	106
Number of species	5	3	5

Seven, possibly 8, species were recorded in the three years.

THE REGULARS: Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui* accounted for 69% of records in 1991, but was far outnumbered by Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* in 1990 and 1992. Red Admirals were the sole component of a marked influx on 19th-29th June 1990, peaking at 13 on 21st and 10 on 23rd; and virtually the only species in an influx on 1st-5th October 1992, peaking at 10 on 4th. An influx on 25th May-14th June 1992 comprised mainly Red Admirals (peak 5 on 6th & 10th June) but 1-2 Painted Ladies were recorded on five dates. The highest Painted Lady count in the period was 4 on 29th July 1990.

The next most frequent species was Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*. Even so, there were only two sightings in 1990 and six in 1992. There was no obvious pattern to occurrences and the peak was 2 on 25th September 1992. Large White *Pieris brassicae* is another species which can be relatively frequent but, surprisingly was only recorded once in the period, on 14th May 1990.

THE RARITIES: From a national viewpoint, the highlight of 1992 was the arrival of two Clouded Yellows *Colias croceus*, one on 25th May and the other on 16th August. The only previous occurrence was the most northerly British record, and the 1992 duo were the northernmost element of a massive prolonged invasion affecting much of Britain. A Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus* on 11th June 1990 was of regional significance because, although it breeds in Orkney, this comprises the first confirmed Fair Isle record (a "blue" on 1st August 1980 was probably this species, and Common Blue has strayed to Shetland). A Small White *Pieris rapae* on 9th July 1992 was the third for the Isle.

In addition to the confirmed species, there was a report of an eighth, Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina* on 29th July 1990. There is an element of doubt about this record because it was only seen briefly and in flight. However, the observers were familiar with the species in their home area. Meadow Brown breeds in Orkney and, though it is not known to be migratory, two were recorded on Fair Isle in 1980. It has yet to be recorded elsewhere in Shetland.

BREEDING RECORDS: We know of no published observations of breeding attempts on the Isle, though there are anecdotal reports of the dreaded Large White caterpillars in years past when cabbages were grown more extensively ("so many that, on calm days, you could hear them munching!"). In 1990, the nettle patch alongside the Observatory gas store was found to hold 20 or more Red Admiral caterpillars. They

were rather small and a check two weeks later suggested (from absence of caterpillars and lack of leaf damage) that all had perished or moved. Then on 4th September 1992, we found a full-grown Painted Lady caterpillar crossing the road at North Shirva. This is a thistle feeder, and there is an abundance of Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense* here. However, any infestation must have been slight, because a search of these thistles failed to locate any further caterpillars, tell-tale webs or obvious damage. By 7th September the caterpillar had pupated, its magnificent chrysalis (with threads of gold reflecting against the light and glistening gold tips to short points arising from the sides of the pupal case) proved something of a tourist attraction! A sadly imperfect adult emerged on or before 23rd September. This exceptional (unique?) breeding record did, however, demonstrate that migrants are occasionally able to breed well beyond their normal breeding range.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: We extend thanks to Mike Pennington and Ian Lorimer for additional information; and to the many visitors who provided butterfly records.

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Paul Harvey, Nick and Elizabeth Riddiford.

FAIR ISLE'S GREY SEALS

Most of us have seen Grey Seals during our visits to Fair Isle, our sightings perhaps of one or more individuals bottling in one of the bays, or maybe of a large group hauled out on one of the beaches or skerries. What few people do witness, however, is the breeding season of these otherwise familiar animals.

The Grey Seal's year can be followed from the departure of the adult animals from the Isle following the breeding season. In late November and December, both bulls and cows spend much time feeding to recuperate the vast weight losses incurred during this period. The development of the newly conceived pups is suspended at this time, and growth only restarts around February, just after the cows have moulted into a fresh coat. Bulls moult a little later, gathering in large haul-outs on offshore skerries.

Seals are least evident during spring, with mainly immature animals being seen. During summer the breeding animals begin to return ashore on Fair Isle. First to return are the bulls, though not directly to the breeding beaches. They again gather offshore re-establishing a hierarchy, even before the cows return. The cows meanwhile are in the final stages of pregnancy and are feeding up in preparation for the energy-sapping period of lactation.

