



FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Report for 2016



Plate 1. Lee Gregory repairing the Gully trap, 28th April 2016. © David Parnaby



Plate 2. Samuel Hood with Puffin, Greenholm, 15th July 2016. © Lee Gregory



Plate 3. Lee Gregory and Ciaran Hatsell, off Dronger, 26th June 2016. © David Parnaby



FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY REPORT NO. 68 (2016)

Editor: David Parnaby

Photographic editor: Ian Andrews

CONTENTS

FIBOT Chairman's report - <i>David Okill</i>	3
Administrator's report - <i>Susannah Parnaby</i>	5
Warden's report - <i>David Parnaby</i>	7
The National Trust for Scotland on Fair Isle 2016 - <i>Alexander Bennett</i>	9
Obituaries:	
Annie Thomson (née Wilson) 1922-2016 - <i>Anne Sinclair and Margo Murray</i>	12
Peter Harrison 1941–2016 - <i>Fiona Mitchell</i>	13
Ann Prior 1949–2016 - <i>Jimmy Stout</i>	14
Ornithological monthly summary - <i>David Parnaby</i>	15
Systematic list 2016 - <i>David Parnaby</i>	34
Ringling summary - <i>Ciaran Hatsell</i>	112
Fair Isle's seabirds in 2016 - <i>Ciaran Hatsell and David Parnaby</i>	133
RSPB Puffin tracking project - <i>Rob Hughes</i>	143
First and last migrant dates - <i>David Parnaby</i>	144
Rarity accounts:	
Little Egret, 20th May; the first for Fair Isle - <i>Logan Johnson</i>	146
Black-browed Albatross, 28th May; the first for Fair Isle - <i>Keith Pellow and David Parnaby</i>	148
Siberian Accentors, 20th and 22nd October; the first and second for Fair Isle - <i>Lee Gregory and David Parnaby</i>	150
Committee decisions on rarities from 2015 - <i>compiled by David Parnaby</i>	156
Non-avian reports	
Cetaceans and other marine wildlife - <i>David Parnaby</i>	158
Butterflies, other insects, bats and other wildlife - <i>David Parnaby</i>	162
Moths, flora and vegetation, lesser-known plants and animals and biodiversity and climate - <i>Nick Riddiford</i>	164
Lichens and lichenicolous fungi of Fair Isle: an annotated checklist - <i>Steve Price</i>	171
Encouraging the next generation at FIBO - <i>David Parnaby</i>	189
My Fair Isle experience - 21st July–14th August - <i>Elizabeth Holmes</i>	190
My Fair Isle experience - 5th–28th July - <i>Oliver Beacock</i>	192
FIBOT financial report and accounts for 2016 - <i>Mike Wood</i>	194
Map of Fair Isle	196
Systematic checklist of the birds of Fair Isle - <i>David Parnaby</i>	197

Front cover. Long-eared Owl, Plantation, 1st May 2016. © Lee Gregory

Published in September 2017 by: Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust, Fair Isle Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland ZE2 9JU.

Typeset by: H. Scott, PicaDesign (picades@ifb.co.uk). Printed by: Swallowtail Print Ltd, Norwich

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST (FIBOT)

A company limited by guarantee.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY, FAIR ISLE, SHETLAND, ZE2 9JU.



Plate 4. Obs, 6th June 2016. © Ian Andrews

Telephone:

01595 760258

General email:

fibo@btconnect.com

Administrator:

fiboadministrator@btconnect.com

Reservations:

fibobooking@btconnect.com

FIBO website:

www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk

Facebook:

facebook.com/fairislebirdobservatory

Twitter:

twitter.com/fi_obs

Board of Directors:

The late Eric Meek (*Chairman*)

David Okill (*Vice-Chairman*)

Mike Wood (*Director of Finance*)

Ian Andrews, Douglas Barr, Louise Batchelor, Alexander Bennett, Mark Bolton, Ian Cowgill, Pete Ellis, Peter Evans, Fiona Mitchell, Jane Reid.

Honorary Director:

Roy Dennis (President)

Warden:

David Parnaby

Administrator:

Susannah Parnaby

Solicitors:

Anderson Strathern

1 Rutland Court, Edinburgh. EH3 8EY.

Bankers:

Bank of Scotland, 38 St Andrew Sq, Edinburgh. EH2 2YR.

Accountants:

Momentum Ltd, Harelands Court, Melsonby, North Yorkshire.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

David Okill



Plate 5. FIBO and Shetland Amenity Trust shared stand (Steve Arlow in centre with Lynne and Ian Cowgill behind to left and right), British Birdfair, Egleton, Rutland, 20th August 2016. © Ian Andrews

Regrettably, the reason that I am writing this Chairman's Report as Vice-Chairman is the sudden untimely death of our Chairman, Eric Meek in early 2017. He was a great guy and will be massively missed by all of those who knew him; a full obituary will appear in the 2017 Annual Report.

The routine at the Observatory continues, with the daily census, seabird monitoring and the recording of scarce and rare migrants. Even after all of these years, new species can be added to the Fair Isle list and this year it was three; Little Egret, Black-browed Albatross and Siberian Accentor (two). As well as these, there was a good show of what have become Fair Isle's signature autumn rarities such as Lanceolated Warbler, Citrine Wagtail and Olive-backed and Pechora Pipits. Also remarkable were the numbers of autumn Yellow-browed Warblers, this year a common migrant changing its status from what was regarded as a scarce bird only a few years ago.

The ringing effort continues to reveal unusual movements of individual birds and has recently helped to discover more about Shetland's Linnets which are rapidly colonising the south Mainland.

Two House Sparrow movements, to and from the isle, demonstrate that this species is not quite as sedentary as was thought but more spectacular was a Turtle Dove to the Faeroes and the number of birds arriving on the isle bearing rings from Norway.

We have been carrying out structured seabird monitoring over many years and how important this work has become! It has demonstrated the dramatic decline of some of our seabird species. This work is vital to understanding the demography of the different populations and is the basis of investigating seabird problems.

A major part of the Observatory's function is to provide high quality food and accommodation for visitors. That this works so well is a tribute to our Administrator and Warden and confirmed by the positive comments from visitors, islanders and staff.

It's always good to see young folk visiting the Obs, as they usually abound with enthusiasm and get a lot out of their visit and in many cases a life-long interest in matters environmental. We have two funds to assist young folk to visit, the John Harrison Memorial Fund and the Simon Aspinall Bursary Fund. There are other funds available from the Shetland Bird Club and the BTO, initiated to encourage youngsters to visit Bird Observatories and have new experiences.

Back copies of Annual Reports free to download
scanned FIBO reports from 1948 to 2012
are available from our website:
www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk/annual_reports.html

Reports covering more recent years can
be purchased from the online shop:
www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk/shop_books.html

Running an operation like ours and living on a remote island throws up unusual problems and the community needs to address a number of these together with the island's owners the NTS and other partners. These include: the setting up of an island-wide electricity supply with the financing and logistics developed through the Fair Isle Electricity Company; the provision of refurbished houses to attract new residents as part of the Fair Isle Development Plan which needs implementation; the problems of airstrip safety possibly affected by bird-strike; the replacement of the Good Shepherd IV which carries most goods in and out of the island as well as some of our visitors. Her maiden voyage was in May 1986, so she is now over 30 years old, perhaps the oldest serving ferry in the country.

After considerable work by FIMETI in October 2016 the Scottish Government confirmed an Order which implemented the Fair Isle Marine Protected Area in November 2016. A Steering Group now needs to be formed to implement the Terms of Reference and Aims of this Demonstration and Research MPA. FIBO is involved in all of these projects to a greater or lesser extent.

Some years ago the FIBOT directors took the decision to organise the analysis of our data, which is particularly valuable as it has been collected in a standardised way and goes back for many years, making it one of the longest runs of ornithological data in Europe. Initially the data was digitised so that it could be properly handled, with the SOC providing a generous grant to cover the costs of the process. Subsequently, we employed Will Miles to begin to analyse the data, this has resulted in a number of publications and presentations and we are keen that this analysis is carried forward to produce a further series of results.

We have developed partnerships with a number of organisations and these are vital for our future; on the island we are in regular contact with the Community and the NTS. More widely, we cooperate with BTO and the Bird Observatories Council, we contribute to BirdTrack, we are part of the JNCC's national seabird monitoring scheme, we are taking part in the latest UK seabird census

and much of our data is supplied to the Shetland Biological Records Centre. We have shared a stall at the Birdfair with the Shetland Amenity Trust, which benefits both organisations. SNH provides funding towards the Ranger, this service is much appreciated especially by first-time visitors and less experienced folk and greatly enhances their visit: as does a trip, in early autumn and after dark, to the North Haven to watch the Storm Petrel ringing, a really unique experience to see these superb, little nocturnal birds appear out of the night and return to the dark after being ringed, not to be forgotten by birders or non-birders.

RSPB researchers again visited the island to continue their tagging work on seabirds, and what interesting information they have come up with. This year the target species was Puffins, and their revealing results are presented in this Annual Report.

FIBOT is a charitable trust controlled by a board of Trustees who are also directors of FIBO. The directors give freely of their time and are unpaid but carry out a wide range of duties, as diverse as administrating the young people's funds, issuing press releases to the media, overseeing Health & Safety arrangements, representing FIBO at the Birdfair, organising the publication of data, revamping the presentation of this Annual Report and developing the website which continues to receive an increasing number of hits. The fact that our finances are in such a healthy state is due largely to the diligence and efforts of our Director of Finance.

I'd like to give a big thanks to everyone mentioned here, to the FIBO directors, all of our staff, our volunteers and to the Fair Isle community; without the help of so many people and partners we could not function, nor provide such a high level of service. If you are not yet a Friend of Fair Isle you can join on the website, you'll receive a free annual report and two newsletters a year and some preferential booking arrangements and discounts. If you are interested in the operation of the Bird Observatory and would consider becoming a director, please let us know, it's always good to see new faces around the meeting table.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Susannah Parnaby

As those who visit regularly will know, and hopefully new visitors soon realise, partnership and community are a key part of what makes the Observatory work, and are a big part of the magic of Fair Isle for those of us who get hooked. The scenery is of course spectacular and the birding definitely has its moments, but there's something more in sharing that with other people who also 'get' what you're feeling. Whether its swapping tales of enlivening walks through skua colonies, or discussing the finding of *that* bird, or the moment you're standing in a crowd on the headland as a Killer Whale fin breaks the surface below you, there's something about the shared experience that adds that bit extra. I'm sure those who were with us in the spring when the albatross call came in, and on the 2nd October when the birds just didn't stop coming and we all seemed to be walking around with daft grins on our faces, will recognise that feeling. We hope you enjoy reliving your moment of the season in this report, and a big thank you to all our visitors in 2016 for making the Obs such a great place to be.

We were very lucky to have a very committed staff team and some great volunteers in 2016, who put a lot of effort into ensuring the guest house operations ran smoothly and helped visitors to get the most out of their stay. Orlando, our returning cook, was joined by his brother Michael, a former pastry chef, and sister-in-law Inessa, from Kyrgyzstan, which brought a middle-European/Russian flavour to the kitchen, which we hope you enjoyed. Housekeeping in another busy season was ably tackled by Terri Bowley, who returned for the first part of the season, and new staff member Sara Bailey, who joined us in the autumn. Alongside the staff we were very grateful to our domestic volunteers, Volker Keppke, Jane Tompsett and Cathy Mendez, bar volunteers Jan Yates and Katherine Westerberg, and to Nina O'Hanlon who helped out on both ornithological and domestic fronts. Domestic work

at the Observatory is perhaps not the most glamorous role, but it does make a big difference to the team and we are very grateful to all those who helped this year. The wardening team this year was comprised solely of returning staff, Ciaran Hatsell and Lee Gregory as assistant wardens and Chris Dodd as ranger, all of whom brought substantial skills to the team which benefitted our ornithological volunteers through the summer: Elizabeth Holmes, Richard Waters, Lewis Mitchell, Sam Hood and Oliver Beacock.

The community too plays a very important role in making the Observatory what it is, not least because we depend very heavily on others to ensure transport services run as smoothly as possible, to guarantee there is always food to put on the table, to maintain migrant and breeding habitats on the isle and to help keep the building itself running. Thank you to all who helped this year, including Deryk Shaw, Kenny Stout, Brian Smith and Iain Stout and to the range of people who very ably looked after our children this year and covered for staff holidays, Raluca Mera, Alice and Hannah Best, Marin Sinclair, Amy Stout, Freya Stout and Raven Shaw.

Life on a small island means many of the tasks that would otherwise be fulfilled by local government employees, or by voluntary organisations, become the responsibility of those living on the isle. As some of you will be aware there are now a number of infrastructure projects underway, including the broadband project and a new power project which aims to increase power generation and to deliver 24-hour power to the isle. We are very lucky to have members of the community with the competency to initiate and drive such projects forward, but we must remember that this work is carried out by individuals giving time outside their normal working hours, rather than specialist companies, and such projects therefore have a longer delivery

time that would be the case elsewhere. This year has seen a number of other changes on the isle, including the loss of both Annie Thomson and Peter Harrison. For visitors to the isle in more recent years, when both were a less visible presence, Annie will perhaps be best known to knitters, for her phenomenal skill in creating beautiful knitwear, whilst many will have been aware of the red sports car at South Light, Peter's pride and joy, rather than the man himself. Both are very sadly missed and full obituaries are included later in the report. September also marked the end of an era with Neil Thomson's retirement as skipper of the Good Shepherd. Ian Best of Kenaby has now taken on this role, but Neil and Pat will continue to take bookings for the ferry on the same number as before.

The Observatory's role as a base for researchers conducting fieldwork was broadened this year by the arrival of botanist Camila Quinteros Penafiel, completing a Master's project on the flora of Fair Isle, and a team of lichenists, who contributed a great deal to the understanding of this less studied group on the isle. We were also very pleased to welcome the RSPB team for another season, focusing solely on studying the off-shore

movements of Puffins this year. The Observatory is equipped with a small office/workspace available for use by visiting researchers, not just those working in ornithology, and supports the work of research teams by offering reduced rates on accommodation. If you are interested in making use of these facilities please contact the Observatory for more information.

Finally a big thank you is due to all the directors of the Observatory, for putting in sterling work behind the scenes, and not being above popping to the shops in Shetland if needed. Do remember to visit the FIBO stand at the Birdfair in the summer for an opportunity to give your feedback to the directors or get in touch via our social media pages to share some of your memories of Fair Isle.

As for my best memory this year, it was in early November, the night before most of our staff left, and Nick Riddiford called to say there was phosphorescence (evocatively called 'mareel' in Shetland) in the waters of the North Haven. Calling other folk on the isle, we all headed down to the beach, children in tow, and spent an hour or so dancing about on the sand in the dark, making sparkly footprints on the tideline...



Plate 6. FIBO team 2016 (clockwise from back left: Ciaran Hatsell (Senior Assistant Warden), Lee Gregory (Assistant Warden), Susannah Parnaby (Administrator), David Parnaby (Warden), Alice Best (Childcarer), Inessa Vetlugina (Domestic Assistant), Terri Bowley (Domestic Assistant), Michael Krippner (Assistant Cook), Orlando Krippner (Cook), Chris Dodd (Ranger), Obs, 4th May 2016. © David Parnaby

WARDEN'S REPORT

David Parnaby

As ever, Fair Isle delivered another memorable year. Bird-wise it will probably be remembered for a spell of easterlies at the end of the season that delivered multiple rarities and some very exciting migration. The year also saw three additions to the island list; it seems remarkable that species are still being added after almost 70 years of intensive studying of the island's birds by FIBO and, of course, many years of records prior to that from visiting ornithologists and sharp-eyed islanders, but still they come! There can surely be very few other three square miles in the United Kingdom that have recorded so many species. Although it is often the overall experience rather than the rarer species that makes birding on Fair Isle so enjoyable, there is no doubt that most visitors are hoping to see something that bit different from their usual patches, and Fair Isle rarely disappoints. Amongst the rarities this year were the island's:

1st	Little Egret, Black-browed Albatross and Siberian Accentor (and a return of the island's first Swinhoe's Petrel, first observed in 2013)
2nd	Mediterranean Gull, Ring-necked Duck, Siberian Accentor and Little Egret
4th and 5th	Little Ringed Plover
6th	Calandra Lark
7th	Collared Flycatcher
7th	Siberian Rubythroat
8th	Radde's Warbler
10th	Red-rumped Swallow
10th–13th	Pine Buntings
11th	Blue Tit

Other rarities and notable species included Honey-buzzard, three Marsh Harriers, four Ospreys, three Spotted Crakes, three Cranes, two Dotterels, Great Snipe, Hoopoe, 14 Wrynecks, Golden Oriole, 14 Red-backed Shrikes, four Great Grey Shrikes, Woodchat Shrike, 14 Shorelarks, two Short-toed Larks, five Greenish, 165 Yellow-

browed, Dusky, 13 Barred, two 'Eastern Subalpine', four 'Western Subalpine', four Lanceolated, Booted, 14 Icterine, Paddyfield, three Blyth's Reed and six Marsh Warblers, Rose-coloured-Starling, Nightingale, 29 Bluethroats, four Red-flanked Bluetails, 11 Red-breasted Flycatchers, two Siberian Stonechats, Citrine Wagtail, five Richard's, four Olive-backed, Pechora and six Red-throated Pipits, 12 Hawfinches, 13 Common Rosefinches, 'Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll', two 'Coues's Arctic Redpolls', three Ortolan, 13 Little and two Rustic Buntings.

Personally, my bird of the year was the Black-browed Albatross, it was one of the best birds I've ever seen and the unlikeliness of it being found from the Good Shepherd IV and twitchable from the island was amazing enough, before it put on a spectacular fly-over as we watched open-mouthed on Bunes. Almost as amazing were two Siberian Accentors, although to be perfectly honest, it did feel like the first British record should have been on Fair Isle, rather than on Shetland just over a week before 'our' first one. Ah well, there's still Black-throated Accentor to aim for!

Seabirds had another mixed season, with details contained in the seabird summary later in this report. The sight (and sound) of Dog Geo and Greenholm's successful Kittiwake colony was another highlight of the year, whilst the sheer number of Bonxies was impressive, but was not without problems. Though there is no evidence that they are responsible for the declines of many of Fair Isle's seabird species (and it was notable that a record Bonxie year was accompanied by several other species having productive years), nor do they have any serious negative impact on other wildlife or livestock, the sheer number of nesting and loafing birds caused problems for airstrip operations. As a result, Scottish Natural Heritage issued the National Trust for Scotland with a licence for the removal of a small number



Plate 7. The 2016 wardening team (left to right): Lee Gregory (Assistant Warden), David Parnaby (Warden) and Ciaran Hatsell (Senior Assistant Warden), 12th April 2016. © Susannah Parnaby

of nests and birds. It is to be hoped that NTS are able to put in places measures that ensure the safety of airstrip operations without the need for such drastic actions to be necessary in the future.

There are several other areas in which the NTS will need to be busy on Fair Isle in the immediate future, not least helping to provide housing for the extra population that the island needs in order to keep functioning as an effective community and it was a shame to see work on the renovation of Midway stall again. The retirement of Alexander Bennett, the NTS's 'man on the ground' on Fair Isle means the work needed will fall to his successor, Chris Cassels, who we wish all the best in his new role.

There are many of the Fair Isle community who are to be thanked for their work for the island in general and for the Obs in particular, and I'd like to echo Susannah's thanks to Deryk Shaw, Kenny Stout, Robert Mitchell, Brian Smith, Jimmy and Iain Stout, amongst several others, who have come to our assistance at the Obs (often at short notice and unsociable hours) when we've needed help. The whole island community is also owed a great

deal of thanks for helping to make the birding experience on Fair Isle a relaxed and enjoyable one and we'd also like to thank our visitors for ensuring that the islanders' hospitality is respected.

Sadly, the island lost two of its residents this year and everyone at the Obs extends their sympathies to the families of Annie Thomson of Shirva and Peter Harrison of South Light, whilst Ann Prior, a stalwart of the Obs kitchen for over 30 years, also passed away during the year. All three will be missed.

Grace and Freyja both very much enjoyed their regular visits to Annie and Stewart at Shirva, often with Alice or Hannah Best, who had been childcarers in recent seasons. The passing of 'Nannie' was not just a sad time, but a chance to reflect on a remarkable life that began on Fair Isle back when the island was a very different place. It is impossible to find anyone who had a bad word to say about Annie and she will be much missed, but we're lucky to all have so many wonderful memories to share with the three generations of her beloved family who live on the isle.

Although Fair Isle is not a secretive place, and has featured on numerous television programmes over the years, the two one-hour episodes broadcast on the BBC towards the end of the year provided a more in depth view of certain parts of island life than many people may be used to seeing. Whilst there was certainly some feeling that the documentary focussed a wee bit too much on some negative aspects, there were nonetheless a number of enjoyable moments. A good test of the impression something makes on the community is how it features during the Hogmanay guising sketches and, without giving away any guising secrets, the programme obviously made even more of a star out of John Best!

Susannah has already detailed staff and volunteers, as well as some of the other highlights of the year, and I'd like to add my thanks to the staff team for another year of sterling efforts and we look forward to welcoming many of them back in the future. Of course, thanks are also due to Susannah, who continues to work very hard, often behind the scenes, in a variety of roles at the Obs and elsewhere on the island, whilst we also benefitted from the support of both of our sets of parents, who seem to enjoy getting stuck in to helping out whenever they visit (at least, I hope they enjoy it!).

Finally, thanks are also due to the FIBOT directors, especially Dave and Mike, whilst the financial contributions of SNH, JNCC and SOTEAG are also welcomed.

THE NTS ON FAIR ISLE IN 2016

Alexander Bennett

General Manager, Countryside and Islands North (retired)

The Trust continues to look to bring new families into the isle and consequently we welcomed Rachel Challoner and Shaun Milner to the island in May 2015, who took up residence in Barkland and set out to a life of crofting and numerous other tasks that would soon occupy them full time. They had the advantage of having already lived on Fair Isle, in that they both worked at the Bird Observatory and were clearly attracted to the way of life on the isle. The romance blossomed. Coincidentally, the BBC were looking to undertake a year-long filming project to look at the year in the life of Fair Isle and were keen to follow a new family arriving on the island and how they settled into daily life. Over a period of about 18 months, the BBC producer Louise Lockwood visited the isle, sometimes with her family, and spent some long hours following island life. The final two-part documentary was shown in late 2016 on BBC1 Scotland, and was aired on BBC4 in February 2017 before going worldwide. This type of documentary is not always

everyone's cup of tea and the intention was to show the trials and tribulations of living and working in such a remote place, when the weather can either lift the spirits or drive you to ground. Louise's experience of documentary making ensured it was done sensitively, whilst showing the harsh reality of survival in a small community.

After the publication of their vision for Fair Isle's future by the island community, they set about the task of prioritising their key objectives and getting on with various developments in order to secure that future. Key to that was the development of a number of essential infrastructure projects such as the installation of a Superfast Broadband network, an absolute necessity these days in order to stay ahead of the communications game and to allow economic activity to work in order to reduce the peripherality and ensure that local businesses can flourish and not be hindered by the lack of good communi-

cations. The next phase is to develop the electricity network to include the replacement of the existing wind turbine on Houll with three new 65 kW wind generators on the Rippack and to include a connection to the aerodrome and the Observatory, which is no mean feat. It is good to see that Fair Isle is still taking a lead in renewables having had the accolade of being the first commercially operated renewables scheme in Europe back in the 1980s. Support by the community and the National Trust for Scotland, for the further development of the water supply through Scottish Water is coming along and this will use additional boreholes to utilise ground water - but bear in mind that the isle is surrounded by mineral rich seawater, which brings its own particular problems of contamination!

Another project identified in the study was to ensure the future viability of the two essential means of travel to and from the island: that of flights and boat travel. The aerodrome which brings daily (except Sunday) flights to and from the island is heavily regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority as a licensed aerodrome. This brings with it an annual audit of the operation and the need to comply with many onerous regulations. A new Aerodrome Safety Management System and Aerodrome Manual occupied much of my time for the best part of a year to ensure that the aerodrome continues to operate safely and to minimise the operational risks. I am glad to say that that process has been completed successfully and I am grateful to the support of many stakeholders to make that happen, not least of which was the staff team on the island and the Civil Aviation Authority for their 'can do' attitude.

Also, as the existing Good Shepherd IV is now 32 years old it is now reaching the end of its working life. It has been a stalwart over that time but the needs of a 21st century island are such that the next phase of ferry is looming. They need faster journey times and quicker turnarounds in Shetland so a new vessel is being sought and initial designs and budgets are being considered by the owners and operators, Shetland Islands Council. Not only is it the key to getting goods and people onto and off the island, it adds to the

number of places to get visitors and islanders back and forth. Anyone who has had the pleasure of a trip on the Shepherd will, I feel sure, miss her!

Sadly, not all plans have come to fruition and the project to renovate Midway House has stalled. The initial phase to clear and partially demolish parts of the house, was completed by the local Fair Isle builders but funding and authority to proceed with the main refurbishment escaped us, thus leaving a bit of an eyesore on the Houll. This project will happen in time and I am sad that I wasn't able to pull this one off. This also stalled the finding of new tenants for Midway Croft and until the house is complete then at least one new family is lacking. However, now that Brian and Mary Wilson of Houll Croft have retired and moved to Orkney to be closer to their family, this has opened up an opportunity for a young islander and family to move into the family croft.

The good news towards the end of the year was the announcement that the Scottish Government, Marine Scotland, have finally approved Fair Isle as a Development and Research Marine Protected Area. It has taken the best part of 20 years to get all party consensus to this proposal. Now that agreement has broken out all round it is for the stakeholders to get together and agree a programme of research and development to prove the case for a full conservation protection designation for the seas around Fair Isle. Protection is not just about protecting breeding fish stocks around the isle for human consumption, it is about protecting valuable food sources for the seabird populations that Fair Isle is so famous for.

The critical issue for the future is growth of the population and encouragement to families to settle on the isle where they can take part in community activities and to bring diversity of employment. There is a desperate shortage of able-bodied people to fill the essential jobs on the isle and to spread employment over a wider section of the residents. Currently, there are too few chasing too few jobs and as a result things stagnate and individuals get very tired at have to do everything, so fresh blood is needed.



Plate 8. Busy pier with Good Shepherd IV, North Haven, 1988. © FIBO Archive. More photographs from our archives can be viewed on our website: www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk/archivephotos.html

On a sad note, I report on the passing of Annie Thomson of Shirva in September. Annie was in her 90s and was a strong family matriarch and a traditional knitter to the end. Anyone who knew Annie could not fail to be impressed with her knitting prowess. Her extended family all have wardrobes of that rare commodity, the genuine hand knitted Fair Isle garment. I knew Annie for over 32 years and she was like a mother to me in my early years of involvement on the isle and many a time she gave me comfort and solace when things weren't going quite the way I had expected! Annie will be missed by her family, friends and many of the visitors to the isle over the years. Her widower, Stewart, continues to tutor in spinning and still makes and repairs spinning wheels. I am so glad that I have my knitwear and wheel as my memory.

Also, Peter Harrison of the South Lighthouse passed away after his time as a retired gentleman on the island. Peter first came to Fair Isle when his daughter was the teacher in the school. She moved on and he wanted to stay on and moved into the South Light house flat where he lived a quiet and peaceful life.

Finally, I first went to Fair Isle in September 1985 as a young, rather wet behind the ears, Land Agent (Factor in those days!) and was welcomed in by Stewart and Annie. So, after 32 years, I have decided to take early retirement and I left the Trust in October. I will remain as a director of FIBOT in my own right and thus maintain my link with the isle. In my time with Fair Isle, I have seen many developments and the population rising to about 76 with a school role of 13. Sadly, the population is in the lower 50s these days and only four children in the school, hence there is a strong need to grow the population. I have had good times and bad times and suffice to say that it is so gratifying and I am so proud to have been part of the Fair Isle story and I thank all those who I have associated with on the isle from the bottom of my heart. I have gained many acquaintances over the years and I look forward to moving from being the Landlord's man to be a friend of the islanders.



the National Trust
for Scotland
a place for everyone

Annie Thomson (née Wilson) 1922–2016

Anne Sinclair and Margo Murray

Anne Sinclair: Born in Springfield on a wild night in February, Annie Wilson was delivered by her father, as the nurse, struggling through the gale, arrived too late! The seventh child and the youngest of three sisters, when she was old enough and much to her delight she was excused the usual crofting chores of milking, making butter and general housework and given the job of babysitting her younger brother Bob.

She enjoyed school, walking there over the same road that her father had, and the three generations that have followed her did, but left at 14 years as was usual; four of the Springfield boys went on to further education, but the three lasses stayed home and knitted to help finance their brothers' schooling. She served in the NAAFI from 1942 to 1944 and married Stewart B. Thomson in March of that year, moving as a lightkeeper's wife

to the isolated Rhuvaal lighthouse on Islay. 1947 and two children later the family were moved to Buchanness lighthouse on the Aberdeenshire coast, and in December 1950 were shifted once again, this time to Auskerry, Orkney, with its regime of six weeks on the rock and two weeks ashore for the lightkeepers, with their wives and families living permanently in Stromness. In 1956, the evacuation of Fair Isle was seriously discussed by the Zetland County Council - more young families were needed. This was the catalyst that prompted the Thomson family, now five in number, to return to Springfield in April 1957. As children, we were delighted as we had always thought of Fair Isle as home; but, as an adult, I am in awe of Mum's stoicism; leaving a sizable house with electricity, running water and a modern bathroom to come back to the family home - tiny, Tilley lamps, water carried in a bucket from the well and an outside chemical toilet!

Our move to Shirva in 1959 coincided with the beginning of the IVS work camps, Dad's responsibility for the many years that followed. Young volunteers arrived every week, some for 10 days, some for three weeks or longer, but there were no cut off points and many didn't want to leave so numbers escalated. While Dad worked with often 20+ young and eager volunteers from all over the world and did his best to find jobs for them, not that easy when the weather was bad and the crofts had no outside work for them to do, Mum ran the Post Office and the telephone exchange (she never walked, she always ran!), and provided aforementioned volunteers with endless tea, coffee, soup and meals. At the end of each season, all the 'Puffin Hotel' blankets, heavy grey ex-forces ones, were washed and dried at Shirva; for the first few years by hand! I heard the occasional mutter, but I never heard her complain. We were lucky teenagers - for five months of every year, we were part of an international community based in our kitchen.



Plate 9. Annie Thomson (Nanny). © Anne Sinclair

Her knitting skills were legendary. (I have an abiding memory of a lovely Japanese lady arriving in the Post Office asking to see her - she had come all the way from Japan to meet Annie - and I had to break the news to her, as gently as possible, that Annie was on holiday in Norway.) She produced beautiful and perfectly knitted bespoke knitwear for more than 60 years, including garments for the British and Norwegian royal families. In her later years, she knitted only for family and close friends. With nine grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren production output did not diminish and she was knitting and teaching others how to until the day she died. Words fascinated her. Generations of children have benefitted hugely from the many games of Scrabble played over cups of tea and glasses of juice, and Countdown was the only TV programme she never missed.

Brought up in a Methodist household, she had a profound and abiding faith. She loved and was very proud of all of her family, but her care and concern for friends and passing strangers ensured that she became 'Nanny' to so many more. My parents were a unit, and there was no division between them. My father is the head of our family and my mother Annie was, and will always be in spirit, the backbone.

Margo Murray: Having inadvertently become the custodians of Springfield, the birthplace of Annie Thomson, it was easy for us to become bonded. Annie, together with her spouse, Stewart, had become the head of a family blessed with resident children, which had grown steadily to allow a stream of love and laughter to flow through the doors of Shirva. With always a wee corner for an island visitor or staff from the Bird Observatory, for an exchange of information. That being said, my own family news was more likely to be aired at a Ceilidh. Annie was a great raconteur, with anecdotes galore, and a dancer who loved to 'take the floor', so it was only at these moments of pause that we would enjoy a natter as we sat 'one out'. She had a great sense of humour and a dab of wisdom also.

It was in her later years, and mine, that I took to dropping into Shirva after the saddest of events for the Shirva e'ens, the unexpected death of their eldest, dearest, grand-daughter Lise. For sure they missed her words and her music, those special fiddling sessions with her grand-father. Annie's stoicism at this time was calm and necessary for there were others to consider, including Lise's mother and father, Ian and their four children. Together they would keep a look-out for each other, trace possibilities. "Far is not far" she would have told them.

Peter Edward Harrison 1941–2016

Fiona Mitchell

As the sun slipped below the horizon, we said goodbye to Peter Harrison of South Lighthouse. Described by us as a gentleman and described by himself as 'a distinguished gentlemen of Anglo-Max-Celtic stock residing in the exclusive southern playground of Costa del Sud Lighthouse and Gold Course'.

It is with some sadness that Peter had only a few people to share the latter months of his life with. Some were the people who cared for him, and it is to their credit that he was able to stay at home

for as long as possible before moving to Overtonlea Care Centre at Levenwick, Shetland. Whilst sharing a dram with Peter on his last night at home, he was resigned to the fact he was dying but not to leaving Fair Isle. A few of us were able to visit him in Shetland before he died on 4th October 2016. Fair Isle extends its condolences to Peter's family and friends, as do all at FIBO.

Over the years Peter has entertained the island with stories, adverts and notices placed at the shop. They brought many a giggle. All eloquently

written with a sharpness and great wit, although some were politically incorrect and a few in need of editing! So a few snippets for you.

Cleaner/lady required: 'blonde and blue-eyed or brunette and hazel-eyed possibly of statuesque proportions', 'must be a proficient or semi-proficient sewer or be able to recognise a needle and thread', 'should be single without the encumbrances of children, former husbands or wives.'

A trip away prompted, 'on that occasion I bought a return ticket from Loganair (motto - **we fly when we can**) and I thereafter spent five nights in Lerwick' eventually rescued by the 'Good Shepherd (motto - **we always sail**).'

And on sitting at Tingwall, 'I spent hours sipping so-called "coffee" at enormous expense since both the bar and restaurant were closed, or at least I could not find them, which put me in mind of our very own airstrip'.

Another notice ends, 'PS - libel suits to my lawyers - Messrs Grab & Run, Panama City'.

When Peter brought home a racy red Mazda sports car, it was on the back of a visit to the Gilbert Bain Hospital, the details of which were posted at the shop: '...20 **minute** chat with a specialist at the **Gilbert Bain** to check that blood was reaching my brain and I will have that result within six weeks which is encouraging to me greatly'. As the sports car was lifted off the Good Shepherd, to numerous 'oohs' and 'aahs', I enquired after his health and his response was, 'Darling, I promised myself a treat if I made it out of the GBH alive!'

Many living here feel we know everything about each other, I don't believe this statement when it comes to Peter. I think we barely scratched the surface. One of Peter's notices was addressed, 'Dear Friends and Goodly Neighbours'. I'd like to think that's how he regarded us, and I hope we were his friend and goodly neighbour when we said 'Goodbye Peter'.

Ann Prior 1949–2016

Jimmy Stout



Plate 10. Ann Prior, Obs, 12th May 2012. © David Parnaby

Sadly, Ann Prior died, following a struggle with cancer, on 24th April 2016. Ann was a very knowledgeable, well-educated lady. She was very much her own person, strong-willed but never condescending. She was therefore very interesting company as she was also interested in Fair Isle, the place and its people, some of whom over so many years had, with her, lasting friendships.

Ann first came here to cook at the Obs in 1979, and thereafter returned for whole seasons, for half seasons and sometimes only for short periods until her illness prevented her. She lived for a time on Mainland Shetland and also in the Falkland Islands, both episodes ending perhaps not as she would have wished, but like her times on Fair Isle, looked back on not with regret, but as part of life's enduring tapestry. So, it's hard to believe that we shall not again meet Ann on the road, in the Obs or in our homes. She has left us with fond memories of her personality, her wit and her wisdom, and she is missed by us all.

ORNITHOLOGICAL MONTHLY SUMMARY

David Parnaby

There was not too much exciting to report from the start of the year, although unusual wintering species present during the month included the first ever Goldfinch in this season, as well as two Whooper Swans, Grey Heron, a few Water Rails, Merlin, and some Pink-footed and Barnacle Geese, whilst 45 Purple Sandpipers on 1st was a good count. A Bar-tailed Godwit was unseasonal, whilst more expected were the two Glaucous Gulls on 6th, which turned out to be the only white-wingers of the month. Some movement, particularly of wildfowl, was obvious mid-month, with the 11th seeing three 'Greenland White-fronted Geese' and a Coot arrive, whilst high counts for the winter included seven Woodcocks, 19 Lapwings and 22 Common Gulls. A Moorhen and two 'Pale-bellied Brent Geese' were further interesting arrivals the following day, with a Tufted Duck on 14th and a peak of 336 Greylag Geese on 15th. Further unseasonal records included Knot (17th) and Puffin (18th), with a second Tufted Duck and an early Ringed Plover arriving on 22nd. A female Goosander flew up the island on 24th, then the 25th saw Fair Isle's earliest-ever Pied Wagtail arrive, along with a Woodpigeon. By far the most unusual record during the month was the Sooty Shearwater seen from the Good Shepherd IV on 27th. Storm Gertrude brought some interesting conditions on 29th, but no birds of note and thankfully no real damage to the island. The last day of the month saw four Whooper Swans on the move, whilst the Long-eared Owl that had been wintering at the Obs was seen for the first time during the year (although droppings and pellets had given its continued presence away earlier in the month).

January

Species Recorded: **66**
Year List at end of month: **66**
Birds Ringed: **5**
Species Ringed: **2**

Plate 11. Merlin, Obs, 31st January 2016.
© David Parnaby



February

Species Recorded: **54**
Year List at end of month: **70**
Birds Ringed: **24**
Species Ringed: **9**

February opened unremarkably, although there was a Glaucous Gull on 3rd and two on 6th. South-easterly winds on 7th saw an increase in thrush numbers, with at least 50 Fieldfares present, and there was a Glaucous Gull again on 8th. Fulmars were on the move off South Light on 9th, and a 'blue Fulmar' was amongst them. A flock of 75 Twite on 10th was a large count for so early in the year although they didn't linger. Glaucous Gulls were again noted on 11th and 21st and the latter date also saw a female Gadwall arrive, representing a rare winter occurrence. Signs of the forthcoming breeding season later in the month included a few Razorbills offshore on 26th and copulating Oystercatchers on 28th, whilst the three Common Seals in South Harbour on 26th was a high count for recent years.

March

Species Recorded: **73**
Year List at end of month: **85**
Birds Ringed: **92**
Species Ringed: **18**

A Woodpigeon arrived in south-south-east winds at the start of the month, along with a few Fieldfares. A Glaucous Gull was in the north on 2nd but the most exciting sighting was five Killer Whales in South Haven before they moved down the east coast after lingering off Sheep Rock for a while on 3rd. By the second week of the month, there were obvious increases in species such as Skylark and Twite, Snipe were drumming from 8th and 'Fair Isle Wrens' and Skylarks were singing from 10th giving a slightly more spring-like feel. A Lesser Black-backed Gull and a Chaffinch on 12th were both firsts for the year and preceded a light easterly breeze from 14th that saw the first 2016 records of Bonxie (the earliest-ever), Stonechat and Goldcrest, whilst there was a slight increase in Blackbirds and Guillemots, and Razorbills returned in good numbers. Frogs were also very evident on the night of 11th (unfortunately timing their emergence with people leaving Brian and Mary Wilson's leaving party at the Obs) with spawn recorded from 13th. A light north-east wind on 15th saw the Good Shepherd IV sail and return with the first major bar and food order of the season, a small fall of common species and then an evening glow of the aurora borealis. Despite some cool westerly winds, the 18th saw the first Dunnock of the year, the 19th produced the first Jackdaw and Black Redstart and the first Kestrel was present the next day. Although Meadow Pipits and Ringed Plovers increased on 22nd, when Lapwings were displaying, the presence of Glaucous Gull and Whooper Swan added a slightly wintrier feel. Curlews joined in with displaying on 23rd and the next few days saw a trickle of common migrants moving, along with an increase in Whooper Swans to 11 on 26th, whilst Easter Sunday on 27th saw 84mph south-west winds and constant rain in the morning then a calm enough evening to get the Obs mist nets open! The calm weather gave way to a light south-easterly wind on 29th, which was brilliantly timed for the return of the assistant wardens (although it was also the first day

Plate 12. Dunnock, Quoy, 6th May 2016.
© Lee Gregory



that the long-staying Coot was not seen, denying them a Fair Isle tick!). Amongst the birds that were seen though, were the first Great Northern Diver, Short-eared Owl, Chiffchaffs (three) and Grey Wagtail of the year, whilst seven Puffins were off Bunes in the evening. The first census of the year in warm, sunny conditions on 30th saw the first Wheatear amongst a few common migrants including 27 Goldcrests. The last day of the month saw 303 Skylarks, 11 *alba* wagtails, and two Jack Snipes amongst the common migrants, when the first Tystie survey of the year took place, producing 189 breeding-plumaged adults.

Plate 13. Killer Whale, Rippack, 3rd March 2016. © David Parnaby



Strong south-south-east winds brought heavy rain for the start for the month, although other than the first Collared Dove of the year, there was not much to report. A few migrants on 2nd included the first Brambling and Siskin of the year and the joint-earliest-ever Sand Martin for Fair Isle, but 3rd was a washout with constant rain. Much better weather on 4th included moderate south-east winds and, as hoped for, birds! These included the earliest-ever House Martin for Fair Isle, the first seven Blackcaps, four 'White Wagtails' and two Mistle Thrushes of the year, along with increases of several species including 48 Robins. Despite the rain on 5th, there was still the island's earliest-ever Green Sandpiper, along with the first Hawfinch, Willow Warbler, Ring Ouzel and Linnet of the year. A Great Grey Shrike on 6th continued the arrivals despite the south-south-westerly wind, with Black Redstarts increasing to three and the first Sparrowhawk and two Reed Buntings of the year. The wind switched to the north-north-west on 7th and a confiding 'Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll' began a ten-day stay at Shirva, whilst a Waxwing and a second Hawfinch also arrived. The

April

Species Recorded: **102**
 Year List at end of month: **117**
 Birds Ringed: **330**
 Species Ringed: **32**



Plate 14. 'Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll' with Twite, Shirva, 7th April 2016. © Lee Gregory

easterly wind on 9th brought no more than the first Shelduck of the year, but similar, albeit milder, conditions on 10th were far more productive. Remarkably, there were three earliest-ever records set for FIBO, Whitethroat, Redstart and Tree Pipit, with other migrants including Long-eared Owl, five Black Redstarts, 'Scandinavian Rock Pipit', 'Mealy Redpoll', 43 Chiffchaffs, 32 Wheatears, 18 Dunnocks, 23 Bramblings and 174 Common Gulls. An increase in many species on a pleasant 11th included 73 Chiffchaffs (a record spring count), 74 Robins and 32 Goldcrests. A Slavonian Grebe was the highlight of 11th, when Chiffchaffs increased to 79 (another record!) then 87 the following day, with 13th also producing a record count of Black Redstarts (ten) and an increase in Robins to 117. A spell of north-westerly winds then slowed things down for a while, with Red-throated Diver (17th) and Whimbrel (19th) the only new arrivals, with Wheatears increasing to 235 on 20th. A Crane on 23rd was a pleasant break from the continued lack of arrivals, with the first Arctic Skua also returning that day. On 27th the wind switched to just east of north and eased a bit, with a Hawfinch arriving, and with the easterlies continuing on 28th Hen Harrier and Sanderling made their first appearances of the year. A Marsh Harrier was the highlight on 29th, with the first Common Sandpiper, along with a 'Scandinavian Rock Pipit', two Tree Pipits and a slight increase in migrants. A fine day on 30th was busy with a Breeding Bird Survey and general trapping and census to take advantage of the conditions, with a new Hawfinch trapped.

May opened inauspiciously with heavy rain limiting sightings, although a Long-eared Owl was trapped, but with the wind switching to a south-easterly later in the day, hopes were raised. It was back to a south-westerly the following day and a wet start delayed census, but birds were in, with Short-toed Lark the highlight and also the first Lesser Whitethroat of the year and Redstart, four Tree Pipits, four Blackcaps, 35 Carrion Crows and 367 Meadow Pipits. Southerly winds for a couple of days brought a Black-tailed Godwit (3rd), then a bright but blustery 5th brought a Red-rumped Swallow amongst some light hirundine passage, the first two Lesser Redpolls, two Sedge Warblers and Lapland Bunting of the year, and a slight increase in other migrant numbers. A light south-westerly wind on 6th with 't-shirt conditions' brought a decent arrival, including the first Arctic Terns (15), Grasshopper and Reed Warblers, two Tree Sparrows and Yellow Wagtail of the year. Although the 7th was chilly in north-west winds, the south-easterlies of the previous night had delivered four new species for the year list: Bluethroat (preceding daily records until 24th), Dotterel, Cuckoo and Garden Warbler. The wind went north-east on 8th and brought a female 'Eastern Subalpine Warbler', three Bluethroats, 'Blue-headed Wagtail' and the year's first Whinchat. A south-easterly on 9th was accompanied by warm enough conditions to census in short sleeves and saw the arrival of two 'Western Subalpine Warblers', Wryneck, Hawfinch and 'Grey-headed Wagtail' along with the first Spotted Flycatchers (11), Pied Flycatchers (two) and Yellowhammer of the year. A lovely sunny start to the 10th, with south-east winds, saw more birds in, with census highlights

May

Species Recorded: **146**

Year List at end of month: **166**

Birds Ringed: **323**

Species Ringed: **42**

Plate 15. Bluethroat, South Haven, 8th May 2016. © Lee Gregory





Plate 16. Black-browed Albatross, from Bunes against a backdrop of Vaassetter, 28th May 2016. © Lee Gregory

including a male 'Eastern Subalpine Warbler', two new female 'Western Subalpine Warblers', two Red-backed Shrikes, four Bluethroats, Wryneck, Marsh Harrier and Hen Harrier. Fog then descended, seemingly bringing an end to the day's sightings, but towards the end of the evening the very south-west of the island peaked out of the gloom and a Calandra Lark was found at Utra (which remained until 13th), shortly followed by a Little Ringed Plover. The sun shone again on 11th as the light or moderate east-north-east wind continued and a Woodchat Shrike was found late in the day (and would go on to linger to 24th), with other highlights including Ortolan Bunting, Nightingale, five Red-backed Shrikes and a Wood Warbler. The wind switched to a northerly on 12th, slowing things down severely, although a Corncrake and Wood Sandpiper were new in. Unpromising conditions continued on 13th, but a Rustic Bunting, a smart male Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Hawfinch were found. A Red-throated Pipit on 14th continued the run of good birds in poor conditions, with a Slavonian Grebe also new in. A Crane moved through in light westerly winds on 15th and a Wood Warbler arrived, whilst good numbers of scarce birds lingering made the birding still very pleasant. The winds became east-north-easterly for a few days, with Icterine Warbler, 'Grey-headed Wagtail', two Wood Sandpipers, five Short-eared Owls and a Greenshank amongst the arrivals on 18th, and Osprey and Pomarine Skua on 19th. A moderate south-westerly wind on 20th brought a (long-awaited) Fair Isle first, when a Little Egret was found at Da Water, with Crane, nine Short-eared Owls, more Bluethroats (four) and an increase in waders including 48 Dunlins. A fog-and-rain dominated day on 21st saw the arrival of Ortolan Bunting, Icterine Warbler and the year's first Manx Shearwater. The sun was brilliant the next day and, despite the west-north-west wind, there was another Red-throated Pipit, this time a fine male singing on the road at Charlie's Trees, along with Turtle Dove and light hirundine passage. A packed day on 23rd saw light westerly winds, sunshine and lots of birds, which pleased the cruise ship visitors. The highlight was a female Collared Flycatcher, along with a Little Ringed Plover, six Bluethroats, Quail, Osprey, Wood Warbler, two Swifts (the first of the year) and increases in many of the common migrants. North-north-east winds slowed down arrivals for a few days, with just one or two new birds noted, although a Nathusius's Pipistrelle was found dead on 26th. Light east-north-east winds on 27th allowed for a full day, including a 'Fair Isle Wren' survey, Razorbill and Puffin monitoring, plenty of ringing and, of course, census; log eventually took place at 11 pm, 17 hours after the wardening team first left the Obs! Highlights were a Rustic Bunting at Utra and a Hoopoe, with the latter being found from the van on the drive back from twitching the former! Grace had always been particularly keen on seeing Hoopoe, and so went off marching through the Meadow Burn pishing her

heart out in an unusual combination of dressing gown, wellies and body warmer! The 28th was dominated by one bird, Black-browed Albatross, First seen from the Good Shepherd, it was just about viewable from land and so was twitched by the entire Obs and many islanders (including Grace, who this time was at the twitch in pyjamas and a pair of size ten boots!), but it then put on a superb display as it flew over Bunness and Sheep Rock leaving everyone stunned. Spare a thought for poor ranger Chris though, who was out of the island attending a friend's wedding for the weekend. The albatross was back in Germany on 29th, so highlights were restricted to the arrivals of Shore Lark, 'Grey-headed Wagtail', Goosander, another Nathusius's Pipistrelle and over 100 Diamond-back Moths. Icterine Warbler and Bluethroat were new on 30th and the month ended with light north-easterly winds and the first Marsh Warbler of the year.

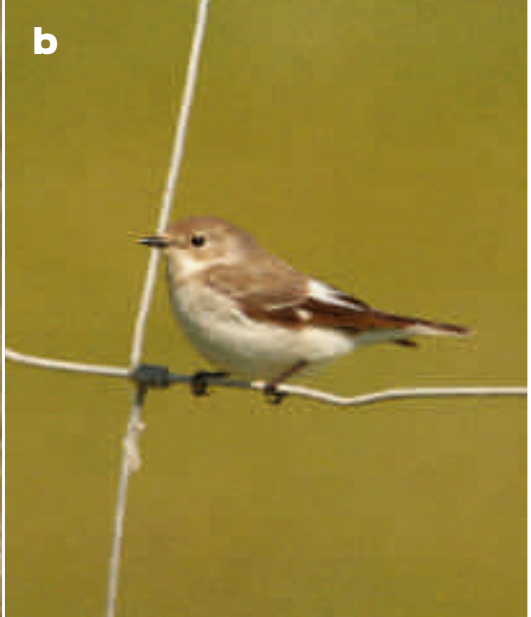
June opened with northerly-based winds and few new birds until 4th, when a slight change to more north-easterly conditions brought Richard's Pipit, two Marsh Warblers and 'Blue-headed Wagtail', along with several hundred Diamond-back Moths. A Dotterel arrived on 5th, with Bluethroat and Marsh Warbler the following day, although the period was generally quiet for new arrivals as spring migration started coming to an end and seabird monitoring was taking up more of the team's time. The first chicks were noted for Razorbill (6th) and Bonxie (8th), with Starling youngsters fledging from 7th. A Marsh Warbler trapped at the Obs on 10th had been ringed on North Ronaldsay six days previously, with a new Red-backed Shrike caught the same day.

June

Species Recorded: **96**
Year List at end of month: **171**
Birds Ringed: **468**
Species Ringed: **24**

Plate 17. Dotterel, Rippack, 5th June 2016.
© Lee Gregory





An Osprey passed over on 11th, when breeding news included the first Eider chicks and fledged Pied Wagtails, Rock Pipits and Lapwings. Although the wind on 12th was easterly, there was little to note in the way of new birds, although an arrival of Diamond-back Moths on 13th was interesting. A Turtle Dove on 14th was a typical late-spring arrival, although a Goldeneye the same day was less seasonal. A Golden Oriole on 15th provided a nice late highlight, with the longest day providing a Red-backed Shrike and 'Grey-headed Wagtail'. A few common migrants continued through to the end of the month, the first Storm Petrel trapping session took place on 25th/26th and seabird work continued to take up the bulk of the workload with Kittiwake chicks noted from 26th. A Turtle Dove on 29th was the last notable migrant of the spring.