The first cows come ashore in September, and when birth is imminent they finally choose a beach suitable for pup-rearing. On Fair Isle these beaches are on the north and west coasts, bound by the highest cliffs and therefore the least disturbed, but also not completely washed by the highest tides. The bulls soon follow, and very quickly the dominant bull stakes his claim on the beach.

On Fair Isle, where (unlike some other sites) the beaches are small and shallow, a single bull can monopolise all of the cows on one beach. He may also defend his domain from the water, preventing other bulls from coming ashore at all. For this reason the dominant bull may not, as do bulls at many other sites, have to go without food completely during his reign, being able perhaps to take some suitable prey chanced upon within the confines of the bay. It is unlikely however that a single bull will remain dominant for the whole season.

The actual birth of the pup is very rapid, and as such is rarely witnessed. The pup is born in a creamy white coat and weighs about 15kg. The bond between parent and pup is immediately formed when the cow smells her pup. In between bouts of suckling, the cow may return to the water, using voice and ultimately smell to relocate her pup amongst the others on the beach.

The pup rapidly gains weight and after about 3 weeks a healthy pup should weigh about 45kg. At this age the pup should already have begun to moult its white natal coat and is soon abandoned by the cow, left to thrive on its large fat reserves whilst gaining the necessary skills for feeding itself. The cow again comes into oestrus and, as she makes her way to the sea, so the bull intercepts her and mating occurs.

Should the pup survive, it may, if female, begin breeding in its fifth or sixth year and live as long as 30 years. Males on the other hand may not become dominant until 10 years of age and may live little beyond 15 years.

Attempts at assessing breeding productivity on Fair Isle by counting pups have been undertaken in several recent years although the completeness of these counts has varied enormously.

The number of pups at each respective pupping beach are given below.

Year of count.

	1983	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
North Haven						1*
Jivvi geo					1*	
Easter Lothar	7	25	12		3	2
Wester Lothar	3	2	1	4	1	
North Felsigeo	2	2	2			
South Felsigeo	17	6	12	6	13	4
Skinnars Glig	1					
Guidicum	4	14	20	15	11	14
North Naversgill	3	1	3			
Troila Geo	2	4			3	8
North Gunnawark	21	25	39	27	32	43
South Gunnawark	4					
South Geo o' Hoini						1
Muckle Geo o' Hoini		14	25	23	18	30
Linni Geo						1*
South Light					1*	
North Mila Hesslands	7			2		
South Ramnigeo	2					
TOTAL	73	93	114	78	83	104

Note, counts marked with an asterisk almost certainly relate to pups that have been washed off their natal beaches and then been guided to an alternative beach.

Accurately counting the number of seal pups produced in any one season is very difficult unless all new pups are marked individually. This allows beach to beach movements to be monitored and pup survival to independence recorded. The very nature of the Fair Isle breeding beaches renders the pups inaccessible and as such only cliff top observations can be made.

The counts for 1983 and 1988 were undertaken on just one date, with all suitable beaches covered. The figures for 1989 and 1990 represent the highest pup count made at each site, over a series of visits. In 1991 and 1992 an attempt was made to assess the age of pups on each visit, with any 'new' pups being added to the totals at each site. This is undoubtedly the best method to use on Fair Isle, but of course is much more labour intensive than single one off counts of all beaches, or repeated casual counts at various sites, as used in previous years.

In 1991 and 1992 more than half of the total pups were born in the second week of October and also more than half of these were born on North Gunnawark and Muckle Geo o' Hoini. The annual production on Fair Isle is in the order of 100 pups.

C.J.Orsman.

CETACEAN RECORDS 1991

MINKE WHALE *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* Single animals were seen from the Good Shepherd on 19th May, 18th June and 22nd August.

PILOT WHALE *Globicephala melaena* Two whales, probably of this species, were seen from the Good Shepherd on 18th August.

SPERM WHALE *Physeter macrocephalus* A group, comprising 6 or 7 individuals, was seen about half way between Fair Isle and Sumburgh Head from the Good Shepherd on 8th August. They were heading north and were also seen from the Loganair Tingwall-Fair Isle flight! What a start to a holiday for a lucky few individuals!

KILLER WHALE *Orcinus orca* A bull was seen about 5 miles north of the Island from the Good Shepherd on 22nd June. Another on 21st August was also seen from the Good Shepherd as it plied between Fair Isle and Sumburgh.