Always an in-between month as far as migration goes, but generally a busy one for monitoring seabirds, particularly with the record number of Bonxies nesting. Two Redwings were present through the month and the 1st saw a fine breeding-plumaged Bar-tailed Godwit. Four Greylag Geese on 2nd were the only ones of the month and two Lesser Redpolls were the first of several records through July. The day's highlight was Fair Isle's second Mediterranean Gull, which arrived with a flock of 35 Black-headed Gulls. A Long-eared Owl at the Obs on 4th (which was seen again on 17th–24th) was an interesting record, with the same day producing a late Garden Warbler. The first Crossbill of the year was in Muckle Uri Geo on 5th, when the first Leach's Petrel was also seen and heard, although it avoided the nets in the Haven. Hooded Crows fledged on 6th, then the next day saw the first returning Purple Sandpiper and two Sand Martins. The 9th saw a few birds moving, with an unseasonal Pintail, the autumn's first Common Sandpiper and seven Swifts. The 10th was dominated by a group of Killer Whales off Bunes, which put on an amazing show hunting Grey Seals for several hours and provided the highlight of the year for several Obs guests and volunteers. A light movement on 11th involved two Bar-tailed Godwits, 16 Black-headed Gulls and a Willow Warbler, whilst a Leach's Petrel was again around the nets. The 12th saw Common and Herring Gulls fledging chicks, in what was quite a successful season for both species. A Manx Shearwater on 15th was the next sighting of note, with three the following day. Waders were on the move by the third week of the month with the autumn's first Sanderling (17th) and Knot (18th), with the latter day also producing eight Swifts, a Crossbill and three Storm Petrels from the Good Shepherd IV (with good numbers also being trapped throughout the month). The 19th saw Bar-tailed Godwit, Crossbills increase to five and also the first Arctic Skua and Arctic Tern chicks taking to the wing. A count of 62 Purple Sandpipers on 20th was

July

Species Recorded: **82**

Year List at end of month: **177**

Birds Ringed: **1898**

Species Ringed: **29**

Plate 18 a-d (opposite). a) Red-rumped Swallow, Utra, 5th May 2016. © Lee Gregory. b) Collared Flycatcher, Field, 23rd May 2016. © Steve Arlow. c) Calandra Lark, Utra, 11th May 2016. © Lee Gregory. d) Calandra Lark, Utra, 11th May 2016. © Lee Gregory. e) Richard's Pipit, Kirki Mire, 5th June 2016. © Lee Gregory. f) Rustic Bunting, Utra, 27th May 2016. © Lee Gregory



Plate 19. Mediterranean Gull (lower right) with Black-headed Gulls, The Haa, 2nd July 2016. © Lee Gregory

good, on a day that also saw the arrival of Wigeon, Blackcap and Black Redstart, with a Kestrel and 38 Black-headed Gulls the next day. A Storm Petrel off South Light on 22nd was a rare diurnal land-based sighting. The seabird season continued to progress with the first fledged Great Skuas on 23rd, when there were also two Siskins. A Greenshank (24th) and Green Sandpiper (26th) indicated more wader passage, with a Sand Martin also on the latter date. On 27th there were 30 Dunlins, 50 Redshanks and 129 Turnstones, along with a Shoveler, Whitethroat and the year's only Sandwich Tern. The autumn's first Sooty Shearwater was noted from the Good Shepherd IV on 28th, on a day that also saw a period of heavy Common Gull passage peak at 269. A Great Northern Diver passed on 29th, a Ruff arrived on 31st and Kittiwakes also fledged on the last day of the month.

August

Species Recorded: **115**

Year List at end of month: **187**

Birds Ringed: **1584**

Species Ringed: **36**

August opened with a cool, north-westerly wind, then easterly winds on 3rd brought a few waders including two Little Stints, Wood Sandpiper and Green Sandpiper. A few days of calm weather produced little new, although a juvenile Willow Warbler appeared on 5th. With the north-west winds increasing, 13 Black-tailed Godwits arrived on 7th and a juvenile Hen Harrier in gales on 8th (that lingered for most of the month) was found to have been ringed as a chick in Orkney. Some south-easterly wind on 10th–11th produced only a Crossbill on the first date. Some busy nights of Storm Petrel ringing culminated in an impressive 193 'Stormies', one Leach's and a Swinhoe's Petrel early in the morning of 14th. The Swinhoe's Petrel was trapped again on 15th, when there were two Leach's and 312 Storm Petrels also caught, one of the best-ever nights 'stormying' on Fair Isle. The freshening south-east wind during the day also produced an Icterine, Garden and three Willow Warblers as autumn migration finally got going. The 16th saw Pomarine Skua and three Sooty Shearwaters from the Good Shepherd IV, whilst Wood Warbler,

Pied Flycatcher and 27 'White Wagtails' were amongst the migrants. Continued south-easterlies on 17th brought a Reed Warbler, 199 Common Gulls and a scatter of common migrants. Wader numbers were building up and included a Little Stint on 18th, when there were also 'Grey-headed Wagtail', two Fieldfares and a Tree Pipit. Winds were still from the south-east on 19th, with a Greenish Warbler, two Wrynecks, 56 Willow Warblers, two Whinchats, Whitethroat and Slavonian Grebe amongst the arrivals. Wrynecks increased to three and Icterine Warblers to two the following day, when a Wood Warbler was new and the first Lesser Whitethroat, Spotted Flycatcher and Redstart of the autumn were noted. Fog on 21st accompanied the east-north-east wind and brought a Barred Warbler and Red-backed Shrike, along with a peak of 122 Ringed Plovers. With the winds still in the east on 23rd, it was a surprise when a Ring-necked Duck was found in South Harbour and an impressive species list for the day also included the Swinhoe's Petrel that was heard in the early hours of the morning, a new Greenish Warbler, Common Rosefinch, three Wrynecks and the first Grasshopper Warbler of the autumn, along with lingering Icterine Warbler and Red-backed Shrike. After a quiet 24th, a light easterly on a cloudy day on 25th saw a couple of Wrynecks, Common Rosefinch and the first Merlin and Goldcrest of the autumn. The 26th started well before descending into a very rainy census, and two Icterine Warblers, three *flava* wagtails, 52 Willow Warblers and 19 Pied Flycatchers were noted, along with an unseasonal Long-tailed Duck. A light west-south-west wind on 27th brought few new birds, although four Minke Whales and seven Harbour Porpoises were noted and the wind switched to south-easterly late in the day. As hoped, the 28th brought lots of birds. A Booted Warbler was the highlight, with Blyth's Reed Warbler, Greenish Warbler, four Barred Warblers, four Icterine Warblers, two Common Rosefinches, Wryneck and three Wood Warblers a good supporting cast, whilst decent counts of common migrants included 183 Willow Warblers, 644 Meadow Pipits, 18 Pied Flycatchers, ten Tree

Plate 20. Booted Warbler, Brecks, 28th August 2016. © Lee Gregory



Pipits, 186 Wheatears and four Bramblings. There was a large clear out on 29th, although a Marsh Warbler was new in and Meadow Pipits increased to 702. Westerly winds on 30th brought a total of 151 *alba* wagtails and 176 Wheatears. The month ended with a surprise when a juvenile Rose-coloured Starling was found outside the Obs library window.

September

Species Recorded: **141**

Year List at end of month: **198**

Birds Ringed: **329**

Species Ringed: **47**

The westerly winds that opened the month brought six Lapland Buntings but little else, with Black-tailed Godwits increasing to ten the following day and Meadow Pipits to 1,112 on 3rd. The first easterly winds of September on 4th brought the first fall of the month, with new birds including Greenish Warbler, two Icterine Warblers, Wood Warbler and Dunnock, with Barred Warblers increasing to three and Ringed Plovers to 145. Blustery easterlies on 5th brought a new Greenish Warbler and Wryneck and the first Chaffinch of the autumn, with Grey Herons increasing to 20. With winds switching to the south-west on 6th, the first Jack Snipe of the autumn was logged, with the first returning Sparrowhawk the following day and with Lapland Buntings increasing to 43. With south-easterly winds touching gale force and fog and rain alternating to obscure visibility, birding conditions on 8th were difficult, although an Ortolan Bunting was in Gilsetter, Black-tailed Godwits increased to 28 and the first Snow Bunting of the autumn was seen. Showery conditions on 9th brought few new birds other than Tufted Duck and Moorhen. There were 53 Lapland Buntings on 10th then unpromising conditions on 11th still produced Icterine Warbler, Common Rosefinch and Osprey, with a Corncrake on 12th. On 13th, conditions were looking good, with a light south-

Plate 21. Lanceolated Warbler, Dumlin's Sink, 21st September 2016. © Lee Gregory





Plate 22. Little Bunting, Field, 23rd September 2016. © Steve Arlow

east wind, and they delivered Lanceolated Warbler, Citrine Wagtail, Little Bunting, Common Rosefinch, Gadwall, 74 Lapland Buntings and two Convolvulus Hawkmoths, whilst a large snipe was flushed from Da Water... Four 'Pale-bellied Brent Geese' on 14th were the highlights of a light northerly breeze, with a Short-toed Lark, Barred Warbler, 15 Pink-footed Geese, Grey Plover and an increase in common migrants also noted. The light south-easterly wind on 15th was overshadowed by the fog that decreased the chances of new migrants finding the island, although the first Yellow-browed Warbler of the autumn was found. A Honey-buzzard drifted in over North Light on 16th and the 17th saw a very light westerly that delivered Bluethroat, Wryneck, Barred Warbler, two Yellow-browed Warblers and a scatter of common migrants. The light south or south-east wind on 18th brought a Red-throated Pipit to the Walli Burn and an increase in Yellow-browed Warblers to four, but the highlight was confirmation of the large snipe from 13th being a Great Snipe, when it was again flushed from Da Water. A Little Bunting was the best of a few new arrivals in light west-south-west winds on 19th, when a group of eight Risso's Dolphins past the Obs entertained the guests. A freshening south-south-east wind on 20th saw Yellow-browed Warblers increase to 54 and a Bluethroat arrive. With the wind in a similar direction on 21st there were more birds, including Lanceolated Warbler, Spotted Crake, two Red-breasted Flycatchers and Ring Ouzel, whilst the number of scarcities lingering added to a good day's birding. A wet start to 22nd saw a good collection of birds still present, although new arrivals were fairly limited to Red-breasted Flycatcher, a second Bluethroat and a Slavonian Grebe. South-westerly winds increased through 23rd, but an Olive-backed Pipit and a new Little Bunting still arrived, Bluethroats increased to three, a Water Rail was the first

for the autumn and a Humpback Whale was seen off South Light. The wind remained in the south-west, which is always disappointing in the peak autumn migration time, although a Richard's Pipit was new in on 25th, then the reappearance of the Great Snipe on 26th led to a Lanceolated Warbler and Spotted Crake being found in an attempt to relocate it! A Long-tailed Skua was also seen and a bat was flying around outside the Obs in the evening. Pink-footed Geese increased to 170 on 27th and a Little Bunting was at the Obs late in the day. A Paddyfield Warbler was a surprise, but very welcome, find in the Walli Burn on 28th, on a day that produced a new Barred Warbler but was generally more notable for wildfowl, with six Whooper Swans and 39 Greylag Geese signifying the start of autumn passage for both of those species, whilst a few new ducks were also noted. Geese increased the following day, with 456 Pink-feet and 175 Greylags, when there was also a Richard's Pipit, but the month generally fizzled out with little else of note, other than a joint party to celebrate the Warden's 40th birthday and skipper Neil Thomson's retirement from the crew of the Good Shepherd IV after 33 years' service.

October

Species Recorded: **150**
 Year List at end of month: **213**
 Birds Ringed: **1069**
 Species Ringed: **48**

With light winds just east of north, a Little Bunting and Barred Warbler were new arrivals to open the month, but it was the switch to a force two east-south-east on a mild and sunny day on 2nd that really opened the floodgates. The texts flew thick and fast, the Obs vehicles were constantly shuttling people around the island and the wardening team covered miles and miles as a really exciting day saw the arrival of Pechora Pipit (which would linger until 20th October), Lanceolated Warbler, Red-flanked Bluetail, Red-throated Pipit, Radde's Warbler and Blyth's Reed Warbler. Scarce migrants newly arrived included four Red-breasted Flycatchers, three Common Rosefinches and seven 'Siberian Chiffchaffs', whilst counts of 72 Yellow-browed Warblers (the second-highest-ever Fair Isle count), three Barred Warblers and two Bluethroats all showed increases on the previous day and Short-toed Lark and Little Bunting were still present. Other migrants included 29 Goldcrests, 13 Lesser Whitethroats, 12 Chiffchaffs (not including the 'Siberian' birds), 20 Blackcaps, ten Goldfinches, 22 Jack Snipes and five Slavonian Grebes, whilst a Stonechat and 133 Redwings were the first of the autumn. It was an amazing day, described by several Fair Isle regulars as one of their best-ever days birding. A clear night saw a lot of birds clear out, but the 3rd still saw the arrival of two Richard's Pipits. As the wind increased from the south-east, there were more birds on 4th, including Olive-backed Pipit, Great Grey Shrike, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Little Bunting, Bluethroat, Short-eared Owl, Grasshopper Warbler and 102 Goldcrests, although the most impressive sight was the 1,275 Barnacle Geese, a new Fair Isle record. Similar conditions for the next couple of days saw arrivals

Plate 23 a-d (opposite). a) Red-flanked Bluetail, Ward Hill, 12th October 2016. © Steve Arlow. b) 'Northern Bullfinch', Obs, 22nd October 2016. © Steve Arlow. c) Pechora Pipit, Upper Stoneybrek, 10th October 2016. © Deryk Shaw. d) Great Grey Shrike, Hoini, 13th October 2016. © Steve Arlow





Plate 24. Radde's Warbler, Stackhoull, 2nd October 2016. © Steve Arlow

on 6th include Red-flanked Bluetail and Blyth's Reed Warbler, and an increase in Little Buntings to four, along with a general rise in common migrant numbers. Easing winds on 7th brought a new Olive-backed Pipit, Marsh Harrier and 213 Goldcrests. The 8th saw a new Bluethroat, the first Glaucous Gull since March and the sixth Grasshopper Warbler of the autumn (just two more than the Lanceolated Warbler total!). A generally busy 9th saw a good days birding, but no new rarities, so the news of a Siberian Accentor on Mainland Shetland was a bit of a blow. A sunny 10th, with a light east-south-east wind saw a few people leave the island for a twitch to Shetland (which was eventually successful after technical problems on the plane left them with only ten minutes to see the bird!) and a new Red-throated Pipit in the Wirvie Burn. The 11th was largely sunny (although a shower in the morning was the first rain for ten days!), with a light east wind and a busy start on the nets and traps, with thrushes zipping about the place and Fair Isle's tenth Pine Bunting the highlight, whilst a new Little Bunting was also found. A number of good birds were still present on 12th, when they were joined by another Red-flanked Bluetail, Dusky Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher and Shore Lark. Easterlies continued on 13th, with what appeared to be a new Red-flanked Bluetail and at least two Spotted Crakes, Hawfinch, Yellowhammer, two Velvet Scoters, 55 Chiffchaffs, 20 Blackcaps, 935 Redwings, 59 'Mealy Redpolls' and 123 Bramblings amongst the arrivals. The easterly wind increased on 14th and brought with it a Siberian Stonechat, Red-throated Pipit, Olive-backed Pipit (to add to the lingering bird), Iceland Gull and more thrushes, including 1,122 Redwings. A showery day with easterly winds touching on gale force on 15th brought new arrivals including the island's 14th Blue Tit, two Waxwings, three 'Tundra Bean' and seven 'European White-

fronted Geese' along with more thrushes, including 301 Song Thrushes, 440 Blackbirds and six Ring Ouzels. The east-south-east wind blew at around force five up to seven on 16th as the remarkable run of weather continued, and so did the remarkable run of birds, with the Pine Bunting joined by two more (along with five Yellowhammers), a second Siberian Stonechat, five Shore Larks and good numbers of common migrants including the first two Greenfinches of the year. The flock of three Pine Buntings remained on 17th, when Shore Larks increased to seven and 'Tundra Bean Geese' to six. The 18th finally saw a break in the strong winds, with a south-east wind becoming westerly and blowing only force two or three and there were still lots of good birds around, with high counts including 325 Fieldfares, 1,401 Redwings, 86 Blackcaps and 58 'Mealy Redpolls'. A light north-westerly on 19th brought a couple of Waxwings and a presumed Nathusius's Pipistrelle, before the winds went back to light south-east on 20th, which was a lovely day for a lot more than just the sunshine. Fair Isle's latest-ever Icterine Warbler at Chalet was initially elusive, so got the blood pumping until it eventually performed, a Long-eared Owl showed well by the Ringing Hut then - BOOM - Siberian Accentor in Troila Geo! The phenomenal arrival of this species to western Europe seemed destined to end up with one on Fair Isle, but it was a huge relief when it did! Conditions were similar on 21st, but with few new birds, then 22nd saw another Siberian Accentor, this time in Kirn o' Skroo. Remarkably, the fourth Pine Bunting of the autumn (and the first male) then appeared at Bull's Park and other sightings included a 'Northern Bullfinch', a new Great Grey Shrike and an increase in 'European White-fronted Geese' to 18. The 23rd couldn't match up to its illustrious history (although it was a leap year, so perhaps that's why we got megas on the 22nd?), with Little Auk the only new bird of note and an increase in Waxwings to ten, although there was a lot of other good stuff still around. Although the wind remained in the east-south-east on 24th, it remained quiet for new arrivals, whilst common migrant numbers also started to decline and it began to feel like we might finally be starting to be past the peak of a remarkable spell of weather and birds. A moderate southerly veering westerly on 25th brought a few more common migrants and a couple of Little Auks and then windy and wet south-westerly conditions on 26th–28th saw some Greylag Goose and Black-headed Gull passage and a 'Pale-bellied Brent Goose' arrive on the latter date. Calmer weather on 29th saw 408 Greylag Geese and 13 Whooper Swans, but not much else new. A slight increase in thrushes in moderate westerlies on 30th also brought a Common Rosefinch and the month ended with few new birds and an exhausted wardening team!



Plate 25. 'Coues's Arctic Redpoll' (left) with 'Mealy Redpoll', School, 10th November 2016. © Deryk Shaw

November

Species Recorded: **96**

Year List at end of month: **215**

Birds Ringed: **116**

Species Ringed: **21**

Nobody predicted that the penultimate month of the year would open with a second for Fair Isle, especially not as the first record had only occurred in the spring, but a Little Egret in South Harbour then the Walli Burn was a nice surprise. Things were generally quiet however, although there were 30 Woodcock flushed during Sheep Hill on 2nd and a Yellow-browed Warbler and three 'Siberian Chiffchaffs' were present on 3rd. A rather fresh north-easterly wind on 4th brought a female 'Northern Bullfinch', Pintail and a Glaucous Gull (the first of several sightings during the month) and the last Wheatear of the year was present the following day. A north-easterly four, easing and becoming slightly more easterly on 7th brought five Waxwings and the last two Goldcrests of the year, whilst an entertaining seawatch included eight Little Auks, 29 'blue Fulmars', Iceland Gull, the last two Bonxies of the year (other than a lingering injured bird) and a good selection of wildfowl including 11 Goldeneyes. The wind remained in the east on 8th, bringing a second female 'Northern Bullfinch', Shore Lark and Black Redstart, but also seeing the departure of the last of the seasonal wardening team. There were still birds though, as the strong east-north-east winds continued on 9th and the small number of lingering redpolls built up to four 'Mealies' and a smart 'Coues's Arctic Redpoll', with 20 Snow Buntings, Iceland Gull and two Little Auks also noted. With the wind in the south east on 10th the redpoll flock increased to nine 'Mealies', two Lessers and two 'Coues's Arctic Redpolls', with a Sparrowhawk also arriving. The 11th brought a Hawfinch, Moorhen and Little Auk, along with three Risso's Dolphins off South Light, but things were generally starting to quieten down. 'Mealy Redpolls' increased to 13 on 14th and a Buzzard on 15th was only seen briefly, although it reappeared on 19th and 20th. White-wingers were the theme of 16th, with Iceland and three Glaucous Gulls present, then the 17th was the last day the lingering Little Bunting and the last Lapland Bunting were seen. A Siberian Rubythroat on 18th was a major surprise, on a day that also produced Pintail and Little Auk, with Waxwing, two Goldfinches and three Lesser Redpolls the next day, the last Blackcap and a Greenfinch on 21st and a Jackdaw on 22nd just about bringing movement to an end. An *abietinus* Chiffchaff at the Obs on 28th was the last warbler of the year.

December

A generally mild month that became rather wild and windy towards the end and produced few unexpected sightings. Species that were present at the start of the month and remained until the end of the year included two Whooper Swans, Grey Heron, several Water Rails, up to three Oystercatchers and two Carrion Crows, along with decent numbers of Skylarks and Meadow Pipits. Although the wintering Greylag flock was smaller than usual, it did hold 'Tundra Bean Goose', three Pink-footed Geese and a Barnacle Goose (which was found dead on 27th) throughout the month. Two Common Redpolls also remained until mid-month. An Iceland Gull on 5th was typical but a Slavonian Grebe on 8th was much rarer for the time of year. There were four 'blue Fulmars' from the Good Shepherd IV on 9th. Five Glaucous Gulls on 10th was a good count and a juvenile was seen regularly after that. Guillemots returned in large numbers a couple of days later and were on the cliffs on 13th. The following day saw a 'blue Fulmar' and Iceland Gull off South Light. A Goldeneye on 15th was a typical winter record, but a Red-throated Diver in South Harbour on 16th–17th was unusual. The 19th saw the winter's peak of Long-tailed Ducks, when nine were in Ditfield, the arrival of a Lapwing and the last day that an injured, flightless Bonxie at Easter Lothar was seen alive. Glaucous Gulls built up to five again on 21st when two Iceland Gulls were also present, then a Goldeneye was seen on 23rd. Strong winds brought an unusual record of three Sanderling on Boxing Day, when three Glaucous Gulls were also seen, with the same number present on 27th. The year ended with the return of the unseasonal Red-throated Diver to South Harbour and a more typical record of a moulting adult Great Northern Diver in North Haven.

Species Recorded: **60**
Year List at end of month: **215**
Birds Ringed: **4**
Species Ringed: **4**

Plate 26. Glaucous Gull, Ditfield, 21st December 2016. © David Parnaby



SYSTEMATIC LIST 2016

David Parnaby

Notes

The species order is taken from the 'British List' published by the BOU in December 2016. Species names are from the BOU 'vernacular name' list.

Status Categories

Vagrant	ten records or fewer in the past 20 years
Rare	11–40 records in the past 20 years
Scarce	averaging ten records or fewer per annum
Regular	averaging 11–40 records per annum
Frequent	averaging 41–500 records per annum
Common	averaging more than 500 records per annum

Breeding Categories

Small numbers	on average, less than 100 pairs per annum
Moderate numbers	on average, 101–1,000 pairs per annum
Large numbers	on average, more than 1,000 pairs per annum

Abbreviations used in the text

AON	Apparently Occupied Nest
AOT	Apparently Occupied Territory
n/c	No count
Obs	Fair Isle Bird Observatory
*	<i>Indicates record(s) requiring assessment by the relevant records committee</i>



Plate 27. 'Tundra Bean Geese' (birds 3, 4 and 6 from the left) and 'European White-fronted Geese' (birds 1, 2, 5 and 7), Malcolm's Head, 23rd October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Whooper Swan

Cygnus cygnus

Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring and winter

There was a stronger winter showing than usual, with two present from 2015 until 12th January (only the ninth time this species has been recorded overwintering on the isle) then four on 31st January, with one of these lingering in Ditfield until 2nd February. Spring was also better than usual, with one from 22nd March, another joining it from 24th and numbers increasing to 11 on 26th–27th March, then singles on 1st and 19th April. Autumn began with six (including four juveniles) moving south on 28th September, then two on 30th September. There were then none until four on 20th October, with one remaining until 23rd October. Ten on 28th October increased to 13 the following day, with numbers then decreasing to two (an adult and juvenile) by 1st November. Although the juvenile was found dead the following day, another arrived on 3rd November and it and the adult lingered until the end of the year.

Bean Goose

Anser fabalis

Rare autumn and winter migrant, approximately 37 previous records of at least 208 individuals, with significant arrivals in 2011 and 2014. Most records of Bean Geese have not been assigned to subspecies, but recent records suggest A.f.rossicus often occurs in autumn influxes and as an occasional winter visitor and spring migrant, whereas A.f.fabalis is perhaps a rare visitor, usually as an autumn migrant, with occasional winter records.

'Tundra Bean Goose' *A.f.rossicus*

This species has become a more frequent visitor to Fair Isle in recent years and a reasonable showing in autumn began with three on 15th October that increased to six on 17th and peaked at seven on 26th–28th, with six remaining until the end of the month. There were still three present by 4th November and then occasional sightings of a single to the end of the year were presumed to relate to one of these birds lingering.



Plate 28. 'Tundra Bean Goose' Lower Leogh, 20th October 2016.
© Steve Arlow

Pink-footed Goose

Anser brachyrhynchus

Common autumn migrant, with smaller numbers in spring and winter

Three birds that remained from 2015 lingered until 2nd March. Spring passage was restricted to a single on 7th April to 4th May that was joined by two more from 13th–17th April. Fifteen heading south on 14th September were the first of the autumn, then 166 arrived on 19th September with small numbers present daily until the next arrival of 170 on 27th September, increasing to 203 on 28th and 456 (the year's peak) on 29th with 107 remaining on 30th. There were no more until daily records from 22nd October until the end of the month, which peaked at 36 on 29th. A flock of 25 remained until 16th November, after which there were just single figures present, with three remaining to the end of the year.

White-fronted Goose

Anser albifrons

Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring and winter

'Greenland White-fronted Goose'

A.a.flavirostris

Three on 11th–13th January was the first winter arrival of this subspecies since 2013, but there were no further records during the year.

'European White-fronted Goose'

A.a.albifrons

One that was unidentified to subspecies on 14th October was followed by seven 'European' birds the following day, which increased to 18 on 22nd with 11 remaining until 29th October and one until 28th November.

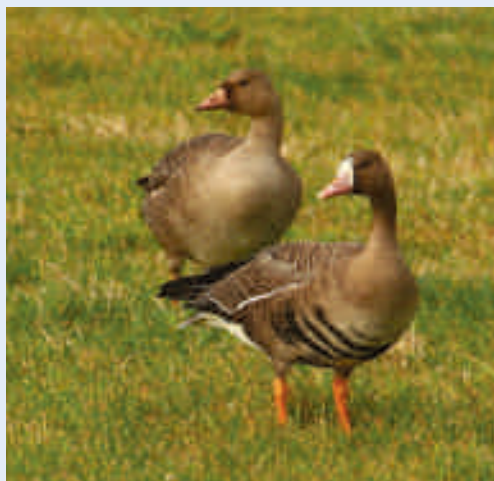


Plate 29. 'European White-fronted Geese', Midway, 17th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Greylag Goose

Anser anser

Common spring and autumn migrant

Table 1. Maximum monthly counts of Greylag Goose on Fair Isle 2016

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
336	n/c	162	198	53	13	4	11	175	408	120	102

More than usual spent the winter on the island and the January count was particularly large, although it possibly involved some migrants as well as the regular wintering flock which appeared to usually be around the 200 mark. There was little evidence of spring passage, as numbers gradually decreased with just a couple remaining through late May into June. Up to 13 moved through in June, with the only record in July being on 2nd. Other than occasional small groups in August and early September, autumn passage began with 39 on 28th September, increasing to 175 the following day. Numbers remained generally low in October, not increasing above 100 until 27th, with the year's peak of 408 recorded on 29th. Numbers decreased rapidly the following month, with only around 100 recorded for most of November, with the wintering flock being much lower in number than recent years despite the mild conditions ensuring plenty of grass still being available.

Barnacle Goose

Branta leucopsis

Frequent autumn migrant, occasional in spring and winter

For the second consecutive year there were overwintering birds present, with three from 2015 being joined by a fourth in early January and three then remaining from mid-February until 28th April. Spring passage was represented by three on 22nd May, with one still the following day, then three on 6th June, with one still on 7th (the latest spring record since 2007). Although the start of autumn passage was the latest since 1975, the 1,275 that arrived on 4th October represented a new record

count for the isle (comfortably beating the 985 on 20th October 2005). Numbers then decreased rapidly, with just 310 the following day and two by 7th. There were small numbers present throughout the rest of the month, including further arrivals of 148 on 14th and 18 on 30th, with one bird remaining from then until 27th December, when it was found dead.

Brent Goose

Branta bernicla

Rare visitor; around 64 records (of at least 236 individuals), although it is possible that some of the early records may not have been correctly identified. There are 41 records (of 86 individuals) in the FIBO period, mostly in autumn (September to November), but several spring (March to June) and winter records. In the FIBO period there have been 26 records of B.b.hrota and ten of B.b.bernicla (plus five that have not been assigned to subspecies), with both subspecies showing largely similar arrival patterns

'Pale-bellied Brent Goose' *B.b.hrota*

There were two at Shirva on 12th January, then a good autumn saw four that lingered around Muckle Uri Geo from 14th–18th September and a juvenile at Skadan from 28th October until 9th November. A Brent Goose unidentified to subspecies flew over with Greylag Geese on 19th October.



Plate 30. 'Pale-bellied Brent Goose', Skadan, 28th October 2016. © Lee Gregory

Shelduck

Tadorna tadorna

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

A single on 9th April was the only record from the first part of the year, making it the quietest spring passage since 2001, whilst autumn was also quiet with just one on 17th October.

Wigeon

Anas penelope

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter

The first winter period saw up to 22 recorded, with numbers dwindling to single figures by mid-March. Spring passage was represented by up to two on two late-April dates and a pair from 16th May that lingered to the end of the month with the drake present until 3rd June. A drake on 26th June and one on 20th–25th July were the only summer occurrences. Autumn passage commenced with two on 18th August, increasing to 14 by late August, with daily counts in September rising to a peak of 114 on 29th. Good numbers were also present in October, peaking at 136 on 16th, a record count for the island. There were intermittent records in November and December, peaking at 16 and 11 respectively.



Plate 31. Wigeon, Da Water, 27th May 2016. © Steve Arlow

Gadwall

Anas strepera

Rare spring and autumn migrant, three winter records; total of 51 records of 80 individuals

A female was at Shirva and Utra from 21st February until 5th March, the first February arrival for the isle. One lingered from 13th September to 4th October, often being found in South Harbour during the latter part of its stay.

Teal

Anas crecca

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter

Numbers in the first winter period were higher than usual, with peaks of 19, 15 and 16 for the first three months of the year. There were still 13 in early April, although only single figures after 7th and there were scattered records of up to four in May. After two on 10th June there were singles on

20th–21st June and 10th July and three on 24th July. There were then scattered records in early August, with daily sightings from 15th until the end of the month peaking at 36 on 20th. After a dip in numbers in early September, counts rose to the year's peak with 44 on 19th. Numbers were generally much lower in October, although the peak was 32 on 6th. November recorded just single figures, as did most of December, although 16 were present on 12th.

Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Regular spring and autumn migrant, breeds in small numbers and a few feral birds are also present

Following the larger numbers than usual at the end of 2015, there was a peak in the first winter period of 35 on 11th January, a good count. A predated egg in Kirki Mire on 7th April was the first sign of breeding during the year, with the first ducklings noted at Da Water on 22nd June and at least three pairs thought to have bred. Autumn passage was noted from at least 5th October, when one was seen coming in off the sea at North Light, with the peak of 38 occurring on 7th November, which included 18 moving past South Light. Wintering numbers were generally average, with a peak of 28 in December.

Pintail

Anas acuta

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

The first of the year was an eclipse male in the Utra area on the unusual dates of 9th–11th July. A good autumn passage began with two on 28th–29th September, with one remaining until 5th October when it was joined by two others, with one of these then lingering until 7th. There were further singles on 12th and 16th October and 4th and 18th November.



Plate 32. Pintail and Pink-footed Geese, Midway, 5th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Shoveler

Anas clypeata

Scarce and irregular spring and autumn migrant

One was present from 27th–29th July, another lingered around the ditches between Utra and Shirva from 4th–13th October and one was on Easter Lother Water on 19th October in an average year for this species.

*Ring-necked Duck

Aythya collaris

Vagrant; one previous record (October 1978)

A male emerging from eclipse plumage was present in South Harbour on 23rd August, an unexpected occurrence during a period of generally calm weather or easterly winds. It seems likely that this was a bird that had been present in western Europe for a while and wandered to Fair Isle, rather than a fresh transatlantic crossing (although it did spend most of its time asleep, so perhaps it had come from further afield!).

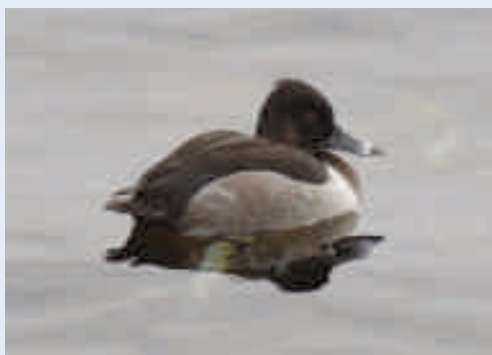


Plate 33. Ring-necked Duck, South Harbour, 23rd August 2016. © Lee Gregory

Tufted Duck

Aythya fuligula

Regular spring migrant, commoner in spring than autumn

One from 14th–25th January that was joined by a second on 22nd were the first January records since 1996. Spring passage saw a pair on 10th April and a male on 7th–18th May, with a late drake on 24th June. Another good autumn showing started with one on 20th–24th August, another from 9th–12th September with a new bird on 13th September. From 27th September to 12th October there were daily records, peaking at four on 6th, with the last of the year recorded on 30th–31st October.

Eider

Somateria mollissima

Resident, breeds in small numbers, with additional birds thought to winter around the island

Although present all year, there were few counts of any significance. Copulation was first noted on 26th April, with the first ducklings seen on 11th June. At least 20 incubating females were located, although the actual number breeding will be larger. A count of the post-breeding population on 27th August located 129 birds, including just 22 juveniles, a similar count to the last two years.

Long-tailed Duck

Clangula hyemalis

Regular autumn migrant, less common in spring

There were no records in the first half of the year for the first time since 2010. Autumn passage began early though, with a female present in North Haven (and occasionally the Obs Scrape!) from 26th August until 5th September. After one on 1st October there were regular records from 10th October until the end of the month, that built to a peak of ten on 29th. Many of the birds observed during this time appeared to be in poor condition and were often dabbling along the shoreline in South Harbour, with five found dead on the Beached Bird Survey of 30th October. Scattered sightings throughout November peaked at six, whilst more than usual were present at the end of the year, with up to nine in December.

Common Scoter

Melanitta nigra

Regular migrant, usually in spring and autumn with smaller numbers occasionally noted in winter

For the first time since 2006, there were no records for the first half of the year, with sightings restricted to up to two in South Harbour from 14th–24th October, with a third also present on 17th. The birds spent the majority of their time dabbling close in to shore and one even wandered up the Walli Burn on 22nd.

Velvet Scoter

Melanitta fusca

Rare migrant, mostly in autumn; 127 previous records of 178 individuals

Two off Hjukni Geo on 13th October represented the first multiple occurrence since 2011 and were assumed to have been the birds responsible for singles seen off South Light the same day and on the beach at Easter Lothar on 14th October.

Goldeneye

Bucephala clangula

Regular migrant, most common in autumn with smaller numbers in winter and spring

Unusually, the first of the year was not recorded until 14th June, the first record for this month since 2004. Autumn passage began with one present from 12th October until the end of the month, another on 4th–6th November and 11 on 7th November (the highest count since 2013), with up to three remaining until 9th. Later records consisted of two on 27th November and singles on 15th and 23rd December.



Plate 34. Goldeneye, Da Water, 18th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

Regular spring and autumn migrant, has bred once (1934)

A male and female were recorded in January, then no more until scattered records of up to three from 13th May and up to two occasionally in June. After singles on 24th and 30th July there were no more until up to three from 23rd September to 4th November in a fairly quiet year for this species.



Plate 35. Red-breasted Mergansers, North Haven, 29th September 2016. © Steve Arlow

Goosander

Mergus merganser

Rare migrant in winter, spring and late autumn; 95 previous records of 131 individuals

A female that flew north past the Chapel on 24th January was the first record for that month since 2006. The only other record for the year was a male on 29th May.

Quail

Coturnix coturnix

Scarce migrant with most in spring and summer and smaller numbers recorded in autumn; has bred (last confirmed attempt in 2003)

A very quiet year saw just one record, a single flushed at Kenaby on 23rd May.

Red-throated Diver

Gavia stellata

Regular migrant, mainly late spring and autumn

The first passed the island on 17th April, with two on 1st May then regular sightings, mostly of singles, from 22nd May to 12th June. Occasional sightings throughout the rest of June and July may have related to a summering bird, with a moulting, flightless individual lingering along the south

coast from mid-July onwards. Most sightings in August were probably also this bird, although two were seen on 4th, and in September there were sightings on 12 dates, all singles apart from three on 7th and two on 22nd. In October, there were two on 1st then singles on 3rd, 18th and 30th, which were the last until a bird in South Harbour on 16th–17th and 31st December, which was only the second December record for Fair Isle.

Great Northern Diver

Gavia immer

Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring and winter

One on 29th–31st March was an early spring record, with more typical occurrences on 7th May (two) and 8th June. One on 29th July was an early autumn sighting, with five more records from 18th October to 7th November totalling seven individuals, with the only other sighting involving an adult in North Haven on 31st December.

*Black-browed Albatross

Thalassarche melanophris

Vagrant; no previous records (an albatross over Sheep Rock in 1949 may well have been this species)

One of the outstanding highlights of the year was an adult of this magnificent species on 28th May. First seen at around 07:40hrs from the Good Shepherd IV a few hundred metres out of North Haven, it sat alongside Fulmars on the sea quite unconcerned as it was circled by the boat. It then made a low pass over Skervalie on Bunes before circling over the South Gavel then making its way to Sheep Rock where it was seen occasionally again in flight until 12:40hrs. It appeared to be the same individual that had summered in Germany and Denmark in 2014–2016; the most recent sighting before it appeared on Fair Isle was on Helgoland on 20th May and it was back there by midday on 29th May. It had made one previous appearance in the British Isles, when it landed on a lagoon at Minsmere, Suffolk on 12th July 2015. A write-up of this first record for Fair Isle can be found on pages 148–149.



Plate 36. Black-browed Albatross, Bunes, 28th May 2016. © Steve Arlow

Fulmar

Fulmarus glacialis

Resident and common migrant; breeds in large numbers

Present throughout the year in large numbers, with a count of birds passing South Light on 9th February producing 1,238 in 15 minutes. A whole-island count of the breeding population produced a total of 32,061 apparently occupied sites, an 8.2% increase since the last survey in 2011 and the highest breeding numbers since 1996. The first egg was noted on 17th May, with chicks seen from



Plate 37. Fulmar, Springfield, 11th April 2016. © Lee Gregory

6th July and the first fledged bird taking to the wing on 18th August. Productivity was down slightly on 2015, with exactly half of monitored nests producing chicks to fledging stage, with heavy rain just before many chicks were due to fledge possibly washing some of them off their nest ledges. 'Blue' Fulmars were noted occasionally throughout the year, with records on 9th and 11th February, 23rd April, 21st–22nd and 26th May and then a quiet autumn until an impressive count of 29 past South Light on 7th November, with further records of four from the Good Shepherd IV on 9th December and one off South Light on 14th December.

Sooty Shearwater

Puffinus griseus

Regular autumn migrant

A remarkable record concerned one seen from the Good Shepherd IV on 27th January, the first winter record for Fair Isle, when the species should be on its breeding grounds in the South Atlantic. More typical passage occurred when one was seen on 28th July, 13 were recorded on four dates from 13th–31st August (with five on the latter date being the peak) and 23 were logged on ten dates in September, peaking at seven on 3rd, all from the Good Shepherd IV. Later singles occurred on 18th and 25th October, completing a reasonable year for the species.

Manx Shearwater

Puffinus puffinus

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

The earliest record since 2009 occurred on 21st May when one was seen from the Good Shepherd IV, with further singles recorded on 21st and 28th June. There were sightings totalling five birds on three dates in July (with three on 16th the peak), two on 12th and three on 31st August then singles on three dates in early September and two on 14th September, which were the last of a reasonable year.

Storm Petrel

Hydrobates pelagicus

Common summer migrant, breeds in small numbers

It was an inauspicious start to the year, with the first found dead in the Gully (having been killed by a cat) on 6th June and the next found in a Great Skua pellet on 19th June. The first live bird was seen from the Good Shepherd IV on 22nd June, with at least three more found predated in the Gully towards the end of the month, including one that had been ringed in Kirn o' Skroo in June 2013. The first trapped birds were 21 caught (including 12 retraps), without the use of tape-lures, at breeding colonies at Kirn o' Skroo (15) and Wester Lothar (six) in the early hours of 26th June. After 11 trapped in the Haven on 30th June, there were a further 18 ringing sessions there until 29th August. The total ringed during the year was 2,122, plus a further 238 birds caught that had either been ringed in previous years on Fair Isle or ringed elsewhere. The best night was 14th/15th August with 312 birds trapped (273 'new'), possibly the most ever trapped in a single session on

Fair Isle. During the summer, there were a further six records, totalling ten individuals, from the Good Shepherd IV between 18th July and 17th September and just one diurnal, land-based record, when one was off South Light on 22nd July.

Leach's Petrel

Oceanodroma leucorhoa

Scarce migrant, usually summer and early autumn, most recorded during petrel trapping sessions

Despite a good year for petrel ringing in the Haven, there were few records of this species, with singles seen and heard around the nets on 5th and 11th July, one trapped on 14th August and two trapped the following night. Unlike the previous three years, there were no retraps and all the birds caught were new individuals.

*Swinhoe's Petrel

Oceanodroma monorhis

Vagrant; two previous records (July and August 2013, with the second bird returning in July and August 2014)

One of the more surprising records of the year was the return of a Swinhoe's Petrel to Fair Isle, with one trapped at 02:20hrs on 14th August, again at 03:50hrs on 15th August and then heard again in the Haven on 23rd August. Against expectation this was the bird that had been ringed on 27th July 2013 and not seen again since, rather than the returning bird that was recorded in 2013 and 2014.



Plate 38. Swinhoe's Petrel, Obs, 15th August 2016. © Lee Gregory

Gannet

Morus bassanus

Common migrant and breeds in large numbers, seen offshore all year

Nesting material was noted being carried from 7th March and the population increased slightly to 3,409 apparently occupied nests. Chicks were seen from 3rd June with the first fledgling recorded on 20th August, and productivity was again good at 0.71 chicks fledged per AON.

Cormorant

Phalacrocorax carbo

Regular migrant, commonest in autumn, with small numbers in winter and spring

Typically, there were a few in the early part of the year, with singles on 12th January, 23rd and 27th February and five on 9th March. Spring passage was restricted to singles on 6th, 11th and 24th April. Autumn movements began with eight on 28th August and regular sightings throughout September that peaked at 11 on 17th, with up to two recorded on seven dates in October until 26th.

Shag

Phalacrocorax aristotelis

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers (last count 204 AON in 2013)

Although the species is present all year round, the timing of the breeding season can be rather variable, and the first eggs were not recorded until 30th April this year, 26 days later than in 2015. The population plots showed a decrease of 21.2% from 2015, whilst breeding productivity decreased by nearly 73%, to just 0.44 chicks fledging from each monitored nest. Sightings of darvic-ringed birds continued to show interesting results, with a small number of birds that had wandered off the island in their first-year now returning to Fair Isle.

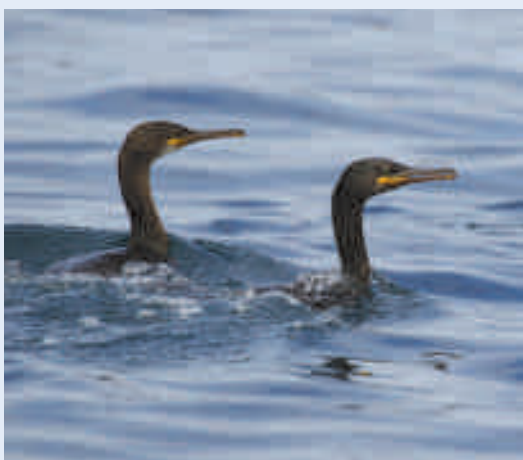


Plate 39. Shags, Greenholm, 26th June 2016. © Lee Gregory

*Little Egret

Ardea garzetta

Vagrant; no previous records

Probably the most likely new addition to the Fair Isle list finally arrived on 20th May, when one was found at Da Water. It remained for the rest of the day, wandering as far north as the Obs on occasions and spending a lot of time in the upper Vaadal stream near the airstrip. The following day, a Little Egret was on Foula, and a small nick in the tip of the third primary of the left wing visible on photos of both birds enabled them to be confirmed as the same individual. A full account of this first for Fair Isle can be found on pages 146–147. Strangely enough, the second Little Egret for Fair Isle also occurred later in the year, when one was found in South Harbour on 1st November before moving to the Walli Burn.



Plate 40. Little Egret, Walli Burn, 1st November 2016. © David Parnaby

Grey Heron

Ardea cinerea

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring

There were occasional records of one in early January, but no more until singles on 2nd and 9th April and 8th–11th May. Sightings from 15th–25th June may have involved a single bird that became Fulmar-oiled towards the end of its stay. From 7th July onward, there were regular sightings of one, with two present on 25th–26th and up to two in early August. The first of several larger arrivals during the autumn involved ten on 16th August, increasing to 11 the next day, with counts dwindling until the end of the month then increasing to 20 on 5th September, the highest count since 2003. There were then smaller numbers again, until ten arrived on 13th September. The next sighting was 27th September, after which numbers built up to 15 on 3rd October before rapidly dropping, with one present from 28th October that was probably responsible for regular sightings until the end of the year.

Slavonian Grebe

Podiceps auritus

Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring

One in Hesti Geo on 11th April was the third spring record in the last four years and was followed by another in South Haven on 14th May, which was later than most spring occurrences. The first of the autumn was the earliest-ever autumn record and only the second ever for August; a moulting adult on 19th and 24th. More typical records occurred in September with one on 22nd then another in the Haven on 30th, which was joined by two more the following day, with this group peaking at five on 2nd October (the joint second-highest count for the isle) and one remaining until 7th October. The last of the autumn was on 29th October, which was found dead the next day. In a good year for the species, the third-ever December record occurred in North Haven on the 8th.



Plate 41. Honey-buzzard, North Light, 16th September 2016. © David Parnaby

***Honey-buzzard**

Pernis apivorus

Rare spring and autumn migrant; 55 previous records (58 individuals)

A dark juvenile came in low off the sea at North Light on 16th September. After circling to gain a little height it drifted south-east towards the northern tip of Bunes and presumably carried on out to sea. Although this species has been recorded annually since 2013, this was the first autumn record since 2010.

Marsh Harrier

Circus aeruginosus

Rare migrant; 47 previous records, with 37 in spring (mostly April–May but three in both March and June) and ten in autumn (mostly in August and September, with singles in July and October)

A female in the south of the island on 29th April was seen in Ferny Cup early the following morning and another female roamed the south of the island on 10th May. A juvenile that drifted south down the island on 7th October was just the second record for that month, following one on 25th–26th October 1976. Three records in a year was the best showing since 2009.

Hen Harrier

Circus cyaneus

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Single ringtails were recorded on 28th April and 10th May; a reasonable spring showing. In contrast to the very good autumn passage of 2015, there was just a single record this year with a juvenile male present from 8th–28th August, during which time it was often seen going to roost in Boini Mire. Although this represented the quietest autumn since 2009, this bird was unusual in that it was earliest-ever autumn arrival and was also the first ringing movement of this species involving Fair Isle; it was wearing a darvic ring which identified it as having been ringed as a chick in Orkney on 4th July 2016.

Sparrowhawk

Accipiter nisus

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage was fairly quiet, with records on 13 dates from 6th April to 25th May, with a maximum of just two on 10th May and perhaps just seven individuals involved. Autumn was also quiet, especially compared to the record year of 2015, with perhaps six individuals involved in records on ten dates from 7th–28th September, including a maximum of three on 17th. There were singles recorded on five dates in October then a male lingered, often around the Plantation, until 16th November.

*Buzzard

Buteo buteo

Rare spring and autumn migrant

One seen briefly from the Obs kitchen window on 15th November was presumably the same bird seen over Vaasetter on 19th–20th November.

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

Scarce migrant; 127 individuals, with 108 in spring (mostly May and June, with four in April) and 19 in autumn (mostly September, but two in October and singles in July, August and November)

The best spring since the record-breaking year of 2013 saw singles recorded on 19th and 23rd May and 11th June. The first autumn record since 2008 involved one seen over the Obs on 11th September.

Water Rail

Rallus aquaticus

Regular spring and autumn migrant, occasionally overwinters

Sightings in January indicated at least five may have been wintering on the island. Records on 11 dates from 12th March to 28th April probably involved some spring passage migrants. The first of the autumn was seen being caught and eaten by a Kestrel in Kirki Mire on 23rd September, with one in the Wirvie Burn on 26th September then daily records from 30th September to 31st October. During this time there was a peak count of four on 29th October, although seven birds were ringed during this time, showing that a far larger number of birds were moving through. After a slight lull in early November, there were more sightings from mid-month, peaking at four on 18th, although probably at least seven individuals were involved. Most of those appeared to be settled into winter territories, including two each at Schoolton and Chalet and singles at Burkle and the Obs, with sightings continuing through to the end of the year.



Plate 42. Water Rail, Gully, 30th September 2016.
© Steve Arlow

*Spotted Crake

Porzana porzana

Rare migrant; 48 previous records (37 in autumn, 11 in spring)

With no records since 2012, and none in autumn since 2011, it was a remarkable year for this species. The first was flushed from Da Water during census on 21st September, with what was assumed to be the same bird flushed during an attempted Great Snipe twitch on 26th September in Kirki Mire. The next records were on 13th October, when at least two were found, one in Gilsetter and the wings of a freshly predated (and totally devoured) individual at the School, whilst one flushed from Charlie's Trees may have related to one of the other individuals.

Corncrake

Crex crex

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred (last suspected in 2002)

The only spring sighting was an elusive single at Lower Leogh on four dates between 12th–24th May. Sightings at Da Water, School and Kirki Mire on 12th, 13th and 15th September respectively were all assumed to relate to one bird, with another near Kenaby on 22nd September, which may have been a new individual.



Plate 43. Corncrake, Da Water, 12th September 2016. © Lee Gregory

Moorhen

Gallinula chloropus

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

An unusual winter occurrence involved one around the Haa on 12th–31st January. There were three in the autumn, with single juveniles at Da Water on 9th–23rd September, the Plantation on 16th September and Meadow Burn on 11th November.

Coot

Fulica atra

Rare visitor; 91 previous records, most in spring, also late autumn and winter, has summered

Five of the previous six records occurred in the winter, so the two recorded in 2016 fitted the recent pattern. The first was found at Da Water on 11th January and remained there until 28th March, braving some freezing conditions that occasionally saw the amount of open water available to it severely restricted by ice. A second was on Gunglesund then Utra on 27th January.

Crane

Grus grus

Rare visitor; 26 previous records (22 in spring) of 36 individuals

This species was recorded for the third year in succession and the three individuals logged made it the best year since 2012. The first came in off the sea over Brecks and headed high out to the south-west on 23rd April, and was possibly the bird seen on Noss the previous day. One went over the Obs just before 08:00hrs on 15th May and was seen two and a half hours later leaving north-east from North Light. The third of the year went south over the Obs on the morning of 20th May, before lingering until about 11:30hrs on 22nd when it was last seen gaining height over Brecks, and was possibly the bird seen later in the day on Mainland Shetland.



Plate 44. Crane, Milen's Houllan, 22nd May 2016.
© Lee Gregory

Oystercatcher

Haematopus ostralegus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The overwintering bird was joined by another from 11th January, with up to five by the end of the month. At least 38 were noted by the end of February, with 87 present by the time census began at the end of March, increasing to 98 by 6th and 107 by 21st April. A count of 147 on 8th May included a flock of around 50 at Shirva, with the spring peak of 229 recorded on 27th May and generally around 100 noted around the island away from the non-breeding flock. At least 39 territories were noted, with the first chicks seen on the early date of 22nd May and fledglings from 22nd June, although productivity appeared poor. By the time census resumed in August, it was clear most birds had moved on, with just 89 on 17th. Numbers fell away after that with generally just single figures in September, with at least three remaining until the end of the year, the first record of multiple overwintering since 2002/03.

Grey Plover

Pluvialis squatarola

Rare migrant, mostly in autumn, with fewer in spring and winter

There was one over the Plantation on 14th September, with three over Kenaby the next day and a final individual from 28th September to 1st October, which completed a strong autumn showing.



Plate 45. Golden Plovers, Utra, 24th May 2016. © Lee Gregory

Golden Plover

Pluvialis apricaria

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred (last recorded in 1989)

Reasonable numbers in winter saw up to eight in January and five in February. Spring began quietly, with up to five throughout March and April then a rise in numbers towards the end of April saw a peak of 18 on 23rd and again on 3rd May. There were regular records of single figures throughout the rest of the month, up to two in June and occasional records in July, which peaked at five on 30th. Small numbers in early August started to rise from mid-month and reached a maximum of 47 on 31st, increasing to 52 on 2nd September. Numbers then dwindled until an increase at the end of September saw the year's peak of 113 on 29th. Counts in October fluctuated, with 84 on 2nd, 73 on 13th and 69 on 18th the peaks, with then just single figures recorded irregularly throughout November and December.

Dotterel

Charadrius morinellus

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; 103 previous records of 192 individuals

Another quiet year with just two records; a male was on Lerness on 7th May and a female was on the Rippack on 5th June.

Ringed Plover

Charadrius hiaticula

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

One on 22nd January was the earliest record since 2005 and there were six by 21st February. Counts increased gradually through March to 39 by the end of the month, although most of the counts throughout April probably related to breeding birds. The first eggs were noted on 22nd April, with around 10–15 pairs thought to be breeding and the first chicks seen on 13th May. Migrants heading to northern breeding grounds were noted on the move in late May, with a count of 30 on

20th May. Small groups at South Light from late July showed return passage was taking place, with numbers rising rapidly in mid-August to 122 on 21st. After a slight lull, migrants started to build up again at the end of the month, rising to a peak of 145 on 4th September, the highest-ever number recorded on Fair Isle during a time of large numbers noted passing throughout Shetland. Numbers remained high until the last ten days of the month and by early October counts were usually less than 15, with one lingering until the late date of 7th November.

*Little Ringed Plover

Charadrius dubius

Vagrant; three previous records (May, July and September)

A remarkable year for a species not recorded on the isle since 1979, with a male found at Utra on 10th May (just a couple of minutes after a Calandra Lark, although the plover was the rarer of the two birds in Fair Isle terms!) and a female at Da Water on 23rd May.



Plates 46–47. Little Ringed Plover, (left) Da Water, 23rd May 2016. © Steve Arlow. (right) Utra Scrape, 10th May 2016. © Lee Gregory

Lapwing

Vanellus vanellus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

There were up to 19 in January, which had largely dispersed by the time of the next arrival of up to 25 in late February, which increased to 35 by 12th March. Counts throughout the rest of the spring largely referred to breeding birds, although the occasional migrant also moved through. Three pairs hatched chicks (two at Da Water/Kirki Mire and one at Pund), with a displaying male holding territory at Utra but not attracting a mate. Productivity appeared good, with all three breeding pairs fledging at least one youngster and these were responsible for most sightings until the end of August, after which just one bird lingered. In late September, up to seven were presumably new migrants and there were occasional sightings of one or two until the end of the year.

Whimbrel

Numenius phaeopus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred (1973 and 1974)

After the first on 19th April there were regular records of up to six until the end of the month. Daily sightings in May continued until 14th June, with 11 on 6th and 14th May and 17 on 18th the only counts of greater than ten, whilst nine (on 13th) was the peak count in June. Occasional records of up to three until the end of June and up to four in July meant that spring and autumn passage effectively blurred into one. Other than 11 on 28th, records on 12 dates in August all involved four or fewer, with September records on eight dates until 14th all involving singles, other than five on 3rd.

Curlew

Numenius arquata

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; overwinters and breeds in small numbers

There were up to 25 in the first winter period, with spring passage producing no higher counts than that. Displaying was recorded from 24th March and territories were held at Homisdale, Pund, Da Water and Meadow Burn, although productivity appeared poor. A flock of 12 in late June was probably the first sign of autumn migration, although there were no more than 15 recorded throughout August to October. Although numbers dropped away in November, they built up to a wintering flock of up to 31 in December.

Black-tailed Godwit

Limosa limosa

Scarce spring and autumn migrant, very rare in winter

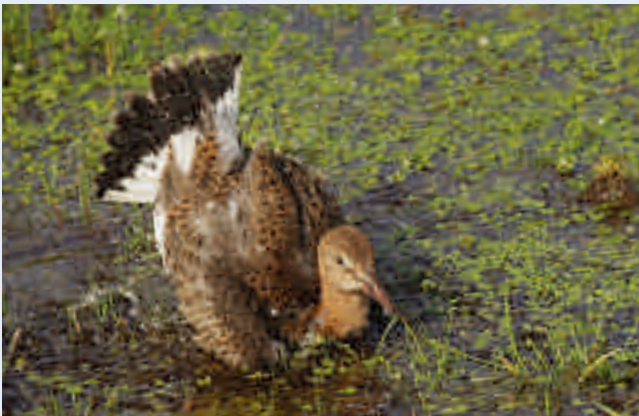


Plate 48. Black-tailed Godwit, Obs Scrape, 27th August 2016. © Lee Gregory

The only spring migrants were one on 3rd–4th May and two from 20th–25th May, with one remaining to 26th. Thirteen on 7th August began a strong autumn showing, with one lingering until 19th then two on 21st–22nd. Two from 26th August increased to five on 1st September, ten on 2nd–7th and 28 on 8th, the peak count for the year a number bettered only by counts of 37 and 39 in late August 2013. There were then single-figure counts that gradually dwindled to the last of the year on 30th September.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Limosa lapponica

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

One on 5th January was only the sixth winter record for the isle and there were spring records on 13th and 27th May. An early autumn record involved a breeding-plumaged adult on 1st July and there were then two on 11th July followed by a single on 19th–26th July.

Turnstone

Arenaria interpres

Common winter, spring and autumn migrant

Table 2. Maximum monthly counts of Turnstone on Fair Isle 2016 compared with previous ten-year average

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2006–15 average	133	120	128	128	55	12	35	74	102	183	158	135
2016 count	200	141	151	136	89	31	129	95	182	190	126	236

Counts were again high in both winter periods, with the year's peak occurring on 18th December. Spring passage was slightly better than average, whilst a rise in numbers to 129 on 27th July was an early date for such a high count.

Knot

Calidris canutus

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring, rare in winter

Winter records have become more regular in recent years and a single seen irregularly throughout January until the end of March was the fifth in the last seven years. The next sighting was not until 22nd June and there were then no more until regular sightings from 18th July until 1st August, peaking at six on 20th. After 17 arrived on 7th August there were almost daily sightings of single figures throughout the rest of the month and during September. After two on 1st October, one lingered in the Haven until the rather late date of 24th November.



Plate 49. Knot, North Haven, 8th October 2016. © Lee Gregory

Ruff

Calidris pugnax

Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring

A juvenile at Barkland on 31st July was a typical arrival date (autumn passage started between 29th–31st July in four of the previous five years), with up to two present until 7th August. One on 16th August began a run of regular sightings that built to a peak of 19 on 26th August. After 12 on 2nd September there were single-figure counts regularly until the last of the year on 19th September.

Sanderling

Calidris alba

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

Spring passage was restricted to one on 28th–29th April, two on 3rd May and up to two from 16th–29th May. Autumn passage began early, with one on 17th July, numbers then increasing to nine by 28th, with regular sightings in August, particularly the second half of the month when numbers rose to 13 on 25th. Daily sightings in September peaked at 16 on 18th and four were still present in early October, with one lingering until 19th. Severe gales on 26th December brought three to South Light, a very rare winter occurrence.

Dunlin

Calidris alpina

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred (last suspected in 2015)

A single on 12th January was the only winter occurrence, with no more recorded until spring passage commenced on 2nd May. There were then regular sightings until 18th June, which included a noticeable build up in mid-May, peaking at an impressive 48 on 20th. There was no repeat of 2015's suspected breeding record, although a bird was singing at Da Water in early June. Autumn passage began on 10th July, with single-figure counts regularly throughout the month until 30 on 27th. Numbers throughout August had increased to 56 by the end of the month, and counts remained high into September, with the year's peak of 65 occurring on 11th. From 30th September until 22nd October there were virtually daily records of single figures, with the last of the year being three on 10th November.

Purple Sandpiper

Calidris maritima

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, also overwinters in smaller numbers



Plate 50. Purple Sandpiper, South Harbour, 24th October 2016.
© Lee Gregory

An unusually high count of 45 on 1st January was the peak during the winter. There were smaller numbers throughout the rest of the early part of the year, with noticeable spring passage in late April that peaked at 89 on 20th. Records continued throughout May until 25th, with approximately 60 on 18th the highest count for the month. The only record in June was on 17th, with scattered records from 7th July increasing dramatically to 62 on 20th. There were smaller counts throughout August and September, generally of single figures, but peaking at 25 and 26 respectively. October counts were also rather low, rising in mid-month to a peak at 37 on 17th, with single figures recorded throughout the rest of the year.

Little Stint

Calidris minuta

Scarce autumn migrant, vagrant in spring

After two at North Light in foggy conditions on 3rd August there were up to two recorded regularly between 18th–27th August in a rather typical year.

Common Sandpiper

Actitis hypoleucos

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

One on 29th April was a typical arrival date, with the rest of spring passage occurring on 19 dates from 5th May until 5th June, peaking at four on 19th May. An early returnee was present on 9th July, followed by up to two on five dates from 27th July until 5th August and then the main autumn passage, which saw virtually daily sightings from 20th August until 3rd September, with peaks of seven on 22nd and 26th. One on 13th September was the last record for the month, with a rather late individual present from 14th–20th October.



Plate 51. Common Sandpiper (left) with Rock Pipit, South Harbour, 23rd August 2016. © Lee Gregory

Green Sandpiper

Tringa ochropus

Regular spring and autumn migrant

One on 5th–6th April was the earliest-ever Fair Isle record (the previous record was 8th April 1979), with another early bird on 10th–11th April, but just one more spring sighting, on 18th May. A quiet autumn passage saw records on ten dates between 26th July and 26th August, all of single birds.

Greenshank

Tringa nebularia

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

The quietest spring passage since 2012 saw just a single recorded on 18th May. Autumn passage began with one on 24th July and there were then none until the year's peak of three on 16th August, with regular sightings of single birds from 21st August to 13th September.



Plate 52. Wood Sandpiper, Da Water, 25th May 2016. © Steve Arlow

Wood Sandpiper

Tringa glareola

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

One flew north over Setter on 12th May, two were present from 18th to 20th May (with one of them singing on the latter date), the first multiple occurrence in the spring since 2012, and one was at Da Water on 25th–26th May. The only autumn occurrence was a bird on Golden Water and Easter Lothar Water on 3rd–4th August.

Redshank

Tringa totanus

Common migrant in winter, spring and autumn migrant; has bred (1993, 1994 and 2015)

There were around 20 in the first winter period and spring passage was unremarkable, with no more than 33 recorded. Although displaying was noted around Da Water then Pund in early April, the few birds that remained throughout May and June were usually on the coast, rather than in suitable nesting habitat and there was no repeat of 2015's successful breeding. Autumn passage became more pronounced from early July with the first juveniles noted passing through from 20th and a peak of 50 birds on 27th. After a decrease in early August, numbers built up to 59 on 20th, with good numbers throughout September peaking at 65 on 10th. October numbers also remained fairly steady, although increased to 80 on 30th and over 60 were still present in early November. Numbers then decreased, with up to 34 recorded throughout the winter.

Jack Snipe

Lymnocyptes minimus

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring

A couple of records in January suggested that birds had overwintered, but sightings on 22nd March and up to two on several dates from 31st March to 13th April presumably involved spring migrants,

especially when birds appeared in less traditional areas such as Bunes and Dronger, with the last of the spring on 27th April. After the first of the autumn on 6th September there were regular records of up to eight throughout the rest of the month. October saw an increase in numbers, with 22 on 2nd–3rd, rising to 28 on 6th. After a slight lull in numbers, another wave of arrivals in mid-month brought 24 on 14th which rose to 34 on 17th, although after 26 the following day, all counts for the rest of the month were of ten or less. Occasional sightings right through November included late migrants and possibly a small number of birds that were set to overwinter.

Woodcock

Scolopax rusticola

Frequent late-autumn migrant, smaller numbers in spring and winter

Up to seven in January was a larger number than usual for winter, although this species is no doubt under-recorded at this time of year. Spring passage was represented by up to two on four dates between 31st March and 13th April, with a late bird on 2nd May. One on 19th September was an early returning bird, and there were no more until 1st October, after which sightings were regular until the end of the month. Waves of arrivals were indicated by 12 on 6th, 50 on 15th and 20 on 26th. Small numbers were regularly seen in early November, although at least 30 were counted during Sheep Hill on 2nd, with just scattered records later in the year.



Plate 53. Woodcock, Mast, 14th October 2016. © Lee Gregory

Snipe

Gallinago gallinago

Common spring and autumn migrant, some overwinter; breeds in small numbers

Present throughout the winter in reasonable numbers, although there were no specific counts made. Spring numbers peaked at 62 on 30th March, with generally around 30 from mid-April and throughout May. Drumming was first noted on 7th March and at least 19 territories were recorded. Autumn numbers were unremarkable until an influx in mid-September brought 104 on 16th, with later high counts including 91 on 27th September, 97 on 7th and 91 on 21st October, with census otherwise generally producing around 60. There were at least 50 still present in December, although the lack of census at this time means numbers present were likely to be higher.

*Great Snipe

Gallinago media

Vagrant; around 45 previous records, mostly autumn (three previous spring records in FIBO period)

A large, 'croaking' snipe flushed from near Da Water on 13th September and between Da Water and Klinger's Geo the following day finally gave good-enough views on 18th September to confirm the suspected identification of this ten-gallon *Gallinago*. It continued to prove elusive however, and generally avoided any attempts at twitching it. Even when it reappeared on 26th and 27th September, first near Busta then again at Da Water, it was only seen by a small number of people. This was the first record since 2011 of this species, which has become much harder to see on Fair Isle since the turn of the millennium.



Plate 54. Great Snipe, Kirki Mire, 18th September 2016. © Lee Gregory

Pomarine Skua

Stercorarius pomarinus

Rare spring and autumn migrant; at least 97 previous records of around 123 individuals, most May–June and September–October

Recorded for the fifth consecutive year, although with the only records relating to single pale-phase adults from the Good Shepherd IV on 19th May and 16th August it was a much quieter than 2015's impressive performance.

Arctic Skua

Stercorarius parasiticus



Plate 55. Arctic Skua mobbing sheep, Bull's Park, 5th June 2016. © Ian Andrews

Frequent passage migrant, breeds in small numbers

The first was over Brecks on 23rd April, two days earlier than 2015, with numbers rising to 23 by 2nd May. Breeding numbers were the same as 2015, with 37 apparently occupied territories. The first chicks were seen on 22nd June, on Bunes, with these also being the first to fledge, on 19th July. The 12 chicks that fledged resulted in productivity increasing by 18.5% to 0.32 chicks fledged per pair in comparison to 2015 (only one

chick fledged from 2011 to 2013 so the years since then have been more positive). One pair didn't lay eggs, and no pairs failed at egg stage, in comparison to 48.65% in 2015 and 20% in 2014 that failed at this point. The majority of failures were due to large (usually near-fledged) chicks being predated, presumably by Great Skuas, although some small chicks also apparently succumbed to the weather and two pairs failed when adults were killed (with Great Skuas again implicated). Despite this, three pairs fledged two chicks (at Bunes, the Mast and Furse) and six fledged a single chick. Two of the fledged chicks were probably predated before leaving the island, but the others appeared to survive. By the end of August, only a handful remained, with one lingering until 18th September, with two on 29th September the last of the year.

*Long-tailed Skua

Stercorarius longicaudus

Rare migrant; 51 previous records of 107 individuals, occurs in spring (May–June) and autumn (July–October), mostly in small numbers, but peak day counts in spring of 40 (May 2015) and autumn of seven (September 1988)

A juvenile that drifted south over the Hill Dyke and down the west of the island on 26th September was the first autumn record since 1997.



Plate 56. Long-tailed Skua, over Hoini, 26th September 2016. © Mark Breaks

Great Skua

Stercorarius skua

Frequent passage migrant, breeds in moderate numbers

One on Mire o' Vatnagaard on 14th March was three days earlier than the previous earliest-ever record for the isle (in 2009). There were no more until 27th March, with numbers then rising slowly until 97 were logged on 20th April. Copulating was noted from 9th May, with the first eggs found in Suka Mire on 16th May (a day earlier than 2015). The breeding season saw a huge increase in numbers, with 516 apparently occupied territories (almost all producing a breeding attempt that reached at least egg stage), the highest-ever number recorded (and considerably higher than the previous record of 424 AOT recorded in 2014). The first chicks were recorded on 8th June, with birds fledging over a protracted period; the first were noted on 23rd July, with others not taking to the wing until mid-September. Productivity was lower than 2015, but the figure of 0.66 chicks per AOT was still the second highest in the last decade. Good numbers remained throughout the autumn, with counts finally dropping to single figures in late October. Two were off South Light on 7th November, which were the last of the year other than a flightless juvenile bird that survived at Easter Lothar from at least 4th November until 19th December when it was found in a weak state and died. Quite what it was surviving on during that time wasn't clear, perhaps a mixture of carrion and fish regurgitates from the large gull roost that builds up in that area in early winter.



Plate 57. Puffin, Bunness, 5th June 2016. © Ian Andrews

Puffin

Fratercula arctica

Common summer visitor, breeds in large numbers (last count 6,666 individuals in 2015), rare in winter

Winter records are unusual and the first this year was on 18th January, the first record for that month since 2003. There were no more until the more expected date of 28th March, with the first seen coming ashore on 5th April and numbers building up from mid-month. There was no count of the breeding population this year, with chicks first noted from 9th June. Productivity decreased slightly, with 0.64 chicks per egg laid being the lowest since 2012 (but just marginally less than 2015), although it may have been higher had there not been a pair of Great Skuas regularly hunting the Greenholm colony in the latter part of the breeding season (at least one monitored nest failed after one of the adults was found predated). The last few were still on the cliffs on 22nd August and after that there were just a few offshore records until 19th September.

Black Guillemot

Cephus grylle

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers

Poor weather for seabird monitoring meant that only one census count could be carried out for the east coast population plot of breeding plumaged adults, with the total of 189 recorded on 31st March being slightly lower than in 2015 but, given the conditions, it suggested that the population was holding steady. The first fledgling was noted in South Harbour on the typical date of 14th August.

Razorbill

Alca torda

Common summer visitor, breeds in large numbers (1,930 individuals in 2015)

Eight on 26th February were the first of the year, with just occasional sightings until good numbers returned on 29th March, with birds present on the cliffs irregularly from the following day until the end of April when they settled. The plot count at Lericum saw a 34.1% increase, with the 30 individuals recorded being the highest since 2006. The first eggs were seen in Dog Geo on 9th May, the first chick at Easter Lothar on 6th June and fledged youngsters were noted from 30th June, with the breeding season producing a very impressive 0.74 chicks fledged per egg laid, the best productivity since 1998. By the end of July, the species was gone from the cliffs and there were just scattered records of up to eight offshore from 31st August until 20th October, with one found dead in North Haven on 27th November.

Little Auk

Alle alle

Regular late autumn migrant and winter visitor in smaller numbers

For the first time since 2011 there were none in the first winter period, with one off Hjukni Geo on 23rd October and two (singles in South Haven and from the Good Shepherd IV) on 25th. Seawatching from South Light in early November produced eight on 7th (the highest land-based count since 2011), two on 9th and a single on 11th, with the last of the year on 18th November in the Haven.

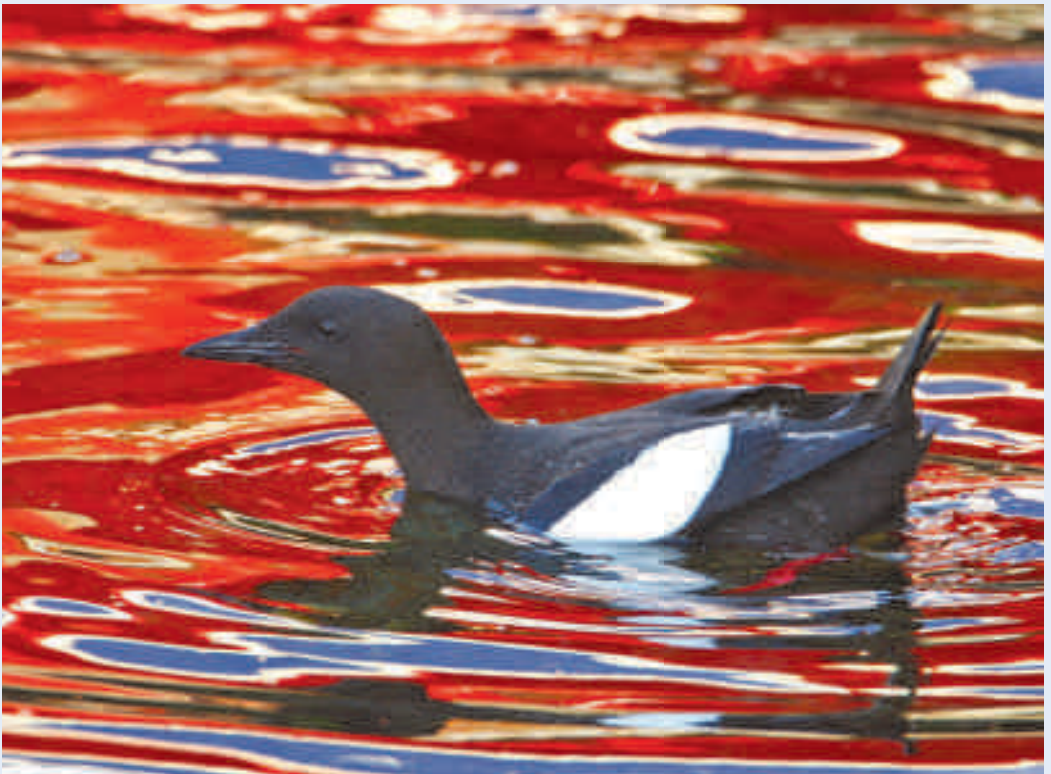


Plate 58. Black Guillemot, North Haven, 29th May 2016. © Steve Arlow

Guillemot

Uria aalge

Common passage migrant, breeds in large numbers (20,924 individuals in 2015)

Birds were present irregularly in the early winter period, with 15 on the February Beached Bird Survey demonstrating the hardships of trying to survive winter in the North Sea. One found dead on 10th February was oiled, with analysis from SOTEAG suggesting an illegal bilge discharge or accidental release being to blame. Birds returned to the cliffs from late February, although did not settle until late April, and breeding numbers in the population plots showed a 1.8% decline from 2015. The first egg was seen at Dog Geo on 8th May, with chicks noted from 11th June at Da Swadin and productivity decreasing to 0.45 chicks per apparently incubating adult. There were none seen from the island in August (although a couple were observed from the Good Shepherd IV), then small numbers could often be seen from seawatches in the autumn. Larger numbers were offshore in early December and, during 12th–13th December at least, birds had returned to the cliffs, although they departed again in the stormy weather later in the month.

Sandwich Tern

Sterna sandvicensis

Scarce spring and summer migrant, rare in autumn

One that passed South Light on 27th July was just the fourth record in the last seven years and the first July occurrence since 2007.

Common Tern

Sterna hirundo

Regular summer visitor, formerly bred in small numbers (until 2005, with one pair in 2012 and 2014–2015)

In what was one of the quietest-ever years for this species on Fair Isle, the only records were of singles on 9th June and 1st August.



Plate 59. Arctic Tern, Bunes, 30th May 2016. © Steve Arlow

Arctic Tern

Sterna paradisaea

Frequent summer visitor, breeds in small numbers

After an early 'commic' tern on 29th April, there were no further sightings until 15 on 6th May, with counts slowly increasing to 148 by 20th May. Birds were settling down to breed by late May, with the first egg seen on 4th June, although for a species struggling on Fair Isle, the discovery of several adults predated by a cat at the Rippack was sad to note. One of these had been ringed as a chick at the nearby Busta colony in 2012 and was one of only two birds to fledge from that subsite in that year. Despite this setback (and the suspicion of a similar situation at the Shalstane colony), the breeding total of 118 apparently occupied nests (88 on Bunes, 21 on Shalstane, six at the Rippack and singles at South Light, Busta and Tarryfield) was the highest since 2012. Chicks were first seen on 29th June, with the first two fledging from Bunes on 20th July and a breeding productivity of 0.23 chicks per AON representing the most productive season since 2009. A few first-summer birds were noted during the summer, peaking at eight on 2nd July, and 120 birds on Bunes on 7th August may have involved some migrants from other colonies, although there was no late-summer build-up on the island this year. Numbers dropped to less than 20 from 21st August and there were scattered records in September until five on 12th, which were the last for the year.

Kittiwake

Rissa tridactyla

Common passage migrant, breeds in moderate numbers (859 AON in 2015)

Small numbers were seen occasionally offshore in the first winter period, with the first large arrival on the cliffs on 5th April. There was no whole-island count, although the population plots showed an increase of 15.2% compared to 2015. The first eggs were noted on 26th May, chicks on 26th June and fledged birds on 31st July and it turned out to be the best year for productivity for this species since 2000, with the 0.75 chicks fledged per apparently occupied nest representing a 476.9% increase from 2015. However, seven of the ten monitoring plots had no breeding attempts at all in 2016, whilst only the Holms and Dog Geo plot produced any fledglings. From late August, there were very few birds remaining around the island, although there were scattered records of variable (but small) numbers offshore until the end of the year.

Black-headed Gull

Chroicocephalus ridibundus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

There were up to five irregularly in the early part of the year. Spring passage increased slightly from late March, although other than 21 on 20th April, counts were never above single figures. Small numbers were recorded throughout May and June, with autumn passage noted from 2nd July when 35 were present. The first juveniles were recorded moving through from 11th July, whilst numbers increased later in the month, including a peak of 38 on 21st July. Although birds were present throughout August and September, counts were in low numbers, with the next notable peak not until 28th October when 45 were recorded. There were just occasional November records and the species was almost absent in December until five arrived on 25th December and remained until the end of the year.

*Mediterranean Gull

Larus melanocephalus

Vagrant; one previous record (October 1995)

A surely long-overdue second record occurred when a magnificent adult was found at Haa on 2nd July during a day that saw an increased number of Black-headed Gulls present. After feeding in a gull flock for a short length of time, it flew off high to the south with the Black-headed Gulls. Given the increased number of this species occurring in the United Kingdom generally and Scotland in particular, it seems likely that other records will follow on Fair Isle, with spring passage of Black-headed and Common Gulls a likely time for any such occurrences.

Common Gull

Larus canus

Common spring and autumn migrant, breeds in small numbers

Present throughout the winter with a peak of 22 on 11th January. Between ten and 40 birds were typically present during the spring, although waves of passage included a peak of 174 on 10th and 94 on 13th April. The first egg was noted on 16th May, with ten pairs nesting (seven on Goorn, two on Buness and one in Kirki Mire) and productivity appearing good, with the first fledged chick noted on 12th July. A few small groups were recorded passing right through the summer and the first large arrival was at the end of July, with numbers rising to a peak of 269 on 28th. Although early August saw just single-figure counts, there was another surge that brought 199 on 17th. In September, there were variable counts of up to 60, with further waves of migration in October seeing 120 on 4th and 95 on 15th, although most days saw just single figures recorded. Small numbers were again present throughout the winter.



Plate 60. Common Gull, Meadow Burn, 6th September 2016. © Lee Gregory

Lesser Black-backed Gull

Larus fuscus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The first was on 12th–14th March, an early first arrival date. There were then regular sightings from 27th March, although counts didn't reach double figures until 15 on 26th April. Numbers were generally higher in May, peaking at 26 on 15th, the highest count of the spring. Five pairs nested, including one on Bunes, the first nesting pair away from the main breeding site of Goorn since 2007. The first sign of autumn passage was 44 on 3rd August, although other than 34 on 1st September, counts were generally of less than ten. An adult *L.f.intermedius* was on Meoness on 9th September; this subspecies is a scarce passage visitor to Fair Isle, although may well be overlooked. Two juveniles lingered well into October, and one on 7th–9th November was the second latest-ever Fair Isle record.

Herring Gull

Larus argentatus

Common migrant, breeds in small numbers

As usual, the species was present throughout the year, with no significant counts noted. The total of 44 pairs that bred (38 on Goorn, three on Greenholm, two on Dronger and one in South Feltsigeo) was just two less than in 2015. The breeding season appeared successful, with the 53 pulli ringed being the highest number since 1992, whilst the first fledged youngster was noted on Goorn on 12th July.

Iceland Gull

Larus glaucooides

Scarce migrant in winter and spring

There were none in the early part of the year for the first time since 2010, with the first record not until 14th October, when an adult was in a large gull flock near the airstrip. An adult was recorded on three dates from 7th–16th November, there was then a juvenile on 30th November and sightings in December of a second-winter on 5th, a juvenile on 14th and two juveniles on 21st.

Glaucous Gull

Larus hyperboreus

Regular migrant in spring, late autumn and winter

There were two in January then an adult and juvenile were seen on several dates through February and until 22nd March. A juvenile over the Wirvie Burn on 8th October was the only sighting of the month, but a productive winter period began with sightings on eight November dates from 4th, peaking at three on 16th, and involving at least four birds. There were then five (an adult and four juveniles) on 10th December, with singles on five more dates until 21st December, when there were again five (a second-winter and four juveniles), with regular sightings until the end of the year that peaked at three on 26th–27th, but involved at least five individuals.



Plate 61. Glaucous Gull, Wirvie Burn, 8th October 2016. © Lee Gregory

Great Black-backed Gull

Larus marinus

Common migrant, breeds in small numbers

The species was seen throughout the year, although few counts were made. Copulating was noted on Landberg from 16th April, although the presence of 153 on Vaasetter on 21st April presumably involved breeding birds from further north that had not yet returned to their nesting grounds. There were six nesting pairs recorded: at North Light, Goom, Sheep Rock, Da Burrian, Greenholm and Dronger.

Rock Dove

Columba livia

Resident, breeds in small numbers

The first fledged youngster was at the Obs on 30th June, a month later than in 2015. There were few counts made during the year, but 93 were recorded on 1st November, the second-highest count on record, after 97 on 9th October 1985 (although it should be noted that this species is not routinely counted on daily census). The large count included 80 in a single flock at Burkle, whilst the 13 others will have represented an undercount of birds elsewhere on the island as there was no specific census done on that date.



Plate 62. Woodpigeons, Walli Burn, 25th October 2016. © Ian Andrews

Woodpigeon

Columba palumbus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

An unusually early migrant was present on 25th–26th January. The next was not until 1st–2nd March, with regular sightings from 11th March rising at the end of the month to 12, with the increase continuing to reach a spring peak of 19 on 5th April, then a gradual decrease until just single figures remained from 16th until the month's end. Daily sightings from 2nd–25th May included peaks of 17 on 6th–7th and 18 on 23rd, then up to three were seen until early June and there were

occasional sightings of up to two throughout the summer. Three on 14th September were probably the first autumn migrants, with regular sightings from 30th September. A gradual increase in numbers preceded an influx of 37 on 15th October, with the autumn peak of 39 on 25th, the second-highest autumn count on record. There were still 14 by early November, with numbers dwindling to the last of the year that lingered until 28th November.

Collared Dove

Streptopelia decaocto

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

One from 1st–3rd April was joined by a second on 2nd, with one also on 19th April. Passage was more regular during May and included peaks of five on 6th and nine on 22nd. There were regular sightings of up to three throughout June and until 21st July, with the only autumn record involving one on 11th September.

Turtle Dove

Streptopelia turtur

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

There were three spring records for the second consecutive year, with individuals on 22nd–26th May, 14th June and 29th–30th June. The first of these birds made history when it was found in a park in the Faeroes on 30th June where it had its ring read in the field!

Cuckoo

Cuculus canorus

Scarce migrant, mostly in spring, rarer in autumn, has bred (most recently in 2002)

The first was a singing bird on the slightly early date of 7th May, with two on 22nd May, one remaining until 24th. Sightings from 2nd–6th June could all have involved the same bird in what was a fairly quiet spring for the species, whilst there were no autumn records for the first time since 2012.



Plate 63. Cuckoo, Springfield, 5th June 2016. © Ian Andrews



Plate 64. Short-eared Owl, Sukka Mire, 8th October 2016. © Lee Gregory

Long-eared Owl

Asio otus

Regular autumn migrant, less common in spring, with occasional records in summer and winter

An overwintering bird remained at the Obs until at least 4th February, with spring passage seeing one from 10th–12th April and possibly the same bird from 15th April until 8th May, when it was found dead, having been oiled by Fulmars. A final spring record concerned one at Da Water on 15th May. A series of mid-summer records included singles around the area of the Obs on 4th and 17th–24th July and 5th and 22nd–24th August, which may just have involved one individual, although it appeared badly Fulmar-oiled at the end of July. Summer occurrences are by no means regular, although this was the second consecutive year to produce such an intriguing record. One at Brecks on 7th October was the first of the autumn, with records on seven more dates in October, including two on 25th. An adult female trapped at the Obs on 3rd November remained until at least 2nd December (although it became oiled during that time), with another at Stackhoull on 13th November.

Short-eared Owl

Asio flammeus

Regular spring and autumn migrant

There were sightings of a single on five dates from 29th March to 8th April and then from 27th April sightings became more regular, with numbers building in mid-May to five on 18th–19th and nine on 20th, a record spring count. Numbers then decreased rapidly, with up to three seen until mid-June and a single recorded until 29th. Autumn passage was late starting and was restricted to the period 4th–31st October, with peaks of nine on 7th and 13 on 16th showing that good numbers were moving through.

Swift

Apus apus

Frequent migrant, most in summer and early autumn

There were records of one or two on six dates from 23rd May to 12th June, with late June occurrences of six on 22nd, ten on 26th and one on 29th. Seven arrived on 9th July with one still on 11th–12th, then eight on 18th–19th July gradually decreased to two by 23rd July. There were regular records from 21st August until 22nd September that peaked at six on 29th August, with records after 4th September possibly referring to just a single lingering individual.

*Hoopoe

Upupa epops

Vagrant; 40 previous records (25 in spring, 15 in autumn)

One on 27th May was a late record and the first since 2012. It was found as it flew in front of the Obs people carrier, which was full of happy birders on their way back from a Rustic Bunting twitch, at Midway. After being seen on the Houll for a short time, it played cat and mouse with observers around the Meadow Burn and Quoy area for the evening, although most people managed at least a flight view.

Wryneck

Jynx torquilla

Regular spring and autumn migrant

One was in Field Ditch on 9th May, with probably a different bird in Furse on 10th–11th May, making it another quiet spring. Autumn was better, with two arriving on 19th August and three present the following day. There were then three on 23rd, two on 25th and one on 28th August and September records on 5th–6th and 17th. The remains of one found in a Bonxie pellet on Suka Mire on 25th September were thought most likely to involve a bird from earlier in the autumn. October sightings are scarce; one on 6th was the latest record since 2006 and brought the autumn total to an impressive 12 individuals.

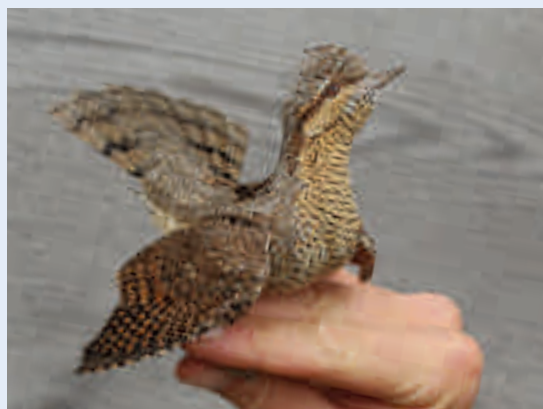


Plate 65. Wryneck, Obs, 19th August 2016. © Lee Gregory

Kestrel

Falco tinnunculus

Regular spring and autumn migrant

One on 20th March was the earliest arrival since 2011, with another on 13th–14th April and then daily sightings during 8th–23rd May, which included peaks of five on 11th and 18th May, representing good counts for the spring. There were later spring migrants on 5th and 20th–21st June and then one on 21st–28th July, which was the first July record since 2008. There were regular records from 13th August, which built to a peak of four by the end of the month, and then daily sightings of up to three in September, other than a peak of four on 22nd. There were still two in early October, increasing to three by 8th then, after numbers dropped for a few days, they built up again to four by 17th, with the last of the year seen the following day.

Merlin

Falco columbarius

Regular spring and autumn migrant, small numbers overwinter

A female was seen periodically throughout January and occasional sightings in February and early March may have referred to the same bird. From 22nd March until 29th April there were up to two, although sightings probably involved a series of individuals moving through, and there were later spring sightings on 10th–14th and 20th May. After the first autumn record on 25th August, numbers increased to two by the end of the month, with three singles in the first half of September then regular sightings in the second half of the month, increasing to three by 29th. There were still three in early October, then sightings of one or two throughout the rest of the month, three again in early November and at least two remained until the end of the year.

Peregrine

Falco peregrinus

Regular spring and autumn migrant; bred regularly until 1973 then again in 2008–2009 and 2013–2014 and suspected to have attempted in 2015

At least two were seen in early January, although there were no further sightings until one in late March. There was a single on just five dates in April, suggesting there would be no repeat of recent breeding attempts. May produced sightings of different individuals on 6th and 25th but there were no further records until the autumn. There was then a juvenile on 30th August before sightings on 3rd–4th and 13th September preceded regular sightings from 27th September until 4th November that involved at least five individuals. There were then irregular sightings of at least two birds until the end of the year.

Golden Oriole

Oriolus oriolus

Rare migrant; 47 previous records (40 in spring, seven in autumn)

Recorded for the second year in succession when a female-type bird was found at Stackhoull on 15th June, before showing well in the area for several hours.



Plate 66. Golden Oriole, Stackhoull, 15th June 2016. © Lee Gregory

Red-backed Shrike

Lanius collurio

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Two males arrived on 10th May, with five birds, including four males, present the next day and five (including three females) again on 12th. There were daily sightings until 29th May, which included another peak of five on 15th, up to three until 20th and single birds thereafter, with probably 11 individuals involved. Later females arrived on 10th and 20th June. The quietest autumn since 2010 saw a single juvenile present from 21st–26th August.

Great Grey Shrike

Lanius excubitor

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

A first-summer bird at the Sheep Cru on 6th April was later trapped at the Double Dyke and lingered until 11th April, the first spring record since 2014. There were three in October, with a single on 4th–5th (whose prey items included a Norwegian-ringed Blackcap) followed by daily sightings from 13th–31st, during which time first-winter birds were trapped and ringed in the Plantation on 17th and 22nd proving that at least two individuals were involved in the sightings.

*Woodchat Shrike

Lanius senator

Vagrant; 29 previous records (14 spring, one mid-summer, 14 autumn)

A superb male was found between Lower Leogh and Utra on 11th May and lingered in the south of the island, usually between Burkle and Kenaby, until 24th May. It could be incredibly elusive, often only being seen once a day before vanishing, despite being searched for. It was seen feeding (presumably on insects) on the ground on occasions, which may explain why it could be hard to find at times. It was only the second in the last decade, with the two most recent records occurring in 2006 and 2011.



Plate 67. Woodchat Shrike, Meoness, 22nd May 2016.
© Steve Arlow

Jackdaw

Corvus monedula

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

The quietest spring since 2011 saw just one record, with a bird present from 19th–23rd March, whilst the only autumn record was on 22nd November, continuing the recent run of very few records for this species.

Rook

Corvus frugilegus

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

There was one on 4th March, another from 23rd–27th March and then two on 7th April, with one seen occasionally throughout the rest of the month. Three arrived on 15th May and a late migrant was present from 20th–21st June. Most autumn records are in October and November, so the sightings on 17th and 29th August were rather early and there were then regular sightings of one from 11th–30th September.

Carrion Crow

Corvus corone

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

An unusual winter record concerned one on 23rd February, with another early sighting on 16th March. There was one on 1st April, then regular sightings from 12th April until 1st June. Numbers built to seven by the end of April, with an influx in early May seeing a peak of 43 on 5th, although counts dropped to single figures by 7th. Other than ten on 15th and 23rd May, other records were presumably lingering birds. Two remained throughout the rest of the summer and autumn, usually in the vicinity of South Light, with both still present at the end of the year. Occasional counts of between three and five from 20th August until 30th October showed that there were also a few migrants on the move during that time.

Hooded Crow

Corvus cornix

Regular spring and autumn migrant and also resident, breeds in small numbers

As usual, the species was present throughout the year, with between three and five pairs breeding. The first fledged young were seen on 23rd June, although several of the fledglings were found dead after being oiled by Fulmars. There appeared to be a small number of migrants (peaking at seven) in late April and early May, just before the main Carrion Crow movement, whilst in the autumn a flock that built up from late September peaked at 18 on 10th October and presumably also included migrants.

Carrion x Hooded Crow *Corvus corone x C. cornix*

The only records confidently attributed to this hybrid combination were on 3rd–7th May and 4th–13th and 29th June.

Raven

Corvus corax

Resident, breeds in small numbers, also regular spring and autumn migrant

There were probably three territories occupied this year, with the first fledged youngsters noted in Gunnawark on 4th June. Although small numbers of migrant Ravens may slip through Fair Isle undetected, a group of 12 migrants on 8th April was fairly obvious, whilst a single bird on 22nd April was also a migrant.

Goldcrest

Regulus regulus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first was on the typical arrival date of 14th March, with up to four until 17th, four on 26th then an arrival from 29th that increased to 27 the following day. Sightings were almost daily from then until 7th May, with an arrival early in April peaking at 37 on 6th but just single-figure counts from 16th. The last of the spring was on 22nd May. Singles on 25th and 27th August and 1st–2nd September were the first returning birds, with daily sightings from 7th September to 31st October. Sightings in September peaked at 13 on 11th, but the main arrival period was in early October, with 102 on 4th, increasing to 129 on 6th and 213 the following day then, after a drop in numbers, 181 were counted on 12th. From 13th until the month's end there were no more than 59, with just single figures from 27th, then scattered sightings until the last two on 7th November.

Blue Tit

Cyanistes caeruleus

Vagrant: ten previous records of 13 individuals (one April, 12 from October to December)

One was found on the cliffs at Kroga Geo on 15th October, before moving to Easter Lothar on 16th–17th and then South Harbour on 18th–20th before it was found dead at Quoy, having been predated by a cat. The first eight records of this species all occurred before 1990, but this represents the third individual since 2012.



Plate 68. Blue Tit, South Harbour, 18th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Skylark

Alauda arvensis

Common spring and autumn migrant, small numbers overwinter; breeds in small numbers

There were a few counts of less than ten in the first winter period, with numbers starting to rise from mid-February and strong passage noted in March, with a spring peak of 303 on the last day of the month when birds were seen coming in off the sea at North Light as visible migration indicated the arrival of spring! Numbers remained high in the first week of April, but then started to tail off with around 140 recorded by the end of the month, with counts dropping to between 65 and 110 as many birds settled into the breeding season during May. Food carrying was first noted on 29th May, with chicks fledging from 18th June, although there was no count of breeding numbers. Counts in late August were generally 20–50, with notable passage occurring in late September, with a count of 230 on 26th the peak for the month. Numbers dwindled to regular counts of around 50 in early October until the next wave of migration saw an increase from mid-month and the autumn's peak of 245 recorded on 19th. Good numbers remained in early November and a mild start to the winter saw up to 11 recorded in December, although the total of wintering birds was probably higher.

*Shore Lark

Eremophila alpestris

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

The first spring record since 2012 was seen over Setter on 29th May, but it was the autumn that really stood out for this species. The first was on Dronger on 12th October, with five (including a flock of three at Lerness; the first autumn flock since 1991) on 16th preceding daily census records until 31st October. During this time flocks frequented the Naaversgills, South Light, Meoness and Buness (the latter producing the largest single flock when four were present on 31st) and there was a peak of seven on 17th–18th, with scattered singles elsewhere. The last was at Skadan on 8th November, producing an estimated autumn total of 14 individuals. The previous nine years had seen just six individuals recorded, so 2016 bucked the recent trend somewhat.



Plate 69. Shore Lark, South Green, 17th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

*Short-toed Lark

Calandrella brachydactyla

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; 162 previous records of 177 individuals

With an unbroken record of annual occurrences stretching back to 1963, this species is remarkably regular in its occurrences without ever being common. This year produced two typical records, with a mobile bird found at Setter but roaming as far as Brecks during 2nd–8th May then a popular, confiding bird that lingered around the water tanks at Tarryfield from 14th September until 7th October.



Plate 70. Short-toed Lark, Tarryfield, 3rd October 2016. © Steve Arlow

*Calandra Lark

Melanocorypha calandra

Vagrant; five previous records in 1978, 1999, 2000, 2008 and 2014 all in April and May

One of these magnificent beasts was found by Utra Scrape on 10th May, just as the fog cleared the south-west of the island. It remained in the same area until 13th May, often showing well, and became the longest-staying Calandra Lark on Fair Isle. On its first afternoon, a Sparrowhawk flew low over the area where it was feeding, which flushed all the other birds present (including a Little Ringed Plover, which was never seen again), but the Calandra remained in place and relied on crouching low and still as its defence; a similar tactic was adopted when a Bonxie made a low pass.

Sand Martin

Riparia riparia

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

One around the Obs on 2nd April was the joint-earliest-ever record, although there were no more until one on 21st April. Two on 5th May increased to 21 on 6th, the second highest-ever count for Fair Isle (bettered only by 28 on 28th May 1969), although only three remained the following day and there were singles on seven other dates in the month until 28th. Early autumn migrants included two on 7th and one on 26th July, with up to two from 23rd–26th August, two more on both 31st August and 17th September and a single on 19th September.

Swallow

Hirundo rustica

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; occasionally breeds (last recorded 2015)

One on 5th April was on a slightly earlier than average arrival date and there were up to three on 15 more dates during the month, including one seen from a yacht 11 kilometres south of the island on 20th April - migration in action! There were daily sightings throughout May until 14th June, with peaks of 98 on 6th and 56 on 22nd May, although by June numbers were generally down to single figures other than an arrival that peaked at 19 on 5th. There was at least one present throughout the summer, often singing at the Mast, but there was no indication of a repeat of last year's breeding success. Autumn passage was rather quiet, beginning with ten on 15th August and rising to 16 by 30th, but just single figures were recorded throughout September. A late burst of activity brought 17 on 1st October with 19 the following day, then single-figure counts until 10th October.

House Martin

Delichon urbicum

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred (last recorded in 1986)

The earliest-ever record involved one over Lower Stoneybrek on 4th April (beating the previous record of 10th April 2011) with other records for the month occurring on 12th and 20th. Regular sightings from 5th May increased to 14 the following day, with single figures for the rest of the month other than the spring peak of 21 on 22nd. The only June records were on 5th–6th, 21st and 23rd. Autumn passage began on 30th August and involved up to three on ten dates until 20th September.

*Red-rumped Swallow

Cecropis daurica

Vagrant; nine previous records, eight in spring, one in autumn

The first record since 2012 occurred when one was found hawking over Hesti Geo and Utra Scrape on 5th–6th May. It showed very well at times, feeding just a couple of metres above observers' heads with a handful of other hirundines. Although the bird had a distinctive broken left tail streamer, it could not be linked to any other sightings around the UK during the spring.



Plate 71. Red-rumped Swallow, Hesti Geo, 6th May 2016. © Lee Gregory

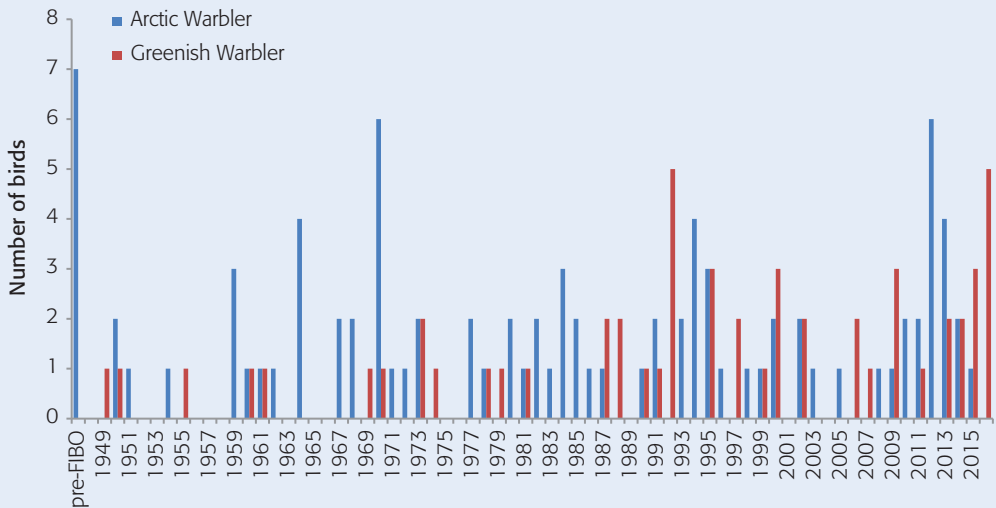
*Greenish Warbler

Phylloscopus trochiloides

Rare migrant; 49 previous records with 38 in autumn (August–September) and 11 in spring (eight in June, two in July and a single in May)

This species is going through a good run on Fair Isle, and 2016 provided the best-ever autumn for occurrences (as well as being the joint highest annual total), along with the first time the species has been recorded in four consecutive years. The first was trapped at the Obs on 19th August (although it was not seen either before or after its appearance in the mist net), with the month also providing sightings at Midway on 23rd and Hunds Heelor on 28th August. One on 4th September in South Naaversgill then Tineside was followed on 5th September by a much brighter bird at the Haa, the latest records since 1997.

Figure 1. Annual occurrences of Arctic and Greenish Warblers on Fair Isle. Note the relatively steady occurrence of Arctic Warbler, with occasional surges of greater numbers, whilst Greenish Warbler appears to occur in short bursts.



Yellow-browed Warbler

Phylloscopus inornatus

Regular autumn migrant

One on 15th–16th September had increased to four by 18th, but then freshening south-southeast winds on the afternoon of 20th brought a deluge of 54, the third-highest count for Fair Isle. Numbers dropped to 27 by the following day, with 31 on 22nd and counts dwindling to single figures by the end of the month. The remarkable day of 2nd October brought a total of 72 (including 16 trapped, which in itself was equal to the second-highest previous annual ringing total), a count beaten only by the 76 recorded on 28th September 2015. A massive clear-out saw only nine present the next day, with 15 on 7th October the next sign of an arrival and with daily records of smaller numbers until 13th. There were then records on seven dates until 24th, all singles other than four on 20th and two on 24th. A late bird was recorded on 3rd November, bringing the autumn total to an estimated minimum of 165 individuals.