WHITE-BEAKED DOLPHIN *Lagenorhynchus albirostris* First seen from the Good Shepherd on 25th March. Further sightings from the boat occurred on at least 16 dates with a concentration of records from mid-August to mid-September. A maximum of 8 were seen on 21st September. The only sighting from the Island was of 4 off South Light on May 4th.

ATLANTIC WHITE-SIDED DOLPHIN *Lagenoryhnchus acutus* A pod of 12 spent an hour off North Light on 25th September

RISSO'S DOLPHIN *Grampus griseus* Sightings from the Good Shepherd involved 2 on 13th June and one on 5th September. A school of 7 were seen off South Light on 5 October.

HARBOUR PORPOISE *Phocoena phocoena* Seen in every month from May-October inclusive. The largest count from the Good Shepherd was of 30 on 28th May while the largest pod seen from the Island comprised 7 on 31st May.

Paul Harvey and Neil Thomson.

PUBLICATIONS

The following were published in 1991 by, or with the assistance of, FIBO staff and facilities.

Seabirds

Harvey, P.V. & Orsman, C.J. 1991. *Fair Isle seabird monitoring scheme: report to J.N.C.C of sixth seasons work in 1991*. J.N.C.C Rep. No. 22.

Riddiford, N. & Harvey, P.V. 1992. Colonisation and population growth of Gannets at Fair Isle. *Scott. Birds* 16: 192-199.

Identification/Rarities

Ellis, P.M. & Riddiford, N.J. 1992. Savannah Sparrow in Shetland: second record for the Western Palearctic. *Brit. Birds* 85: 561-564.

Harrop, H.R. 1992. Little Swift on Fair Isle. *Scott. Birds* 16: 276.

Harvey, P.V. 1992. The Brown Flycatcher on Fair Isle - A new British bird. *Bird. World* 5: 252-255.

Riddiford, N. & Harvey, P.V. 1992. Identification of Lanceolated Warbler. *Brit. Birds* 85: 62-78

Suddaby, D. & Harvey, P.V. 1992. Baillon's Crake on Fair Isle. *Scott. Birds* 16: 211-214.

Votier, S.C. 1992. Semi-palmated Sandpiper on Fair Isle. *Scott. Birds* 16: 277-279

Invertebrates

Riddiford, N. & Harvey, P.V. 1992. New moth records and a wasp from Fair Isle. *Entomologists Record & Journal of Variation*. 104: 264

Popular

Harrop, H.R. 1992 Birding Hotspots: Fair Isle. *Bird. World* 5: 138-142.

MISCELLANY

Vignettes;

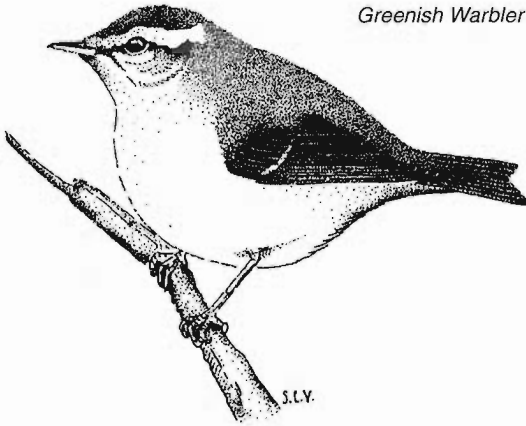
We would like to thank the following for supplying vignettes for this report,

Phil Bristow	Cory's Shearwater, Long-tailed Duck, Firecrest, Brown Flycatcher
John Clifton	Green Sandpiper, Nightjar, Sand Martin, Bonelli's Warbler
Ian Fisher	Corncrake, Goldfinch, Little Bunting
Chris Orsman	Eyebrowed Thrush, Pallas' Warbler, Tree Sparrow
Roger Riddington	Sandwich Tern, Spotted Flycatcher
Dave Suddaby	Stock Dove
Guy Thompson	Pectoral Sandpiper, Robin
Steve Votier	Montagu's Harrier, Red-footed Falcon, Ring-billed Gull, Subalpine Warbler, Greenish Warbler
Kester Wilson	Stone Curlew, Icterine Warbler, Black-headed Bunting

NEW ADDRESS: Paul & Elizabeth's address in Shetland will be:

29 Brentfield, Sandwick, Dunrossness.

Greenish Warbler



FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY Financial Report and Accounts

A summarised form of the Trust's accounts for the year ended 31st October 1992 appear on the following pages. The full statutory accounts and auditors' report by Coopers & Lybrand can be inspected at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh.