*Radde's Warbler

Phylloscopus schwarzi

Vagrant; seven previous records, all in autumn (one in September, six in October)

The species was recorded for the second year in succession when one was found during the exciting fall on 2nd October in the Chapel Plantation before roaming the island as far as Upper Stoneybrek.

*Dusky Warbler

Phylloscopus fuscatus

Vagrant; 16 previous records, all in autumn (September to November)

One showed well at Barkland and Chalet on 12th October before being relocated in the Meadow Burn the following day. There have now been four records in the last four years, all in mid-October.



Plate 72. Dusky Warbler, Barkland, 12th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Wood Warbler

Phylloscopus sibilatrix

Regular spring and autumn migrant

The best spring showing since 2013 involved one in Gorsens Geo on 11th May, one in South Harbour on 15th–16th May and one trapped in the Plantation on 23rd May. A reasonable autumn showing opened with one on Dronger on 16th August, followed by one in the south of the island on 17th–18th August and one in Copper Geo on 20th, then three on 28th August and the last of the year on 4th September.

Chiffchaff

Phylloscopus collybita

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Three on 29th March were the first of the year, a slightly late arrival date. Records built up rapidly through April, with daily counts during 10th–15th of 43, 73, 79, 87, 75 and 87 respectively, which included three days in a row of new spring records being set, beating the previous highest count of 50 in April 1970. There were still 46 on 20th and 21 on 28th April with numbers dropping in early May before rising to 39 by 9th and a late wave of migrants that saw 27 by 23rd. The species has been a regular feature of the summer in recent years, and at least three birds remained this year, with singing occasionally heard, although there has not yet been a breeding attempt. The first autumn migrant was a juvenile on 20th

August, but numbers remained no higher than eight until 19 on 2nd October. This preceded a good three weeks of passage, with numbers rising to a high count of 55 on 13th and a secondary peak of 42 on 20th. There were single figure counts until 4th November, with a late bird, thought to be of *P.c.abientinus*, at the Obs on 28th November. DNA analysis of birds in the autumn confirmed the identity of birds on 17th, 18th, 20th and 24th October as being nominate *collybita*, whilst a bird trapped on 12th October was the Scandinavian and eastern European race *abientinus*.

'Siberian Chiffchaff' *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*

Although the totals above include all races, an attempt is made to accurately log the numbers of this distinctive subspecies. There were regular records from 2nd October to 4th November, peaking at just seven on 2nd and 11th October. Interestingly, only three were logged on 13th October amongst the 55 Chiffchaffs present, although by the beginning of November, all of the three remaining birds were 'Siberians'. *Tristis* birds trapped on 2nd, 4th, 12th and 22nd October had their identity confirmed by DNA analysis.

Willow Warbler

Phylloscopus trochilus

Common spring and autumn migrant

One on 5th April was slightly earlier than usual, with numbers rising to ten by 11th–12th, but otherwise there were only single-figure counts throughout the month. There were almost daily records throughout May, peaking at 19 on 9th, and one or two remained until 10th June, with a late migrant trapped on 27th June. There was one on 11th–12th July, then the first juvenile on the typical date of 5th–7th August. There were daily records from 15th August to 6th October, with a rapid rise in numbers seeing 183 logged on 28th August, the highest count since 1997, with birds seemingly in every patch of cover across the island. Counts dropped rapidly in September, with generally less than 25, although another surge of migrants saw 63 on 4th and there were still nine on 2nd October, with one lingering until 12th.



Plate 73. Willow Warbler, Dog Geo, 20th August 2016.
© Lee Gregory

Blackcap

Sylvia atricapilla

Common spring and autumn migrant

Seven on 4th April were slightly early, with up to four until 12th then one from 21st–30th April. In May there were almost daily records from 2nd until the month's end, with the only count above single figures being 13 on 9th. Up to two were present on 7th–11th June, then a late bird was trapped on 27th June. A juvenile on 20th–27th July was early, with the next not until 26th–27th August. A scatter of records in early September increased to 15 by 17th, then daily sightings in October saw 39 on 6th, another wave of arrivals in the third week bringing a peak of 86 on 18th and then a final arrival of 61 on 25th. Small numbers remained until mid-November, with late individuals on 19th and 21st.

Garden Warbler

Sylvia borin

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Usually one of the later-arriving warblers, the first was, typically, not seen until 7th May, with records on 11 more dates during the month, with a peak of five on 23rd. There were singles on seven dates in June and the last of a quiet spring was a late bird on 4th July, the first in this month since 2011. After one trapped in the Gully on 15th August there were daily records until the end of the month, peaking at seven on 23rd. Regular sightings in September peaked at just seven on 14th. Up to five were recorded on four dates in October until 8th, with one on 16th and a late bird on 31st October.

Barred Warbler

Sylvia nisoria

Regular autumn migrant, vagrant in spring (four records)

The latest arrival date since 2007 saw the first of the year not recorded until 21st August. There were then four on 28th August, with daily records until 5th September that included a new individual on 4th. September saw further records on 14th, a lingering bird at the Obs on 17th–24th and one trapped in the Plantation on 28th September. October saw a typical light scattering, with one on 1st increasing to three the next day, with the final bird of the year at the peat cuttings on 16th, bringing the autumn total to just 13 individuals.

Lesser Whitethroat

Sylvia curruca

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first was on 2nd–4th May, a typical arrival date, with almost daily sightings throughout the rest of the month peaking at just seven on 9th. There were occasional sightings until 13th June and a late migrant on 26th June. One on 20th August began a series of daily records until 7th September, with a peak of six present on 30th August, whilst regular records in September also peaked at six, on 20th. The largest arrival of the year was an impressive 13 on 2nd October, with numbers dropping away to three the following day and scattered records until 25th October. Eleven Lesser Whitethroats were trapped in the autumn, with DNA analysis of five of these (a random sample based on which birds shed feathers during the ringing process) showing that those on 4th September and 7th October were nominate *curruca*, whilst those on 2nd (two) and 25th October were of the Siberian race *blythi*.

*Subalpine Warbler

Sylvia cantillans

Rare migrant; 90 previous records (86 in spring and four in autumn). Most currently unraced, although at least 15 thought to be 'Eastern Subalpine Warbler' S.c.cantillans/albistriata

'Eastern Subalpine Warbler' *S.c.cantillans/albistriata*

In the best year for this subspecies since 2011, a female was on heathland near the Mast on 8th May, whilst a male was in South Naaversgill on 10th May.



Plate 74. 'Western Subalpine Warbler', Easter Lother, 10th May 2016. © Lee Gregory

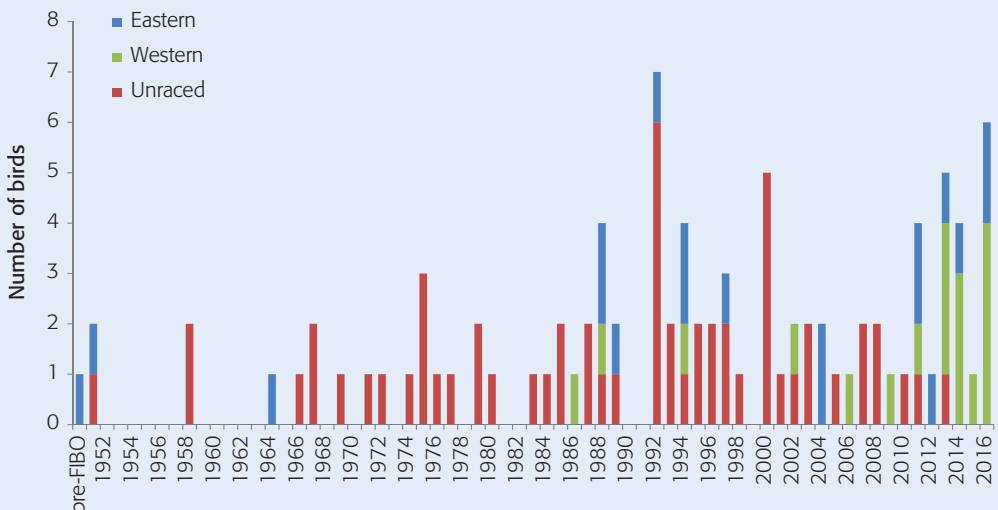
'Western Subalpine Warbler' *S.c.iberiae/inornata*

A remarkably concentrated arrival of Subalpine Warblers saw two of this subspecies trapped on 9th May, with a male in the Plantation (which was later heard singing at the Obs) and a female in the Gully. The next day there were two unringed females, with singles at Utra and Easter Lother. None of the females were heard to call or were subject to DNA analysis, so they should probably be best considered as 'Western Subalpine' or Moltoni's Subalpine Warbler, although whilst the taxonomic status of the 'subalpine warbler' complex is still being reviewed, they will feature as 'Western Subalpine Warblers' in the FIBO statistics.

Unidentified Subalpine Warbler

An unraced female seen very briefly at Lower Stoneybrek during the evening of 10th May was presumed to relate to one of the birds seen elsewhere on the island in the preceding couple of days.

Figure 2. Annual occurrences of Subalpine Warblers on Fair Isle, showing race where known. Note the regular occurrence of this species on Fair Isle, with a recent surge of records. Most previous records are unraced, whilst some of those currently accepted as 'showing the characteristics of' one of the subspecies could change as the result of any future BBRC review, although several of the recent records have been confirmed using DNA analysis.



Whitethroat

Sylvia communis

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

One on the heather near the Single Dyke on 10th April was the earliest-ever Fair Isle record, beating the previous record of one on 11th April in an unspecified year prior to 1959. The next was not until the more expected date of 5th May, with a rapid increase seeing a good count of 19 present on 9th–10th. Numbers dropped to single figures after 14th, other than a small arrival that saw ten present on 19th, with up to two remaining until 30th May. A late spring bird was present on 18th–23rd June and was joined by a second on 22nd. One was at the Obs on 27th July, with autumn passage otherwise falling between 19th August to 2nd October, when there were regular records, but with a peak of just five on 20th August.

*Lanceolated Warbler

Locustella lanceolata

Scarce autumn migrant; 91 previous records (between 4th September and 1st November)

A good year for this quintessential Fair Isle rarity; another four records brought the total in the last five years to 14 birds and maintained the isle's record as the top site in the United Kingdom for this streaky Siberian scuttler. The first was in Field Ditch on 13th September, the earliest arrival date since 2002. The second was a remarkably confiding bird in the roadside ditch at Dumlin's Sink on 21st September, which allowed approach down to a few centimetres at times. A more skulking bird was trapped in Kirki Mire on 26th September, where it was found to be carrying good fat reserves and weighing an impressive 12.4 grams, suggesting it had either arrived earlier in the month or had only made a short journey to Fair Isle. The final bird of the year was on 2nd October at Shirva before making the short journey to Midway, where it remained until 4th, often feeding inside one of the outhouses.



Plate 75. Lanceolated Warbler, Dumlin's Sink, 21st September 2016. © Lee Gregory

Grasshopper Warbler

Locustella naevia

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage was quiet, with single sightings on four dates from 6th–11th May. Autumn passage was more protracted but was still relatively poor, with records on 23rd and 28th August, 12th and 24th September and 4th and 8th October.

*Booted Warbler

Iduna caligata

Vagrant; 14 previous records, all in autumn (late August to early October)

One located feeding in the grassy roadside verge at Brecks on 28th August was the fourth consecutive occurrence for this month, which is now level with September as the best month to find the species on Fair Isle with seven records apiece. It moved to Meadow Burn the following day and remained in that general area until 6th September.

Icterine Warbler

Hippolais icterina

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A quiet spring saw three records: 18th, 21st–22nd and 30th May. Autumn was better, with the first on 15th–23rd August and another on 20th. Two arrived on 26th August, with one remaining until 28th when it was joined by a further three birds. The next arrival saw two on 4th September, with one still present the following day and another on 11th–12th September. By far the latest-ever Fair Isle record was one at Chalet on 20th October, the 11th of the autumn, making it the best autumn passage since 1997.

Sedge Warbler

Acrocephalus schoenobaenus

Frequent migrant, commonest in spring; has bred (2010)

For the second consecutive year the species debuted on 5th May (when two were seen) a relatively late arrival date. Numbers increased to six on 7th May and then ten on 10th. There were then regular sightings until 6th June, usually of up to three, but including a further slight peak of six on 23rd May, before the last of the spring on 13th June. Autumn passage was quiet, with two from 22nd August until 3rd September and late birds on 22nd September and 3rd October.

*Paddyfield Warbler

Acrocephalus agricola

Vagrant; 24 previous records, 18 in autumn (15 September, three October) and six in spring (May and June, one lingering until July)

The fifth consecutive year of occurrence saw one found in the Walli Burn on 28th September which moved to Upper Stoneybrek the following day. Late September remains by far the peak time for occurrences of this delicate 'Acro'.



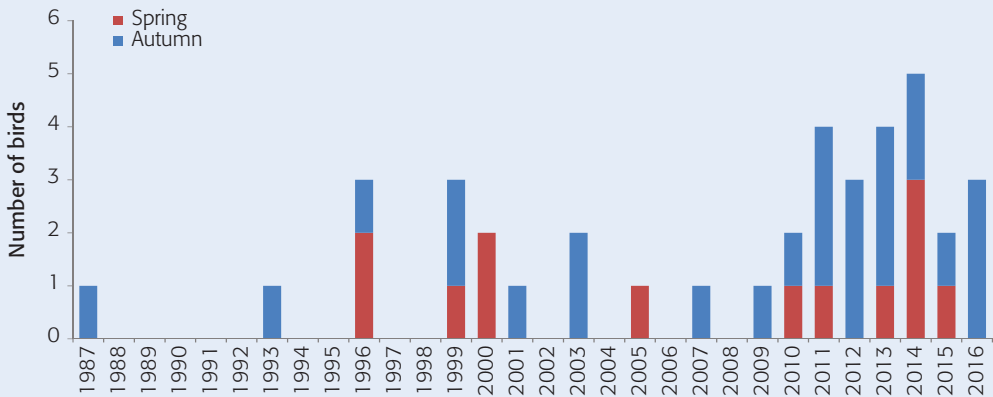
*Blyth's Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus dumetorum

Rare migrant; 42 previous records, 29 in autumn (August–October) and 13 in spring (May–June)

Although there had been spring records in five of the six previous years, all three of 2016's birds were found in the autumn. One showed well in Mid Geo on the early date of 28th August (the only two previous August records both occurred in 2014), one was found near the Haven on 2nd October, which was later trapped when it made its way to the Obs garden. Another was also trapped at the Obs on 6th October.

Figure 3. Annual and seasonal occurrences of Blyth's Reed Warbler on Fair Isle (note: there were also six autumn records during 1910–1928).



Marsh Warbler

Acrocephalus palustris

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

The quietest spring since 2010 began with a bird on the Hill Dyke on the typical date of 31st May, followed by two on 4th June and further individuals on 6th and 10th June (the latter having been ringed on North Ronaldsay six days previously). One at Schoolton on 29th–30th August was a typical autumn showing.

Reed Warbler

Acrocephalus scirpaceus

Regular migrant, more common in autumn

A protracted spring migration began with one on 6th–11th May, which was joined by a second on 9th, another single on 24th–27th May, then two on 21st–22nd June, including a singing bird at the Obs on the latter date that remained until 23rd. Autumn passage began on 17th August, then five arrived on 20th August, with up to five recorded daily from 22nd–28th August. There were then records on 12 dates from 31st August to 22nd September, all of singles apart from two on 15th September. Later birds occurred on 3rd, 10th and 16th October.

Plate 76 a–d (opposite). *Acrocephalus* warblers: a) Marsh Warbler, Springfield, 4th June 2016. © Lee Gregory. b) Blyth's Reed Warbler, South Haven, 2nd October 2016. © Lee Gregory. c) Paddyfield Warbler, Walli Burn, 28th September 2016. © Steve Arlow. d) Reed Warbler, Schoolton, 22nd August 2016. © Lee Gregory



Plate 77. Waxwing, Obs, 24th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Waxwing

Bombycilla garrulus

Scarce but irruptive autumn migrant, scarce in spring and rare in winter

A first-summer male at the Obs on 7th April was unusual given the lack of birds in the United Kingdom during the previous winter. Autumn passage was the best since 2012 and began with two on 15th October. Two on 19th October built up to ten by 23rd October, with one remaining until 3rd November. Five were then present on 7th–8th November with one remaining the following day and one was trapped at the Obs on 19th November.

Wren

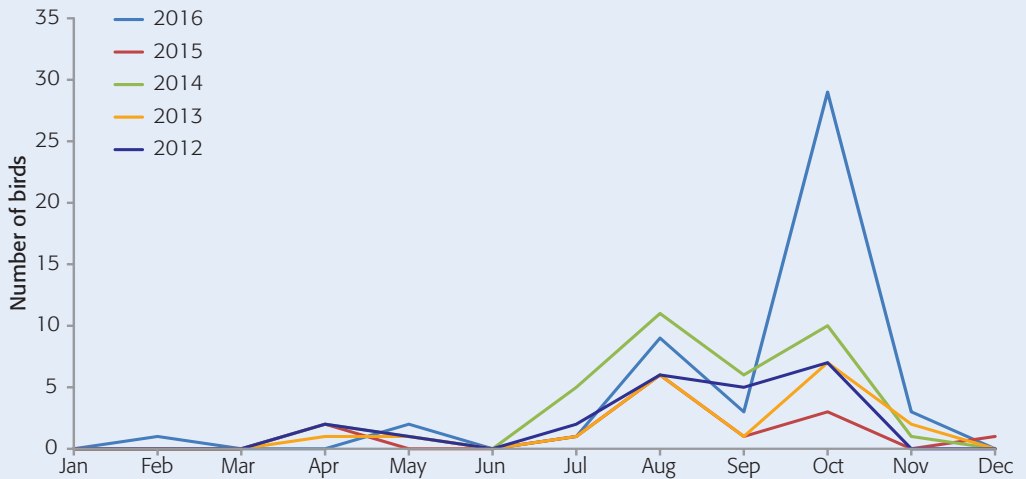
Troglodytes troglodytes

Endemic race 'Fair Isle Wren' T.t.fridariensis resident in small numbers. Other races probably occur as rare spring and autumn migrants

The first singing birds were not noted until 10th March, when individuals were heard in the Haven and South Harbour. Mapping singing birds in the spring and early summer produced a minimum of 34 apparently occupied territories, a decrease of nine on the 2015 population, although still a decent total. The first fledged youngsters were seen at Shaldi Cliff on the late date of 13th June (recent years have seen the first fledglings noted from 2nd–10th June). The species is not counted on census, but it was apparent in mid- to late October that good numbers of migrants were moving through. The only attempt at a count produced 42 on 24th October, although it was

thought that numbers had perhaps been double that in the preceding week. It is interesting to note that the last time the species was counted regularly during autumn census was the early 2000s (during which time the breeding population was 21–34 territories), when October counts were typically 10–20 (although 40 were logged on 13th October 2000).

Figure 4. Monthly totals of Wrens ringed on Fair Isle 2012–2016. Most years see a spike in August (presumably as youngsters fledge and move into the trapping areas and Obs garden), along with a smaller peak in October (either involving migrants or perhaps birds relocating on the island). 2016 was notable for the much larger than usual number ringed in October, despite catches in other months being consistent with recent years. This suggests that migrants were involved, with biometrics and some plumage features amongst trapped birds apparently supporting this idea.



Starling

Sturnus vulgaris

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers, also common spring and autumn migrant

As usual, the species was present throughout the year, with large numbers breeding, although no counts were made. The breeding season was somewhat earlier than the previous year, with the first eggs noted as hatching on 17th May and the first fledged youngsters seen on 6th June (eight days earlier than 2015); a juvenile seen on 29th May had presumably arrived from outside the isle. In comparison to 2015, a sample of 59 monitored nests produced a clutch size that was 0.08 larger (4.61 eggs per clutch), similar hatching success (86.6%), and a fledging success (87.8%) and overall breeding success (76.1%) that were both around four per cent higher.

Rose-coloured Starling

Pastor roseus

Rare migrant; 44 previous individuals, with 11 in spring (May–June), ten in summer and 23 in autumn (August–November)

A juvenile showed very well at the Obs as it visited feeders in the gardens from 31st August until 2nd September. This species has now been recorded in three consecutive years, after only one occurrence in the five years prior to that, and this was the earliest arriving juvenile since 1968.

Ring Ouzel

Turdus torquatus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first was on 5th April and there were then almost daily sightings to the end of the month, peaking at five on 16th April. Three on 9th May was the next arrival, with sightings then regular until the end of the month. Whilst they mostly involved a couple of lingering birds, there was another peak of ten on 19th–20th. A male in full song on the Hill Dyke on 23rd was a pleasant experience, but it remained for just one day, with the last sighting of the spring occurring at Ditfield on 6th June. A quiet autumn passage opened with singles on 21st and 28th September. There were then up to three from 4th–7th October and daily sightings from 12th–18th October that peaked at six on 15th.



Plate 78. Ring Ouzel, North Park, 20th May 2016. © Lee Gregory

Blackbird

Turdus merula

Common spring and autumn migrant, small numbers overwinter; has bred (last recorded 2014)

There were at least 20 in the first winter period, with occasional slight increases likely to involve some new arrivals. Ringing records showed that at least some birds were overwintering, with a female and male present from 25th November 2015 until 19th and 23rd March respectively at least (during which time the the female increased its weight from 72.6 g to 110.6 g and the male from 74.1g to 100 g). Spring passage was noted from mid-March, although it was light, with the highest numbers in mid-April, peaking at 53 on 14th. There were single-figure counts throughout May and occasional new migrants until 19th June, with a female (that had been ringed on the isle on 2nd March) summering. There were occasional migrants from 18th September then numbers gradually increased throughout October, with the main period of arrival in mid-month that saw a peak of 440 on 15th, then a fall in numbers before another increase to 338 on 30th. Numbers declined rapidly in November and there were generally less than 30 remaining during the winter.

Fieldfare

Turdus pilaris

Common spring and autumn migrant, often overwinters

Around 20 were present at the start of the year, with an increase in thrush numbers bringing at least 50 on 7th February. Spring passage was most marked from late March, rising to a peak of 79 on 5th April. After 17th April there were no counts higher than five other than 22 on 2nd May, with 18 remaining the following day, and the last of the spring was on 29th May. Up to two from 18th–27th August were not unusually early, although there were no more until a trickle from 25th September. Numbers were slow to increase, although from 13th October counts rarely dipped below 200, with a peak of 325 on 18th, followed by the year's highest count of 347 on 30th. No more than 50 were recorded in November, with generally around ten in December.



Plate 79. Fieldfare, Barkland, 28th October 2016.
© Ian Andrews

Song Thrush

Turdus philomelos

Common spring and autumn migrant, sometimes overwinters; has bred (last recorded 1926)

At least two were present in the first winter period, with light spring passage from mid-March seeing numbers rising slowly to 48 on 10th–13th April. After 17th April there were up to five until 11th June, including one singing at the Obs on 4th May. Birds were present daily from 14th September until 9th November, with waves of migrants seeing high counts of 169 on 5th, 301 on 15th and 231 on 18th October. There were a few records from the latter part of the year, with up to five overwintering.

Redwing

Turdus iliacus

Common spring and autumn migrant, sometimes overwinters; has bred (1935)

Although up to 25 were recorded early in the year, counts had dropped to less than ten by the start of March. Light passage was noted from the end of the month, with daily records in April peaking at 44 on 4th. There were still four in early May, with two birds remaining throughout the summer. Both probably lingered due to run-ins with predators leaving them damaged, although one (of the Icelandic race *T.i.coburni*) recovered enough to be regularly heard singing in the Parks throughout the summer. Sightings of one or two throughout September probably referred to these birds, with the first migrants arriving on 2nd October, when 133 were counted. Numbers increased to 458 on 6th October, then fluctuated before rising to a peak of 1,401 on 18th October. Numbers were then between around 350 and 650, other than another arrival of 878 on 26th October. Although there were still 103 on 4th November, the rest of the year saw no more than 38 recorded.

Mistle Thrush

Turdus viscivorus

Regular spring and autumn migrant

There were up to three on four dates between 4th and 11th April, with the only other spring record on 30th April. Autumn passage was restricted to 5th–30th October, with almost daily records of between one and four, other than 11 on 16th, which was the highest-ever autumn count (beating the previous record of six).

Spotted Flycatcher

Muscicapa striata

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring arrival was remarkably consistent with recent years (the species has arrived between 7th and 9th May annually since 2011), with 11 on 9th May the first of the year. Numbers increased to 16 on 11th May, with between one and five recorded regularly until 14th June. Sightings between 20th August and 19th September peaked at just three on 23rd August and involved perhaps as few as eight individuals. One around Troila Geo then Hill Dyke on 9th–13th October was the last of the year and the latest record since 1987.

Robin

Erithacus rubecula

Common spring and autumn migrant, often overwinters in small numbers

Only a couple were seen in the first winter period, with spring passage occurring from 30th March. Numbers rose throughout April, with an early peak of 51 on 6th, then climbed again to the spring peak of 117 on 13th April, with counts declining rapidly shortly afterwards and the last few moving through in early May. For the fifth consecutive year, birds summered on the island, with at least three present, although again there were no signs of any breeding attempts. A few new birds were recorded from mid-September, although numbers didn't reach double figures until 4th October, rising to 50 on 9th, 84 on 13th, 148 on 17th and the year's peak of 219 the following day. Numbers remained high until early November, with decent numbers remaining throughout the month, e.g. 17 still in the north on 27th. At least half a dozen birds remained throughout December; one of them had been, intriguingly, ringed on the isle on 17th September, in the first small arrival of just six birds.

*Nightingale

Luscinia megarhynchos

Rare migrant; 54 previous records, 45 in spring (April–July) and nine in autumn (August–October)

Recorded for the second consecutive year, when one on 11th May was in North Gunnawark before working its way down the Hill Dyke.

Bluethroat

Luscinia svecica

Regular migrant, commonest in spring and scarce in autumn

A female on 7th May was a slightly earlier arrival date than usual and it preceded daily records until 24th May, with numbers rising to three on 8th, four on 10th–12th then a drop before four were again

recorded on 20th. After a couple of quieter days, six were present on 23rd, the highest day count since 2009. Further records followed on 26th and 30th May and 6th June, bringing the spring total to an estimated 22 birds. The difficulties of gauging exact numbers can be illustrated by a record of a male on the tip of Lerness on 10th May, which would have been assumed to have been a new arrival, were it not for the fact it was wearing a ring and was therefore presumably the bird trapped at the Obs on 8th. However, a male in exactly the same spot on Lerness on 12th, which was initially assumed to be the same bird, was found on closer inspection to be unringed! One at Shirva on 17th September was followed by another on 20th, which lingered until 3rd October, during which time there was another on 22nd–23rd, with three in total on the latter date and another on 2nd October. There were further individuals on 4th and 8th–9th October, bringing the autumn total to seven individuals.

***Siberian Rubythroat**

Calliope calliope

Vagrant; six previous records, all in October

An unexpected record involved a male along the roadside between Lower Stoneybrek and Stackhoull on 18th November. Comfortably the latest record for Fair Isle (and the United Kingdom), it was, sadly, seen only briefly by the finder and could not be relocated.

***Red-flanked Bluetail**

Tarsiger cyanurus

Vagrant; 12 previous records, most in September and October with one in March–April

The species was recorded for the third consecutive year, beginning on 2nd October with a bright individual in Dog Geo. A duller-looking bird was in Gunnawark on 6th–7th October before another provided a reward for the assistant warden who made it to the very top of Ward Hill on 12th October and was watched as it fed amongst the ruins of the old radar station. What was initially assumed to be the same bird moving down the isle was found the following day in South Raeva and Hjukni Geo, although photographs showed plumage differences between it and the Ward Hill bird. Four records made this the best year for this species on Fair Isle, beating the three recorded in 2010.



Plate 80. Red-flanked Bluetail, Ward Hill, 12th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Red-breasted Flycatcher

Ficedula parva



Plate 81. Red-breasted Flycatcher, Lower Stoneybrek, 2nd October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Rare in spring (35 previous records), scarce autumn migrant

One in Hesti Geo on 13th May was the fifth spring record in the last five years, although the first adult male in that time. Two on 21st September were the first of the autumn, with one the following day probably a new bird. The next arrival was a rather impressive one, with four on 2nd October and there were then new birds on 4th and 5th October, whilst the last of the year roamed the cliffs in the area of the Raevas during 12th–15th October.

*Collared Flycatcher

Ficedula albicollis

Vagrant; six previous records, five in spring, one in autumn

A female at Field on 23rd May was generally elusive as it ranged along fences over a wide area and often vanished, although at times it was possible to get reasonable views and, crucially, photographs in flight that showed the exact wing pattern. It was the fourth record since 2011 and second female in that time; the first record in October 1986 was a first-winter bird, the others have all been spring males.

Pied Flycatcher

Ficedula hypoleuca

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Two on 9th May were the first of the year, with numbers increasing to eight on 11th, then up to two on seven more dates until 28th May. One at Gunglesund on 16th August was a typical date for the commencement of autumn passage, with daily sightings then occurring until 6th September. During that time, there were peaks of 11 on 20th, 19 on 26th (the highest autumn count since 2010) and 18 on 28th August and 11 on 5th September. There were records on ten more dates in September, peaking at five on 20th–21st, and then up to three until the last on 5th October.

Black Redstart

Phoenicurus ochruros

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

This is often one of the first migrants to arrive and there were early singles on 19th, 26th and 30th March. An impressive spring passage saw almost daily records from 4th–28th April, with an arrival in mid-month seeing numbers peak at ten on 13th, the highest-ever count for Fair Isle. During that time, an adult male was at Aesterhoull from 5th–28th and was often associating with a female for around a week at the beginning of that period, although there was no suggestion of any breeding activity taking place. There were up to four on eight dates in May, then late spring migrants on 11th–13th and 25th June. Sightings from scattered locations on 20th, 22nd and 31st July and 2nd and 4th August probably all referred to one bird; the first July record since 2007. New migrants occurred on 28th August and 4th September, then one lingered around Ditfield from 14th September until

at least 8th October. Four arrived on 18th October, with one remaining until 31st, with the last of a good year for this species at Quoy on 8th November.

Redstart

Phoenicurus phoenicurus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

One on 10th–12th April was the earliest in FIBO history, and possibly the earliest record for Fair Isle (there is some doubt whether pre-FIBO records from 4th and 9th April may refer to Black Redstart). There were then none until birds on 2nd–4th and 6th May and daily sightings from 8th–22nd May, which rose to a peak of 15 on 11th then, after counts dwindled to single figures, increased again to 11 on 15th. Autumn passage was poor, with records on 22 days between 20th August and 16th October, but with no more than two recorded on any date.

Whinchat

Saxicola rubetra

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first was at Utra on the late date of 8th May, with up to three recorded regularly until 22nd May and with the last of a quiet spring on 27th May. Two on 19th August increased to ten by 22nd, with sightings then virtually daily until 15th October. Other than a brief flurry around mid-September, which saw a peak of ten on 18th, all other counts were less than five in a generally quiet autumn for the species.

*Siberian Stonechat

Saxicola maurus

Vagrant; 42 previous records, most in autumn (13 in September, 23 in October and three in November) and three in spring (April and May). One 'Caspian Stonechat' S.m.variegatus (April 2014), with all other records accepted as S.m.maurus/stejnegeri, although most thought to refer to S.m.maurus

One was at Shirva from 14th–16th October, with another in South Harbour from 16th–31st October. The latter bird was considered a candidate for *S.m.stejnegeri* but was trapped on 19th October and DNA analysis proved it to be *S.m.maurus*. Two in an autumn is the best showing in this season since 1993.



Plate 82. Siberian Stonechat, South Harbour, 23rd October 2016. © Brendan Doe

Stonechat

Saxicola rubicola

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A male on 14th March was joined by a female the following day, with April records consisting of three on 5th (with one remaining until the following day), one on 10th, two on 12th and another on 14th, whilst in May there was a female on 9th and 11th, which concluded a good spring passage. Autumn was quieter though, with one on 2nd–4th October and one killed by a cat on 16th October.

Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The first was a classic in terms of date and location with one on 30th March in Homisdale. There were no more until 13 on 4th April after which sightings were daily throughout the spring. Numbers rose to 68 by 15th, then a sudden influx on 20th brought 235, after which numbers tailed off to less than 100, until another increase to 206 on 29th April. Although numbers in May fluctuated, they were generally around 200 during the early part of the month, rising to a peak of 253 on 20th, then tailing off to generally 70–100 as June approached and birds got on with breeding. The first fledged youngsters were noticed from 19th June (an average date). Autumn passage was evident on 16th August, when 253 were present, with September seeing counts generally less than 150, although there were influxes of 227 (2nd) and 232 (14th). From 23rd September there were no more than 56 other than 134 on 28th (largely consisting of 'Greenland Wheatears' *O.o.oenanthe*) and in October numbers rapidly dwindled, although a few moved through late, with the last of the year on 4th November.



Plate 83. Siberian Accentor, Troila Geo, 20th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Siberian AccentorPrunella montanella****Vagrant; no previous records***

Although long-predicted as Fair Isle's next potential addition to the British list, one found at Troila Geo on 20th October was actually the sixth for Britain despite occurring just 11 days after the first for the country was found in Shetland! It was present for around four and a half hours, during which time it moved to the top of the geo and showed very well, before heading inland and not being seen again. The greyish tones to the ear coverts suggested it may have been a female, although age and sex are not really ascertainable in the field. On 22nd October, a new individual was found in Kirn o'Scroo. This bird, which could be elusive at times as it largely stuck to feeding in the lower recesses of the vegetated areas of the Kirn, showed more solidly black ear coverts, amongst other plumage differences and remained in the same location for the day. These records occurred during a remarkable and unprecedented influx of this stripy dunnock, which saw over 200 individuals recorded in western Europe during the autumn. A full write-up of these sightings can be found on pages 150–155.

Dunnock

Prunella modularis

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred twice (1973 and 1993)

An early migrant was present from 18th March, with numbers rising to four by the end of the month. There were regular sightings throughout April until 11th May, with a couple of waves of migrants bringing 15 on 5th and 24 on 11th April. There were three more sightings during May, with the last of the spring on 7th June. The first autumn migrant was early, arriving on 4th September, and there were sightings on nine more dates during the month, all singles apart from two on 5th. October sightings were almost daily from 6th, rising to a peak of 16 on 18th and the last of the year was present on 4th November.

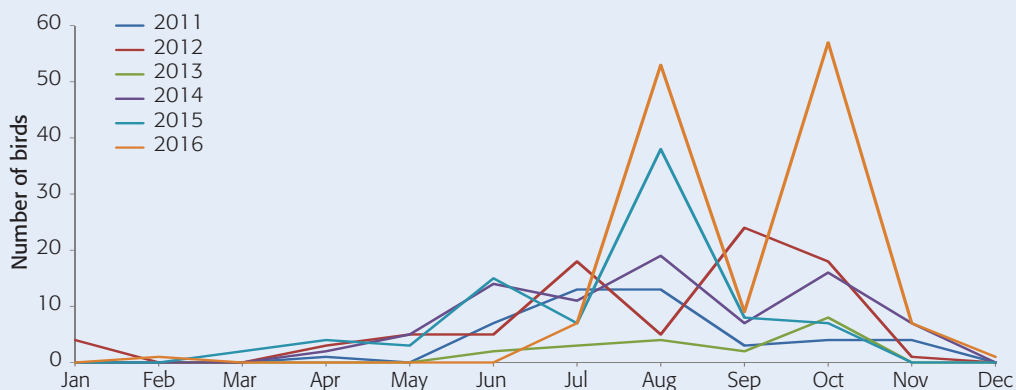
House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

Resident, breeds in small numbers

Counts in the spring were slightly lower than in recent years, with around 22–30 pairs thought to be present. It appeared to be a good breeding season, with a count of 130 on 3rd September being the highest since 2011. Of particular interest was the high number ringed - 135 representing the second-highest-ever ringing total for Fair Isle (bettered only by 156 ringed in 1949, at a time when the breeding population was estimated to be between 50 and 100 pairs). The high September count, coupled with a large catch of juveniles in August, suggested a good breeding season, but of particular interest was the large number trapped in October, especially as one of these was confirmed as having been ringed on Orkney in the summer, suggesting that some of the numbers present later in the autumn may have been as a result of immigration.

Figure 5. Monthly totals of House Sparrows ringed on Fair Isle since 2011. Note that there is generally a peak in July and August (or sometimes September) as fledged youngsters make their way into the traps and nets, but the large spike in birds caught in October 2016 is unusual.



Tree Sparrow

Passer montanus

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; formerly rare and irregular breeder (last recorded 1972)

After the impressive spring passage of 2015, things were a lot quieter this year. Two were recorded on 6th May, one of which lingered until 9th, making it the quietest year since 2009.

Yellow Wagtail

Motacilla flava

Regular spring and autumn migrant; has attempted to breed once (M.f.flavissima in 1981)

'Yellow Wagtail' *M.f.flavissima*

A male in the Walli Burn on 6th May was the first *flava* wagtail of the spring, a late arrival date, and was probably the same as the one in South Harbour on 8th–9th, the only confirmed record of this subspecies during the year.

'Blue-headed Wagtail' *M.f.flava*

A male was in the Haven on 8th–10th May, with another male from 16th–18th, a female on 18th–19th May and one in the Wirvie Burn on 4th June.



Plate 84. 'Blue-headed Wagtail', South Haven, 9th May 2016. © Lee Gregory

'Grey-headed Wagtail' *M.f.thunbergi*

A male was in the Haven on 9th–12th May, with presumably the same bird at Schoolton on 13th and a new male in the Meadow Burn on 18th May (the 9th and 18th were days with a total of three *flava* wagtails present, which was the spring peak). A female was present from 29th May until 3rd June at various locations around the island and a late male was at Kirn o' Skroo on 20th June. Autumn *flava* wagtails are generally not safely assigned to specific taxa, but a female at various locations from 18th–26th August appeared to belong to this subspecies.

Unidentified *flava* wagtail

Scattered sightings during the spring probably involved individuals already covered above, on days when they were only seen briefly. In the autumn, there were records from 21st–29th August (including two on 26th, when a total of three *flava* wagtails was present, the peak autumn count), 7th–10th and 22nd–26th September, 2nd October and 7th–14th October (with two present on 11th), all of which were thought to refer to 'western' birds.

*Citrine Wagtail

Motacilla citreola

Scarce migrant; 75 previous records, 72 in autumn (August–October) and three in spring

A mobile bird was found in the Meadow Burn area on 13th September before moving to Da Water. After 13 birds were recorded during 2011–2013, this was just the third since then.

Grey Wagtail

Motacilla cinerea

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; has bred twice (1950 and 1989)

Spring migration began with birds present on 16 dates between 29th March and 27th April, usually one or two, but with a peak of four on 11th April. After one on 15th May there was one on the 22nd, with two the following day and then regular sightings of a male in the Gully until 14th June, although the late nature of the stay may have had more to do with missing flight feathers on one wing that any serious attempt to hold territory. One on 27th August was an early date for the first autumn migrant, with another on 3rd September. From 19th September birds were present regularly, with up to two until the end of month. Numbers built to four by 2nd October, with counts then dropping again until the year's peak of six on 20th October, with then up to two lingering until 5th November.

Pied Wagtail

Motacilla alba

'Pied Wagtail' *M.a.yarrelli*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, breeds in small numbers

A male from 25th January until 6th March (when it was found dead at Quoy) was comfortably the earliest-ever *alba* wagtail for Fair Isle, the previous record being 20th February 2003. Migrants were first noted from 14th March and numbers built slowly through the month. The highest count in April was 17 (on 15th, with the 26 *alba* wagtails recorded on this date and the previous day the highest *alba* counts for the spring) and by mid-May most Pied Wagtails remaining were probably summering birds. Another good breeding season saw eight nesting attempts, with territories held at Easter Lother, Dronger, Lerness, Hesswalls, Furse, North Light, North Haven and Hesti Geo, with the latter three all confirmed as fledging young. Food was first noted being carried on 29th May (on Dronger) and the first fledged chicks were seen at North Light on 11th June. Autumn passage was light, with a maximum of 20 on 30th August, with numbers gradually dwindling until the last three on 22nd October.

'White Wagtail' *M.a.alba*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, formerly bred occasionally, but last pure alba pair bred in 1986, although occasional mixed pairings have been recorded since

There were four on 4th April, with regular records to the end of the May, peaking at just ten on 6th and 12th May. There were occasional records in June and July, possibly relating to a summering individual. Autumn passage was noted from 14th August and built dramatically at the end of the month to 106 on 30th (of a total of 151 *alba* wagtails, which was also the highest *alba* count of the year). Passage continued strongly in early September with high counts including 92 on 4th and 73 on 7th (of a total *alba* count of 110 and 119 respectively), but tailed off after mid-month. There were generally less than 20 by October, with the last lingering until the 23rd October (a day later than the last 'Pied Wagtail').

Richard's Pipit

Anthus richardi

Scarce autumn migrant, vagrant in spring (five spring records, all in May)

One on Brecks on 4th–5th June was the latest-ever spring sighting for Fair Isle. Autumn was relatively quiet, with singles on 25th and 29th September, with then two arriving on 3rd October, one of which remained until 6th.

*Olive-backed Pipit

Anthus hodgsoni

Scarce migrant; 104 previous records, 102 in autumn and two in spring

One was at the Obs during the morning of 23rd September before flying south and not being seen again. The second of the autumn was at Field Ditch on 4th October, with what was assumed to be the same bird then relocated at Shirva and the Raevas on 6th, where it remained until 18th October (although it was missing during 9th–11th October). During that time, one was found on Dronger, which then relocated to Lerness where it often showed well at times during 7th–12th October. The fourth of the year was in the Chalet area on 14th–20th October.



Plate 85. Olive-backed Pipit, Shirva, 18th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

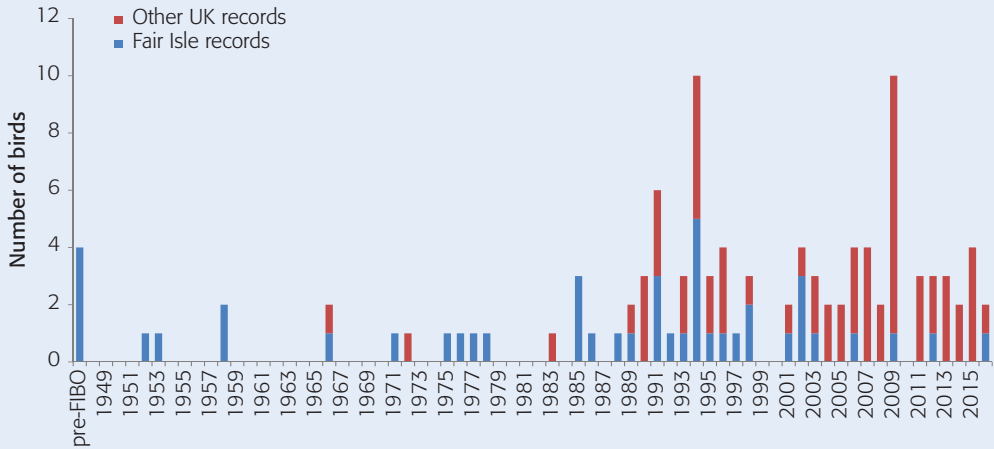
*Pechora Pipit

Anthus gustavi

Rare autumn migrant; 43 previous records, all in September or October

One at Shirva on 2nd October was found in the same location as the previous record in 2012. Although initially elusive, it was seen daily in the area until 6th, moving to Hjukni Geo on 5th and Lower Stoneybrek on 6th, where it remained in the garden until 20th October, often showing well.

Figure 6. Annual occurrences of Pechora Pipit on Fair Isle and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. *Unusually, there is a decreasing frequency of records on Fair Isle (since the peak time from the late 1980s until the early 2000s), despite the species still occurring at a consistent rate overall throughout the country; this is one of the very few species to show this pattern of records.*



Tree Pipit

Anthus trivialis

Regular spring and autumn migrant

One on 10th April was a record earliest arrival date (the previous being 14th April), with other records during the month on 13th, 29th (two) and 30th. There were four on 2nd May then daily records from 4th–26th May, with peaks in numbers that indicated fresh arrivals during that time of nine on 9th May, eight on 15th May and seven on 22nd May, with the last of the spring on 5th–6th June. Autumn passage began with daily census records from 18th August to 10th September, peaking at eight on 20th and 23rd and ten on 28th August, with the only arrival in September during that period involving six on 5th. There were then scattered sightings of singles to the end of the month, and three on 19th, then late records on 2nd and 11th October.

Meadow Pipit

Anthus pratensis

Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

One on 1st January suggested small numbers may have overwintered. Spring passage was noted from 16th March, when two were seen coming in off the sea at South Light. Numbers increased rapidly, with 204 present by 29th March. Counts fluctuated between 100 and 250 during April and an increase towards the end of the month saw a spring peak of 367 on 2nd May, although after the first week of the month there were generally less than 150. As birds either passed through or settled down to incubate, counts decreased further and the first chicks fledged on 10th June (five days earlier than 2015). Passage was evident from late August, with a rapid increase seeing numbers rise from less than 200 until 26th to 702 on 29th. Numbers continued to rise in early September, with large numbers often seen on visible migration, and a peak of 1,112 on 3rd. Counts remained around 700–950 until mid-month when a decrease was noted, although another surge at the end of the month saw 964 on 28th. Numbers continued to fall throughout October, although there was a peak of 669 on 12th and over 180 remained at the end of the month. The milder winter conditions saw small numbers scattered across the island, and there were no counts in double figures after mid-November, but a full island census would probably have recorded higher numbers.

*Red-throated Pipit

Anthus cervinus

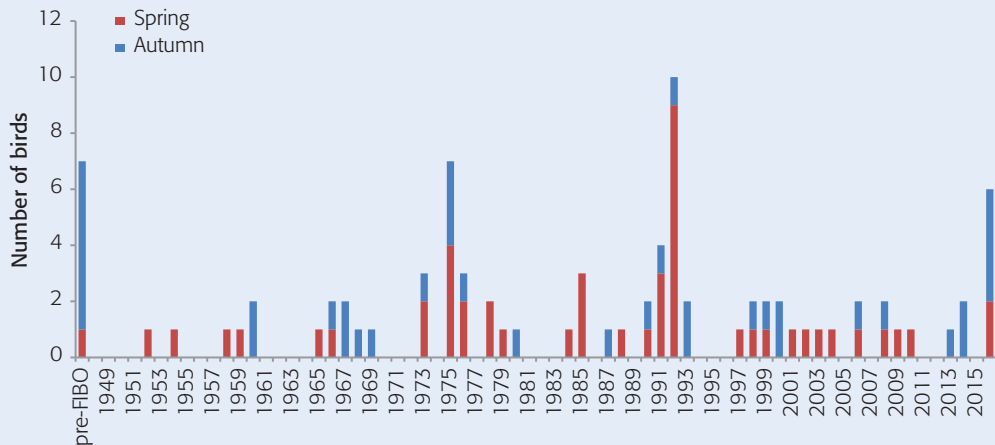
Rare migrant, 82 previous records; 48 in spring (most in May, but ten in June) and 34 in autumn (most in September, but 11 in October and one in August)



Plate 86. Red-throated Pipit, Walli Burn, 18th September 2016. © Lee Gregory

The first spring record since 2010 involved a dowdy bird, presumably a female, on Meones on 14th May whilst a fine male was singing from the road at Charlie's Trees on 22nd May, making it the best spring for this species since the record-breaking year of 1992. It was also a good autumn, with another dingy individual around the Walli Burn on 18th September, an adult at Shirva on 2nd October and then a first-winter bird in the Wirvie Burn on 10th October, which was presumed to be the same individual seen and heard as it flew over Boini Mire and Shirva the following day. Another adult was then seen near Busta on 14th October, completing a record-breaking autumn.

Figure 7. Annual and seasonal occurrences of Red-throated Pipit on Fair Isle.



Rock Pipit

Anthus petrosus

Resident, breeds in small numbers, also frequent spring and autumn migrant

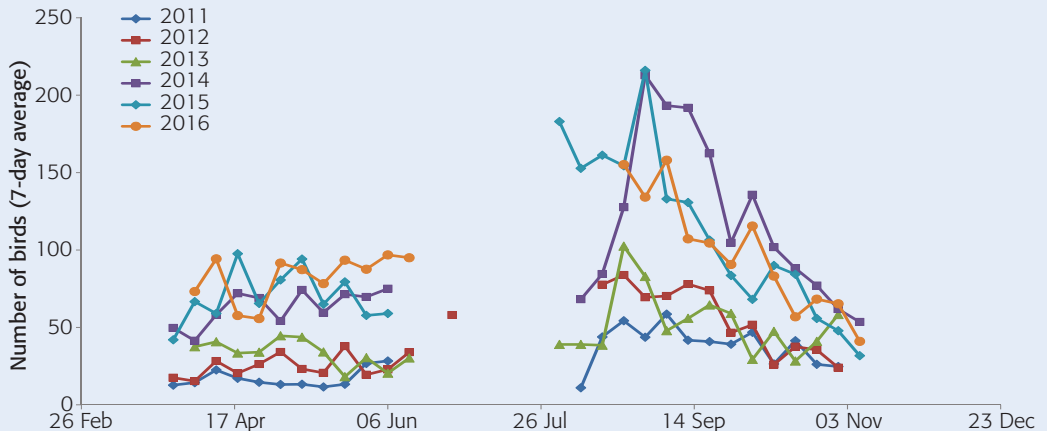
There were no counts in the early part of the year, with the most notable records being of birds at sea heading north past the Good Shepherd IV in early March and one perching on the Obs hanging feeders to get seed on 13th March. The highest count in the spring was 123 on 6th April, although numbers were generally around the 65 mark for the rest of the month. Counts increased to just over 100 in early May and again to similar numbers from the third week of the month, times when the presence of 'Scandinavian Rock Pipits' showed passage was taking place. A minimum of 50 territories was noted, although estimating likely territories in the less well covered stretches of coast would suggest a minimum of 70–80 breeding pairs. The first fledglings were noted on 11th June, a fairly typical date. Census counts again showed a peak in late August, with the highest count of the year of 193 recorded on 19th. Numbers gradually dwindled through most of September, although there was a slight flurry towards the end of the month, then counts in most of October were generally between 55–80. The presence of 31 in the North census area alone on 27th November suggested that numbers probably remained in the 50–80 region throughout the winter.

'Scandinavian Rock Pipit' *A.p.littoralis*

Scarce spring passage migrant, occasionally recorded holding territory in the summer. Records at other times of year likely to be overlooked due to identification difficulties

A series of scattered records occurred throughout the spring with singles noted on 10th, 19th and 29th April and 8th, 20th, 25th and 27th May. Unlike 2015, there was no hint of any breeding attempts, although the bird on 20th May was singing at North Ramnigeo.

Figure 8. Rock Pipit counts on Fair Isle 2011–2016, plotted using a seven-day average of census counts. The reason for the large increase in counts in the last three years is not clear, although could perhaps be due to counting techniques. What is clear is the consistent notable peak of numbers in late August.



Brambling

Fringilla montifringilla

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage saw almost daily sightings from 2nd April until 20th May, with counts mostly in single figures, other than an arrival during mid-April that peaked at 36 on 11th. Four on 28th August were extraordinarily early, with the only other August records occurring in 1966. The next records were up to two on the more expected dates of 22nd–25th September. There then followed daily records from 2nd–31st October, with numbers rising to 123 by 13th and 137 by 16th, although there were less than 100 present from 18th onwards. Just a couple remained into November, with the last on 17th.

Chaffinch

Fringilla coelebs

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

After a male on 12th–16th March, there were regular records from 24th March, rising to six by the end of the month as the species was seen virtually daily until the end of April. The peak number during that period was eight on 4th April, with most counts of between one and four, although 25 were ringed during this time showing that there was a reasonable turnover of individuals. Sightings of up to two from 6th–14th May were followed by a lingering bird until 27th May. Autumn passage began fairly early, with between one and four recorded on 18 dates from 5th September until the month's end. Daily October records were generally in low single figures, with a mid-month arrival seeing a peak of 14 recorded on 17th. There were still three in early November, with the last of the year recorded on 24th November.

Hawfinch

Coccothraustes coccothraustes

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; 111 records of 126 individuals

A very good spring showing saw seven birds recorded: a female at Haa on 5th–7th April, a new female at the Obs on 7th–10th April, a male at Hesti Geo on 12th April, a male at the Obs on 27th April, a female at the Obs on 30th April to 4th May, one at Burkle on 9th May and a roaming female on 13th–18th May. Autumn was also very good, with four records in October: a first-winter female on 13th–19th, an adult male on 19th–20th, a female on 26th and a male on 27th, before a fifth of the autumn involved a male at Haa, then Burkle, on 11th–12th November (the third latest record). A total of 12 records represents the best-ever year for Fair Isle, surpassing the ten in 2012 and eight in 2011.



Plate 87. Hawfinch, Upper Stoneybrek, 20th October 2016. © Steve Arlow

Common Rosefinch

Erythrina erythrina

Regular spring and autumn migrant

After three years with low spring numbers there were no records in that season for the first time since 1975. The first was on 23rd–25th August, with up to two on 28th–30th August. There were sightings on 15 dates in September, with a peak of just two on 14th and 22nd, although probably five individuals were involved. Three arrived on 2nd October, with two still present the next day and late individuals were at Quoy on 21st and Setter on 30th October.

Bullfinch

Pyrrhula pyrrhula

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring. All except one (June 2006) have been 'Northern Bullfinch' P.p.pyrrhula

A male that flew north over the Double Dyke on 22nd October was relocated at the Obs and then roamed the island until 27th October. A female at the Obs from 4th–14th November was joined by another on 8th November, with the second bird giving a more nasal 'trumpeting' call than the first individual. These records, the first since 2014, were typical in their arrival dates and the fact they arrived as a small 'invasion'; multiple records are the norm for this species.

Greenfinch

Chloris chloris

Regular spring and autumn migrant

This species has become distinctly scarcer on Fair Isle in the last decade and, for the first time since 1996, there were no spring records. Autumn passage was also rather light, with daily records from 16th–31st October peaking at five on 30th, one of those lingering until 14th November, with a new arrival on 21st November.

Linnet

Linaria cannabina

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

The first was on 5th April, with sightings on 13 more dates during the month, peaking at just three on 30th. May fared little better with sightings of up to two on 12 dates and the lack of turnover was reflected by just three birds being trapped during the spring (two of which had previously been ringed on Shetland, the other of which was then recorded breeding on Shetland, showing the source of many of Fair Isle's Linnets). Autumn passage began with up to two on three dates from 23rd–28th August. The only other records were from 20th September to 7th October, when regular sightings peaked at five on 25th September.

Twite

Linaria flavirostris

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, small numbers breed and overwinter

Table 3. Maximum monthly counts of Twite on Fair Isle 2016

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
12	75	58	74	65	36	n/c	192	261	213	7	2

The count of 75 on 10th February was unusually high for the winter, although numbers in spring and early summer were at more typical levels. As expected, several of the birds trapped in the spring were returning individuals, having been ringed on Fair Isle in recent years. There was no formal count of breeding birds, although it was estimated that 10–20 pairs were probably present and the first fledged youngster was noted on the typical date of 18th June. Passage peaked in mid-September, with the year's peak of 261 occurring on 19th, with numbers declining sharply after the first week of October.

Lesser Redpoll

Acanthis cabaret

Scarce migrant in spring, summer and autumn

Daily records from 5th–13th May peaked at four on 8th, with another on 22nd May in a reasonable spring passage for this species, which seems to have become a more common visitor to Fair Isle in recent years. Up to two were recorded on several dates from 2nd–23rd July, with autumn passage seeing regular records from 14th September until 19th November, during which there was a peak of five on 13th October.

Common Redpoll

Acanthis flammea

'Mealy Redpoll' *A.f.flammea*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A very quiet spring passage saw singles on 10th–15th April, 4th–5th and 23rd May and 31st May to 1st June. Unlike many recent years, there were no summer occurrences, with no more until records of up to two on five dates from 26th September to 9th October. A strong late-autumn passage saw daily records from 11th October to 1st November, with the highest counts including 59 on 13th and 58 on 18th, although numbers declined to ten or less from 20th. Another small arrival in mid-November brought up to 13 and a couple recorded in mid-

December may have been lingering from that group. There were no records of 'North-western Redpolls' *A.f.rostrata/islandica* for the first time since 2002.

*Arctic Redpoll

Carduelis hornemanni

Rare migrant; approximately 89 previously recorded, most in autumn (September–November) but nine in spring and has also occurred in midsummer and winter. Although historically Coues's is the commoner of the two Arctic Redpoll subspecies recorded on Fair Isle, many of them have occurred in major influx years; in the previous decade eight of the ten accepted Arctic Redpolls have been Hornemann's.

'Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll' *C.h.hornemanni*

Around 26 of the accepted records of Arctic Redpoll have been assigned to this subspecies

A large, pale redpoll seen briefly at Quoy on 7th April was then relocated at Shirva, where it fed around the thistle patch and sheep-feeding area. It remained there until 10th before roaming more widely around the island until 16th April. As it was more streaked than a 'classic' *hornemanni*, it was trapped to establish the identification. The measurements and plumage features all indicated that it was the north-western subspecies of Arctic Redpoll, with the more streaky nature of the plumage being typical of a bird in the spring. It is the third spring record of this subspecies, following birds in April 1990 and June 2012.



Plate 88. 'Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll', Field, 14th April 2016. © Lee Gregory

'Coues's Arctic Redpoll' *C.h.exilipes*

Around 53 of the accepted records of Arctic Redpoll have been assigned to this subspecies

Strong south-easterly winds in early November brought a small arrival of redpolls to the isle, with one of these Scandinavian-breeding Arctic Redpolls found at the School Brae on 9th November, where it was joined by a second individual on 10th, with both remaining until 11th November. One of them was trapped to confirm the subspecific identification, with measurements ruling out *C.h.hornemanni*. They represent the first accepted autumn occurrences of this subspecies since 2005, although there have been two July records since then (in 2007 and 2012).

Common Crossbill

Loxia curvirostra

Irregular irruptive summer and autumn migrant

A very quiet year for this species saw one at Muckle Uri Geo on 5th–6th July, up to five during 18th–23rd July, a single on 10th August and a male at the Obs on 30th October.

Goldfinch

Carduelis carduelis

Regular spring and autumn migrant, has overwintered

One of the overwintering birds from 2015 (the first ever to do so on Fair Isle) remained until 4th February. Spring passage began with one on 5th May, with then daily sightings until 12th that peaked at five on 7th. There were further May records on 16th and 21st (two). Autumn passage began with an impressive ten (the third-highest island count) on 2nd October, with numbers dropping to two by 11th October. Another four arrived on 20th October, with one still on 23rd–24th, then three more from 30th October to 4th November and two late birds on 19th November.

Siskin

Spinus spinus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Sightings on ten April dates from 2nd peaked at three on 30th and probably only involved six individuals in a quiet start to spring passage. Things picked up in May, with daily records from 1st–17th, with peaks of nine on 3rd and ten on 8th and ringing indicated turnover during this time (18 were ringed). Records on 11th June, 23rd June (two), 30th June to 2nd July (two) and 23rd–28th July (two) were the only summer records. Eleven arrived on 26th September, with one remaining until 1st October and other records in the month involved one on 7th, daily sightings from 12th–24th, that peaked at ten during 16th–18th, and up to four on 29th–30th, which were the last of a relatively quiet autumn.



Plate 89. Siskin, Stackhoull, 16th October 2016. © Lee Gregory

Snow Bunting

Plectrophenax nivalis

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, often overwinters

There were up to nine in the first winter period, whilst spring passage saw up to three in March, a similar number regularly recorded through April and scattered sightings of up to three in May until 31st. One on Meoness on 8th–9th September was the first of the autumn, with regular sightings of up to 24 from 23rd September until a larger arrival at the end of October that peaked at 139 on 30th. There were no more than 20 in November and eight in December, in a quiet end to the year.

Lapland Bunting

Calcarius lapponicus



Plate 90. Lapland Bunting, Stackhoull, 1st October 2016.
© Steve Arlow

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

There was just one in the spring, at Wester Lothar on 5th May. Autumn passage was very good though, with six on 1st September beginning a series of virtually daily sightings for the next two months, with numbers increasing rapidly to 53 on 10th September and a peak of 74 on 13th September, the highest count since 2010. Numbers started to tail off from the end of September, with no more than 22 in October, and then late singles on 4th, 9th and 17th November.

*Ortolan Bunting

Emberiza hortulana

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

The first spring records since 2013 involved one briefly at Barkland on 11th May, with a more cooperative female at North Naaversgill on 21st–22nd May. One found in Gilsetter on 8th September was presumably the same bird seen at Field on 11th and Springfield on 13th before settling at Quoy from 14th–18th September. Three records made this the best year since 2006 for this declining species.



Plate 91. Ortolan Bunting, North Naaversgill, 22nd May 2016. © Lee Gregory

Plate 92 a–d (opposite). Pine Bunting: a) Bird 1, Quoy, 11th October 2016. © Steve Arlow. b) Bird 2, Quoy, 17th October 2016. © Steve Arlow. c) Bird 3, Quoy, 17th October 2016. © Steve Arlow. d) Bird 4, Bull's Park, 24th October 2016. © Lee Gregory



Yellowhammer

Emberiza citrinella

Regular spring and autumn migrant

The only spring record was a lovely male, which was trapped in the Plantation on 9th May, adding a nice splash of colour to the pre-lunch trap round. After a few quiet years, the species had its best autumn since 2011, with daily sightings from 13th–31st October rising to a peak of five on 16th–20th. The first to arrive met up with the Pine Bunting that had been present for two days, and this pair seemed to drag in others; at the peak, it was possible to see five Yellowhammers and three Pine Buntings in the Quoy area - quite a flock! One of the Yellowhammers was a very dull female with just a few shades of yellow about the plumage, and there must be at least the possibility that this individual had some Pine Bunting genes in its ancestry, although it may just have been a particularly dull Yellowhammer.

*Pine Bunting

Emberiza leucocephalos

Vagrant; nine previous records, seven in October and two in November

Several eastern-breeding species enjoyed their best years in Britain, during an autumn that produced a sustained spell of suitable weather conditions for vagrancy to the Northern Isles and east coast, one of which was Pine Bunting, and Fair Isle fared particularly well in this arrival. The first was a first-winter female on 11th October that was first seen in flight over Hunds Heelor, with the identification clinched when it landed for a short while at Barkland, before it moved to Quoy. It settled in the area around Quoy and Burkle and remained until 17th October, having been ringed on 15th October at Burkle. Remarkably, two more females joined it on 16th October, with all three present the following day, the two unringed birds present on 18th and one still on 19th; the first flock to be seen in the United Kingdom (although the ringed female was generally not in the company of the unringed birds). These were the third to fifth females to be recorded on the island. This phenomenal year was still not over though, as a male was then present with a Yellowhammer in the Bull's Park crop strip from 22nd–26th October, with both roosting at the Obs during this time. The male showed yellow fringes to the primaries, similar to birds on the isle in 1980, 1995 and 2007. Needless to say, four in a year is unprecedented, although there were two in both 1980 and 1987, suggesting the species may be prone to occasional small influxes.

Reed Bunting

Emberiza schoeniclus

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage took place from the late date of 6th April, until 20th May, although the peak was just three on 14th April and 12th May, with a late individual on 5th June. Autumn passage was concentrated in the period 3rd to 26th October, with a reasonable fall mid-month that peaked at 24 on 19th. After that date, two lingered to the end of October with one until 19th November.

Little Bunting

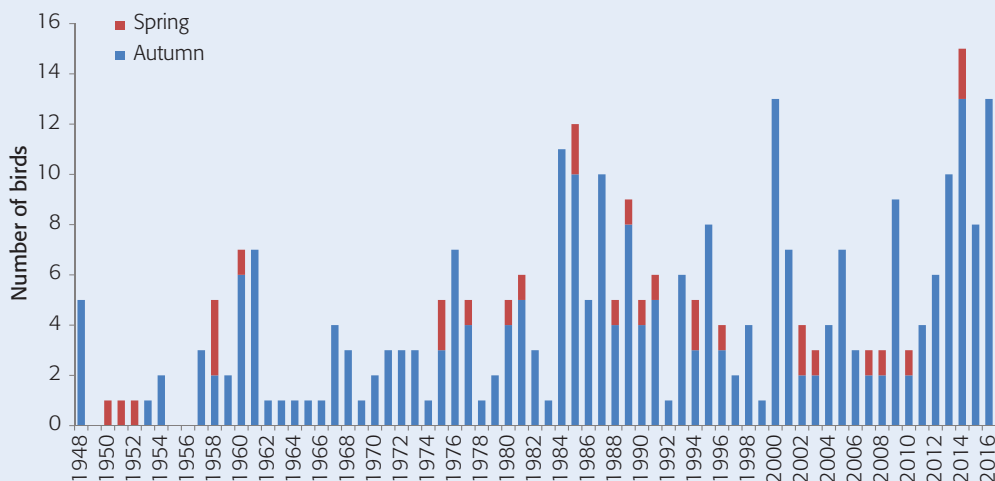
Emberiza pusilla

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring (29 previous spring records)

Another very good year for this species, with a minimum of 13 individuals recorded in the autumn, although with a daily presence for over six weeks, it is possible the actual number involved was higher as some turnover may have been involved. The first was at the Obs on 13th September, with the next at Taing then Bull's Park from 19th–22nd, a new individual (identified from plumage differences visible

in photographs) at Field on 23rd and the fourth of the month at the Obs on 27th–30th. There was then a daily presence from 1st October to 17th November, with the lingering bird at Setter falling just two days short of the latest-ever record for Fair Isle. A roaming bird was in the south of the island from the start of October, another on Ward Hill on 4th, two arriving on Roskillie on 6th, with another new bird in the south the same date (making four birds in total present that, with three still on 7th and two on 8th). By 9th October, the two remaining birds were joined by a third, with this flock (which was largely lingering around North Shirva) increasing to four on 10th, with three remaining to 17th and two until 25th. Another was at Skinner's Gls on 11th–13th, with a new bird also seen on 24th.

Figure 9. Annual and seasonal occurrences of Little Bunting on Fair Isle. Note the recent surge in records.



*Rustic Bunting

Emberiza rustica

Rare spring and autumn migrant; 131 previous records (67 in spring, mostly in May and June with three in April and 64 in autumn, mostly September and October with one in November)

A fine male at Lower Leogh on 13th May was the earliest arrival since 2005 and another was at Utra on 27th May.

CORRECTIONS TO PREVIOUS ANNUAL REPORTS

2014 Annual Report

Jack Snipe: the picture labelled as this species in the systematic list is a Common Snipe.

Greenish Warbler: the record on 6th August was the second-earliest-ever autumn record (not the earliest), after one on 4th August 1978

2015 Annual Report

In the article about the first Great White Egret for Fair Isle, it was speculated that Gull-billed Tern could be amongst the next additions to the Fair Isle list. This was an error as there has, of course, been a record of this species from the isle already (24th–29th May 1971). In fairness, the same article did correctly predict Little Egret as the next addition to the island list!

RINGING SUMMARY

Ciaran Hatsell

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Birds ringed	5	24	92	330	323	468	1898	1584	329	1069	116	4
Species ringed	2	9	18	32	42	24	29	36	47	48	21	4

A total of 6,242 new birds of 106 species was ringed during 2016, a reasonable amount representing the second highest total in the last decade. Storm Petrels accounted for over a third of all birds ringed during the year, with 2,122 ringed. Other seabirds contributed reasonable numbers to the overall totals, with Great Skua numbers reaching a record high. Although it was a reasonable year for auks, poor weather in the peak time for ringing curtailed any activities in the colonies, with low numbers of Guillemot and Razorbill ringed despite good productivity.

The Helgoland traps accounted for the majority of the passerines ringed during the year, with the continuation of standardised trap rounds. The traps were run at least once a day (weather permitting) from late March until early November and the standardised six daily trap rounds were run in the peak migration periods (mid-April until mid-June and mid-August until the end of October).

Ringing sub-sites at Burkle (single mist net and walk-in trap) and Chalet (single mist net) produced good numbers of birds. The walk-in trap at Burkle was in use in mid-October and proved particularly fruitful, with 40 Bramblings, a female Pine Bunting and a Yellowhammer all trapped over a short period. Unfortunately, the Chalet site was less productive; it contributed just 30 birds of eight species, with ringing activities limited there due to the regular presence of cats.

As always, a great variety of birds were caught during the year, including two birds added to the Fair Isle ringing list; Common Scoter and Brent Goose. The scoter was caught in the Walli Burn by

Nick Riddiford and was in surprisingly good condition and was released in North Haven; the goose was caught as part of a late night 'dazzling' session as it fed in Kirki Geo.

There were six record annual ringing totals achieved in 2016. The record number of Great Skuas (516 pairs) resulted in 565 pulli being ringed (along with one adult which was rescued from a fence at the Obs after trying to snaffle kitchen scraps from the garden!). The 48 Wrens ringed also represented a record, with 28 birds caught during October, during what appeared to be a passage of migrants; the biometrics and small, pale appearance of some of the birds trapped seemingly supporting this. Continuing the upward trend were Goldfinch, which are becoming ever more frequent as a migrant on Fair Isle, and the eight birds ringed bettered the record of five set in 1999. Seven Hawfinches was also a new high, giving several people the chance to experience the strength and power of a Hawfinch bite!

The Chiffchaff total was once again improved upon, with 134 new birds ringed. All bar one of the top ten best years have occurred since 2000, seemingly reflecting a genuine increase in numbers passing occurring on Fair Isle. It was interesting to note the very low numbers of *tristis* birds in the autumn, which often account for a large percentage of Chiffchaff records by late October. Also continuing a recent trend were the six Mallards ringed, the third year in succession for the record has been broken for this species.

Other species that recorded totals amongst the ten best in the history of the Obs included Jack



Plate 93. Hen Harrier 'Blue AFT'(see p124), Boini Mire, 26th August 2016. © Lee Gregory

Snipe, Woodcock (the last six years all feature in the top nine highest ringing totals for this species), Common Gull (reflecting a good breeding season), Rock Dove, Goldcrest, Yellow-browed Warbler (34; the second highest total), Willow Warbler, Blackcap, Sedge Warbler, Waxwing, Black Redstart, House Sparrow (135; the highest total since 1949), Brambling, Lesser Redpoll and Yellowhammer.

Other ringing highlights included the 3rd Pine Bunting, 13th Siberian Stonechat (proved by DNA analysis to belong to the subspecies *Saxicola maurus maurus*), 20th Long-tailed Duck, the 21st Pink-footed Goose, 26th and 27th Arctic Redpolls (one of each subspecies), 26th and 27th Blyth's Reed Warblers, 27th Greenish Warbler, 42nd and 43rd Subalpine Warblers, 44th Lanceolated Warbler and 46th Little Bunting.

Some species that didn't fare so well included Sparrowhawk (just one caught, making it the worst year since 1968 for this species and following on from the joint second best-ever year in 2015; perhaps the two facts are linked?) and a number of long-distant migrants, including Garden Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart, Wheatear and Tree Pipit (there have only been two of the latter species trapped in the last three years, whereas the average in the 1970s was over 20 per year).

Storm Petrel ringing sessions continued to be a stand-out highlight for many guests visiting the Observatory in the summer months. A total of 2,122 new birds were ringed, providing lots of opportunity for guests to get involved in both ringing and releasing these superb seabirds.

Amazingly, after an absence of three years, the first Swinhoe's Petrel to be ringed on Fair Isle in 2013 returned! It was re-trapped on 14th August and again on 15th, but only heard once subsequently. It is interesting to think that this bird will now be at least approaching breeding age and yet still, after a three year sojourn, it has returned to inspect Fair Isle as a potential colony.

Two colour-ringing projects continued on Fair Isle in 2016: the long-term Starling research project started in 1980 and the Shag colour-ringing project, run by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology which looks at the dispersal, survival, distribution and movement patterns of juvenile and adult Shags. Twenty-eight Shags (21 pulli and seven adults) were colour ringed as part of the project.

Occasionally, the capture of a healthy bird and examination of it in the hand is crucial for identification or trapping it is for the benefit of the bird's welfare. During 2016 five birds were trapped for one of these reasons: Siberian Stonechat, Grasshopper Warbler, Lanceolated Warbler and two Arctic Redpolls.

Storm Petrel retains its top spot for the sixth consecutive year, with three other seabirds also appearing in the top ten thanks to good breeding seasons or a specific research project

in the case of Puffin. A period of sustained easterly wind in October boosted the totals of several typical late autumn migrants which saw them also record decent totals.

Table 1. Ten most commonly ringed species on Fair Isle in 2016, with species totals (2015 totals in brackets for comparison):

Species	2016
Storm Petrel	2,122 (1,076)
Great Skua	566 (188)
Starling	528 (465)
Blackbird	271 (517)
Blackcap	247 (164)
Brambling	206 (124)
Robin	202 (127)
Puffin	163 (92)
Meadow Pipit	158 (140)
Fulmar	152 (84)



Plate 94. 'Lesser Whitethroat' of the subspecies *blythi* (confirmed by DNA), Obs, 2nd October 2016. © Ciaran Hatsell

RINGING SUMMARY

Species	Total										Average/year					2010-2015		Ringed 2016		Highest/Lowest		Year ranking (out of 69)
	1948-2015	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010-2015	adult	pullus	Total	Since	Lowest	Highest	Since	Year ranking (out of 69)					
Pink-footed Goose	20	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.3	1	0	1	0	1	Highest	2014	Joint 8th				
Greylag Goose	101	0	0	0	0.4	0.7	0.8	2.3	5.8	0.2	3	0	3	0	3	Highest	2009	8th				
Brent Goose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	0	1	Highest	ever	1st				
Teal	89	0	0.3	2	1	0.5	3.2	1.4	0.8	0.8	1	0	1	0	1	Highest =	2015	Joint 18th				
Mallard	26	0	0	0	0.6	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.2	1.5	1	5	6	1	6	Highest	ever	1st				
Long-tailed Duck	19	0	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	1	0	1	0	1	Highest	2008	Joint 4th				
Common Scoter	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	0	1	Highest	ever	1st				
Fulmar	18146	13.5	50.7	346.3	363.5	641.3	244.2	99	111.5	1070.3	7	145	152	145	152	Highest	2014	38th				
Storm Petrel	37701	1	3.7	160.5	575.4	446.6	1640	301.5	1070.3	2122	0	2122	0	2122	0	Highest	2014	4th				
Leach's Petrel	132	0	0	0.3	1.2	0.5	5.2	2.7	5.5	5.5	3	0	3	0	3	Highest	2014	Joint 13th				
Gannet	647	0.5	0.2	1.3	1.2	11.5	20.4	17.4	21.0	21.0	3	0	3	0	3	Highest	2009	Joint 22nd				
Shag	23895	9.5	87.5	579	383.5	674.5	375.9	267.2	33.3	33.3	3	23	26	3	26	Lowest	2011	Joint 55th				
Grey Heron	23	0	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	1	0	1	0	1	Highest	2011	Joint 4th				
Sparrowhawk	469	1	3.3	2.9	6	8.7	12.5	6.6	11.2	11.2	1	0	1	0	1	Lowest	1968	Joint 66th				
Water Rail	347	5	6.6	5.4	7.4	4.6	4.4	4	2.2	2.2	8	0	8	0	8	Highest	2008	Joint 13th				
Oystercatcher	1610	18	24.7	27.6	33.1	32	25.8	8.9	8.8	8.8	0	3	3	3	3	Lowest	2004	Joint 66th				
Ringed Plover	849	0	7.5	14.3	11.7	15.4	16.9	11.9	12.0	12.0	15	0	15	0	15	Lowest	2014	Joint 21st				
Knot	115	1	1.1	2.5	2.8	1.2	2	1.1	1.0	1.0	1	0	1	0	1	Lowest	2014	Joint 28th				
Dunlin	671	0.5	5	16.7	17.3	4.3	10.2	7.1	10.7	10.7	6	0	6	0	6	Lowest	2012	Joint 37th				
Redshank	22	0	1.3	8.7	10.1	2.7	4.8	1.2	1.5	1.5	6	0	6	0	6	Highest	1998	16th				
Jack Snipe	156	0	0.8	1.4	8.7	0.7	1.7	1.8	0.8	0.8	7	0	7	0	7	Highest	1998	6th				
Woodcock	642	2	4.7	6.9	9.2	9.6	8.4	11.1	23.2	23.2	20	0	20	0	20	Lowest	2013	6th				
Snipe	611	0	2.8	8.1	14.3	7.8	10.9	10.7	10.8	10.8	12	0	12	0	12	Lowest	2014	Joint 16th				
Arctic Skua	4092	8	71.7	38.2	131.8	61	67.7	27.3	16.5	16.5	0	37	37	0	37	Highest	2010	40th				
Great Skua	4663	4	16.9	13	19	51.5	110.8	134	200.5	200.5	1	565	566	1	566	Highest	ever	1st				
Puffin	14403	19.5	128.2	277.3	318.8	294.8	216.9	131.7	114.5	114.5	74	89	163	89	163	Highest	2008	37th				
Black Guillemot	1691	0	11.3	45.6	52.1	25.2	26	6.7	3.7	3.7	0	5	5	0	5	Highest	2014	55th				
Razorbill	11975	0	6.5	60.9	173.5	231.6	412.5	281.8	51.2	51.2	5	33	38	5	33	Highest	2014	51st				
Guillemot	38299	0	7.9	82.6	468	1268	1314.8	588.8	166.3	166.3	2	28	30	2	28	Highest	2014	51st				

RINGING SUMMARY

Species	Total		Average/year							Ringed 2016		Highest/ Lowest	Since	Year ranking (out of 69)	
	1948-2015	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010-2015	adult	pullus				Total
Arctic Tern	11919	0	0.1	0.4	0	16.4	954.8	216.5	6.2	0	46	46	Highest	2009	16th
Common Gull	327	0	0.5	1.3	4.6	8.8	3.9	10.6	5.0	0	11	11	Highest	2010	Joint 6th
Lesser Black-b Gull	1480	5	10	25.7	49.7	40.4	13.8	5.7	2.8	0	4	4	Lowest	2014	Joint 55th
Herring Gull	4714	8	12.1	64.9	163.6	140.8	34.8	34.6	31.7	0	53	53	=	2015	Joint 29th
Great Black-b Gull	2897	0.5	8.8	39.1	92.2	51	92	2.2	7.2	1	0	1	Lowest	2012	Joint 55th
Rock Dove	248	0	0	0.2	0.9	1.1	4.8	7.9	16.5	27	0	27	=	2015	Joint 3rd
Woodpigeon	80	0	0.6	1.6	0.5	1.6	2.6	0.5	1.0	2	0	2	Highest	2014	Joint 10th
Collared Dove	427	0	0	1.1	10.5	7.2	10.6	10.8	4.2	4	0	4	Highest	2014	Joint 35th
Turtle Dove	83	0	0.9	0.6	3.5	2.1	0.8	0.3	0.2	1	0	1	=	2015	Joint 21st
Long-eared Owl	288	0.5	1.4	3	7.6	5.8	5.7	2.7	4.2	3	0	3	Lowest	2013	Joint 30th
Wynneck	269	0	2.3	4.4	7.1	4.8	2.2	4.2	3.2	4	0	4	Highest	2014	Joint 22nd
Merlin	201	1	7	4.2	2.7	2.4	1.4	1.8	0.7	1	0	1	=	2015	Joint 36th
Red-backed Shrike	381	1.5	2	4.4	11.5	7.8	4.2	5.4	4.2	4	0	4	Highest	2014	Joint 28th
Great Grey Shrike	125	0.5	0.5	3.3	5.5	1.2	0.6	0.4	1.5	3	0	3	Highest	2014	Joint 15th
Goldcrest	2097	16	17	28.7	47.9	28.7	33.9	31.4	31.5	68	0	68	Lowest	2014	9th
Sklark	1448	6.5	16.6	22.4	27.4	7.4	48.4	15.2	10.2	2	0	2	Lowest	2011	Joint 58th
Swallow	335	1	3.6	9.9	9.9	2.1	1.7	2.1	6.7	3	0	3	Lowest	2013	Joint 33rd
Greenish Warbler	26	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.2	1	0	1	Highest	2014	Joint 3rd
Yellow-b Warbler	297	0	1.1	2.3	3.3	1.9	2.8	5.2	21.8	34	0	34	Lowest	2014	2nd
Wood Warbler	121	0	0.5	2.3	3	2.3	2	1.2	1.3	1	0	1	Highest	2014	Joint 35th
Chiffchaff	1997	0.5	4.9	16.6	24.7	30.9	32.5	44.9	75.2	134	0	134	Highest	ever	1st
Willow Warbler	4506	3	44.2	80.9	94.6	66.6	56.3	65.8	69.3	102	0	102	Highest	2006	10th
Blackcap	6890	0.5	15.2	59.8	158.7	149.4	105.1	115.5	142.0	247	0	247	Highest	1999	6th
Garden Warbler	4021	3.5	30.7	78.1	74.6	88.2	59.2	50.4	33.7	25	0	25	Lowest	2003	58th
Barred Warbler	496	0	5.3	9.6	12.9	4.8	5.8	6.4	8.0	3	0	3	Lowest	2013	Joint 50th
Lesser Whitethroat	951	3	7.4	11.9	19.7	12.1	13.4	20.3	16.2	19	0	19	Highest	2014	16th
Subalpine Warbler	41	0	0.4	0.3	0.9	0.5	0.4	0.6	1.7	2	0	2	Highest	2014	Joint 4th
Whitethroat	1143	2.5	19.7	28.8	17.7	10	14.7	14.8	13.5	12	0	12	Lowest	2013	Joint 43rd
Lanceolated Warbler	43	0	0.1	0.2	0.9	1	0.7	0.9	0.8	1	0	1	=	2015	Joint 11th

RINGING SUMMARY

Species	Total 1948-2015	Average/year										Ringed 2016		Highest/ Lowest	Since	Year ranking (out of 69)
		1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010-2015	adult	pullus	Total				
Grasshopper Warbler	170	0	0.8	2.4	3.6	2.1	2.2	3.5	4.0	3	0	3	Lowest	2013	Joint 20th	
Icterine Warbler	151	0	1.5	2.6	1.5	1.7	3	2.9	3.2	3	0	3	Lowest	2014	Joint 13th	
Sedge Warbler	646	5	7	9.5	7.8	11.2	5.5	14.1	14.2	16	0	16	Highest	2011	Joint 7th	
Blyth's Reed Warbler	25	0	0	0	0.1	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.0	2	0	2	=	2015	Joint 3rd	
Reed Warbler	387	0.5	1	4.9	4.8	4.4	7.5	10.9	8.5	8	0	8	Lowest	2014	Joint 14th	
Waxwing	250	0	0.3	1.1	1.9	0.3	0.1	3.1	30.3	4	0	4	Highest	2012	Joint 6th	
Wren	1098	17.5	20.8	15.7	15.6	8.1	15.6	19	19.2	48	0	48	Highest	ever	1st	
Starling	32282	140.5	269.2	337.4	662	746.9	445.8	424.3	524.2	324	204	528	Highest	2014	24th	
Ring Ouzel	561	0	1.4	16.8	12.7	13.1	4.6	3.6	6.5	3	0	3	=	2015	Joint 44th	
Blackbird	26463	76.5	414.7	591.2	464	384	277.3	306.1	322.8	271	0	271	Lowest	2012	50th	
Fieldfare	709	2.5	7.9	33.6	12	5.7	2.7	3.7	8.0	8	0	8	Lowest	2014	Joint 27th	
Song Thrush	3458	7.5	19	76.6	72.1	52	53.1	40.1	52.3	34	0	34	Lowest	2013	44th	
Redwing	10924	34.5	139.1	184.1	231.3	143	144.4	121.8	203.0	106	0	106	Lowest	2012	Joint 48th	
Spotted Flycatcher	911	2.5	7	16.6	15.6	13.2	19.9	10.4	13.2	5	0	5	Lowest	2005	Joint 58th	
Robin	10444	14	64.3	196.1	196.9	199.7	143.8	132.2	181.0	202	0	202	Highest	2014	20th	
Bluethroat	319	0.5	5.4	4.6	5.3	6.4	4.2	4.5	2.3	6	0	6	Highest	2010	Joint 17th	
Red-b Flycatcher	65	1	1.6	1.3	0.5	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.5	1	0	1	Highest	2014	Joint 17th	
Pied Flycatcher	1050	5	16.2	23.1	24	14.3	12.6	9.1	7.8	10	0	10	Highest	2013	Joint 42nd	
Black Redstart	171	1	1.6	2.5	4.2	3.4	3	1.4	1.3	5	0	5	Highest	1997	Joint 7th	
Redstart	1950	5	36.6	41.4	51.4	20.4	24.7	14	9.2	3	0	3	Lowest	2001	Joint 66th	
Siberian Stonechat	12	0	0	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0	0.0	1	0	1	Highest	1997	Joint 2nd	
Stonechat	51	0	0.6	1.1	2.1	1	0.7	0.6	0.3	2	0	2	Highest	2007	Joint 9th	
Wheatear	19184	108	505	407.8	284	229.8	142.8	212.8	191.0	78	0	78	Lowest	2013	66th	
Duncock	3016	1.5	11.2	50.2	67.8	65.7	41.1	35.3	50.0	41	0	41	Highest	2014	29th	
House Sparrow	2178	83	46.7	31.4	11.8	22.2	18.3	35.3	59.2	135	0	135	Highest	1949	2nd	
Grey Wagtail	67	0	0.4	0.2	0.5	1.3	0.5	2.7	1.8	2	0	2	Lowest	2014	Joint 10th	
Pied/White Wagtail	1079	14	13	15.5	10.7	10.7	14.6	18.8	36.3	9	0	9	Lowest	2001	Joint 47th	
Tree Pipit	684	4.5	9.2	14.2	20.2	12.3	6	4.4	2.0	1	0	1	=	2015	Joint 62nd	
Meadow Pipit	12422	64.5	214	243.3	191.1	162	140.6	183.9	157.3	157	1	158	Highest	2011	Joint 40th	

RINGING SUMMARY

Species	Total		Average/year							Ringed 2016		Highest/ Lowest		Year ranking (out of 69)	
	1948-2015	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010-2015	adult	pullus	Total	Since	Since	Year ranking (out of 69)
Rock Pipit	10164	69.5	208.6	187.8	221.4	171.6	108	82.6	37.5	34	0	34	2013	2013	Joint 64th
Brambling	4835	2	15.1	29.6	139.1	79.5	72.1	63.6	140.2	206	0	206	2014	2014	7th
Chaffinch	3504	10	26.4	30.4	69.5	103.6	59.1	40.1	32.2	40	0	40	2014	2014	27th
Hawfinch	35	0	0	0	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.9	1.7	7	0	7	ever	ever	1st
Common Rosefinch	288	0	1	1.2	3.4	5.9	6	6.3	8.3	5	0	5	2013	2013	Joint 20th
Bullfinch	309	0	0.3	1.2	1.1	1.5	7.2	19.4	0.3	2	0	2	2010	2010	Joint 11th
Greenfinch	551	0	0.2	2.3	4.8	8.2	9.1	28	4.2	6	0	6	2014	2014	28th
Linnet	238	0	0.2	2.7	7.2	2.9	1.9	4.5	7.3	1	0	1	2013	2013	Joint 35th
Twite	7319	59.5	114.1	69.1	162	96.5	96.6	110.3	119.0	114	0	114	2014	2014	33rd
Lesser Redpoll	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8.0	11	0	11	2014	2014	3rd
Common Redpoll	1001	1	7	6.4	34.2	8.2	6.5	17	34.3	25	0	25	2013	2013	Joint 11th
Arctic Redpoll	25	0	0	0.3	0.3	1.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	2	0	2	2012	2012	Joint 2nd
Goldfinch	30	0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.6	1	1.5	8	0	8	ever	ever	1st
Siskin	694	0	3.6	9.4	7.3	7.7	11.4	19.6	17.3	20	0	20	2012	2012	12th
Lapland Bunting	105	0.5	1.4	2.2	0	0.5	0.6	1.2	7.5	1	0	1	2013	2013	Joint 11th
Yellowhammer	76	0.5	0.4	1.8	1.4	1.5	0.7	1.2	0.8	4	0	4	2006	2006	Joint 3rd
Pine Bunting	2	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0.1	0.0	1	0	1	2007	2007	Joint 1st
Reed Bunting	578	2	3.4	7.8	14.2	8.9	8.4	7.5	12.0	4	0	4	2009	2009	Joint 49th
Little Bunting	45	0	0.4	0.8	0.4	1	0.8	0.4	1.2	1	0	1	2014	2014	Joint 9th
Total (all species):	383376	883	2934	5095	6799	7493	8229	4733	4798	4990	1252	6242	Highest	2014	27th

OTHER SPECIES ON THE FIBO RINGING LIST THAT WERE NOT RINGED DURING 2016

Species	Total 1948–2016	Species	Total 1948–2016
Whooper Swan	53	Ruff	42
Bean Goose	1	Curlew Sandpiper	6
White-fronted Goose	3	Temminck's Stint	2
Barnacle Goose	5	Sanderling	131
Shelduck	5	Purple Sandpiper	193
Wigeon	58	Baird's Sandpiper	1
Pintail	2	Little Stint	124
Shoveler	1	White-rumped Sandpiper	1
Pochard	3	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1
Ring-necked Duck	1	Pectoral Sandpiper	5
Tufted Duck	26	Semipalmated Sandpiper	1
Scaup	8	Red-necked Phalarope	5
Lesser Scaup	1	Grey Phalarope	3
Eider	174	Common Sandpiper	76
Velvet Scoter	2	Green Sandpiper	63
Goldeneye	23	Spotted Redshank	3
Red-breasted Merganser	3	Greenshank	16
Goosander	3	Wood Sandpiper	19
Quail	8	Great Snipe	2
Red-throated Diver	1	Pomarine Skua	1
Swinhoe's Petrel	2	Little Auk	15
Cormorant	7	Common Tern	488
Little Grebe	10	Kittiwake	7197
Great Crested Grebe	1	Black-headed Gull	52
Red-necked Grebe	1	Little Gull	1
Slavonian Grebe	3	Iceland Gull	1
Marsh Harrier	1	Glaucous Gull	40
Hen Harrier	2	Cuckoo	114
Goshawk	2	Scop's Owl	2
Spotted Crake	20	Snowy Owl	1
Little Crake	1	Short-eared Owl	19
Baillon's Crake	1	Nightjar	8
Corncrake	45	Swift	19
Moorhen	109	Hoopoe	3
Coot	18	Great Spotted Woodpecker	34
Great Bustard	1	Kestrel	57
Golden Plover	27	Red-footed Falcon	1
Grey Plover	1	Peregrine	6
Lapwing	386	Golden Oriole	9
Little Ringed Plover	1	Brown Shrike	1
Dotterel	4	Isabelline Shrike	2
Whimbrel	18	Lesser Grey Shrike	7
Curlew	223	Woodchat Shrike	13
Black-tailed Godwit	1	Jackdaw	16
Bar-tailed Godwit	9	Rook	11
Turnstone	119	Carrion Crow	3

OTHER SPECIES ON THE FIBO RINGING LIST THAT WERE NOT RINGED DURING 2016

Species	Total 1948–2016	Species	Total 1948–2016
Hooded Crow	49	Siberian Rubythroat	2
Raven	29	Red-flanked Bluetail	3
Firecrest	2	Collared Flycatcher	2
Blue Tit	2	Rock Thrush	1
Great Tit	15	Whinchat	708
Coal Tit	1	Black-eared Wheatear	3
Short-toed Lark	8	Pied Wheatear	1
Woodlark	3	Tree Sparrow	145
Shore Lark	5	Yellow Wagtail	11
Sand Martin	8	Citrine Wagtail	7
House Martin	150	Richard's Pipit	14
Arctic Warbler	39	Blyth's Pipit	2
Pallas's Warbler	4	Tawny Pipit	3
Hume's Warbler	1	Olive-backed Pipit	11
Radde's Warbler	1	Pechora Pipit	10
Dusky Warbler	7	Red-throated Pipit	9
Western Bonelli's Warbler	2	Pallas's Rosefinch	1
Moltoni's Subalpine Warbler	2	Two-barred Crossbill	7
Sardinian Warbler	1	Common Crossbill	578
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	14	Parrot Crossbill	37
River Warbler	11	Citril Finch	1
Savi's Warbler	4	Snow Bunting	681
Thick-billed Warbler	2	Savannah Sparrow	2
Booted Warbler	8	Song Sparrow	3
Sykes's Warbler	2	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	2	White-throated Sparrow	1
Melodious Warbler	13	Ortolan Bunting	21
Aquatic Warbler	25	Cretzschmar's Bunting	1
Paddyfield Warbler	12	Yellow-browed Bunting	1
Marsh Warbler	176	Rustic Bunting	17
Great Reed Warbler	8	Chestnut-eared Bunting	1
Treecreeper	1	Yellow-breasted Bunting	6
Rose-coloured Starling	3	Pallas's Reed Bunting	2
Daurian Starling	1	Black-headed Bunting	4
Dipper	17	Red-headed Bunting	5
White's Thrush	1	Corn Bunting	4
Hermit Thrush	1	Chestnut Bunting	2
Grey-cheeked Thrush	2	Tennessee Warbler	2
Eyebrowed Thrush	1	Blackpoll Warbler	1
Dusky Thrush	1		
Black-throated Thrush	2		
Mistle Thrush	24		
Brown Flycatcher	1		
Rufous-tailed Robin	1		
Thrush Nightingale	38		
Nightingale	32		

RINGING RECOVERIES AND CONTROLS

Ciaran Hatsell and David Parnaby

Notes

The co-ordinates of Fair Isle are 59°32'N, 01°38'W.

Order of data for each record:

Ring number - age (and sex if known) of bird - date of record - location, with duration (years, months and days) between ringing and recovery/control, distance (km) and direction (° and compass point).

Ages of birds: The numbers given are EURING age codes and do not represent years. Definitions are as follows:

- 1 = pullus (nestling or chick)
- 2 = fully grown, but year of hatching quite unknown
- 3 = definitely hatched during calendar year of ringing
- 4 = hatched before calendar year of ringing, but exact year unknown
- 5 = definitely hatched during calendar year previous to year of ringing
- 6 = hatched before calendar year previous to year of ringing, but exact year unknown
- 7 = definitely hatched in the calendar year two years previous to the year of ringing
- 8 = hatched three or more calendar years previous to year of ringing, but exact year unknown

Sex: M = male, F = female

Condition at recovery:

- X found dead
- XF found freshly dead or dying
- + shot
- WV alive and probably healthy, ring or colour marks read in the field
- R caught and released by ringer

Barnacle Goose

1294231	4M	18/12/2004	Newfield Farm, Dumfries and Galloway
(orange 'CBT')	W	5/10/2015	Fair Isle, Shetland (10y 9m 17d, 520 km, 13° NNE)
1297222	5F	4/4/2007	Caerlaverock, Dumfries and Galloway
(orange 'DFH')	W	6/10/2015	Fair Isle, Shetland (8y 6m 2d, 520 km, 13° NNE)

In addition to the two birds listed above that had been ringed on their wintering grounds, the same period of passage brought a series of records of birds that had been ringed on their breeding grounds in Svalbard, the data for which is summarised below.

Table 1. Ringed Barnacle Geese sightings from October 2015 on Fair Isle

Date seen on Fair Isle	Ring number	Age	Sex	Ringling date	Last seen on Solway
4th October 2015	Green 'YVB'	adult	male	26th July 1995	14th January 2013
4th October 2015	Green 'NJU'	gosling	male	5th August 1996	16th February 2014

5th October 2015	Green 'BCF'	adult	female	26th July 2001	6th February 2014
5th October 2015	Green 'BLS'	adult	female	26th July 2001	
5th October 2015	Green 'XNC'	adult	male	1st August 2007	17th February 2015
5th October 2015	Green 'VDY'	adult	male	9th August 2007	18th April 2016
5th October 2015	Green 'XAF'	adult	male	6th August 2006	24th October 2014
5th October 2015	Green 'ZIL'	adult	female	5th August 2008	10th November 2014
5th October 2015	Green 'XBY'	adult	male	14th July 2007	13th February 2011
5th October 2015	Green 'YFC'	adult	male	18th July 2008	not seen since
5th October 2015	Green 'ZNZ'	adult	male	5th August 2008	28th January 2014
5th October 2015	Yellow'ASD'	?	?	after 2013	25th October 2015
5th October 2015	Yellow'VX'	gosling	unsexed	25th July 2015	not seen since
5th October 2015	Yellow'VF'	gosling	unsexed	25th July 2015	not seen since
5th October 2015	Yellow'XZ'	adult	male	25th July 2015	not seen since
5th October 2015	Yellow'ALU'	?	?	in 2012	
5th October 2015	White'UM'	gosling	unsexed	30th July 2015	26th April 2016
5th October 2015	White'IZ'	adult	female	25th July 2015	not seen since

A further three darvic-ringed birds were observed on Fair Isle in 2016, details of one that was ringed on the Solway Firth have been received and is listed below.

Date seen on Fair Isle	Ring number	Age	Sex	Ringing date	Last seen on Solway
18th October 2016	Orange'DCX'	juvenile	male	23rd March 2007	22nd April 2016

The remains of 1099812, ringed on Fair Isle on 30th October 2015, were found on 15th July 2016, having presumably died during the autumn.

Fulmar

FP18999	1	7/8/2013	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	4/6/2016	Bride's Ness, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (2y 9m 28d, 48 km, 245° WSW)

Three birds were caught on the island having previously been ringed here: FP18430 caught on 16th May 2016 (ringed as an adult on 22nd July 2009), FP18108 caught on 27th May 2016 and 26nd June 2016 (ringed as an adult on 9th July 2007) and FC71913 caught on 26th June 2016 (ringed as an adult on 6th July 1997).

Fair Isle Fulmars have been recorded from a wide variety of locations, usually along North Sea or Atlantic coasts (e.g. 31 in The Netherlands, 17 each in Germany and the Faeroe Islands and 16 in Denmark) and this is the 12th to be found on Orkney (the highest number from any county in the United Kingdom). Fulmar is a long-lived species, so FC71913 is not an unusual age (the oldest known Fair Isle-ringed Fulmar was nearly 37 years old).

Storm Petrel

Petrel ringing in the Haven provided the usual batch of interesting movements of birds. As expected, most of these were either birds returning to Fair Isle, or moving between the isle and the nearest sites to the north and south (Sumburgh Head and North Ronaldsay respectively) and most were birds ringed within the previous three years. A few older individuals were recorded, with the oldest being 2364691, which was ringed at Wick on 22nd July 1988 and caught on Fair Isle on 24th July 2016. There was also a movement away from Fair Isle involving a bird that was at least 28 years old, with 2304513, which had been ringed on Fair Isle on 14th July 1988, being caught on Priest Island, Highland (a large Storm Petrel breeding colony) on 17th June 2016.

A ringing session at a couple of the breeding colonies in the north of the island on 26th June produced retraps from 2015 (three), 2014 (six) and 2006 (which had been ringed in the same colony), as well as birds ringed on North Ronaldsay in 2014 and 2007 (the latter of which had also been recorded in the same Fair Isle colony in 2007). One that was amongst several that had been predated by a cat in the Gully had been ringed on the island in 2013.

It is interesting that only 84 individuals (less than 4% of the total number of birds caught) returned to the net on a night after their initial capture.

Table 2. Storm Petrel movements from birds trapped in the Haven in 2016. Key: Fair Isle to other site/other site to Fair Isle

Trapped in 2016									
Site	Year of ringing	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Fair Isle		84	19	18	5	1	1	1	
Sumburgh		31/5	5/4	2/1	1/0		1/0		
other Shetland			0/1	0/1					
North Ronaldsay		13/36	6/4	1/2					
other Orkney		3/1	0/1	0/1		0/1		0/1	
Eilean nan Ron, Highland			2/1	2/1					
other Highland		4/2		1/0					
Moray		2/1							
Isle of May			0/1		0/1				
Angus		0/2							
Eilean An Taighe, W. Isles		0/3	1/0	2/0					
County Durham			0/4						
Cleveland						0/1			
Copeland		1/0							
Annagh Head, Ireland		0/1							
Faeroes			1/0						
Norway		0/1	0/2				0/2		
Portugal		0/3			2/0				
Site	Year of ringing	2008	2007	2006	2003	2000	1999	1996	1988
Fair Isle				1	1				
Sumburgh									
other Shetland									
North Ronaldsay			0/1						
other Orkney				0/1		0/1	1/0	0/1	
Eilean nan Ron, Highland									
other Highland									1/1
Moray									
Isle of May									
Angus									
Eilean An Taighe, W. Isles									
County Durham									
Cleveland									
Copeland									
Annagh Head, Ireland									
Faeroes									
Norway									
Portugal									
Trapped in 2015									
Site	Year of ringing	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Faeroes			8/0						

Swinhoe's Petrel

After a gap of three years and 18 days since it was ringed on Fair Isle, NB84930 was recaptured on 14th and 15th August. This was the first of two males of this species that were ringed on the island in 2013 and, unlike the second individual (which was recaptured on a number of occasions in 2013 and 2014), this bird had not been recorded since. Where it has been in the meantime, and why it chose to return to Fair Isle, is anybody's guess.

Gannet

1427025	1	14/7/2010	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	21/6/2016	Burrafirth, Shetland (5y 11m 7d, 149 km, 17° NNE)

The 18th Fair Isle-ringed Gannet to be recovered elsewhere and the third from Shetland.

Shag

1339041	1	28/6/1996	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	13/6/2016	Ness, Shapinsay, Orkney (19y 11m 16d, 85 km, 234° SW) ring only
1417986	1	12/7/2014	Fair Isle, Shetland
(red 'HIE')	WV	28/5/2016	Noss, Shetland (1y 10m 16d)
	WV	23/8/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland
1427143	1	28/7/2014	Fair Isle, Shetland
(green 'FRW')	WV	5/5/2016	North Ronaldsay, Orkney (1 yr, 9 m, 7d, 46 km, 249° WSW)
	WV	31/5/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland
	WV	9/9/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (and also 17th June and 2nd August)

In addition, birds were trapped in breeding colonies that were ringed in 2015, 2014 (three), 2013, 2003 and 1997 (ring number 1339319, ringed as a chick at Easter Lothar on 24th June 1997). An old ring found in South Ramnigeo (number 1013239) had been ringed as a chick there in 1960, and presumably died before fledging.

There were 23 birds ringed in previous years sighted on the island during the year (including those listed above), with 20 of those having been ringed in 2014 and the other three from 2015 (although two of those were ringed as adults). Just two of those 20 were also seen on the island in 2015, but one (red 'HSE') was seen at Toft in Shetland on 4th June 2015. Although the numbers recorded so far are relatively small, there does appear to be a pattern of birds moving away from the isle in their first year before returning to the isle in their second calendar year. There were 15 Shags fitted with darvic rings in 2012, nine in 2013, 90 in 2014, 37 in 2015 and 28 in 2016, so it will be interesting to see what patterns continue to develop.

Hen Harrier

Blue 'AFT'	3M	4/7/2016	East Mainland, Orkney
	WV	8/8/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (1m 4d)

This is the first Hen Harrier movement involving Fair Isle and it perhaps hints at the origin of many of our autumn migrants of this species (although some presumably also arrive from mainland Europe). It remained until 28th August.