The continuing domestic recession, and similar economic problems in Europe and across the Atlantic, are still exerting considerable pressure on the UK tourist industry from which Fair Isle has certainly not been exempt. In spite of a further drop in visitor numbers, the accounts show a modest improvement.

The Directors are again most grateful to David MacLehose whose further fund-raising efforts have enabled the shortfall of funds in respect of the Lodge redevelopment to be fully cleared, thereby eliminating the burden of interest charges of recent years.

The Directors also wish to express their gratitude to the following for financial help during the year:

National Trust for Scotland for yet another donation but, more particularly, for a most generous grant towards further improvements in and around the Lodge.

Shell (U.K.) Limited and BP Exploration Limited, also for most generous donations towards our work.

Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st October 1992

	1992		1991	
	£	£	£	£
Lodge Income		63,355		59,275
Less: Lodge supplies	22,937		22,287	
Staff costs	<u>21,378</u>		<u>20,734</u>	
		<u>44,315</u>		<u>43,021</u>
Gross Profit		19,040		16,254
Less: Overhead Expenses				
Administration	6,770		5,834	
Establishment	15,603		14,235	
Promotion	2,486		1,108	
Financial & Legal	<u>4,892</u>		<u>8,160</u>	
		<u>29,751</u>		<u>29,337</u>
Operating Deficit		(10,711)		(13,083)
Other Income				
Grants receivable	3,173		2,643	
Subscriptions & donations	8,083		6,435	
Investment interest	1,921		3,161	
Deferred grant income release	<u>2,961</u>		<u>2,916</u>	
		<u>16,093</u>		<u>15,155</u>
Surplus before depreciation		5,382		2,072
Depreciation charge		<u>(13,441)</u>		<u>(13,122)</u>
		<u>(8,059)</u>		<u>(11,050)</u>
<u>Statement of Accumulated Surplus</u>				
Accumulated surplus at beginning of the year		94,535		103,289
Prior year adjustment		<u>-</u>		<u>(6,525)</u>
as restated		94,535		96,764
Deficit for the year	(8,059)		(11,050)	
Release from appeal reserve	<u>9,043</u>		<u>8,821</u>	
		<u>984</u>		<u>(2,229)</u>
		<u>95,519</u>		<u>94,535</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31st October 1992

	1992		1991	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Assets		195,379		207,132
Investments		<u>10,548</u>		<u>10,548</u>
		205,927		217,680
Current Assets				
Stocks	3,531		3,787	
Debtors	5,781		14,460	
Cash at Bank and in hand	<u>1,955</u>		<u>6,229</u>	
	11,267		24,476	
Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	<u>(25,383)</u>		<u>(49,370)</u>	
Net current (liabilities)/assets		<u>(14,116)</u>		<u>(24,894)</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		191,811		192,786
Non-current liabilities				
Creditors - amounts falling due after more than one year		<u>(7,368)</u>		<u>(10,284)</u>
		<u>184,443</u>		<u>182,502</u>
Representing:				
Accumulated surplus		95,519		94,535
Reserve funds		<u>88,924</u>		<u>87,967</u>
		<u>184,443</u>		<u>182,502</u>

FAIR ISLE ENDOWMENT FUND

Accounts for the year to 31st October 1992

REVENUE ACCOUNT	1992		1991	
	£	£	£	£
Investment Income (Net)	351		357	
Deposit Income (Gross)	324		266	
Tax Refund	39		108	
		715		731
Management Fees	69		50	
Balance due to FIBOT	646		681	
		715		731
		715		731
CAPITAL ACCOUNT				
Investment at cost				
10% Treasury Stock 1992- £2750 Stock	-		2500	
10% Treasury Conv. Stock 1996 £2953 Stock	2749		-	
Henderson Administration 960 High Income Units	638		638	
		3387		3138
Cash Balance held on Deposit	2402		2401	
		5789		5539
		5789		5539
Represented by				
Balance per last Account	5539		5539	
Gain on maturity of Investment	250		-	
Balance forward 31st October		5789		5539
		5789		5539