Arctic Skua

ES60024	1	4/7/1995	Foula, Shetland
	WV	1/8/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (21y 0m 28d, 71 km, 161° SSE)

One photographed on Bunness on 27th July was ring number ET75474; it had been ringed as a chick on Byerwalls on 28th June 2000 (16y 0m 29d).

Ringling recoveries suggest a certain amount of movement between colonies in the Northern Isles so ES60024 may have been part of the Fair Isle breeding population, although given the relatively late date, it is perhaps equally likely to have been a wandering post-breeding bird.

Great Skua

HT44395	1	13/7/1994	Foula, Shetland
	XF	22/5/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (21y 10m 9d, 72 km, 160° SSE)
HT78365	1	4/7/2006	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	8/5/2016	Scalloway, Shetland (9y 10m 4d, 70 km, 17° NNE)
HT78489	1	20/7/2006	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	9/1/2016	FRANCE: Port-Des-Barques, Charente-Maritime (9y 5m 20d, 1,510 km, 179° S) found after storm
MA27477	1	9/7/2015	Fair Isle, Shetland
	WV	7/1/2016	FRANCE: Capbreton Harbour, Landes (5m 29d, 1,765 km, 180° S)
MA38377	1	19/7/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XX	8/10/2016	FRANCE: Hermanville-sur-Mer, Calvados (2m 19d, 1,144 km, 176° S)
MA38384	1	24/7/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	4/10/2016	Holkham, Norfolk (2m 10d, 745 km, 169° S)

MA22422, ringed on 14th July 2010, was photographed on Bunes on 16th July 2016 (6y 0m 2d). HT78415, ringed on 17th July 2006, was found at 0100hrs on 8th September 2016 (10y 1m 22d) when it flew into the window of the Obs bar. After taking a bite of the assistant warden who went to its assistance, it flew off none the worse for its experience (although having failed to get served).

A number of adults were recovered dead on the island during the year, including birds ringed in 1993, 1995 (two), 2006, 2010, 2012 (two) and 2013. All except the 2010-ringed individual were killed as part of airstrip safety operations. A total of 32 chicks were found dead, either shortly before they fledged or before leaving the isle, of which 15 were killed as part of airstrip safety operations.

Movements from Shetland are common (HT44395 was the 43rd to make that movement) but HT78265 was only the fifth to head in the opposite direction. There are two records that reflect the southward movement of youngsters that sadly failed to survive their first winter. One was moving south through the English North Sea in October with another on the French coast shortly afterwards. It was good to see one of 2015's cohorts was surviving the winter in France; MA27477 had its ring read as it fed on a Guillemot on the beach. There have been more recoveries of Fair Isle-ringed Bonxies from France than anywhere else; the three records in 2016 take the total to 22.

Puffin

EW05069	6	19/7/2005	Sule Skerry, Orkney
	R	21/6/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (10y 11m 2d, 166 km, 73° ENE)

Six Fair Isle-ringed birds were found dead on the isle in 2016, they had been ringed in 1992, 1994, 1998, 2009, 2014 and 2016 (most were killed by Bonxies on Greenholm). A number of birds were also resighted or retrapped during the year, these had been ringed on the isle in 1990, 1991, 1996, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008 (two), 2009, 2011, 2012 (two) and 2013 (two).

EW05069 is only the third Puffin ringed elsewhere to be discovered on Fair Isle, with previous birds coming from the Isle of May and Norway.

Guillemot

X75565	1	24/6/1997	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	2/7/2016	NORWAY: Ellefsnyken, Rost, Nordland (19y 0m 8d, 1,102 km, 38° NE)

In addition, birds caught in various breeding colonies had been ringed as adults in 1996, 2010, 2011 (two), 2014 (three) and 2015, with one bird ringed as a pullus in 2014 also recaptured.

A Fair Isle-ringed Guillemot going to Norway is one of the commonest movements recorded from the FIBO ringing scheme and this was the 437th individual to make that journey. The date and location (an important seabird colony) implies this was a breeding bird.

Razorbill

Several birds were trapped in the colonies that had been ringed previously on Fair Isle, including birds ringed in 1994, 1997 (two), 1998 (three), 1999, 2002, 2003 (two), 2004, 2005, 2008, 2009 (four), 2011 (two), 2012, 2014 and 2015 (two).

Razorbills can live to be over 40 years old, so this represented an expected batch.

Arctic Tern

SX68373	1	1/7/1991	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	30/5/2016	Point of Ayre, Isle of Man (24y 10m 29d, 594 km, 197° SSW)
SX26044	1	6/7/1991	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	23/7/2016	Bewan, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (25y 0m 17d, 46 km, 249° WSW)
SX33247	1	30/6/1992	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	23/7/2016	Bewan, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (24y 0m 23d, 46 km 249° WSW)
SX94102	1	17/7/1996	North Hill, Westray, Orkney
	XF	29/6/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (19y 11m 12d, 85 km, 74° ENE)
SV17186	1	24/6/2000	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	2/8/2016	Bewan, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (16y 1m 9d, 46 km, 249° WSW)
SV17716	1	28/6/2000	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	6/8/2016	Bewan, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (16y 1m 9d, 46 km, 249° WSW)
SV23161	1	2/7/2000	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	23/5/2016	Isle of May, Fife (15y 10m 21d, 377 km, 189° S)
SV23226	1	2/7/2000	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	24/7/2016	Bewan, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (16y 0m 22d, 46 km, 249° WSW)
SV23266	1	9/7/2000	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	24/7/2016	Bewan, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (16y 0m 15d, 46 km, 249° WSW)

SV76304 was one of just two birds to fledge from the sub-colony at Busta in 2012, having been ringed on 10th July, and was found dead on 3rd June 2016 (3y 10m 24d) having been killed by a cat. A similar fate befell SX33395 that had been ringed on 30th June 1992 (23y 11m 4d).

Although movements to Orkney are relatively regular (these are the 22nd–27th examples), SX94102 is the first to be recorded moving in the opposite direction. Arctic Terns started breeding on Fair Isle in the 1980s, with the population thought to be made up of birds from Shetland, so this was the first example of a bird having colonised from elsewhere. The recoveries of Fair Isle-ringed birds on the Isle of Man and Isle of May were both the first movements to these locations and, given the dates, may have involved breeding birds.

Skylark

TR34032 had its ring read as it fed in the Obs garden on 12th March; it had been ringed as a juvenile in the North Grind on 20th July 2012 (3y 7m 21d).

Chiffchaff

2V6301 3 16/10/2015 **FRANCE:** Trunvel, Treogat, Finistere
R 11/4/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (5m 26d, 1,307 km, 8° N)

The first French-ringed Chiffchaff for Fair Isle (according to the BTO online ringing database, only the second French-ringed bird to be found on Fair Isle following a Robin in 2012).

Blackcap

14815839 3M 23/9/2016 **BELGIUM:** Higene, Antwerpen
R 6/10/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (13 days, 1008 km, 339° NNW)

S016684 3M 18/10/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland
R 19/10/2016 Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (1 day, 49 km, 248° WSW)

This was the tenth Belgian Blackcap to be caught on Fair Isle (the most frequent origin of birds caught on the isle, with seven recorded from other sites in the United Kingdom and six from The Netherlands amongst the others) and was presumably an eastern European bird migrating to the United Kingdom for the winter. The bird moving rapidly to North Ronaldsay was possibly a Scandinavian arrival heading south and details are awaited for a Norwegian-ringed bird that was found dead (having been killed by a Great Grey Shrike) on 4th October.

Marsh Warbler

D397486 4 4/6/2016 Westness, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
R 10/6/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (6 days, 48 km, 70° ENE)

An interesting example of a bird moving slowly north in the spring.

Sedge Warbler

EK19199 4 16/5/2016 **NORWAY:** Sogardsvatnet, Oygarden, Hordaland
R 23/5/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (7 days, 379 km, 254° WSW)

The first foreign movement of a Sedge Warbler for Fair Isle and one that involved an unusual direction of movement for the spring, it was perhaps an overshooting bird that was reorientating.

Starling

LJ43663 1 2/6/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland
R 11/9/2016 Maywick, Shetland (3m 9d, 55 km, 18° NNE)

LJ43281 3J 28/9/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland
VV 11/12/2016 Scarfiskerry, Thurso, Highland (2m 13d, 137 km, 223° SW)

There were also a variety of retraps and resightings of older birds throughout the year.

Blackbird

LJ02752 3F 17/10/2015 Fair Isle, Shetland
R 4/12/2016 Deer Park Forest Croft, Highland (1y 1m 17d, 264 km, 214° SW)

7582073 6F 24/3/2016 **NORWAY:** Sore Merkeskog, Utsira, Rogaland
R 27/10/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (7m 3d, 369 km, 275° W)

7403860	3M	8/10/2016	NORWAY: Herdla Fuglestasjon, Askoy, Hordaland
	R	15/10/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (7 days, 382 km, 253° WSW)
LJ43964	3F	21/10/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	30/10/2016	Druridge Bay, Northumberland (9 days, 476 km, 180° S)

There were also two birds trapped on 25th November 2015 that overwintered on the isle, an adult male (LH79994) that remained until 23rd March (3m 27d) and a first winter female (LH79992) that lingered until 19th March (3m 23d). Both were in poor condition when they were initially trapped, weighing 74.1 g and 72.6 g, but increased their weights to 100 g and 110.6 g respectively. LJ43305, a young female, was ringed on 2nd March and was last retrapped on the island on 6th August (5m 4d), having summered around the Gully and Parks.

The two Norwegian-ringed birds were the 86th and 87th Blackbirds to be recovered on Fair Isle and the 14th and 15th from Norway (only Orkney has provided more). There have also been 130 that have gone in the opposite direction, a typical representation of the origin and destination of many of the migrants that pass through Fair Isle in the spring and autumn. The bird trapped in Highland (the first for that recording area) shows that many of the birds arriving in the autumn go on to winter in the United Kingdom, whilst the rapid movement of the bird found dead in Northumberland was also heading south for the winter.

Pied Flycatcher

7H96735	3	27/8/2016	NORWAY: Titran, Froya, Sør-Trøndelag
	R	6/9/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (10 days, 698 km, 229° WSW)

Although there have been birds ringed in Fair Isle that have been recovered in Orkney, Norway (two), Morocco and Spain, this is the first bird ringed elsewhere to be caught on the isle and represents a typical autumn movement of a south-bound migrant.

Wheatear

Y123339	3	17/8/2012	Fair Isle, Shetland
	WV	2/9/2014	nr Hengistbury Head, Dorset (2y 0m 16d, 982 km, 181° S)

A number of Fair Isle-ringed birds were caught or seen during the year:

TP38561. Ringed as a chick on 11th June 2009 and trapped as an adult male in the Double Dyke on 16th May (6y 11m 5d), the oldest known Fair Isle-ringed Wheatear.

L274572. Ringed on 2nd May 2012 and seen from 11th April until 28th August (4y 3m 26d).

Y123038. Ringed as a juvenile on 10th July 2012 and seen at Pietron (where it had also been seen on 17th May 2013) on 5th May (3y 7m 18d).

Y123076. Ringed on 17th August 2012 and trapped on 4th April (3y 7m 18d), its first recapture.

D190359. Ringed on 15th April 2014 and trapped on 20th May 2016 (2y 1m 5d).

Duncock

TR34306	5	20/5/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	28/5/2016	Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (8 days, 49 km, 248° WSW)

A short-distance movement, although where it was ultimately headed to as a south-bound, late spring migrant is anybody's guess.

House Sparrow

TR34214	2F	16/10/2015	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	22/6/2016	Scousburgh, Shetland (8m 6d, 50 km, 20° NNE)

TL80519 2 27/8/2016 Cott, Sanday, Orkney
 R (2M) 26/10/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (1m 29d, 61 km, 59° ENE)

There were a few retraps of birds from earlier years, the oldest was TR34151 a male ringed on 10th April 2012 that was retrapped on 6th April (3y 11m 27d), with others from 2014 (three) and 2015.

Not a species that features often in the movements section of the report, this is actually the third Fair Isle-ringed House Sparrow to make it to Shetland, whilst another two have been caught on North Ronaldsay. TL80519 was the first House Sparrow ringed elsewhere to be found on Fair Isle and occurred during a time when a large number of unringed birds were being trapped, so it may perhaps have been part of a larger movement of this species at the time.

Meadow Pipit

Although there were no movements away from the isle, there were seven birds retrapped that had been ringed in previous years on Fair Isle, five of these were ringed in 2015 and the other two were from 2014, the oldest of which was D190346, which was ringed on 8th April 2014 and retrapped on 17th August 2016 (2y 4m 9d), presumably whilst breeding on the island.

Rock Pipit

2611363 3 12/11/2012 Cairnbulg, Aberdeenshire
 VV 17/7/2013 Fair Isle, Shetland (8m 5d, 209 km, 6° N)
 VV 19/6/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (3y 7m 7d, 209 km, 6° N)
 VV 27/7/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (3y 8m 15d, 209 km, 6° N)

2721784 3 28/8/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland
 VV 31/10/2016 Glaxo Sea Defence. Montrose, Angus (2m 3d, 319 km, 189° S)

In addition, 2711071, ringed in South Haven on 12th December 2015 had its ring read as it fed in the Obs garden on 5th March and was caught there again on 10th December (2m 22d), 2606392 was ringed at Double Dyke on 6th November 2015 and retrapped in the Gully (apparently as part of a breeding pair) on 4th May (5m 28d) and 2688011, which had been ringed in the Obs garden on 10th March 2014, was retrapped there on 9th March (1y 11m 28d).

2611363 was colour ringed in North-east Scotland as part of a Grampian Ringing Group study into the movements of this species. It breeds on Bunes and winters in back in Aberdeenshire every year, proving (along with other colour-ringed birds from this study), that it is not just the youngsters which leave the island in the winter. 2721784 had its metal ring read in the field (not an easy task with a ring with an internal diameter of 2.3 mm) and is the sixth longest-travelled Fair Isle-ringed Rock Pipit. Where these autumn passage birds are coming from is not clear; there are currently no recorded movements to or from anywhere to the north of Fair Isle.

Brambling

EH18602 3F 2/10/2014 **NORWAY:** Barstadvik, Orsta, More og Romsdal
 R 9/10/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (2y 0m 7d, 527 km, 234° SW)
 R 10/10/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (2y 0m 8d, 527 km, 234° SW)

EL11871 3F 8/10/2016 **NORWAY:** Bomyra, Randberg, Rogaland
 R 13/10/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland (5 days, 414 km, 279° W)

S016594 3F 10/10/2016 Fair Isle, Shetland
 R 13/10/2016 Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (3 days, 49 km, 248° WSW)

The fifth and sixth Norwegian-ringed Bramblings to be caught on Fair Isle, one making its first North Sea crossing, the other a comparative veteran, being on its third south bound migration.

Linnet

Z330877	3	2/8/2015	Scousburgh, Shetland
	R (5F)	28/4/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (8m 26d, 50 km, 200° SSW)
Z330936	3	29/8/2015	Scousburgh, Shetland
	R (5M)	22/4/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (7m 24d, 50 km, 200° SSW)
	R	23/4/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (7m 25d, 50 km, 200° SSW)
	R	24/4/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (7m 26d, 50 km, 200° SSW)
	R	26/4/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (7m 28d, 50 km, 200° SSW)
	R	30/4/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (8m 1d, 50 km, 200° SSW)
S016022	4M	1/5/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	10/5/2016	Virkie, Shetland (9 days, 43 km, 25° NNE)

Although Linnets are increasing in frequency on Fair Isle as the Shetland breeding population grows, it proved to be a poor year for them in the traps, with only three caught. Remarkably however, two of these had been ringed as youngsters in the same garden the previous autumn on Shetland (the source of at least three previous movements of this species involving Fair Isle) and the third went on to breed in the south of Shetland, raising two broods (of six chicks each) in the garden of former FIBO Warden and FIBOT Chairman Roger Riddington.

Twite

Y506318	5	12/1/2016	Dale, Costa, Evie, Orkney
	R	29/4/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (3m 17d, 101 km, 64° ENE)
S016288	3	19/9/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R (2M)	2/11/2016	Geosetter, Shetland (1m 14d, 52 km, 21° NNE)

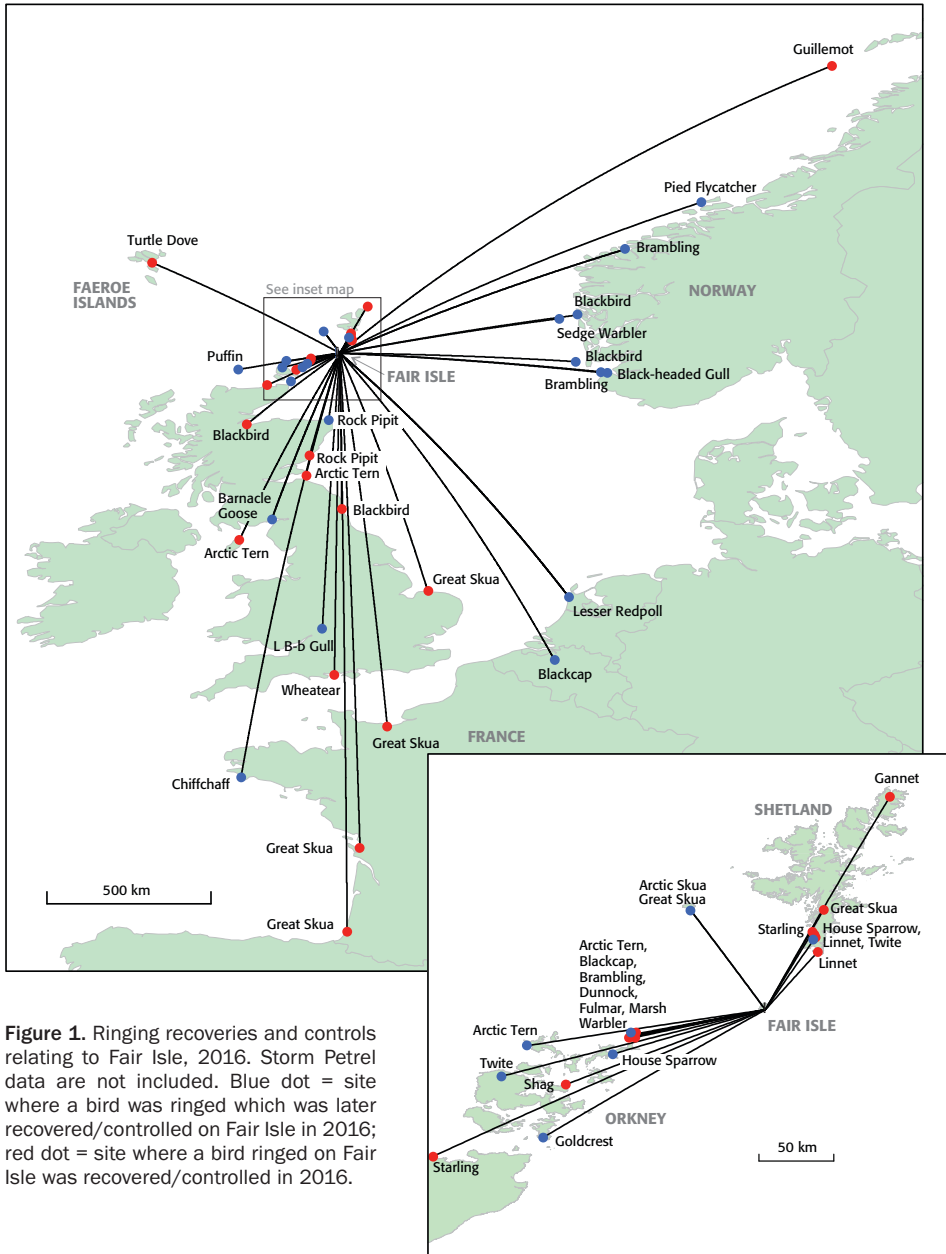
Retraps from previous years included X713772, a female ringed at the Obs on 29th August 2010 that was retrapped on several occasions between 9th March and 3rd May (5y 8m 4d). This female has been retrapped on Fair Isle every year from 2012 to 2016, on dates between 13th February and 23rd May, and is now the oldest known Fair Isle-ringed Twite (and is only four months short of the oldest known BTO-ringed Twite). Other retraps included birds ringed in 2012 (three), 2013 (two), 2014 (ten) and 2015 (27). The species is generally largely absent from the isle in the winter, with most of the Fair Isle population thought to winter in Orkney (73 Fair Isle-ringed birds have been found in Orkney, with one in North-east Scotland and one in Sutherland). Numbers on the isle build up during the spring, when numbers ringed increase, with most caught at the Obs and Plantation. Fewer are caught during the summer, with numbers then building up in August when catches again increase. It is assumed that the build-up of Twite in the spring on Fair Isle includes birds heading further north (presumably to Shetland) and that the large flocks present in the autumn are also largely consisted of Shetland birds as they head south for the winter. Twite are generally more easily caught in the spring when they form flocks that are attracted to feeders, as natural food is presumably scarcer at that time of year. The absence of retrapped birds in the summer (when an abundance of grass seed means feeders are less utilised and birds have dispersed into breeding territories) does not necessarily indicate that all the ringed birds have left the isle, so it isn't entirely clear how many of the returning birds caught in the spring are actually returning breeding birds.

Y506318 is a typical record of a bird ringed in the winter moving north (the 67th Orkney-ringed bird to be caught on Fair Isle), although in most years there are more individuals found making this movement. S016288 is, remarkably, the first confirmed movement of a bird between Fair Isle and Shetland (although two partially read Twite rings at Sumburgh in spring 2016 were likely to have been Fair Isle birds). It appears unusual that it moved north in the autumn - was it post-fledging wandering or do some Fair Isle Twite actually winter in Shetland, where there is likely to be more suitable feeding habitat available? The lack of movements confirmed between Fair Isle and Shetland is presumably as much to do with the areas that Twite inhabit in Shetland being away from those that ringers are active in, as to the lack of actual movements. It is interesting to compare this with Linnet (239 ringed on Fair Isle compared to 7,433 Twite), where there are now several movements between Shetland and Fair Isle, despite the Shetland Linnet population being only in the region of 20–30 pairs. Linnets however, are more likely to nest in gardens than Twite, and indeed, most of the records from Fair Isle are of birds caught in Shetland ringers' gardens!

Lesser Redpoll

BE83773	3F	24/10/2015	THE NETHERLANDS: Zwanenwater, Noord-Holland
	R	6/5/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (6m 12d, 842 km, 333° NNW)
	R	7/5/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (6m 13d, 842 km, 333° NNW)
	R	8/5/2016	Fair Isle, Shetland (6m 14d, 842 km, 333° NNW)

The first Dutch redpoll to be found on Fair Isle, where the only previous foreign movements involved a 'Mealy Redpoll' arriving from Norway in October 2013 and an unidentified redpoll caught in spring 1980 that had been ringed in Belgium in December 1975.



FAIR ISLE'S SEABIRDS IN 2016

Ciaran Hatsell

2016 was another interesting year for Fair Isle's seabirds, with more highs than lows and some very positive steps made by several species. The Kittiwake plots around Greenholm experienced a bumper year, with 40 chicks fledged from 44 nests, the highest productivity since 2000. Although it is a comparatively minor success, it was heartening to see a monitoring plot thriving rather than failing, even on such a small scale.

An all-island count of Fulmars during 2016 showed an 8.2% increase to 32,061 AOS (apparently occupied site) in comparison with the last whole island count of 29,640 AOS in 2011. The Gannet population rose for the first time since 2013 and productivity remained high once again.

Shags had a poor year, with low productivity compounding the overall picture of long-term decline on the monitoring plots. Some of the other colonies around the island appeared to fare better, with some of the ringed birds including broods of two and three large chicks.

It was an outstanding year for skuas and the Great Skua population of 516 breeding pairs was a staggering record, with nesting density extremely high in places and several pairs nesting just metres apart. It will be interesting to monitor the impact of this surge in the population and to monitor whether the colonies will reach breaking point as nesting density increases. The Arctic Skua population remained at 37 AOTs (apparently occupied territory) for the second consecutive year and productivity was positive, with an 18.5% increase on 2015 producing 0.32 chicks fledged per AOT. Hatching success was extremely high, with no broods failing at egg stage. Twelve chicks fledged in total, with many others falling foul to predation.

Guillemots and Razorbills both had reasonable seasons, with no mass starvation noted during the season and Razorbills in particular having a stand-out year, with a 34.1% increase in numbers at the Lericum monitoring plot and the highest productivity at Easter Lothar since 1998.

The Arctic Tern colonies fared relatively well, with 118 AIA (apparently incubating adults) and a productivity of 0.23 chicks fledged per AIA. This moderate success was dampened by the discovery of several dead adult birds in the small colony at the Rippack, which had fallen victim to a cat. One of the birds predated was ringed in 1992 and another ringed as a chick in 2012. This shows that although the terns have struggled in recent years, there is at least some evidence that the chicks have survived to return for a breeding attempt. It is a massive shame that these incredible birds should have their lives cut short in such circumstances.

One of the biggest success stories of the year was the approval of the Marine Protected Area designation around Fair Isle waters. This will hopefully be a stepping stone to protecting the waters surrounding the isle to benefit our seabirds, island residents and wider ecosystem. It is testament to the determination and commitment of the island community that this milestone has been achieved and all at FIBO would like to thank them for all their hard work in bringing this dream to reality.

Fulmar: An increase of 5.7% was recorded at the population monitoring plots in 2016 (371 AOS), in comparison with 2015 (351 AOS). A whole-island count produced an 8.2% increase in 2016 (32,061 AOS) in comparison with the last whole-island count in 2011 (29,640). The whole-island count was the third consecutive count to produce an increase and resulted in the highest annual total since 1996.

Mean Fulmar breeding success on the monitoring plots decreased by 7.4% to 0.50 chicks fledged per AOS in 2016, in comparison to 0.54 chicks fledged per AOS in 2015. It is possible that the slightly lower productivity in 2016 was caused by some of the plots apparently being adversely affected by heavy rain shortly before the fledging stage. The long-term trend in breeding success is neither one of consistent increase or decrease, but rather is of relatively short-term fluctuations.

Phenology records: eggs were first seen on 17th May (Meoness) and the first fledging was recorded on 18th August (Easter Lother).

Gannet: An increase of 1.4% was noted in the island Gannet population in 2016 to 3,409 AON (apparently occupied nest) in comparison to the 3,363 AON in 2015. Gannets colonised Fair Isle in 1975 after which a gradual increase followed, with rapid expansion in the population noted from 2008 to 2010. Since then, there has been a slow fluctuating decrease in numbers, with the 2016 count representing the first increase since 2013.

Gannet productivity in 2016 was 0.71 chicks fledged per AON, representing a decrease of 4.1% from 2015 (0.75 chicks fledged per AON). The 2016 figure maintains the high productivity values seen over the last 16 years; above 0.6 in all years with data from 2001 to 2016. The sample size of nests monitored in 2016 was 268.

Phenology records: the first chicks were noted during a monitoring visit on 3rd June (Guidicum and Lerness) and the first fledgling on 20th August (off Dronger).

Shag: Long-term whole-island monitoring and plot counts have shown that the Fair Isle population of Shags has declined considerably since 1969 (see Figure 3). Since 2011, counts have apparently stabilised, with small fluctuations possibly related to how many birds choose to breed in a given season. In 2016 the plots showed a decline of 21.2% to 26 AON in comparison to 2015 (33 AON).

Shag productivity was 72.8% lower in 2016 (0.44 chicks fledged per AON) than in 2015 (1.62 chicks fledged per AON). The long-term trend since 1986 has been a gradual decline in productivity, with particularly poor breeding success recorded recently in 2008, 2009 and 2011, and the 2016 breeding season fits this pattern, which is disappointing given the high productivity recorded in the two previous years. The breeding Shag population on Fair Isle has declined severely and the total number of occupied nests in the productivity monitoring plots is now very low with just nine in 2016 compared to 68 in 1986.

Phenology records: the first eggs were seen on 30th April (Mavers Geo) and the first chicks on 18th June.

Table 1. Shag population change at five monitored plots, 1986–2016.

	North Ramnigeo	South Ramnigeo	South Naaversgill	South Gunnawark	Lericum	All sites
1986	27	38	52	64	36	217
1987	30	31	28	49	102	240
1988	24	53	45	48	51	221
1989	20	73	42	53	53	241
1990	20	60	25	43	54	202
1991	27	53	17	38	63	198
1992	21	49	16	26	63	175
1993	20	35	19	24	76	174
1994	26	46	17	24	58	171
1995	18	37	20	23	62	160
1996	26	51	24	33	72	206
1997	16	47	19	26	55	163
1998	13	32	20	25	45	135
1999	11	20	16	19	30	96
2000	23	30	18	25	59	155
2001	17	25	14	29	64	149
2002	19	22	22	22	50	135
2003	14	16	19	26	44	119
2004	11	17	21	22	51	122
2005	8	14	15	22	38	97
2006	13	28	24	18	54	137
2007	11	21	20	24	55	131
2008	4	8	8	7	28	55
2009	0	3	5	7	5	20
2010	0	10	14	11	14	49
2011	1	4	3	4	8	20
2012	1	7	10	7	7	32
2013	1	5	2	6	7	21
2014	2	5	3	6	8	24
2015	2	10	2	5	14	33
2016	1	7	2	2	14	26
% change 2015–2016	-50.0 %	-30.0 %	+0.0%	-60.0 %	+0.0%	-21.2 %
% change 1986–2016	- 96.3 %	- 81.6 %	- 96.2 %	- 96.9 %	- 61.1 %	- 88.0 %

Plot totals refer to total AON (apparently occupied nests).

Arctic Skua: Numbers of breeding Arctic Skuas remained the same in 2016 (37 AOT) as 2015. The long-term trend in the population has been a gradual decline with occasional fluctuations, although since reaching a low of just 19 AOT in 2013, a very slight increase in fortunes has been noted.

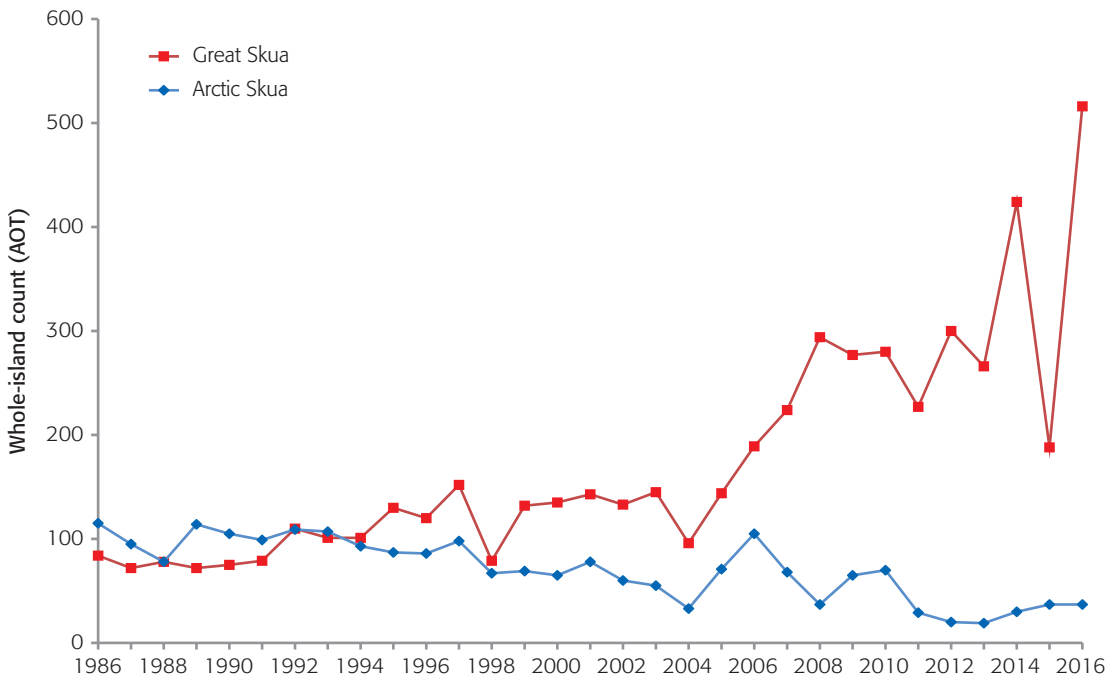
Arctic Skua productivity in 2016 increased by 18.5% to 0.32 chicks fledged per AOT in comparison to 2015 (0.27 chicks fledged per AOT). After disastrous years from 2011 to 2013 (in which a total of just one chick fledged), 2014 to 2016 has looked a bit more positive.

Of the 37 AOT, nine fledged at least one chick (three AOTs fledged two chicks and six fledged a single chick) and 27 failed at chick stage (none failed at egg stage, with one AOT involving a pair that appeared not to attempt breeding). A much lower percentage of nests failed at egg stage in 2016 (0% compared to 48.7% in 2015 and 20% in 2014), with most of the other nests failing due to predation of chicks, presumably by Great Skuas (with Great Skuas also implicated in two nests that apparently failed due to an adult from the breeding pair being predated), with a small number failing due to the effects of wet and windy weather on small chicks. Despite the large number of near-fledged chicks that were predated it appeared that, of the 12 that went on to fledge, probably only two were predated on the isle.

Figure 1.

Population change of Arctic Skuas and Great Skuas on Fair Isle, 1986–2016 (whole-island counts of apparently occupied territories - AOT).

Phenology records: the first eggs were first seen during a monitoring visit on 31st May (several locations) and the first chick on 22nd June (on Bunness, a day earlier than 2015, in the same location), with the first chicks fledging on 19th July (Bunness).



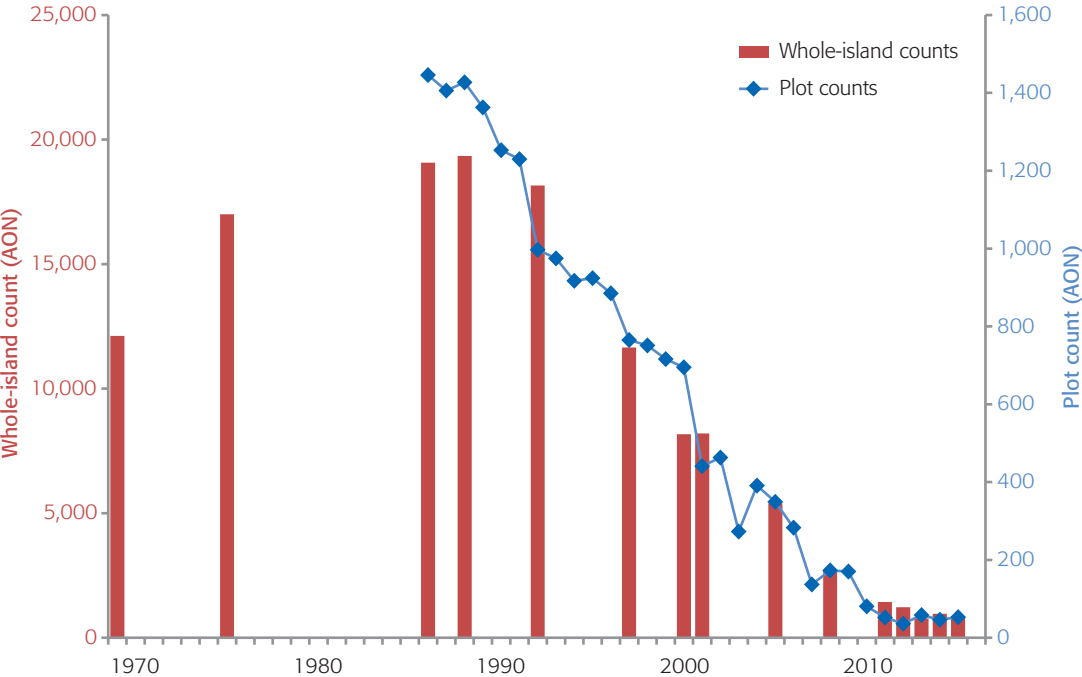
Great Skua: Great Skuas increased by 174.5% to 516 AOT in comparison to the 188 AOT in 2015. This is a new record high population count for Fair Isle, beating the previous record of 424 AOT in 2014. The overall trend for Great Skua has been a long-term increase, which was slow and steady, until 2004 when numbers increased rapidly until 2008, before apparently stabilising until 2013, after which numbers have fluctuated markedly.

Breeding success was 26.7% lower in 2016 (0.66 chicks fledged per AOT) than in 2015 (0.90 chicks fledged per AOT). Prior to 2000, productivity was generally high (usually 0.7 chicks or higher fledged per AOT), but since then it has been more mixed and the 2016 productivity is the second highest in the last ten years.

Phenology records: eggs were first seen on 15th May (Suka Mire) and chicks on 8th June, with the first fledging noted from 23rd July, with the last chick fledging in mid-September (showing the extended breeding season of this species).

Kittiwake: Plot counts in 2016 produced 53 AON, an increase of 15.2% in comparison to 2015 (46 AON). There was no whole-island count this year due to unsuitable weather and sea state conditions during the monitoring period. Kittiwake has seen one of the most dramatic population crashes of any of Fair Isle’s seabirds, with a steep decline noted since 1987, although since 2013 this has perhaps started to stabilise (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Population change of Kittiwakes on Fair Isle, 1969–2016 (whole-island counts and plot counts of AON). Plot counts for each year are the sum of counts from ten study plots.



Productivity for Kittiwake increased by 476.9% in 2016 to 0.75 chicks fledged per AON, in comparison to the 0.13 chicks fledged per AON in 2015. This is the highest productivity since 2000, during which time there have been six years of zero productivity. No nesting attempts were made in 2016 at seven of the ten monitoring plots (South Gunnawark, Lericum, Stroms Heelor, Johnny's Peats, Shaldi Cliff, Da Swadin and Trottie Kame). No Kittiwakes have returned to the productivity plot at Lericum since a substantial landslide occurred there in the winter of 2010/2011 and it seems that the cliff here no longer contains suitable nest ledges for this species. The bulk of the nesting attempts (44 of the 53 monitored nests) and all of the fledged chicks came from just one plot (Holms and Dog Geo).

Phenology records: the first egg was seen during a monitoring visit on 26th May (Greenholm), with the first chicks noted from 26th June (Greenholm) and the first fledging on 31st July (Greenholm).

Arctic Tern: The whole-island count showed an increase of 293.3% in 2016 (118 AIA) in comparison with 2015 (30 AIA), the highest whole-island count of this species since 2012. Breeding numbers have fluctuated greatly since 1987, although a general upward trend until 2001 has now clearly been reversed. Although the species' breeding ecology, in which they often prospect for nest sites in large, cohesive flocks and do not always nest at the same site every year, may be partially responsible for the fluctuations, a genuine decline also seems to be occurring.

Arctic Tern productivity increased in 2016 by 666.7% to 0.23 chicks fledged per AIA, compared to the 0.03 chicks per AIA recorded in 2015. This is the highest productivity since 2009, with zero productivity recorded in nine years since 2001. Cat predation was proven at Rippack (with several adults taken) and strongly suspected at Shalstane.

Phenology records: the first egg was noted on 4th June (Buness), chicks were seen from 29th June (Buness) and fledging was noted from 19th July (Buness).

Guillemot: Plot counts decreased by 1.8% in 2016 to 1,263 individuals compared with 2015 (1,286 individuals). Since 1999, the pattern of change is one of decline in numbers recorded, although this appears to have started to stabilise since 2008.

In 2016, Guillemot productivity was 0.45 chicks fledged per AIA, a decrease of 23.7% from the 0.59 chicks fledged per AIA recorded in 2015. From 1988 to 2002, Guillemot productivity remained relatively high, fluctuating between 0.67 and 0.85; however, since 2002 the general trend has been for productivity to be relatively low (less than 0.5) or to be zero. 2014 and 2015 both produced productivity of over 0.55, but 2016 saw productivity reverting to the lower numbers more often seen recently.

The number of occasions when fish were observed being brought back by Guillemots during a 24-hour watch was 95% higher in 2016 (200 return flights with fish) than 2015 (105 return flights with fish). Gadoids were the most common prey-type seen in 2016 (33.0% of fish brought back were from this group), followed by clupeids (19%) (32% of flights involved fish that were not identified, either due to being too small or the flight being too quick). In 2015 the commonest fish observed during the 24-hour watch were sandeels (40%), gadoids (31.4%) and clupeids (14.3%). The majority of fish brought back by Guillemots in 2016 were judged to be equal to the length of the bill (38.5%), followed by fish less than a bill length (33.5%) and between 1–1.5x bill length (22.5%). In 2015, fish 1–1.5x bill length were the most commonly observed (34.3%) followed by fish equal to bill length and less than bill length (both 31.4%)

In 2016, the 24-hour Guillemot feeding watch was carried out at Pietron on 3rd July and daily chick feeding frequency was found to be 2.90 feeds per chick per day, 88.3% higher than the 1.54 feeds per chick per day recorded in 2015.

Phenology records: the first eggs were recorded on 8th May (Dog Geo) with the first chick on 11th June (Da Swadin).

Razorbill: Razorbill numbers at the Lericum monitoring plot increased by 34.1% in 2016 (30 individuals) compared with 2015 (23 individuals). The Razorbill population on Fair Isle has been steadily declining since the late 1980s, with a particularly sharp crash in numbers noted after 2006, with counts then remaining relatively stable until 2012, with a slight increase apparent since 2013.

Razorbill productivity in 2016 was 0.74 chicks per egg laid, a 5.7% increase from the 0.70 chicks per egg laid recorded in 2015. From 1990 to 2002, productivity fluctuated but remained relatively high at between 0.47 and 0.8, but since 2003 productivity has consistently been low (<0.5) or, in four years, been zero, so the last three year's productivity figures have been a welcome return to form, with the 2016 productivity being the highest recorded since 1998.

Phenology records: the first egg was seen on 9th May (Dog Geo), the first chick was found at Easter Lothar on 6th June and the first fledged birds were noted on 30th June.

Table 2. Razorbill breeding success at the Easter Lothar monitoring plot, 2006–2016. Razorbill productivity is expressed as the number of chicks fledged per egg laid.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Eggs laid	107	94	78	72	73	63	43	27	34	41	38
Productivity	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.47	0.00	0.02	0.23	0.04	0.68	0.71	0.74

Black Guillemot: The number of Black Guillemots in breeding plumage counted along the east coast of Fair Isle (North Lighthouse to South Lighthouse) was 2.6% lower in 2016 (189 individuals) than in 2015 (194 individuals). Due to strong winds and rough seas, only one count was made this year (on 31st March). Although this was the second year in succession to record a slight decline, it is still possible that the gradual, fluctuating increase noted since 1999 (following a steep crash in numbers in 1998) is continuing.

Black Guillemot productivity was formerly monitored at nests in the boulder beaches along the east coast of Fair Isle (1987–2000). However, use of these nest sites has greatly declined (possibly due to predation by cats) and since 2000 either too few nests were found and accessed for any meaningful data on breeding success to be collected, or none were found. Data collected between 1987 and 2000 showed productivity fluctuating, with no obvious long-term pattern of increase or decrease. Accessible Black Guillemot nest sites are extremely rare now, and new sites containing accessible nests for productivity monitoring have not been found, despite searches being made annually since 2011.

Phenology records: the first fledged chick was noted on 14th August in South Harbour

Puffin: Poor weather conditions in the early spring period prevented a whole-island count of Puffins from taking place, although 2016 was not a year scheduled for a whole-island count of the species on Fair Isle. The most recent count remains the 6,666 individuals recorded in 2015.

Productivity was 1.5% lower in 2016 (0.64 chicks fledged per egg laid) than in 2015 (0.65 chicks fledged per egg laid). Puffin productivity was above 0.5 chicks fledged per egg laid every year from 1987 to 2000 and, although it has fluctuated more since then, it has remained relatively high (especially compared to the other auks), with no years of zero productivity. Productivity was affected this year by a number of the later hatching chicks failing to fledge, with a larger number than usual being found dead in their burrows. Whilst this could have been as a result in reduced food supply later in the season or perhaps poor weather, it seems likely that the continued presence of a pair of Great Skuas had an impact. The Great Skuas regularly sat in the middle of the colony and often hunted adults. Of six ringed Puffins found dead that were assumed to have been predated by the Great Skuas, two were known to have been breeding on Greenholm in recent years, whilst one had been ringed earlier in 2016, where it was breeding (the latter's bird chick was found dead in the burrow on a later visit). The other three ringed birds had been ringed as chicks on Greenholm (in 1994, 1998 and 2009 respectively) and were presumably also breeding on Greenholm in 2016.

The total number of occasions when fish were observed being brought back to burrows by Puffins during a 24-hour feeding watch was 26.5% higher in 2016 (239 return flights with fish) than in 2015 (189 return flights with fish). The majority of the fish being brought in were recorded as too fast to be

positively identify prey (53.6%), the same as 2015 (68.2%). The second most commonly identified prey type in 2016 were small sandeels (32.6%) followed by rockling (10.9%), large sandeels and clupeids (both 1.25%). This compares to 2015 when large sandeels (16.4%) followed by small sandeels (12.7%) were the next most commonly observed prey.

In 2016, the majority of food samples collected from adult Puffins at the Tor o' Da Ward Hill colony on 5th July were identified as small sandeels (49.2%), followed by rockling (33.8%), gadoids (10.8%), clupeids (3.6%), large sandeels and flatfish (both 0.12%) , with 2.3% of samples unidentified.

On average, the prey types of the longest length in Puffin food samples collected in 2016 were large sandeel (a single individual measuring 129 mm), gadoids (mean = 45.4 mm), followed by clupeids (mean = 40.1 mm), small sandeels (mean = 34.9%) and rockling (mean = 24.1 mm).

The mean mass of food samples collected in 2016 (mean mass of one 'beak-full' in 2016 = 5.1g, SE = 0.54) was 89.6% higher than in 2015 (mean mass = 2.69g, SE = 0.17). Since 2001, the mean mass of Puffin food samples collected annually on Fair Isle has only once exceeded six grams (mean = 6.1 in 2003), whereas prior to this period (in 1986 to 2000) the mean mass frequently exceeded seven grams.

A 24-hour Puffin feeding watch was carried out on 14th July at Roskillie and daily chick feeding frequency was found to be 17.7% higher in 2016 (8.24 feeds per burrow per day) than in 2015 (7.0 feeds per burrow per day)

Phenology records: fish were noted being carried (indicating chicks hatched) on 9th June.

Other seabird studies on Fair Isle in 2016: A total of 28 Shags (21 chicks and seven adults) were fitted with darvic rings (green rings with white three-digit capital letter combinations). This ringing, using darvics, contributes to a project being run all across the north-east of Scotland by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH, Penicuik, Midlothian) looking at dispersal, survival, distribution and movement patterns of juvenile and adult Shags.

A number of pellets were collected from the Great Skua breeding colonies and loafing areas in the summer, the contents analysed and the results sent to the University of Exeter who are undertaking monitoring on the results of the banning of certain fish discards.



RSPB PUFFIN TRACKING PROJECT

Rob Hughes

For the seventh consecutive year, the RSPB returned to Fair Isle to GPS track seabirds during the breeding season. This year Ellie Owen, Fabrice Le Bouard and I concentrated on tracking Puffins. We did this with the aim of finding out where they forage (location and distances), how long they spend at sea away from their burrows and what prey types they are bringing back for their chicks. Puffins are prone to disturbance so we also wanted to develop a new 'Puffin friendly' method that allows the Puffins to behave as naturally as possible while being tracked.

The 'Puffin friendly' method used new remote download tags. These tags only require us to catch the bird once and the data gathered from the birds download to a base station when they return to the colony. We tagged a total of 30 Puffins between sites on Bunes and Roskilie. We used mist nets to catch the birds away from their burrows so they did not associate their burrow with danger that would potentially alter their natural behaviour. The tags weighed just 7.5 g and are attached to their dorsal feathers. They gather data every ten minutes for approximately five days before they fall off. We use motion-sensitive video cameras to compare foraging rates of tagged and un-tagged birds. The birds made a mixture of foraging trips close to Fair Isle and much further trips to the south. The shorter trips are thought to be for catching prey for their chicks and the longer trips for feeding themselves. As with the Razorbills, Guillemots and Kittiwakes that we have tracked here in the past, the Puffins were travelling much further than previously recorded. Once again Fair Isle is re-writing the record books.

We are very grateful to Fair Isle Bird Observatory for providing us with food and accommodation for our two week stay. Thanks again to David and Susannah Parnaby and the rest of the Observatory's staff and volunteers for their kind hospitality.

Plate 95. Photographing Puffins, Bunes, 5th June 2016. © Ian Andrews

Figure 1. GPS foraging tracks for two Puffins from the Bunes colony.



FIRST AND LAST MIGRANT DATES

David Parnaby

Species	earliest-ever	Earliest 2016	Latest ever	Latest 2016
Quail	30.04.61	23rd May	13.10.89	23rd May
Osprey	25.04.66	19th May	04.11.35	11th September
Comcrake	10.04.66	12th May	03.11.77	22nd September
Dotterel	25.04.73	7th May	03.12.86	5th June
Whimbrel	09.04.13	19th April	12.12.1907	14th September
Common Sandpiper	05.04.83	29th April	02.11.1908	20th October
Green Sandpiper	08.04.79	5th April*	12.11.70	26th August
Arctic Skua	04.04.88	23rd April	25.10.	29th September
Great Skua	17.03.09	14th March*	25.11.14 ^	7th November
Sandwich Tern	23.04.07	27th July	18.09.77	27th July
Common Tern	25.04.83	9th June	18.10.75	1st August
Arctic Tern	No data	6th May	30.10	12th September
Lesser Black-backed Gull	02.02.11	12th March	12.12.57	9th November
Turtle Dove	23.04.71	22nd May	01.11.82	30th June
Cuckoo	17.04.87	7th May	08.10.77	6th June
Swift	16.04.13	23rd May	26.10.75#	22nd September
Wryneck	18.04.81	9th May	17.10.74	6th October
Red-backed Shrike	04.05.84	10th May	08.11.93	26th August
Goldcrest	27.02.	14th March	19.12.03	7th November
Sand Martin	02.04.89	2nd April**	19.10.78	19th September
Swallow	31.03.02	5th April	02.11.84	10th October
House Martin	10.04.11	4th April*	02.11.11	20th September
Wood Warbler	14.04.81	11th May	06.10.73	4th September
Chiffchaff	12.03.73	29th March	no data	28th November
Willow Warbler	25.03.10	5th April	23.11.27	12th October
Blackcap	27.03.12	4th April	20.12	21st November
Garden Warbler	21.04.68	7th May	20.11.76	31st October
Lesser Whitethroat	20.04.09	2nd May	08.11.	25th October
Subalpine Warbler	20.04.00	8th May	29.10.07	10th May
Whitethroat	11.04. Pre 59	10th April*	21.10.78	2nd October
Grasshopper Warbler	07.04.02	6th May	25.10.14	8th October
Icterine Warbler	08.05.13	18th May	13.10.76	20th October*
Sedge Warbler	19.04.87	5th May	11.11.75	3rd October
Marsh Warbler	18.05.13	31st May	06.10. Pre 63	30th August
Reed Warbler	28.04.01	6th May	31.10.80	16th October
Ring Ouzel	16.03.88	5th April	18.12.1909	18th October
Spotted Flycatcher	20.04.49	9th May	26.10.85	13th October
Bluethroat	22.03.1908	7th May	13.11.83	9th October
Pied Flycatcher	21.04.83	9th May	29.10.85	5th October
Black Redstart	09.02.1989	19th March	22.12.86x	8th November
Redstart	12.04.1981	10th April*	11.11.81	16th October

FIRST AND LAST MIGRANT DATES

Species	earliest-ever	Earliest 2016	Latest ever	Latest 2016
Whinchat	14.04.81	8th May	26.11.90	15th October
Wheatear	13.03. Pre 59	30th March	19.11.59	4th November
Yellow (flava) Wagtail	25.03.54	6th May	20.11.57	14th October
Pied (alba) Wagtail	20.02.03	25th January*	17.11	23rd October
Tree Pipit	14.04. Pre 63	10th April*	09.11.1908	11th October
Red-throated Pipit	08.05.36	14th May	01.11.1908	14th October
Common Rosefinch	08.05.77	23rd August	30.11.91	30th October
Ortolan Bunting	26.04.64	11th May	07.11.15	18th September
Little Bunting	04.04.58	13th September	19.11.75	14th November
Rustic Bunting	25.04.80	13th May	08.11.75	27th May

*new record ** equal to record x arrival date (went on to winter) # note: a swift sp. was seen on 07.11.11
 ^ an injured, flightless bird survived on the island until 19th December



Plate 96. Grasshopper Warbler, Shirva, 4th October 2016. © Lee Gregory



LITTLE EGRET, 20TH MAY 2016; THE FIRST FOR FAIR ISLE

Logan Johnson

I've been coming to Fair Isle for quite a few years now but one thing I've always wanted to do is work at the Bird Obs. I had three weeks off in May so I decided that this would finally be the time for me to work there.

It was my first day as a wardening team volunteer at the Fair Isle Bird Observatory and the first task of my trip was to help assistant warden Lee Gregory in doing south-east census. The morning started off quite well with Bluethroat, Black Redstart and a couple of Swallows being seen before we arrived at the School, so the day seemed quite promising. At 10.15am Lee stopped to write down a couple of sightings and I raised my bins to scan Da Water when I picked up a white bird on the western corner of the pool. The ID hit me instantly and I knew it was a Little Egret from the size of the bird and also the beak and leg colour which showed black along with the striking yellow feet. The first thing I blurted out was 'egret!' and Lee dropped what he was doing to get his eyes on the bird. News was then put out and David Parnaby showed up along with several Observatory guests, with everyone getting good views before the bird started to roam the island for the rest of the day, never staying in one place too long.

It was quite a novelty to find a first for Fair Isle (after having only found one previous island rarity), and it took most of the day before the excitement of finding Fair Isle's 386th bird species finally wore off.

Size and structure: smallish, all white egret, half the size of a Grey Heron, elegant in structure with a long thin, neck and plumes on head and upper breast. In flight the bird had its neck 'tucked in' like most egret/heron species and also had rounded wings which seemed owl-like.

Bare parts: eye; yellow with lores dull greyish

Legs and feet: legs; all black with bright yellow feet

Bill: long and black

Behaviour: although feeding in a settled manner when first found, it soon started roaming the island for the remainder of the day, often landing in the Vaadal stream near the airstrip, before finally being seen on Golden Water late in the evening.

Call: Not heard to call

Weather: SW or S 3–5, cloudy at first

BLACK-BROWED ALBATROSS, 28TH MAY; THE FIRST FOR FAIR ISLE

Keith Pellow (summarised by David Parnaby)

KP had enjoyed another successful trip to Fair Isle, although not reproducing his success of 2014, when he found a lovely male Moltoni's Subalpine Warbler in the Obs garden. His last full day on the island had produced Rustic Bunting and Hoopoe and, as the conversation in the bar that evening turned to his departure from the island, we debated the merits of flying off (more chance to find birds in the morning before his departure) with sailing. He eventually decided on sailing, with a view to finding something good from the boat (Fea's Petrel was mentioned).

KP takes up the tale: I boarded the Good Shepherd IV at North Haven on Fair Isle at 07:30 hours in calm conditions, with little wind and a relatively calm sea. Within ten minutes of sailing towards Shetland I noticed a large bird on the water behind the boat. It was accompanied by a couple of Fulmars and I immediately recognised it as an albatross but needed a couple of looks to make certain I was not imagining it! The boat crew were made aware of the sighting and fortunately the skipper turned the boat and returned to where it remained on the sea giving excellent views down to around six metres.

Description

Head and underparts white. Back and upper wings black, as well as upperside of tail. Bill yellow/orange becoming a deeper orange towards the tip. Black eye enclosed in a small dark eyebrow / eye-stripe. Legs bluish-grey.

KP's calm description belied the panic back on land. Ciaran Hatsell had just returned from a blank trap round and was in the ringing room with DP, processing a Garden Warbler from the Obs mist nets. DP recounts the excitement:

Susannah burst into the ringing room corridor at 7:40 to shout 'There's a Black-browed Albatross off the Good Shepherd and Lee can see it from Bunes', causing an instant scrambling of everyone. People were dispatched to the Haven in various states of confusion, excitement and attire (Grace's Hoopoe-twitching outfit of a dressing gown, bodywarmer and wellies combo from nine hours earlier being replaced by pyjamas and an old pair of DP's boots). Views were briefly obtained of the albatross just off the port side of the Good Shepherd, which was slowly circling the bird. Lee Gregory was up early to start census before breakfast and following a phone call from KP could see the albatross from his vantage point at the north of Bunes, so it was decided to get everybody up there to try to get better views. As the stragglers (including Grace who had been piggy-backed half way and was



Plate 98. Black-browed Albatross, Wick o' Furse, 28th May 2016. © Brian Swift

now continuing bare-foot!) were heading up there, the albatross appeared over the rocks of Skervalie (the bit where the Arctic Terns and Common Gulls nest on Bunes and where the Lesser Scaup was in 2011) only about ten metres or so up. After circling a couple of times, giving amazing views (during which time DP virtually had to pick his jaw up of the floor to shout to the people ahead), it drifted to the South Gavel, circled a couple of times, swept over Landberg and eventually Sheep Rock, where it was seen again a few times until 12.40pm. An amazing experience.

This represents the first Black-browed Albatross for Fair Isle, although an immature albatross that soared around Sheep Rock and Meoness on 14th May 1949 was considered to be this species, but was accepted only as an albatross sp. (it's remarkable to think that it could just about, technically, be the same bird!).



SIBERIAN ACCENTORS, 20TH AND 22ND OCTOBER; THE FIRST AND SECOND FOR FAIR ISLE

Lee Gregory and David Parnaby

Long predicted as a new species to occur in Britain, and keenly anticipated as a potential addition to Fair Isle's array of British 'firsts', hints of an arrival into western Europe raised hopes that this enigmatic 'Sibe' would finally appear. There was, therefore, a palpable air of disappointment on the isle when one was found at Scousburgh on Mainland Shetland on 9th October. A few folk, including LG, had a tense day on 10th when a twitch out the island was delayed due to a technical fault with the plane. The nervous gang eventually made it to the bird just ten minutes before it went to roost and was never seen again!

As the days ticked on and more Siberian Accentors flooded into Scandinavia, further British records occurred in Yorkshire, Cleveland, Durham (at DP's old patch in Sunderland docks!) and Northumberland. Fair Isle was benefitting from a regular easterly airflow and a number of good birds, but as regards the mega *Prunella*, opinion was divided between the optimistic, who were sure Fair Isle would cash in soon, and those who worried that the influx now seemed to have a more southerly locus and we'd missed our chance.

The 20th October saw a light, drifty south-easterly wind and sunshine and LG takes up the tale:

Bird One, 20th October, LG

North census started well with six Chiffchaffs in Furse then, as I got to the Restengeos, I had a text from Steve Arlow that he had an Icterine Warbler at Chalet, then another text saying he hadn't seen it well enough to rule out Eastern Olivaceous Warbler and it looked very pale so DP picked me up and we drove down to take a look. Although elusive at first, it eventually showed well enough to be confirmed as a very late Icterine Warbler - Fair Isle's latest ever record. Now running a little behind schedule I decided to do North census the 'wrong way' (clockwise) taking in a Long-eared Owl found by Ciaran Hatsell (CRH) at the Ringing Hut on the way. Climbing Hill Dyke there were a few migrants around so it seemed that birds had arrived on this very light easterly. Dropping down to view Troila Geo I immediately spotted a dull passerine grubbing around on the scree in the shade just below me, I put my bins on it and spotted the two obvious pale stripes down the side of the bird's head - A RARE ACCENTOR! The bird refused to lift its head for what seemed like ages and I thought I could see a dusky throat - was it going to be a Black-throated? It then lifted its head and looked at me revealing the nice clean orange throat - IT'S A SIBERIAN! The next couple of minutes were a blur with me hyperventilating trying to phone DP, with no luck, and take

Plate 99. Siberian Accentor,
Troila Geo, 20th October 2016.
© Lee Gregory

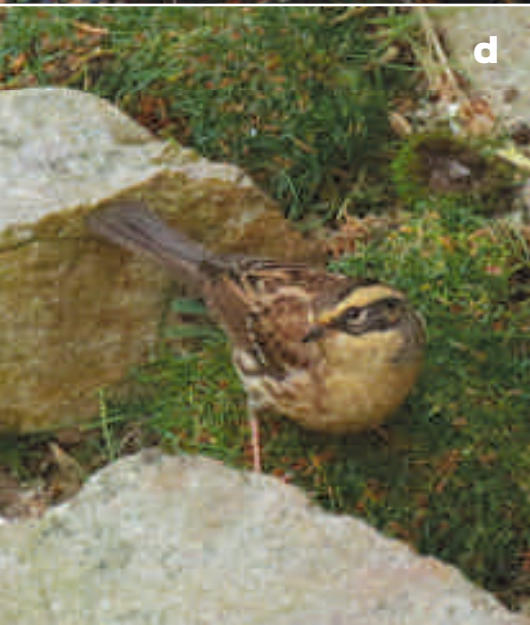
record photos at the same time. I then tried CRH who fortunately was climbing Hill Dyke on the south side. CRH put the news out and started running to join me but at that moment the accentor flew across the geo onto the sunny side revealing how bright it really was, then hopped up the geo and flew strongly out of the top and out of view. I phoned CRH and told him what it had done then started the search. There was no sign of it on top of Burrasheid or Tineside, and by this point I was joined by Deryk Shaw (DNS) and Micky Maher (who were at the airstrip waiting for Micky's plane when the news broke) and we headed to South Naaversgill, which also drew a blank. At this point, I got a call to say that CRH had just seen it at the bottom of Troila and it was making its way back up to the top. I waved to DNS and we ran back to Troila - there it was almost back in the same spot - phew! It performed well for most of the day, with a crowd of most of the birders on Fair Isle (including some who had just stepped off the plane and were herded straight up to the clifftop - welcome to Fair Isle!) gathering at the top of the geo and getting good views. Although it spend most of its time in the geo, after most people had left, it came right up to the top and showed incredibly well in the sunshine for the handful of remaining observers. It remained until about 3.15 pm, when it flew out strongly from the geo towards Hill Dyke and was not seen again.

Description

The same size and structure as a Dunnock with typical shuffling/grubbing around feeding style.

Upperparts: dull brown background with maroon stripes down the mantle interspersed with black flecking and two obvious paler brown mantle braces, olive-coloured rump, very dark brown almost black tail, especially in the shade, wing feathers very dark with almost black centres, with rich brown edgings with buffy/white tips to the tertials and greater coverts forming an obvious wing bar. The most obvious feature from above was the obvious orangey supercilium contrasting against the blackish crown sides and ear covert which had three small orange spots at the rear and crescent below the eye, central crown dark dusky brown, throat/underparts same orangey colour as supercilium being slightly paler on the lower belly with broad dark brown and maroon streaks along the flanks, bill fine and black with hint of pale area at the gape, eye medium brown with black pupil, legs/feet pink and darker claws.

It may have been a first-calendar-year female, as its face pattern was not as dark and contrasting as the Scousborough bird.



Bird Two, 22nd October, DP

The autumn was turning into a phenomenal one, with seemingly endless easterlies bringing a host of good birds. I headed into North census with high hopes as the moderate easterly wind continued. As I went up the east coast, I thought I'd try Mopul, as it always looks good for rare wheatears (although it wasn't), which left me approaching the Kirn o' Skroo from the 'wrong' direction. As I did, I was replying to a text from one of the assistant wardens, when a bird flicked briefly above the 'horizon' of the Kirn, before disappearing back down. Despite the sighting being very brief and only in flight, I had made out a black mask, bordered by a yellowy supercilium. My initial thoughts on seeing the mask were 'rare wheatear' (as that's what I'd just been looking for), before the realisation that I'd just found a rare dunnock sp! Crikey.

I was a bit unsure as to the best way to proceed, as peering over the top was likely to flush the bird if it had landed nearby, so I headed back along the edge to get a view down into the Kirn. Before I'd got to a point that I thought would offer a view, the bird reappeared at the top of the Kirn, I was able to take one out of focus record shot after getting brief views through my bins to confirm that it was indeed a Siberian Accentor (and again, 'crikey!'), but also, that it appeared to be a different bird from the sighting on the west coast two days previously. The mask appeared a beautiful solid black, unlike the Troila bird, which had greyer markings in the ear coverts.

I phoned out the news and tried to relocate the bird, eventually finding it in the gully at the bottom of the Kirn that ran down towards the sea. It remained in the lower reaches of the Kirn for the rest of the day, where it could avoid detection for 15–20 minutes at a time, even with several observers present trying to relocate it. Had it not moved to the top of the Kirn just as I was passing, it may have evaded being seen altogether (and potentially, could have been lurking unseen for a while, although the good conditions for arriving birds on the day would certainly have favoured a new arrival, and indeed another was found on Unst a couple of hours later).

Identification was relatively straightforward. Essentially a Dunnock (although perhaps a slightly longer, thinner version), with less of a tendency to flick its wings, although the shuffling feeding action was similar. On a couple of occasions, it was chased off by a Robin.

Description

Head: a broad yellow supercilium, with a black crown and black mask (consisting of lores and ear coverts). The ear coverts had a yellow splotch towards the rear. There was no trace of grey or brown in the black areas, they appeared richly coloured (particularly when the bird was seen briefly at the top of the cliffs), although images later showed that the top of the crown was perhaps paler than the dark strip immediately above the supercilium. Upperparts: the mantle was a rich brown, with broad chestnut stripes. The tertials were dark with a thin chestnut-buff edge and faint white tips, whilst the greater coverts also showed thin pale edges that gave a very narrow wing bar. The long, narrow looking tail was dark brown. Underparts: mostly difficult to see



Plate 101. Siberian Accentor, Kirn o' Scroo, 22nd October 2016. © Deryk Shaw

as the views were generally from above, whilst the bird grubbed about on the ground. On the initial views, it could be seen that the underparts (certainly the throat and breast) were a rather nice yellowish colour. There was also some darker mottled spotting around the edges of the upper breast, whilst a lovely, distinct grey colour wrapped around from the nape forming a point just below the throat. The bill was dark with a paler area at the base of the lower mandible. Legs appeared brownish, although it was difficult to tell exactly.

There were a number of differences from the Troila Geo individual of 20th October. The initial view was of the black areas appearing much darker than the Troila bird, appearing more like the Scousburgh individual. This appeared to be a consistent feature even as the bird retreated further down the Kirn. The mantle appeared a solid warm colour with streaking, the Troila bird had distinct tramlines. The tips to the tertials and, in particular, the greater coverts were less prominent on the Kirn o' Skroo bird than the Troila individual. The grey 'collar' also appeared more prominent on the Kirn bird, although this was perhaps more difficult to judge and may not have been a solidly reliable feature. All differences were able to be compared in similar viewing conditions (i.e. when the bird was at the bottom of a sheltered geo out of direct light).

A couple of visitors had been unable, due to limited mobility, to make it to Troila to see the first individual, so it was especially pleasing that this bird was in a more accessible location and everyone on the island who was interested was able to see this exciting vagrant. Fair Isle may not have managed the first record for Britain but, with two records, it is at least one of the top sites for the species in the country!

COMMITTEE DECISIONS ON RARITIES FROM 2015

The following records have been accepted:

Species	Date, Location, Observers	Committee
Great White Egret	31 May, Da Water and roaming, A.L. Cooper <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Glossy Ibis (5)	2–15 Oct, Obs and roaming, M. Rimmell <i>et al.</i>	SBRC
Honey-buzzard	16 Jul, Midway and roaming, G. Tyler <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Pallid Harrier	12–21 Sep, Meadow Burn and roaming, L.V. Gregory, D. Parnaby <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Goshawk	13 Apr, Ditfield and roaming, C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Buzzard	2014 - 19 Mar, Pund area, R. Cope <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Rough-legged Buzzard	8 May, Haven, C.R.Hatsell, L.V. Gregory, D. Parnaby <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Pectoral Sandpiper	6–7 Sep, Muckle Uri Geo and Utra, C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Hobby	30 May, Skadan and Field, L.V. Gregory, P. Jeffery, D. Parnaby	SBCRC
Hobby	5 Jun, Lerness, D. Parnaby	SBCRC
Hobby	21 Jun, Bull's Park, L.V. Gregory	SBCRC
Firecrest	11–15 Oct, Hjukni then Field, M. Osborne <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Short-toed Lark	8–17 May, Bergaroo then Setter, C.R. Hatsell, D. Parnaby <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Short-toed Lark	16–22 May, Skadan, C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Greenish Warbler (2)	3–5 Jun, roaming in south, A. Cooper, L.V. Gregory, J. Manson <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Greenish Warbler	19–20 Aug, Obs, T. Gale, D. & M. Leask <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Arctic Warbler	8 Sep, Furse, C.R. Hatsell, A. Vials <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Radde's Warbler	14–19 Oct, Barkland, L.V. Gregory <i>et al.</i>	SBRC
Dusky Warbler	11 Oct, Tineside, D. Parnaby	SBCRC
Moltoni's Subalpine Warbler	15–25 May, Obs then Meadow Burn, L.V. Gregory, K. Pellow <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
'Western Subalpine Warbler'	30 Jun–3 Jul, Plantation then Obs, D. Parnaby <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	19 Oct, Wirvie Burn, C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Lanceolated Warbler	27 Sep, Suka Mire, L.V. Gregory <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Lanceolated Warbler	12 Oct, Kenaby, D. Parnaby <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Booted Warbler	19–22 Aug, Lower Leogh, C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Aquatic Warbler	15–16 Aug, Meadow Burn, L.V. Gregory <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Paddyfield Warbler	8 Oct, Da Water, H.J.Fearn, C. Griffin, P. Woollen <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Blyth's Reed Warbler	8 Jun, Gully, L.V. Gregory <i>et al.</i>	SBRC
Blyth's Reed Warbler	20–25 Sep, Upper Stoneybrek and Lower Leogh, L.V. Gregory, J. Walsh <i>et al.</i>	SBRC
Siberian Thrush	5 Oct, Hoini then Steensi Geo, F. Fearn, L.V. Gregory	BBRC
Thrush Nightingale	19 Aug, Setter, C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Nightingale	30 Jun, Gully, D. Parnaby <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Siberian Rubythroat	20 Oct, Hill Dyke, Setter and Parks, C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Red-flanked Bluetail	11 Oct, Tineside, D. Parnaby <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Citrine Wagtail	1–8 Sep, Ditfield then roaming in south, C.R. Hatsell, A. Vials <i>et al.</i>	SBRC
Citrine Wagtail	12 Sep, Guidicum, L.V. Gregory <i>et al.</i>	SBRC
Tawny Pipit	4–19 May, Schoolton & surrounding area, C.R. Hatsell, D. Parnaby, D.N. Shaw <i>et al.</i>	BBRC
Olive-backed Pipit	28 Sep, Da Water and roaming, M. Breaks, C. Fulcher, R. Hughes <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Olive-backed Pipit	5–8 Oct, Boini Mire, H.J. Fearn, C. Griffin, P. Woollen <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Olive-backed Pipit	12–15 Oct, North Shirva, C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Olive-backed Pipit	13–17 Oct, Taft and Schoolton, D.N. Shaw <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Olive-backed Pipit	17 Oct, Malcolm's Head, L.V. Gregory	SBCRC
Olive-backed Pipit	19–30 Oct, Obs then Wirvie Burn, S. Arlow, C. Mendez <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Olive-backed Pipit	3–8 Nov, Vaadal then Obs, L.V. Gregory <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC



Plate 102. Tawny Pipit, Quoy, 17th May 2015. © Deryk Shaw

Ortolan Bunting	16 Oct–7 Nov, Ditfield and Plantation, R. & S. McIntyre <i>et al.</i>	SBCRC
Rustic Bunting	19 May, Utra, C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i>	BBRC

No description was received for the following record, which therefore does not currently feature in the statistics:

Sabine's Gull 31 Jul 2015, Burkle

The following record that did not feature in the Annual Report was found not proven:

Collared Flycatcher 29 Sep 2015, Kim o' Skroo BBRC

The following record has been accepted as the first of this taxon for the British List:

'Eastern Subalpine Warbler' *S.cantillans* 8 May 2014, Gully, D. Parnaby *et al.* BOURC

The 'Subalpine Warbler' complex has undergone revision recently, resulting in a need for the reassessment of the species and subspecies on the British List. This record refers to the subspecies that breeds in southern Italy, including Sicily.

Key to abbreviations:

- BBRC - British Birds Rarities Committee
- BOURC - British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee
- SBRC - Scottish Birds Records Committee
- SBCRC - Shetland Bird Club Records Committee

a**b****c**

CETACEANS AND OTHER MARINE WILDLIFE

David Parnaby

For recording purposes Fair Isle cetacean sightings include all those in 'Fair Isle waters' (i.e. half way from Fair Isle to Shetland, usually made from the Good Shepherd IV) as well as those from land. For the sake of completeness all sightings made from the Good Shepherd IV in 'Shetland waters' are also included here.

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* *Vagrant; two previous records in Fair Isle waters (August 2001 and October 2014)*

The species has become a more frequent visitor to the waters around the Northern Isles in recent years and so it was perhaps not a huge surprise when one was seen off South Light on 23rd September. Unfortunately, unlike the previous record when two lingered for some time, this animal was seen to blow then surface just once.

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* *Annual visitor in small numbers, most records from May to September, usually seen singly*

The Good Shepherd IV provided all of the spring and summer sightings, with singles on 7th June and 5th July then an impressive four together around ten and a half miles north of the island on 27th August (along with two in Shetland waters on 30th July). There were singles seen off the east coast of the island on 19th September and 2nd October, with a late record off South Light on 7th November.

Risso's Dolphin *Grampus griseus* *Annual visitor, most records in August and September, usually in groups of up to a dozen*

After one in Shetland waters from the Good Shepherd IV on 23rd June, there was another good run of sightings in the autumn from the island. The first were six off Tor o' da Ward Hill on 23rd August, with eight (including a calf) off Bunes on 19th September, then sightings of six and four off South Light on 11th and 19th October respectively. The last record was of three rather late individuals off South Light on 11th November.

White-beaked Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus albirostris* *Regular visitor, most records from July to September, usually in small groups*

Another quiet year, with the only record involving two off South Light on 23rd October.

Plate 103 a-c (opposite).
Killer Whales, Bunes, 10th
July 2016. © Lee Gregory

Killer Whale

Orcinus orca

Annual visitor, often with several sightings of individuals or small groups during the year. Can occur in any month, but most regular between March and September

On 3rd March there were five in South Haven, which lingered off the south of Sheep Rock for a while before passing close down the east coast. Photographs of these individuals showed that one of them was an adolescent male, known as '072', who had previously been photographed in North Haven on 1st November 2013. He is part of a group of animals that are regular visitors to the Northern Isles and northern Scotland during the winter and early spring. A bull was seen from the Good Shepherd IV in Shetland waters on 30th March and there were no further sightings until 10th July, when five put on an impressive show starting just off the North Haven. They proceeded to successfully hunt Grey Seals off Bunes, before eventually moving down the east coast of the island. Photographs showed that they were the 'Northern Isles Pod', a group that includes a female known as 'Mousa', who has a distinctive notch in her fin as well as a unique scar pattern on her saddle, and had been identified previously on Fair Isle, in June 2011. The group also included Mousa's calf from 2012 and her new calf, which had been born earlier in 2016. This group were seen off the Scottish coast in May as far south as the Moray Firth, southern Orkney in May and July and were then seen in Shetland after their visit to Fair Isle, where they remained from July until September before returning to Iceland for the winter, where they were first observed in early November.

Harbour Porpoise

Phocoena phocoena

Recorded in small numbers from May to October

The only records in June were from the Good Shepherd IV in Shetland waters. There were then seven sightings of up to three in Fair Isle waters in July, mostly from North Light or Bunes, in the last third of the month. Sightings on five dates in August included 12 from the Good Shepherd IV in Fair Isle waters on 25th and a peak land-based count of seven on 27th, with a calf amongst five seen off Bunes on 10th. Later records involved 11, including two calves, off Meoness on 23rd October, seven off Bunes on 30th October and seven off South Light on the late date of 7th November.

Unidentified cetaceans

There were five sightings of unidentified dolphins during the year: five on 25th May and four on 23rd July that were thought to be probably White-sided Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus acutus*, two probable Risso's on 11th August, three probable White-beaked on 28th September and three on 3rd October off South Light that may have been Bottlenose Dolphins *Tursiops truncatus*, although the details observed were not quite enough to clinch this species' place on the Fair Isle list.

Other Marine Wildlife

Grey Seal

Halichoerus grypus

The first pup was born on 3rd October in Gunnawark, with the bulk of births then occurring between 12th October and mid-November. A total of 55 pups was recorded, with Gunnawark (20) and Gorsen's Geo (nine) the most productive sites. As usual, adults were present in large numbers throughout the year, although there were no formal counts.

Common Seal

Phoca vitulina

One in North Haven early in the year may have been one of the three (apparently a male, female and youngster) seen in South Harbour on 26th February, with regular sightings of up to two at this site until 19th May.



Plate 104. Common Seal, South Harbour, 2nd April 2016. © Lee Gregory

BUTTERFLIES

David Parnaby

Painted Lady

Vanessa cardui

There were records on eight dates from 3rd–30th June, peaking at four on 9th. There were then no more until singles on 21st and 27th August, followed by up to three on five dates from 13th–26th September. Daily sightings occurred from 4th–11th October, all of singles apart from two on 7th, with later individuals on 18th and 25th October.

Red Admiral

Vanessa atalanta

Four on 10th May, one the next day and singles on 24th, 29th and 30th June were the only records in the spring. One on 2nd July was, remarkably, the only butterfly seen that month. As is often the case, the majority of records were in the autumn, with two on 19th August followed by up to four on five more dates until the end of the month, singles on seven dates in September, five on 4th October preceding regular records until 13th October, then a late individual on 20th October.

Peacock

Aglais io

A very quiet year saw just one record: at the School on 23rd May.

Small Tortoiseshell

Aglais urticae

There were only two recorded during the year; singles on 8th May and 7th September.

Other Insects

'Shetland Bee'

Bombus muscorum agricola

The first were logged from 22nd May (two days earlier than 2015), with regular records throughout the rest of the season until at least 29th August.

Bats

Nathusius's Pipistrelle

Pipistrellus nathusii

A remarkable year for bat sightings saw two spring migrants of this species, with one found freshly dead near the Double Dyke on 26th May and another found moribund at Meadow Burn on 29th May. Although the latter individual appeared to perk up after being taken into care, it was later found dead



Plate 105. Moribund Nathusius's Pipistrelle, Meadow Burn, 29th May 2016. © Lee Gregory

where it had been released. It weighed just 6.1 g, substantially less than the average weight of around 10 g.

There were also two bat records not confirmed to species, with one over the Obs on 26th September that was considered to be probably larger than a pipistrelle and a presumed pipistrelle species in South Harbour and at the Haa on 19th October.

Other wildlife

A wonderful display of bioluminescence on 7th November was attributed to *Noctiluca scintillans* washing ashore in the North Haven, presumably having been brought in by the strong northerly winds. This display of 'mareel' (the Shetland word for bioluminescence, which was derived from the Old Norse for 'sea fire') was one of the highlights of the year for many islanders.

The first date that Common Frog *Rana temporaria* spawn was recorded was 13th March.

MOTHS, FLORA AND VEGETATION, LESSER-KNOWN PLANTS AND ANIMALS AND BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE

Nick Riddiford

It was a quiet year for scarce migrant moths. The Brick *Agrochola circellaris* is just about annual and a small arrival on 13th–17th September was on typical dates. Bright-line Brown-eye *Laconobia oleracea* (one on 20th July) and Satellite *Eupsilia transversa* (two on 12th September, one on 20th October) are more infrequent. Two Convolvulus Hawkmoths *Agrius convolvuli* contrived to cram into the confined space of an actinic light trap on 12th September, appearing for the second consecutive year after a seven year absence. The arrival coincided with a moderate influx into Britain from a range which encompasses southern Europe southwards into Africa. The only new species found during the year was the Tortricid *Epinotia caprana*. This species is widespread in Britain and is probably a previously overlooked resident rather than a visitor from elsewhere.

Moths in Britain don't get much larger than the Convolvulus, much easier to overlook is the Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella*, another habitual migrant. Not in 2016! With a body length of four or five millimetres and a wing span of less than 15, this tiny moth invaded Britain in unprecedented numbers in early summer, prompting national newspaper headlines of doom and gloom for gardens and vegetable plots. The event was originally assumed to be restricted to southern Britain but Fair Isle did not escape. The influx began at the end of May with several thousand by 4th June and a considerable number of millions, too high to estimate effectively, during the week beginning 13th June when the isle, from the outermost rocks to gardens, was smothered in them. An unprecedented number bred. The leaves of brassicas planted at Skadan and Schoolton as cover crops for birds were shredded to skeletons by the caterpillars only to recover reasonably well by late summer. One final migrant blew in from the sea on 17th October, its passage aided by a strong south-east wind. That was the latest on record by 21 days.

What may have been the biggest surprise of the year was the unexpected capture of the longhorn beetle *Rhagium bifasciatum* at the Obs, five years after the previous records. The original specimens emerged from a seaborne log which had been pulled ashore. Wood-eating longhorn larvae can take some years to reach adulthood and the 2016 find may represent a late developer or a second generation individual from the same log.

Plate 106 a–f (opposite).
a) Diamond-back Moth, Field, 29th May 2016. © Lee Gregory. b) Longhorn Beetle *Rhagium bifasciatum*, Obs, 12th June 2016. © David Parnaby. c) Vine Weevil *Otiorhynchus sulcatus*, Obs, 6th July 2016. © Lee Gregory. d) Water Cricket *Velia caprai*, Burn of Vatstrass, Homisdale, 27th August 2016. © Lee Gregory. e) Dance-fly *Empis tessellata*, Chalet, 7th July 2016. © Lee Gregory. f) Caddisfly *Stenophylax permistus*, Obs, 6th May 2016. © Lee Gregory



Equally unexpected was a Common Wasp *Vespula vulgaris*, discovered on 24th December. It was a drone and probably arrived with a Christmas tree or other seasonal goods. It doesn't quite qualify as a complete surprise as imported Christmas trees have provided several unfortunate stowaway insects over the years. The only other wasp to be recorded on Fair Isle was a Norwegian Wasp *Dolichovespula norvegica*, also a drone, at Quoy in August 1991. Irrespective of its name, it occurs in Scotland and as near as Orkney. Nevertheless, though it too may have been an accidental import with goods, its appearance coincided with easterly winds and vagrant moths so an arrival from Scandinavia cannot be totally ruled out.

FLORA AND VEGETATION

Muckle Uri Geo

The shingle expanse at Muckle Uri Geo is providing a fascinating long-term study of how coastal plants cope with Fair Isle storms and extreme conditions. The star of the site is the Oysterplant *Mertensia maritima*, a plant whose immediate survival is due to the protective enclosure put in place by FIBO to safeguard it from grazing animals. No human ingenuity can protect it, however, from the vagaries of Fair Isle winter storms.

Exceptional sea surges invading the beach and re-distributing pebbles and rocks have become a regular feature over the last three to four years. Following the dramatic 85% fall in numbers after the destructive storm of February 2013, the Oysterplant is on an upward curve again despite further changes to the shingle. The 2016 count was 346 plants, up from 106 in 2015. It seems that the species is resilient to these impacts though perhaps prone to strong longer-term fluctuations. It is certainly in good health at the current time.

Oysterplant's conservation status in the UK is *Near-Threatened (NT)*.



Plate 107. Azores Adder's-tongue, Easter Lother, 18th June 2016. © Lee Gregory

Table 1. Summary of moths trapped at FIBO in 2016. Moth trapping was undertaken at the Obs, Schoolton and Lower Stoneybrek during the year. The Obs trap was operated on 54 occasions between 20th April and 3rd October. A total of 972 individuals of 39 species was trapped, with the 150 moths trapped during the night of 14th/15th August the peak catch.

Scientific name	Name	First date	Last date	No. of nights trapped	Max. catch	Max. catch date	Total individuals
<i>Hepialus fusconebulosa</i>	Map-winged Swift	7th Jun	23rd Jul	15	7	25th Jun	45
<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	Diamond-back Moth	1st Jun	28th Aug	14	35	13th Jun	141
<i>Elachista argentella</i>		15th Aug		1	1		1
<i>Bryotropha terrella</i>		15th Jul		1	1		1
<i>Scrobipalpa samadensis</i>		13th Jul	23rd Jul	2	1		2
<i>Aphelia vibumana</i>	Bilberry Tortrix	2nd Jul	15th Jul	3	1		3
<i>Eana osseana</i>		2nd Jul	23rd Aug	11	6	23rd Jul	23
<i>Eana penziana</i>		15th Jul	26th Aug	6	5	15th Aug	11
<i>Acleris aspersana</i>		15th Aug	29th Aug	5	7	15th Aug	13
<i>Lobesia littoralis</i>		23rd Jul	22nd Aug	5	1		5
<i>Agriphila straminella</i>		13th Jul	15th Aug	5	9	23rd Jul	18
<i>Scoparia ambigualis</i>		15th Jul		1	1		1
<i>Xanthorhoe decoloraria</i>	Red Carpet	28th Aug		1	1		1
<i>Xanthorhoe montanata</i>	Silver-ground Carpet	25th Jun	24th Jul	7	2	15th Jul	8
<i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata</i>	Garden Carpet	25th Jun		1	1		1
<i>Campptogramma bilineata</i>	Yellow Shell	23rd Jul		1	1		1
<i>Eupithecia nanata</i>	Narrow-winged Pug	10th Jun		1	1		1
<i>Eupithecia pusillata</i>	Juniper Pug	15th Aug		1	1		1
<i>Abraxas grossulariata</i>	Magpie	2nd Jul	24th Jul	3	4	24th Jul	7
<i>Standfussiana lucernea</i>	Northern Rustic	25th Jun	29th Aug	15	11	15th Aug	28
<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	Large Yellow Underwing	23rd Jul	15th Sep	13	5	23rd Aug	27
<i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>	Autumnal Rustic	15th Aug	29th Aug	11	27	15th Aug	97
<i>Lycophotia porphyrea</i>	True Lover's Knot	6th Jul	22nd Aug	12	16	5th Aug	68
<i>Diarsia mendica</i>	Ingrailed Clay	29th Jun	29th Aug	20	16	15th Aug	106
<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	Setaceous Hebrew Character	16th Aug		1	1		1
<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	Square Spot Rustic	15th Aug	14th Sep	12	17	18th Aug	92
<i>Hada plebeja</i>	Shears	23rd May	7th Jul	6	3	31st May	9
<i>Hadena confusa</i>	Marbled Coronet	24th May	11th Jun	3	2	24th May	4
<i>Hadena bicurris</i>	Lychnis	23rd Jul		1	1		1
<i>Cerapteryx graminis</i>	Antler Moth	23rd Jul	29th Aug	13	11	15th Aug	61
<i>Orthosia gothica</i>	Hebrew Character	7th May		1	1		1
<i>Mythimna impura</i>	Smoky Wainscot	5th Aug		1	1		1
<i>Phlogophora meticulosa</i>	Angle Shades	21st Aug	26th Aug	2	7	26th Aug	9
<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	Dark Arches	13th Jul	29th Aug	14	46	15th Aug	145
<i>Apamea crenata</i>	Clouded-bordered Brindle	25th Jun		1	1		1
<i>Apamea furva</i>	Confused	15th Aug	28th Aug	6	2	15th Aug	7
<i>Oligia fasciuncula</i>	Middle-barred Minor	24th Jul		1	1		1
<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	Rosy Rustic	15th Aug	26th Sep	12	4	26/29th Aug, 26th Sep	26
<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	13th Jun	21st Aug	3	1		3

Other notable plants

The flora of Fair Isle has been subject to considerable monitoring, including from resident botanists, for over 70 years. Yet in recent years, there appears to have been an acceleration and spread of a number of plants previously restricted in range on the isle. Round-leaved Sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* is one of these. Forty years ago, it was restricted to a wet flush above the North Light reservoir in Wirvie. It has gradually spread to other sites and there is a substantial population now in Sukka Mire, first colonised in 2001. A new population of 15 plants was discovered this year in Dumlin's Sink, a basin mire at considerable distance from previous known sites.

Another wetland plant on the move was the stonewort *Nitella flexilis* var. *flexilis*. Previously only known from the Gilsetter drainage system, one clump has appeared in the Vatstrass stream. It was a bumper year for the Azores Adderstongue *Ophioglossum azoricum*, one of several hyperoceanic-adapted plants restricted to the European fringe of the Atlantic.

Two new species of vascular plant were found, Giant Quaking Grass *Briza major* and Wavy Bittercress *Cardamine flexuosa*. Common Field Speedwell *Veronica persica* was the first for many years. They were all associated with horticultural plots and had probably arrived inadvertently with garden or agricultural produce. Giant Quaking Grass *Briza maxima* is a Mediterranean species so is not expected to persist. However, Black Horehound *Ballota nigra*, first found in 2015, and Perennial Wall Rocket *Diploaxis tenuifolia*, first recorded in 2013, have adapted to Fair Isle conditions despite being well north of their known UK range. It will be interesting to follow the progress of the speedwell and bittercress, both of which have substantial populations, to see whether they too adapt in these times of climate change.

LESSER-KNOWN PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The level of investigation into Fair Isle's wildlife increased markedly in 2016. Specific projects included a mapping study of Fair Isle vascular plants and a survey of lichens by a group of British experts. Resident ecologist Nick Riddiford has retired from major projects (including FIMETI) and has turned his attention to some of the lesser known biota. These studies are adding substantially to Fair Isle's knowledge of its biodiversity. A long list of new finds is expected in groups ranging from flies, fungi, centipedes, terrestrial and freshwater algae to marine biota and much more. The new line of investigation requires referral to experts and most of the additions await specialist verification. A panel of experts willing to help in the verification process has been established. This is attracting an interest which may lead to experts undertaking study visits themselves.

New records for the isle confirmed so far include the Rosy-tipped Worm *Aporrectodea rosea*, and the flies *Dolichopus simplex*, *Dolichopus brevipennis*,

Dolichopus lepidus, *Hydrophorus balticus* and *Medetera truncorum*. They are probably all long-established residents not previously subject to scrutiny.

A coastal dung-fly *Scathophaga litorea* taken in April this year is a good example of how much of Fair Isle's wildlife remains under-investigated. The species was last recorded in September 1905 and remained undetected since.

By contrast, some 40 Rough Gooseneck Barnacles *Lepas pectinata* huddled in several clusters on a red fishermen's tray washed ashore at Hesti Geo on 19th December will have drifted from afar. This pelagic oceanic species is rarely encountered in British waters and infrequent occurrences ashore are normally in south Wales, south and south-west England. It is not the first Fair Isle record, however, as one was found in September 1982.



Plates 108–109. (top) Rough Gooseneck Barnacles *Lepas pectinata*, Hesti Geo, 19th December 2016. © Nick Riddiford. (bottom) Common Goose Barnacles (or Smooth Gooseneck Barnacles) *Lepas anatifera*, South Haven, 3rd March 2016. © David Parnaby

BIODIVERSITY, WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Fair Isle is well located to measure the effects of both weather patterns and broader climate change issues on plants and animals. A number of observations demonstrate direct and indirect local outcomes which can be related to weather. The autumn in particular threw up some unusual events. It was exceptionally mild throughout, prompting some plants to flower beyond mid-December and renewed flowering by spring and mid-summer species such as Lesser Celandine *Ficaria verna* and Heath Pearlwort *Sagina subulata* respectively. It was not a case, however, of an extended season at both ends. Flowering plants and crops were an estimated 10 to 14 days later than usual, even later than the year before.

Drier, warmer conditions may benefit less welcome biota. The occurrence of southern species such as Wavy Bittercress and Common Field Speedwell is unlikely to cause any negative impacts other than the need to weed, easily done for these species. The Vine Weevil *Otiorhynchus sulcatus* is a different case. First recorded in 2009, there has been a steady increase since. The species is now well established and known from the Obs in the north to Skerryholm in the south. The larvae are virulent pests of roots and seriously damage was done to young fruit trees planted in a greenhouse at Setter. The species probably arrived on the isle as eggs or larvae amongst the roots of horticultural material imported to the isle.

Another unwelcome arrival with imported horticultural stock was the Green Spruce Aphid *Elatobium abietinum*. Found on a Noble Fir *Abies procera* in the Obs plantation, it could present a risk if transferring to Fair Isle's nationally important Prostrate Juniper *Juniperus communis nana* population. Islands throughout the world are known to be particularly vulnerable to introductions and Fair Isle is no exception.

There are no local measures which can safeguard against events such as the unprecedented Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella* invasion of 2016. The huge numbers, shared by much of Britain, indicate high productivity farther south and this flags up the vulnerability of Fair Isle's environment to climate changes elsewhere.

A species whose impact is not yet felt is the Banded Mosquito *Culiseta annulata*. A female intercepted in October 2014 has proven not to be a "one-off". The species was discovered breeding in livestock drinking troughs in two places this summer, the adults emerging in August. These are the only records for the Northern Isles; and no-one has been bitten... so far. An expanding population due to warmer, more suitable conditions farther south may have brought the species to Fair Isle but successful breeding suggests that conditions on the isle are now suitable too.

LICHENS AND LICHENICOLOUS FUNGI OF FAIR ISLE: AN ANNOTATED CHECKLIST

Steve Price

The lichens of Fair Isle were reported upon by Andrew Currie (Currie 1961) and by Ursula Duncan (Duncan 1963). The former noted the 17 taxa that had been collected in 1954. Duncan visited Fair Isle for one week in 1961 and noted 107 taxa in her paper, which also cited the records in Currie (1961).

Nick Riddiford of Fair Isle (pers. comm. May 2015) organised for some specimens to be determined by Kery Dalby who had taken a special interest in the lichens of Shetland (Dalby & Dalby 2005).

In 2015, the author, during a one-week holiday, gave the island a 'lichenological once over' which convinced him of the value of returning with a specialist group of lichenists to engage in a more thorough recording session. A group of four stayed on the island for a week in August 2016. David Parnaby, Bird Observatory Warden, kindly gave the group the use of the FIBO research room for microscope work.

The group in 2016 were: Andy Acton, an independent ecologist and lichen consultant; Brian Coppins, an internationally respected lichenologist, recently retired from the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh; John Douglass, an independent lichen consultant; and Steve Price, an amateur lichen enthusiast, formerly the Senior Reserves Officer, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

The taxa in this checklist number 294. This includes 13 lichenicolous fungi (see note) and one thought doubtful. 14 are classified as nationally rare and 55 as nationally scarce.

Note: Lichenicolous fungi are studied and recorded by lichenists, they are host-specific fungi that are only associated with lichens and if lichenists did not study and record them no one else would.

The British Lichen Society (BLS) maintains a database of records of lichens and lichenicolous fungi from across Scotland, England and Wales. The records from the surveys mentioned in this report are all on the BLS database and the checklist below is based upon an analysis of records known up to the end of 2016.

WHAT'S SPECIAL ON FAIR ISLE

Given the range of habitats present on Fair Isle, the island supports the rich communities of lichens, and the individual species that could be anticipated on an island of its size and geology in the North-east Atlantic. There are some noteworthy species, including the following that are very special:

Anaptychia ciliaris* subsp. *mamillata is considered to be Near Threatened (IUCN vulnerability status) and Nationally Scarce, it is found across the island and is unusually abundant on the rocks below South Light and in the grassland on the south slopes of Malcolm's Head.

Caloplaca caesiorufella has a boreal to arctic distribution being known from Sweden, Norway, Svalbard and Greenland. It has the IUCN threat category of Vulnerable, it is Nationally Rare and is a Scottish biodiversity priority species. There are previous British records from west and south mainland Shetland (in 1961 & 1992) and St Kilda (in 2013). On Fair Isle, it was found in 2016 at a single site on cliff-top turf on the coast between FIBO and Ditfield.

Gyalecta foveolaris is usually found in the uplands overgrowing mosses and soil associated with basic rocks. It is rarely coastal. It is Nationally Rare and has IUCN status Near Threatened. On Fair Isle, it was found in crevices on the basic dykes to the south and the north-west of South Light. It's close relative *G. biformis*, also Nationally Rare, was found nearby.

Lecania granulata is a recently described lichen (Fryday & Coppins 2012). Worldwide, it has been found on Hoy, North Rona, Flannan Isles, Foula and now on Fair Isle. Here it was found in cliff-top turf, on rock and bryophytes at eight sites around the island.

Lecanora straminea is a rare arctic-maritime specialist of nutrient-enriched rocks, especially boulders frequented by seabirds. It is Nationally Rare and has the IUCN status of Near Threatened. In the British Isles, it has been recorded from St Kilda, The Flannans, the west of Harris, The Shiant, Mainland Shetland, Noss and Fair Isle. On Fair Isle, it has been found on bed-rock on the South Gavel of Bunes and on top of a sheep shelter-wall above South Harbour.

Lecidea berengeriana is a terricolous arctic-alpine species in Europe and found on Foula, Ben Lawers and the Grampians. It is Nationally Scarce. On Fair Isle, it was found on mineral soils and terracettes on Meoness and the southern flanks of Malcolm's Head.

Lobaria virens is traditionally thought to be part of a community of lichens associated with old-growth woodland in the west of the British Isles. It is a species for which the country has an international responsibility. It was considered to be in an unusual habitat when first found in short-turf coast habitats on islands in north and west Scotland. It is found across Fair Isle in this habitat and it's abundance on the southern slopes of Malcolm's Head is particularly noteworthy.

Plate 110 a-f (opposite). a) Fellfield on Ward Hill with Andy Acton surveying *Bryoria* species. © Steve Price. b) The flanks of Malcolm's Head with Brian Coppins studying the abundance of *Lobaria virens*, a lichen normally associated with old growth woodland. © Andy Acton. c) *Lobaria virens* amongst the turf on the slopes of Malcolm's Head. © Steve Price. d) The Nationally Rare lichen *Gyalecta foveolaris* photographed on the basic dyke near South Light. © Andy Acton. e) The basic rocks of the intrusive dyke at South Light support a community of lichens not found elsewhere on the island. © Steve Price. f) Bedrock boulders on South Gavel, a site of the rare *Lecanora straminea*. © Steve Price.



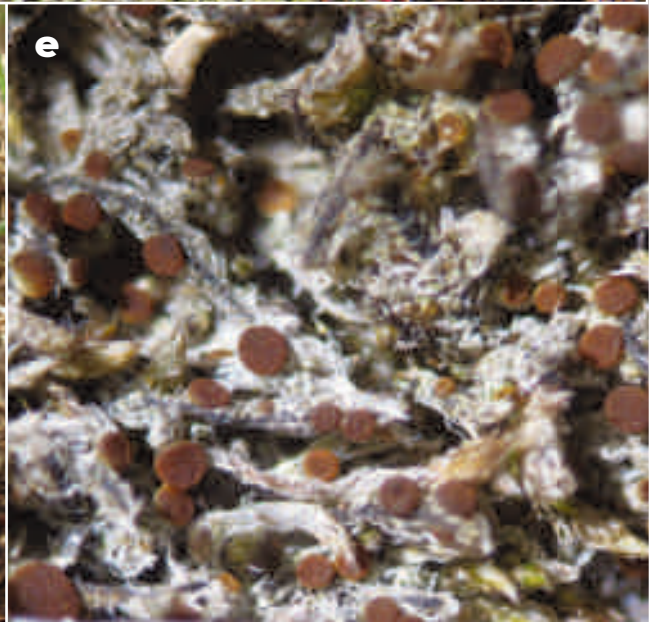
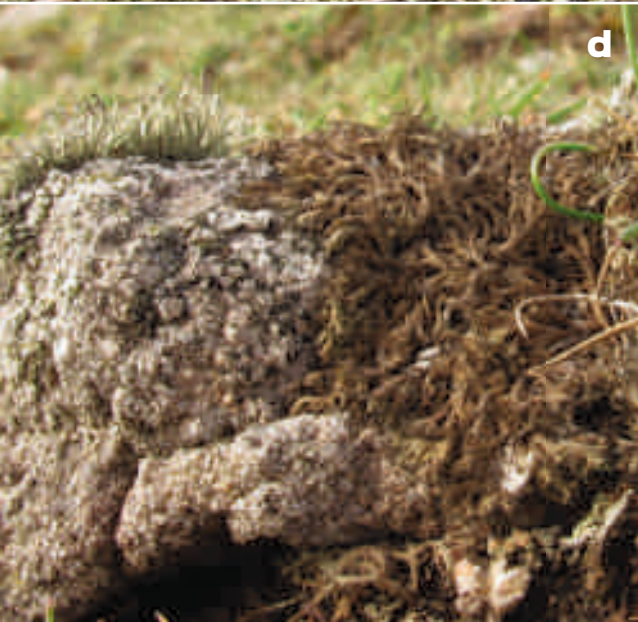
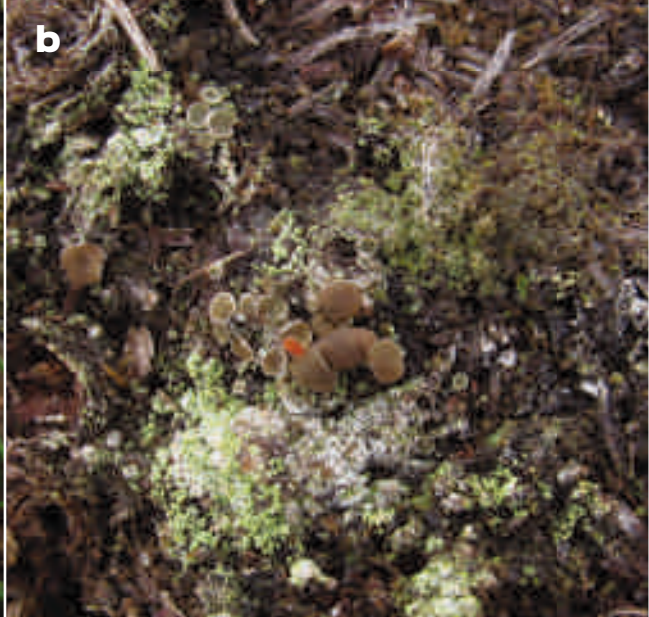


Plate 111 a–e (opposite). a) *Lecanora straminea* a rare arctic-maritime lichen, a specialist of nutrient-enriched rocks especially boulders frequented by seabirds. © Steve Price. b) *Lecania granulata* a lichen whose known world distribution is restricted to a handful of northern Scottish islands. This one photographed on Meoness. © Steve Price. c) *Lecidea berengeriana* is a terricolous arctic-alpine species in Europe. It is Nationally Scarce. On Fair Isle, it was found on mineral soils and terracettes. © Steve Price. d) *Anaptychia ciliaris* subsp. *mamillata* is Near Threatened (IUCN vulnerability status) and Nationally Scarce, on Fair Isle it is found across the island. © Steve Price. e) *Caloplaca caesiorufella* has a restricted boreal to arctic distribution. It has the IUCN threat category of Vulnerable, it is Nationally Rare and is a Scottish biodiversity priority species. On Fair Isle, it was found not too far from the Obs. © Steve Price.

AN ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF THE LICHENS AND LICHENICOLOUS FUNGI OF FAIR ISLE

Taxon name

The currently accepted name
{LF} lichenicolous fungi

BLS number

The number allocated by the British Lichen Society to the species. It is included here to assist tracing through future taxonomic changes.