JOHN HARRISON MEMORIAL FUND

Accounts for Year to 31st October 1992

	1992 £	1991 £
REVENUE ACCOUNT		
Interest Received	858	837
Tax Refund 1990/91	<u>-</u>	<u>119</u>
	<u>858</u>	<u>956</u>
Grants paid	790	635
Transfer to Capital	30	271
Management Expenses	<u>38</u>	<u>50</u>
	<u>858</u>	<u>956</u>
CAPITAL ACCOUNT		
Investments @ cost		
£6,400 9% Treasury Loan 1994	-	5,362
£900 13.1/4% Treasury Stock 1997	870	870
£1,400 9.1/2% Treasury Stock 1999	1,435	1,435
£6,400 9% Treasury Conv. Stk. 2000	<u>6,411</u>	<u>-</u>
	8,716	7,667
Cash	<u>508</u>	<u>543</u>
	<u>9,224</u>	<u>8,210</u>
represented by:		
Balance per last Account	8,210	7,939
Donations	-	-
Gain on realisation of Investment	1,059	-
Transfer from Revenue	<u>30</u>	<u>271</u>
	9,299	8,210
less Management Charges	<u>75</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>9,224</u>	<u>8,210</u>

JOHN HARRISON MEMORIAL FUND

Accounts for year to 31st October 1991

	1991 £	1990 £
Revenue Account		
Opening Balance	-	118
Interest Received	837	853
Tax Refund 1990/91	119	-
	956	971
Grants paid	635	654
Transfer to Capital	271	272
Management Expenses	50	45
	956	971
 Balance Sheet at 31st October		
Investments @ cost		
£6,400 9% Treasury Loan 1994	5,362	5,362
£900 13.1/4% Treasury Stock 1997	870	870
£1,400 9.1/2% Treasury Stock 1999	1,435	1,435
	7,667	7,667
Cash	543	272
	8,210	7,939
 represented by:		
Capital Account		
Balance per last account	7,939	7,667
Donations	-	-
Transfer from Revenue	271	272
	8,210	7,939

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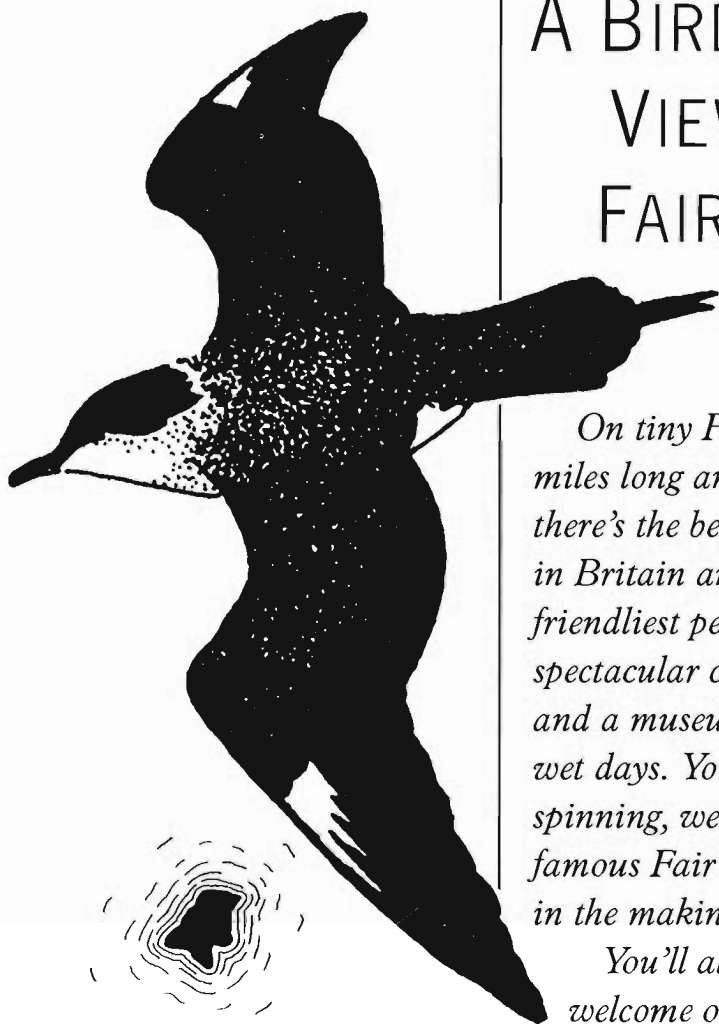
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