GB status

The national status of the species. From conservation evaluations maintained by the BLS (see Woods & Coppins 2012).

IUCN threat categories

CR	Critically Endangered
VU	Vulnerable
NT	Near Threatened
DD	Data Deficient

Other abbreviations

NR	Nationally Rare
NS	Nationally Scarce
IR	International Responsibility
P	Priority national BAP species with full plan
Sc	Listed in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004

Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)

Names used in Duncan (1963) are listed here to assist tracing entries in that document.

Fair Isle status

A subjective judgement as to the current status of the taxa on Fair Isle. This judgement includes consideration of the number of records of the taxa.

Status and other codes in the checklist table

A	Abundant: must not be looking if this species is not found in suitable habitat / on suitable substrate.
F	Frequent: would be disappointed not to find at least several specimens of this species in suitable habitat / on suitable substrate.
O	Occasional: would hope, but not expect, to find a single specimen in suitable habitat;
R	Rare: would look for, but not expect to find, in suitable habitat / on suitable substrate.
RV	Very rare: how lucky are you! There is a single record on Fair Isle.
?	Doubtful: some real doubt exists as to the validity of the record.

Comment

Substrate, locations, and other comments.

CHECKLIST OF THE LICHENS AND LICHENICOLOUS FUNGI OF FAIR ISLE

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status (1963)	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Acarospora fuscata</i>	10			O	Sandstone: N. Haven; Ward Hill; a record on lignum of old fence post N. Haven.
<i>Acarospora veronensis</i>	3	NS		O	Sandstone: N. Haven; Landberg; Kim o' Skroo.
<i>Agonimia globulifera</i>	26	NS		RV	Concrete structures: Ward Hill.
<i>Agonimia tristicula</i>	38			O	Soil, stone and moss: Bunes; S. Light area; Ward Hill.
<i>Amandinea coniops</i>	203	NS		O	Sandstone and metal: Coom; Malcolm's Head; Meoneess coast; Ward Hill.
<i>Amandinea pelidna</i>	1292			O	Sandstone: Coom; Mavers Geo; Meoneess coast; N. Haven.
<i>Amandinea punctata</i>	212		<i>Buellia punctata</i>	F	Sandstone, metal; bark and lignum: across the island.
<i>Anaptychia ciliaris</i> subsp. <i>mamilata</i>	46	NT NS		F	Sandstone and soil: this nationally scarce species is found in some quantity around the island. Particularly notable on the rocks below S. Light and on the S. flank of Malcolm's Head.
<i>Anaptychia runachata</i>	47			A	Rocks and compacted soil: across the island.
<i>Anisomeridium polypori</i>	49			R	Soil and bryophytes: Gully; N. Haven; Da Nizz.
<i>Arthonia muscigena</i>	1700	NS		R	Bryophytes and bark: Gully; Vaadal plantation.
<i>Arthonia parietinaria</i> (LF)	2683	NR		R	On <i>Xanthoria parietina</i> : coastal rock, Bunes.
<i>Arthonia phaeobaea</i>	67	NS		R	Sandstone: Meoneess coast; S. Light area.
<i>Arthonia varians</i> (LF)	714	NS		F	On <i>Lecanora rupicola</i> and <i>L. helicopsis</i> : across the island.
<i>Aspicilia leproscens</i>	116			O	Coastal rock: around the island.
<i>Bacidia caligans</i>	137	NS		RV	Concrete paving: BT generator building.
<i>Bacidia delicata</i>	144			RV	Moss covered rocks: Gully.
<i>Bacidia scopulicola</i>	166			O	Shaded faces of coastal rocks: around the island.
<i>Baeomyces rufus</i>	176			O	Soil: across the island.
<i>Belonia nidrosiensis</i>	179			RV	The record in Riddiford (2015) of 'entire north wall, exterior of Kirk, 25th March 2001 - observer Triona Thomson, leg. N.J. Riddiford, det. Kery Dalby' was not re-found in 2016.
<i>Bilimbia sabuletorum</i>	165			R	Moss covered rocks: S. flanks of Malcolm's Head; Ward Hill.
<i>Branaria bauschiana</i>	873			R	Sandstone: Gully; Vaadal plantation gully.
<i>Bryobilimbia hypnorum</i>	730	NS		RV	Soil: Ward Hill summit area.
<i>Bryoria bicolor</i>	188	NS		R	Soil in fellfield: 10 thallii Ward Hill summit area.
<i>Bryoria fuscescens</i>	192		<i>Alectoria jubata</i>	RV	Soil: Malcolm's Head summit area; Ward Hill summit area. The September 1961 record in Duncan (1963) from 'fence posts; frequent, near Vaasetter, etc.' was not re-found in 2016.
<i>Buellia aethalea</i>	200			O	Sandstone: Burrashield; Cemetery; Homisdale.
<i>Buellia griseovirens</i>	207			RV	Lignum: gates and fence rails The Grind.

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Buellia stellulata</i>	216			R	Sandstone: Gully.
<i>Caloplaca arcis</i>	2442	NS		O	Concrete: Ward Hill; Cemetery; N. Haven; Hornisdale.
<i>Caloplaca austroctirina</i>	2613			RV	Stone: east end of Kirk.
<i>Caloplaca britannica</i>	1689	NS Sc IR		R	Sandstone: Meoness coast; Goom; S. Haven.
<i>Caloplaca caesionifella</i>	232	VU NR PSc		RV	Cliff top turf: coast FBO to Diffield.
<i>Caloplaca ceracea</i>	1644			RV	Sandstone: S. Light area.
<i>Caloplaca chlorina</i>	263			RV	Short turf: Landberg.
<i>Caloplaca citrina</i> s. lat.	247			F	Rocks and soil: across the island.
<i>Caloplaca crenulana</i>	253		<i>C. ferruginea</i> var. <i>festiva</i>	A	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Caloplaca dichroa</i>	2443	NS Sc		O	Concrete: BT Generator building; Ward Hill.
<i>Caloplaca flavescens</i>	259			RV	Concrete at base of headstone: Cemetery.
<i>Caloplaca flavocitrina</i>	2315			RV	Concrete: footbridge over Burn of Wirvie.
<i>Caloplaca holocarpa</i> s. str.	2527		<i>Caloplaca pyracea</i> (as <i>C. holocarpa</i> s. lat.)	O	On a variety of substrates: across the island.
<i>Caloplaca limonia</i>	2607			O	Buildings and walls: across the island.
<i>Caloplaca littorea</i>	265	NS		RV	Sandstone: gull colony at Goom.
<i>Caloplaca marina</i>	267			O	Maritime rocks: around the island.
<i>Caloplaca maritima</i>	280	NS		F	A variety of rock and metallic substrates: across the island.
<i>Caloplaca microthallina</i>	268			O	Maritime rocks: around the island.
<i>Caloplaca oasis</i>	2461			F	Buildings and walls: across the island.
<i>Caloplaca phlogina</i>	2317			R	Cliff-top turf assoc. with <i>Lecanora zosteræ</i> : Mather's Head; Bunes S. Gavel.
<i>Caloplaca saxicola</i>	277	NT NS		R	Concrete and marble: BT generator building and Cemetery.
<i>Caloplaca scopularis</i>	278			R	Sandstone: bird colony Goom; Furse; granite headstone in Cemetery.
<i>Caloplaca soediella</i>	2459	NR		R	Juniper: crags W. of N. Haven; sandstone: Goom; Gully.
<i>Caloplaca thallicola</i>	282			O	Sandstone: Bunes N.; S. Haven; N. Haven; Cemetery.
<i>Caloplaca verruculifera</i>	286		<i>Caloplaca granulosa</i>	F	Variety of substrates enriched by bird droppings.
<i>Candelariella aurella</i> f. <i>aurella</i>	291			F	Concrete and basic stone substrates: across the island.
<i>Candelariella vitellina</i> f. <i>vitellina</i>	298			F	Variety of nutrient enriched substrates across the island.
<i>Catapyrenium cinereum</i>	300	NS		F	Soil: across the island.
<i>Catillaria chalybeia</i> var. <i>chalybeia</i>	306			A	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Ceradospora epipolytrapa</i> {LF}	2025	NS		RV	On <i>Lecanora polytrapa</i> : wall across Hornisdale.
<i>Cetraria aculeata</i>	430		<i>Comicularia aculeata</i>	F	Soil: across the island.

CHECKLIST OF THE LICHENS AND LICHENICOLOUS FUNGI OF FAIR ISLE

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Cetraria muricata</i>	431			R	Soil: Ward Hill; Malcolm's Head; coast FBO to Dittfield.
<i>Cladonia arbuscula</i> subsp. <i>squamosa</i>	360		<i>C. arbuscula</i>	R	Heathland: E. of Brecks; Homisdale.
<i>Cladonia bellidiflora</i>	362			RV	Soil: Ward Hill summit area.
<i>Cladonia cervicornis</i> subsp. <i>cervicornis</i>	369		<i>C. cervicornis</i>	F	Soil in rock crevices: across the island.
<i>Cladonia chlorophaea</i> s. <i>lat</i>	371			F	Soil: across the island.
<i>Cladonia ciliata</i> var. <i>tenuis</i>	373		<i>C. tenuis</i>	O	Heathland: across the island.
<i>Cladonia coccifera</i> s. <i>lat</i>	374			O	Soil: across the island.
<i>Cladonia fimbriata</i>	384			RV	Duncan (1963) record. 'Gravelly banks; local, quarry between North Haven and North Light.'
<i>Cladonia firma</i>	385	NS		R	Short turf: Mather's Head; Maver's Geo.
<i>Cladonia floeikeana</i>	386			R	Crag W. of N. Haven. Duncan (1963) records. 'Peat; frequent, Ward Hill; above Gully.'
<i>Cladonia foliacea</i>	387			F	Short coastal turf: around the island.
<i>Cladonia furcata</i> subsp. <i>furcata</i>	389			A	Soil in heathland and rock crevices: across the island
<i>Cladonia graalis</i>	392			RV	Duncan (1963) record: 'Peat; frequent, Ward Hill, etc.' was not re-found in 2016.
<i>Cladonia polydactyla</i> var. <i>polydactyla</i>	408		<i>C. flabelliformis</i>	R	Soil: N. coast grassland; Vaadal gully.
<i>Cladonia portentosa</i>	409		<i>C. impexa</i>	F	Heathland: across the island.
<i>Cladonia pyxidata</i>	410			F	Soil: in heathland and rock crevices.
<i>Cladonia ramulosa</i>	359			R	Soil: W. of N. Haven; quarry by BT generator building.
<i>Cladonia rangiformis</i>	412			A	Heathland: across the island.
<i>Cladonia squamosa</i> var. <i>squamosa</i>	2365			R	Soil and rock: Gully; Vaadal
<i>Cladonia strepsilis</i>	420			O	Soil: in heathland and rock crevices.
<i>Cladonia subcervicornis</i>	421		<i>C. uncialis</i>	A	Soil in rock crevices: across the island.
<i>Cladonia uncialis</i> subsp. <i>biuncialis</i>	426			A	Soil: in heathland and peat moorland.
<i>Clauzadea monticola</i>	751		<i>Lecidea monticola</i>	R	Basic rock and concrete: Gully; Hill Dyke; BT generator building.
<i>Clostorium griffithii</i>	429		<i>Catillaria griffithii</i>	O	Lignum and bark: Vaadal plantation; W. of N Haven. fence posts and gates: N. Grind; Brae of Restensgeo.
<i>Clostorium tenerum</i>	689			F	Vertical faces of sandstone: across the island.
<i>Cocotrema citrinescens</i>	1699	NS		RV	Sandstone: Kim o' Skroo blowhole.
<i>Collema crispum</i> var. <i>crispum</i>	440			O	Soil and sandstone: coast FBO to Dittfield; Meoness coast; Hill Dyke.
<i>Collema tenax</i> var. <i>ceranoides</i>	460			RV	Rock crevice: S. Light area.
<i>Collema tenax</i> var. <i>tenax</i>	459			R	Stone: Cemetery, S. Light area.
<i>Collema tenax</i> var. <i>vulgare</i>	462			R	Soil: Gully; BT generator building.

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Collema spidium foveolatum</i>	85			O	Barnacle shell: S. Light area. Limpet shell: S. Haven; Skadan. Intertidal, probably under recorded.
<i>Collema spidium halodytes</i>	87	NS		RV	Maritime rocks: S. Harbour.
<i>Collema spidium sublitoreale</i>	93	NS		R	Limpet shells: South Haven
<i>Cystocoleus ebeneus</i>	477			RV	Rock: Gully.
<i>Dactylospora parellaria</i> (LF)	2048	NS		R	On <i>Ochrolechia parella</i> : Meoneess coast; Homisdale.
<i>Dibaeis baeomyces</i>	175		<i>Baeomyces roseus</i>	R	Peat: Ward Hill; N. coast.
<i>Diploicia canescens</i>	491			R	Rock: Hill Dyke; crags W. of N. Haven.
<i>Diplomatma albostratum</i>	496			O	Basic stone and concrete: across the island.
<i>Endococcus propinquus</i> (LF)	2060	NS		RV	On <i>Porpidia</i> sp. : Ward Hill E. & SE. side.
<i>Epicladonia stenospora</i> (LF)	2064	NR		RV	On <i>Cladonia</i> squamules: Lemess.
<i>Fuscidea cyathoides</i> var. <i>cyathoides</i>	515		<i>Lecidea cyathoides</i>	A	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Fuscidea lygaea</i>	527			F	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Fuscidea praeruptorum</i>	525			R	Sandstone: Gully; Kim o' Skroo blowhole; Vaadal gully.
<i>Gyalecta biformis</i>	534	DD NR Sc		RV	On narrow crack in basic dyke: S. Light area.
<i>Gyalecta foveolaris</i>	537	NT NR Sc		R	On basic dyke: S. & NW. of S. Light.
<i>Haematomma ochroleucum</i> var. <i>ochroleucum</i>	554			R	Record in Riddelford (2015) of extensive patch and a further 10 smaller plants, rock face, northern end of outcrop above observatory garage, North Haven, 24th January & 21st May 2002 - leg. N.J. Riddiford, det. Kery Dalby was not re-found in 2016.
<i>Haematomma ochroleucum</i> var. <i>porphyrium</i>	555			O	Vertical faces of sandstone: across the island.
<i>Halecania ralfsii</i>	620	NS		R	Maritime rocks: S. Light & Meoneess coast
<i>Hydropunctaria amphibia</i>	1474	NS		RV	Maritime rocks: Goom.
<i>Hydropunctaria maura</i>	1504		<i>Verrucaria maura</i>	A	Maritime rocks: around the island.
<i>Hydropunctaria oceanica</i>	2596			R	Maritime rocks: Goom; S. Haven; S. Light area.
<i>Hydropunctaria oreae</i>	2597			R	Maritime rocks: Goom; S. Haven; S. Light area.
<i>Hydropunctaria scabra</i>	2390	NR		RV	Burnside rocks: Gully.
<i>Hypogymnia physodes</i>	582		<i>Parmelia physodes</i>	A	Bark; lignum; soil and rock: across the island.
<i>Hypogymnia tubulosa</i>	583		<i>Parmelia tubulosa</i>	O	Rock and soil: near Sheep Craig; Homisdale; Ward Hill; Vaasetter.
<i>Isnadophila ericetorum</i>	584			O	Peat: Ward Hill; Gully; N. coast.
<i>Ionaspis lacustris</i>	573			O	Rocks in and by freshwater: Burn of Winvie; Gully; Vaadal gully.
<i>Lecania alpospila</i>	609	NS		O	Maritime rocks: around the island; Cemetery.

CHECKLIST OF THE LICHENS AND LICHENICOLOUS FUNGI OF FAIR ISLE

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Lecania baeomma</i>	612	NS		F	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Lecania cyrtella</i>	613			RV	Lignum: fence post Meoneess coast.
<i>Lecania enysibe</i> s. str.	616			R	Concrete: BT Generator building; Ward Hill; Vaadal gully.
<i>Lecania granulata</i>	2575			O	Cliff top turf, rock and bryophytes: around the island.
<i>Lecania hutchinsiae</i>	1625			R	Concrete: Cemetery; N. Haven; Whaleback.
<i>Lecania rabenhorsitii</i>	1708			O	Mortar and concrete: BT generator building; Kirk; N. Haven; Vaadal plantation.
<i>Lecania subfuscula</i>	167	NS		R	Soil in cliff top turf; Bunes; Meoneess coast; The Nizz.
<i>Lecanora actophila</i>	624			R	Maritime rock: Bunes N.; S. Haven; S. Light area.
<i>Lecanora albescens</i>	627			F	Concrete and basic rock: across the island.
<i>Lecanora argentata</i>	685	NS	<i>Lecanora subfuscata</i>	RV	The Duncan (1963) record of on 'fence posts; local, near Vaasetter, etc.' was not re-found in 2016.
<i>Lecanora campestris</i> subsp. <i>campestris</i>	635			O	On rock and a fence post: across the island.
<i>Lecanora chlorotera</i>	639			R	Bark: FBO 'woodland'; Vaadal plantation. The Duncan (1963) record of ' <i>L. chlorotera</i> f. <i>rugosella</i> (Zahlbr.) Poelt Fence posts; common, Reeva, etc.' was not re-found in 2016 and probably relates to a form of <i>L. chlorotera</i> .
<i>Lecanora confusa</i>	641			R	Bark: <i>Calluna</i> - crags W. of N. Haven. <i>Salix</i> - Vaadal planation.
<i>Lecanora dispersa</i>	646			F	Basic stone and sheep vertebrae: across the island.
<i>Lecanora expallens</i>	649			A	Variety of substrates: across the island.
<i>Lecanora farinaria</i>	650			O	Worked timber; rock and bark: Hill Dyke; quarry S. of BT generator building; Vaadal plantation.
<i>Lecanora gangaleoides</i>	653			R	Sandstone boulders: FBO area; Burrashield; crags W. of N. Haven
<i>Lecanora hagenii</i>	621		<i>Lecanora umbrina</i>	R	Sandstone and worked timber: Bunes N. & S.; Meoneess coast; Cemetery.
<i>Lecanora helicopsis</i>	655			O	Rocks; mostly maritime: Meoneess coast; S. Light area; Mather's Head; Cemetery; Kirk.
<i>Lecanora intricata</i>	656			R	Sandstone and worked timber: Hornisdale; N. Grind.
<i>Lecanora muralis</i>	661			RV	The Duncan (1963) record on 'Walls; local, near Burrashield: was not re-found in 2016.
<i>Lecanora poliophaea</i>	666			F	Sandstone and iron work: across the island (including the Henkel engine at Gilsetter).
<i>Lecanora polytropa</i>	667			A	Sandstone and worked timber: across the island.
<i>Lecanora rupicola</i> var. <i>rupicola</i>	674			A	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Lecanora saligna</i>	675			R	Worked timber: S. Harbour; E. of Cemetery.
<i>Lecanora semipallida</i>	610	NS		R	Concrete: paving at Kirk; track above airfield.
<i>Lecanora sorilifera</i>	679			RV	Sandstone boulder: BT generator building.

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status (1963)	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Lecanora straminea</i>	681	NT NR Sc		R	Sandstone (bird dropping enriched): Bunes - S. Gavel; sheep fank wall above above E. end of S. Harbour.
<i>Lecanora sulphurea</i>	783		<i>Lecidea sulphurea</i>	A	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Lecanora symmetrica</i>	688		<i>Lecidea symmetrica</i>	R	Worked timber - fence post: Schoolton; Swey. In Duncan 1963 recorded as 'fence posts; common' not found to be so in 2016.
<i>Lecanora zosteræ</i>	2287	NS		F	Dead roots of <i>Armeria</i> (thrift): around the island.
<i>Lecidea berengiana</i>	702	DD NS		R	Mineral soils and terraces: Meoness; S. flanks of Malcolm's Head.
<i>Lecidea diducens</i>	715	NS		O	Sandstone boulders and walls: across the island.
<i>Lecidella asema</i>	804		<i>Lecidea latypea</i>	A	Sandstone: across the island. Worked timber: N. Haven.
<i>Lecidella elaeochroma</i> f. <i>elaeochroma</i>	797		<i>Lecidea limitata</i>	O	Worked timber and bark: S. Harbour; Vaadal plantation.
<i>Lecidella meiococca</i>	800	NS		A	Stone and worked timber: across the island.
<i>Lecidella scabra</i>	802		<i>Lecidea scabra</i>	F	Stone and worked timber: across the island.
<i>Lecidella stigmata</i>	803		<i>Lecidea stigmata</i>	R	Rocks and concrete: Ward Hill; Vaadal plantation area.
<i>Lepraria ecoricata</i>	1995	NS		RV	Shaded sandstone: Vaadal gully.
<i>Lepraria incana</i> s. str.	1974			O	Sandstone and bark: Roskillie; FBO area; Vaadal plantation.
<i>Lepraria lobificans</i>	1629			F	Soil and sandstone: across the island.
<i>Lepraria vouauxii</i>	1604			RV	Sandstone: Goorn.
<i>Leptogium britannicum</i>	829	NS Sc IR		O	Cliff top turf: tiny specimens Bunes; Landberg: coast FBO to Ditfield; above Hesti Geo.
<i>Leptogium gelatinosum</i>	846			R	Cliff top turf: Landberg; Bunes; Meoness coast.
<i>Leptogium pulvinatum</i>	2530			R	Cliff top turf: Bunes; Mather's Head.
<i>Lichenocnium lecanoræ</i> (LF)	2092	NS		R	On <i>Lecanora</i> prob. <i>L. polytrapa</i> : lower Homisdale.
<i>Lichenodiplis lecanoræ</i> (LF)	2096	NS		RV	On <i>Lecanora zosteræ</i> : Bunes.
<i>Lichenomphalia alpina</i>	935			R	Heathland: Ward Hill W. & NW. of summit; N. coast.
<i>Lichenomphalia hudsoniana</i>	934			R	Heathland: Malcolm's Head; Ward Hill N. of summit.
<i>Lichenomphalia umbellifera</i>	931			F	Heathland and peat: across the island.
<i>Lichina confinis</i>	851			O	Maritime rocks above high water mark.
<i>Lichina pygmaea</i>	852			R	Maritime rocks below high water mark: S. Light area. One record but likely to be commonly found if its habitat could be more easily accessed.
<i>Lobaria vires</i>	856	Sc IR	<i>L. laetevirens</i>	O	Short turf coastal grassland: around the island. Abundant on S. flanks of Malcolm's Head.
<i>Megalaria pulverea</i>	318			R	Soil and moss on rock: Burn of Wirvie; Gully.
<i>Melanixia fuliginosa</i>	998		<i>Parmelia fuliginosa</i>	F	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Melanetia glabrata</i>	997			RV	Sandstone boulder: FBO area.

CHECKLIST OF THE LICHENS AND LICHENICOLOUS FUNGI OF FAIR ISLE

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Melanelia subaurifera</i>	1020		<i>Parmelia subaurifera</i>	O	Worked timber and sandstone: N. Haven; near Sheep Craig; Hill Dyke; quarry near BT generator building
<i>Micarea botryoides</i>	874			R	Sandstone and moss: Gully; Vaadal gully.
<i>Micarea cinerea</i> f. <i>tenuispora</i>	2341	NR		RV	Soil and bryophytes: quarry near BT generator building.
<i>Micarea lignaria</i> var. <i>endoleuca</i>	881	NS IR		RV	Soil and bryophytes: Ward Hill E. side.
<i>Micarea lignaria</i> var. <i>lignaria</i>	880		<i>Bacidia lignaria</i>	R	Soil and bryophytes: Ward Hill E. side; Gully.
<i>Micarea pellocarpa</i>	886			R	Loose stone; soil and bryophytes: Kim o' Skroo; Ward Hill E. side; FBO area.
<i>Micarea prasina</i> s. <i>lat.</i>	887			O	Soil and bryophytes: across the island.
<i>Micarea ternaria</i>	895	NR		R	Sandstone: Kim o' Skroo; Ward Hill.
<i>Minutocapula tephromelae</i> (LF)	2584	NR		R	On <i>Tephromela atra</i> : Cemetery; Burrashield.
<i>Muellerella pygmaea</i> (LF)	2118			RV	On <i>Lecidea diducens</i> and <i>Porpidia platycarpoides</i> : boulders near FBO.
<i>Mycoblastus caesius</i>	550			RV	<i>Calluna</i> heath: E. of Brecks.
<i>Myriospora rufescens</i>	21			R	Sandstone: FBO area; coast FBO to Ditfield.
<i>Myriospora smaragdula</i>	25			O	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Nephroma laevigatum</i>	917	Sc IR		O	Short turf grassland: Bunes; Landberg; flanks of Malcolm's Head.
<i>Ochrolechia androgyna</i>	921			O	Soil and sandstone: across the island.
<i>Ochrolechia frigida</i> f. <i>frigida</i>	922			F	Short turf and soil: across the island.
<i>Ochrolechia frigida</i> f. <i>lapuensis</i>	748	NR		O	Short coastal turf: around the island.
<i>Ochrolechia parella</i>	926			A	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Ochrolechia tartarea</i>	928			R	Sandstone: Ward Hill summit area.
<i>Ochrolechia xanthostoma</i>	1097	NS		R	Stone in fellfield: Ward Hill; lignum of <i>Calluna</i> : upper Homisdale.
<i>Opegrapha areniseda</i>	937	NS Sc		O	Sandstone; juniper; dead thrift cushions: crags W. of N. Haven; Goorn; Gully; Kim o' Skroo.
<i>Opegrapha ata</i>	938			O	Worked timber and bark: across the island.
<i>Opegrapha calcaria</i>	959		<i>O. confluens</i>	F	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Opegrapha cesareensis</i>	941			O	Sandstone: around the island.
<i>Opegrapha gyrocarpa</i>	947			RV	Sandstone: Gully.
<i>Opegrapha multipuncta</i>	1636			O	Bark; worked timber; tree lignum and sandstone: across the island.
<i>Opegrapha niveoatra</i>	953			RV	Sycamore bark: Vaadal plantation.
<i>Opegrapha zonata</i>	967			RV	Sandstone: Vaadal gully.
<i>Parmelia omphalodes</i>	1006			A	Grassland and sandstone: across the island.
<i>Parmelia saxatilis</i>	1015			O	Sandstone: across the island. Worked timber: Ward Hill.

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Parmelia sulcata</i>	1022			A	Wide range of substrates: across the island.
<i>Parmotrema crinitum</i>	989			O	Short coastal turf: around the island.
<i>Parmotrema perlatum</i>	1008			R	Short coastal turf: Lerness; Meoneess coast.
<i>Peltigera canina</i>	1039		<i>Peltigera canina</i>	R	Short coastal turf: Landberg; Ward Hill E. side; Meoneess coast. <i>P. canina</i> in Duncan (1963) may have referred to this species or to <i>P. membranacea</i> .
<i>Peltigera hymenina</i>	1043		<i>Peltigera polydactyla</i>	O	Grassland: across the island. Records in Duncan (1963) of ' <i>P. polydactyla</i> ' are included here.
<i>Peltigera membranacea</i>	1047		<i>Peltigera canina</i>	F	Grassland: across the island.
<i>Peltigera rufescens</i>	1051			O	Maritime grassland: Bunness; above Hesti Geo; Mavers Geo; Meoneess coast.
<i>Pertusaria amara</i> f. <i>amara</i>	1058			O	Sandstone and worked timber: Hornisdale wall; upper Hornisdale; N. Grind; Kim o' Skroo.
<i>Pertusaria corallina</i>	1066			R	Sandstone: FBO area; Ward Hill summit The Duncan (1963) report of 'Rocks and walls; common' was not confirmed in 2016.
<i>Pertusaria lactescens</i>	1078			O	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Pertusaria multipuncta</i>	1083			RV	<i>Calluna</i> bark: upper Hornisdale.
<i>Pertusaria pseudocorallina</i>	1089			O	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Phaeophyscia orbicularis</i>	1107			O	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Physcia adscendens</i>	1112			O	Sandstone and bark: Bunness; Cemetery; Kirk; Vaadal plantation.
<i>Physcia dubia</i>	1116			R	Sandstone: Bunness; Meoneess.
<i>Physcia tenella</i>	1120			F	Sandstone: across the island. Plus a record each from a fence post and on bark.
<i>Placidium squamulosum</i>	1608			R	Soil in crevice in basic dyke: S. and NW. of S. Light.
<i>Placynthiella tarmalea</i>	732		<i>Lecidea uliginosa</i>	O	Soil: sandstone and worked timber: across the island.
<i>Placynthiella uliginosa</i>	788		<i>Lecidea uliginosa</i>	R	Soil: Bunness N.; N. Haven.
<i>Platismatia glauca</i>	1145		<i>Cetraria glauca</i>	R	Soil in fellfield: Ward Hill. The 1963 reports of 'Rocks, walls, and fence posts; frequent, near North Haven, etc.' was not confirmed in 2016.
<i>Polyblastia cupularis</i>	1151	NS		RV	Sandstone: Gully.
<i>Poina chlorotica</i> f. <i>chlorotica</i>	1171			RV	Sandstone: Gully.
<i>Poina lectissima</i>	1180			RV	Sandstone: Gully.
<i>Porpidia cinereootra</i>	562		<i>Lecidea albocarulescens</i> = <i>Porpidia cinereootra</i> , <i>Porpidia contraponenda</i> or <i>Porpidia platycarpoides</i>	O	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Porpidia crustulata</i>	564			O	Sandstone: across the island.

CHECKLIST OF THE LICHENS AND LICHENICOLOUS FUNGI OF FAIR ISLE

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Porpidia flavicunda</i> / <i>P. flavocruenta</i>			<i>Lecidea macrocarpa</i> <i>f. flavicunda</i>	RV	The record in Duncan (1963) of ' <i>L. macrocarpa f. flavicunda</i> on Ward Hill' could in current nomenclature have been <i>P. flavicunda</i> or, more likely, <i>P. flavocruenta</i> . Neither of these were re-found in 2016.
<i>Porpidia macrocarpa f. macrocarpa</i>	568		<i>Lecidea macrocarpa</i>	O	Sandstone: across the island. Worked timber on Ward Hill.
<i>Porpidia melinodes</i>	565	NS		RV	Stone in fellfield: Ward Hill.
<i>Porpidia platycarpoides</i>	571		<i>Lecidea albocarerulea</i> f. = <i>Porpidia cinereocra</i> , <i>Porpidia contrapanenda</i> or <i>Porpidia platycarpoides</i>	F	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Porpidia striata</i>	586	NS		RV	Sandstone: Ward Hill E. side.
<i>Porpidia tuberculosa</i>	572		<i>Lecidea tumida</i>	F	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Protoblastenia rupestris</i>	1189			R	Mortar and concrete: Ward Hill; nr. Burrashield.
<i>Protopannaria pezizoides</i>	979			O	Soil in short turf grassland: around the island.
<i>Protoparmelia badia</i>	633			R	On wall: N. of Field; lower Homisdale.
<i>Psoroma hypnorum</i>	1205	NS		O	Soil in short turf grassland: around the island.
<i>Pycnothelia papillaria</i>	1211		<i>Cladonia papillaria</i>	R	Peat in wet heath: Ward Hill; upper Homisdale; opp. BT generator building
<i>Ramalina cuspidata</i>	1232		<i>R. cumowii</i>	O	Maritime rocks above high water mark: around the island.
<i>Ramalina farinacea</i>	1234			RV	Bark of <i>Picea</i> : Vaadal plantation.
<i>Ramalina siliquosa</i>	1240			A	On anything that stands still long enough: across the island!
<i>Ramalina subitranacea</i>	1241			F	Sandstone: across the island. Old gate: N. Gird.
<i>Rhizocarpon geographicum</i>	1257			R	Sandstone: Burrashield; Golden Water; Lemess. The report in Duncan (1963) of Rocks and walls; common; was not confirmed in 2016.
<i>Rhizocarpon petraeum</i>	1249			R	Sandstone: N. Haven; N. Light
<i>Rhizocarpon polycarpum</i>	1270	NS		RV	Maritime rocks: S. Light.
<i>Rhizocarpon reductum</i>	1266		<i>R. obscuratum</i>	F	Sandstone: across the island. Includes the Duncan (1963) records of <i>R. obscuratum</i> .
<i>Rhizocarpon richardii</i>	1250		<i>R. constrictum</i>	F	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Rinodina atrocineae</i>	1281			RV	Sandstone: W. of N. Haven.
<i>Rinodina contalii</i>	1286	NS		RV	Soil: Landberg.
<i>Rinodina oleae</i>	1289		<i>R. salina</i> , <i>R. gemmarii</i>	O	Sandstone and worked timber: across the island.
<i>Sarcogyne regularis</i>	1306			RV	Render: BT generator building
<i>Schaereria fuscoacineae</i> var. <i>fuscoacineae</i>	1313			R	Sandstone: upper Homisdale; Point Saider area; Swey.
<i>Scollariosporum chlorococcum</i>	1320			RV	Bark of <i>Salix</i> : Vaadal plantation.

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Scoliosporium umbinum</i>	1322		<i>Bacidia umbrina</i>	O	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Skyrtea tephromelanum</i> (LF)	2210			RV	On <i>Tephromela atra</i> : Meoneess.
<i>Solenopora vulturensis</i>	1326			O	Crucives of coastal rocks and on soil: around the island.
<i>Sphaerophorus fragilis</i>	1332			?	Curnie's record on soil is considered doubtful. It is likely to be of a stunted <i>S. globosus</i> . <i>S. fragilis</i> has only been found growing directly on rock.
<i>Sphaerophorus globosus</i>	1333			A	Soil and rock: across the island.
<i>Stigmidium tabacinae</i> (LF)	2237	NR		RV	On <i>Toninia sedifolia</i> : S. Light area.
<i>Tephromela atra</i> var. <i>atra</i>	630		<i>Lecanora atra</i>	A	Sandstone: across the island. One record on a fence post: Meoneess coast.
<i>Thelenella muscorum</i> var. <i>muscorum</i>	901			R	Soil: coast FBO to Dittfield; Landberg; flanks of Malcolm's Head; Meoneess.
<i>Thelecarpon impressellum</i>	1399	NS		RV	Soil: BT generator building.
<i>Toninia aromatica</i>	1415			O	Rocks and concrete: across the island.
<i>Toninia mesoidea</i>	1423	NS		RV	Coastal gully: N. Bunes
<i>Toninia sedifolia</i>	1416	P	<i>Toninia coerulescens</i>	R	Soil in crevice in basic dyke: S. and NW. of S. Light.
<i>Trapelia coarctata</i>	1431			R	Loose stones: Gully; FBO area.
<i>Trapelia glebulosa</i>	1432			O	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Trapelia placodioides</i>	1595			RV	Boulder: Vaadal gully.
<i>Trapelopsis flexuosa</i>	692			R	Worked timber: N. Grind; N. Haven.
<i>Trapelopsis granulosa</i>	727			R	Peat: Kirm o' Skroo; Ward Hill E. side.
<i>Trapelopsis pseudogranulosa</i>	1582			RV	Soil: Vaadal gully.
<i>Tuckermannopsis chlorophylla</i>	327		<i>Cetraria chlorophylla</i>	O	Wall tops: Hill Dyke; upper Homisdale; lower Homisdale. Wooden gate: N. Grind. Record in Duncan (1963) as <i>C. chlorophylla</i> (Willd.) Vain. Walls; local, near North Haven was not re-found in 2016.
<i>Usnea flammaea</i>	1461			RV	Rock face: Gully, where it is frequent.
<i>Usnea hirta</i>	1468			RV	The record in Duncan (1963) 'Fence posts; local, near Vaasetter' was not re-confirmed in 2016.
<i>Vahllella atlantica</i>	2432	NR Sc		O	Soil in maritime grassland: around the island.
<i>Vaizellaria lactea</i>	1077		<i>Pertusaria lactea</i>	R	Sandstone: Kirm o' Skroo; Lerness.
<i>Verrucaria aethiobola</i>	1473	NS		RV	Burnside rocks: Gully.
<i>Verrucaria amphibia</i>	1474	NS		RV	Sandstone: Coom.
<i>Verrucaria anziana</i>	2526			RV	Sandstone boulder in stream: Vaadal gully.
<i>Verrucaria dolosa</i>	1619			RV	Small stone: BT generator building.
<i>Verrucaria fusconigrescens</i>	1491			O	Sandstone, mostly coastal: across the island.

CHECKLIST OF THE LICHENS AND LICHENICOLOUS FUNGI OF FAIR ISLE

Taxon name	BLS number	GB status	Synonyms used in Duncan (1963)	Fair Isle status	Comment
<i>Verrucaria halizoa</i>	1493	NS		RV	Coastal rocks: S. Haven.
<i>Verrucaria internigrescens</i>	1498	NS		R	Sandstone: BT generator building; Burn o'Vaistrass; Gully.
<i>Verrucaria macrostoma</i> f. <i>macrostoma</i>	1502			RV	Concrete: Ward Hill E. side
<i>Verrucaria mucosa</i>	1506			R	Maritime rocks (littoral zone): S. Harbour; S. Haven; S. Light area. Probably under-recorded.
<i>Verrucaria muralis</i>	1507			R	Rocks and concrete: Ward Hill E. side; S. Light area; BT generator building
<i>Verrucaria nigrescens</i> f. <i>nigrescens</i>	1510			RV	Concrete: Ward Hill E. side. The record in Duncan (1963) of ' <i>V. nigrescens</i> ' probably included <i>V. fusconigrescens</i> . The latter was not fully recognized at that time.
<i>Verrucaria striatula</i>	1517			R	Maritime rocks (littoral zone): S. Haven; S. Light area. Probably under-recorded.
<i>Xanthoria aureola</i>	1538			O	Sandstone: across the island.
<i>Xanthoria calcicola</i>	1526		<i>X. parietina</i> var. <i>ectanea</i>	O	Sandstone and buildings: Cemetery; Kirk; Malcolm's Head; Point Saider area.
<i>Xanthoria candelaria</i> s. str.	2364		<i>Xanthoria candelaria</i> = <i>X. candelaria</i> s. str., s. lat. or <i>X. ucrainica</i>	O	Stone, worked timber and bark: sites across the island.
<i>Xanthoria parietina</i>	1530			A	All substrates: across the island (including FIBO roof).
<i>Xanthoria ucrainica</i>	950	NS	<i>Xanthoria candelaria</i> = <i>X. candelaria</i> s. str., s. lat. or <i>X. ucrainica</i>	R	Stone and bark: S. Harbour, Cemetery, Vaadal plantation.
<i>Xanthorhizocola physciae</i> (LF)	2272			RV	On <i>Xanthoria parietina</i> : Meoness coast.

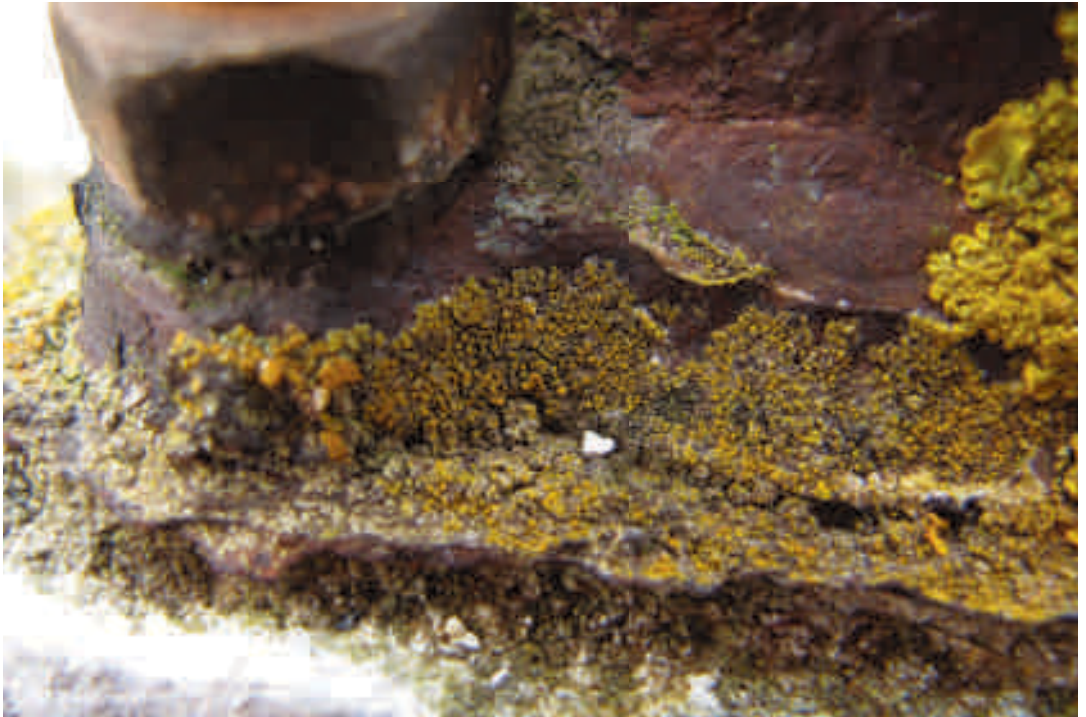


Plate 112. Lichens encrusting the iron work of the Heinkel engine at Gilsetter (*Caloplaca maritima*; *Candelariella vitellina* f. *vitellina*; *Lecanora poliophaea*; *Xanthoria parietina*). © Steve Price

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Nick Riddiford for showing the author and the group around the island and for pointing out some smaller areas of special habitat that otherwise may have been overlooked. Thanks to Brian Coppins for reviewing various drafts of this paper and for giving advice on how to deal with some species names that had been used in a few of the older records. Thanks to Richard Luxmoore, Senior Nature Conservation Adviser, The National Trust for Scotland for giving permission for us to collect specimens for the purpose of identification. Finally, thanks to the wardens, staff and visitors at FIBO for their hospitality and for tolerating in their midst four people who rarely lifted eyes from their hand-lenses and demonstrated but little interest in the birds.

References

- Currie, A. 1961. Notes on the lichen flora of Fair Isle, Shetland (V.C. 112). *Transactions and proceedings of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh* 39: 236–238. [Note: these records are included in Duncan (1963).]
- Dalby, D.H. & Dalby, C. 2005. *Shetland Lichens*. Lerwick: Shetland Amenity Trust.
- Duncan, U.K. 1963. A list of Fair Isle Lichens. *The Lichenologist* 2: 171–178.
- Fryday, A.M. & Coppins, B.J. 2012. New taxa, reports, and names of lichenized and lichenicolous fungi, mainly from the Scottish Highlands. *The Lichenologist* 44: 723–727.
- Woods, R.G. & Coppins, B.J. 2012. A Conservation Evaluation of British Lichens and Lichenicolous Fungi. *JNCC Species Status No. 13*.



ENCOURAGING THE NEXT GENERATION AT FIBO

Fair Isle Bird Observatory has inspired and educated many visitors over the years and many leading ornithologists cite a visit to FIBO as an important part of their formative years. To keep that trend going, FIBO aims to support younger visitors in a number of ways and we encourage anybody who is interested in visiting the Observatory in any capacity to get in touch.

Simon Aspinall Bursary Fund (SABF) & John Harrison Memorial Fund (JHMF)

These two funds provide financial assistance in the form of grants to anyone between the ages of 16 and 24 (inclusive) to enable them to visit Fair Isle and take part in the daily work schedule of the Observatory. The JHMF was established in 1968 by Richard Richardson in memory of John Harrison who visited Fair Isle three times before he died at the early age of 19. The SABF was established in 2015 by Jack and Sylvia Aspinall to honour the memory of their son Simon who was an assistant warden at FIBO in 1987, revisiting the island in subsequent years with his brother Richard to undertake research on the 'Fair Isle Wren'. Simon died in 2011, aged 53, from motor neurone disease.

Grants normally cover the cost of travel by the most economical means possible to the Observatory and back home. Whilst at the Observatory awardees are required to pay £14 per night*, which covers full board and lodgings. Volunteers who gain these grants are a full part of the wardening team whilst staying at the Obs and may end up helping out with any of the work that the Observatory undertakes and full details can be found on the FIBO website.

Ornithological Volunteers

For £14 a night*, visitors of any age can join the wardening team in their duties when space at the Obs allows. The Obs also regularly takes domestic and bar volunteers (who stay for free in return for working at the Obs*), who get spare time to enjoy the island and are often able to help out with the wardening team's work.

Young Person Discount

For anyone aged 25 or under, there is a special rate of £35 per night* (full board) for staying at the Obs as a visitor throughout the year (possibly sharing a single-sex room). From 2017, the discount will apply for the whole year, including the peak autumn migration period.

**note, all prices are correct at the time of going to press, but please check the FIBO website for updates.*

Plate 113 (opposite). The view of the Holms and Malcolm's Head from South Light, 20th June 2016. © Lee Gregory

MY FAIR ISLE EXPERIENCE

21ST JULY TO 14TH AUGUST

Elizabeth Holmes - recipient of SABF grant

I volunteered at FIBO from 21st July to 14th August 2016 as part of my year out before going on to study Ecology and Wildlife Conservation at the University of Reading. I visited many countries and did various volunteering stints during my gap year but working with the FIBO was definitely the highlight of my whole year.

Home for me is Shropshire, making it an epic journey to the island. After a 24-hour journey involving trains, planes, automobiles and ferries I reached the Island. As soon as I hit *terra firma* I was getting stuck into life at the Observatory. This includes eating a lot of great food! There were four other young volunteers, and we became known to the wardening team as the 'weaner pod', referring to just weaned seal pups! Most of the tasks I did were with the group, making everything even more enjoyable and allowing me to make some really good friends. I spent my first night on the island helping with Storm Petrel ringing. Mist nets were set up at the Haven, and a recording of Storm Petrel calls was played to attract non-breeding birds looking for a new colony. After four nights in a row of Storm Petrel ringing it is a sound I will never forget. We collected the birds from the wardening team as they extracted them from the nets and took them back to the ringing shed. Here I got to ring my first seabird, and one of the cutest at that. Most sessions carried on throughout the night, allowing us to see the 04:00 am sunrise. The awe of what we were doing kept us awake, as well as a few Snickers!

The first trip out on the Zodiac allowed us to explore the caves of Sheep Rock. We landed in a little cove and searched for Black Guillemot and Shag nests between boulders. We carefully extracted the chicks out of their nests to be ringed. This saw my first day of being covered in bird excrement, which made me feel like a proper ornithologist... and I loved it!

Another adventure on the Zodiac took us to Greenholm, a mayweed covered rock, home to at least 100 pairs of Puffins. Each Puffin burrow had been given a number, and the state of each burrow was recorded throughout the breeding season. Checking a Puffin burrow involves sticking your arm as far down the burrow as physically possible in search of 'pufflings' and the occasional angry adult! Many of the burrows were empty. From the previous records we could assume that either the chick has fledged or the parents have failed to breed. However, some burrows still had chicks. Many of these chicks had already been ringed from the previous visit. The ring number and measurements of these chicks were recorded, (wing length and weight). Any un-ringed chicks were ringed, providing me with another first!

I also got to do lots of work with Great Skua (locally known as 'Bonxie') and Arctic Skua ('Skootie Alan' - the best name ever!). We walked around the island collecting pellets to identify what they were eating, using GPS to locate and monitor nests, as well as ringing the chicks - which are so cute! After nearly a month of walking the island being dive bombed by these birds I became to love them, I greatly miss being able to high five a Great Skua!

Working with the volunteering team provided me with many new experiences and senses, including some unique smells! From early August, we started ringing Fulmar chicks. Fair Isle is only a couple of miles long and only up to a mile wide, so, you're never far from the sea. This allows the island's most abundant seabirds, the Fulmar, to nest almost anywhere on the island. Many nest within dry stone walls or just on the side of one of the heath covered hills. This makes them accessible to the wardening team for monitoring, including ringing the chicks and the adults if possible! It was no problem catching the chicks at this stage as they were just great lumps of grey down, but don't be fooled, I soon found out their secret weapon... sick. I spent a whole week smelling of it, but it was worth it.

Working with the wardening team provided so many unique experiences, and greatly increased my knowledge of seabird ecology, as well as strengthening my love of nature and my ambition to work to protect it! I'm definitely hooked and can't wait to do more work in this incredible place!



Plate 114. The Kirk, Kenaby and Brecks, 15th August 2016. © David Parnaby

MY FAIR ISLE EXPERIENCE 5TH TO 28TH JULY

Oliver Beacock - recipient of SABF grant

At the beginning of July, I set off from my local train station just outside Nottingham on the long journey north that would see me arrive on Fair Isle in a couple of days time. I got my first views of the island from the deck of the Good Shepherd IV and this was immediately followed by my first ever Storm Petrels following the boat - brilliant birds and I hadn't even arrived yet! A quarter of an hour or so later and I was greeted at the harbour by the two other volunteers with whom I'd be working for the first two weeks of my stay.

Having taken the opportunity to fuel up on a delicious boat lunch at the Observatory I was ready to begin work that afternoon. The experience of volunteering as part of the wardening team at the observatory was fantastic and so was the wildlife. We got involved with a whole manner of activities from repairing fences and the island's famous Helgoland traps behind some of the birds I could only dream of seeing in central England. As well as the more practical maintenance work the volunteers were able to assist with monitoring work whether this was the Puffin all-day feed watch (though it did get a bit cold on the clifftop after the end of two hour stints!) to completing productivity surveys on Puffins and Kittiwakes.



Plate 115. Oliver Beacock with Common Gull chicks, Goorn, 12th July 2016. © Lee Gregory

As a trainee ringer myself, the opportunity to ring some of the more unusual breeders on Fair Isle was an exciting change from the woodland avifauna I'm used to back home not least because of the profound lack of trees on the island. Out of all the ringing experiences none were quite on a par with the thrill of Storm Petrel ringing in the Haven; the repetitive purring and grunting 'song' of a petrel echoing off the steep sides of the cliffs made for an eerie soundscape, but soon the stormies arrived flying long arcs around the net and a few minutes later a moment of activity around the nets resulted in the first few birds being brought to the ringing hut. It was a real privilege to get to be up close and almost personal with this nocturnal and pelagic species and to marvel at the intricacies of their bills and the extraordinarily long wings.

There were plenty of other fantastic moments of birding during my time on Fair Isle and I got to see lots of species ranging from an unseasonable Long-eared Owl to Purple Sandpipers on the rocks around the South Lighthouse.

One of the more memorable birds was the Black Redstart found at Hesti Geo by Ciaran; the volunteer wardens were busy digging new margins into the overgrown Utra Scrape when Ciaran appeared over the hill waving his arms at us and calling for us to bring our binoculars over. After a couple minutes of searching the Black Redstart, a female-type, appeared on the fence line with a Rock Pipit and we all got good views, with a Red-throated Diver down in the geo below adding to the excitement.

Despite all the wonderful birding experiences there I was one moment of my trip to the island that stands out miles above the others and that came just a few days into my stay at the Observatory. On the Sunday morning the volunteer team had been dispatched across the road to work on the sluice and edges of the Obs Scrape; after a few hours of work the decision was made to go back to the Obs for a hot drink before continuing with the work. As we were having our drinks out on the patio area we were joined by Ciaran and Chris who had come to examine our work so far. It was at this point the unbelievable happened upon turning to look out over North Haven we saw dorsal fins right up in the entrance to the harbour, it was Chris who exclaimed "ORCAS!" and went running through the observatory building to alert everyone. In the end everyone gathered on the northern tip of Bunes and got excellent views of five of these awesome predators in action as they caught and killed two of the local Grey Seals. One of the female Killer Whales could be identified from a distinctive notch in the dorsal fin as an individual that has been seen regularly around Shetland and also in Iceland - incredible!

All this was only possible thanks to a grant awarded to me from the Simon Aspinall Bursary Fund which covered most of the cost of my travel to and from the Observatory and without which I would probably not have made it out there and wouldn't have been able to see such incredible wildlife (or play in the Obs vs. Islanders football match!).

Plate 116. Storm Petrel, the Haven, 26th June 2016. © David Parnaby

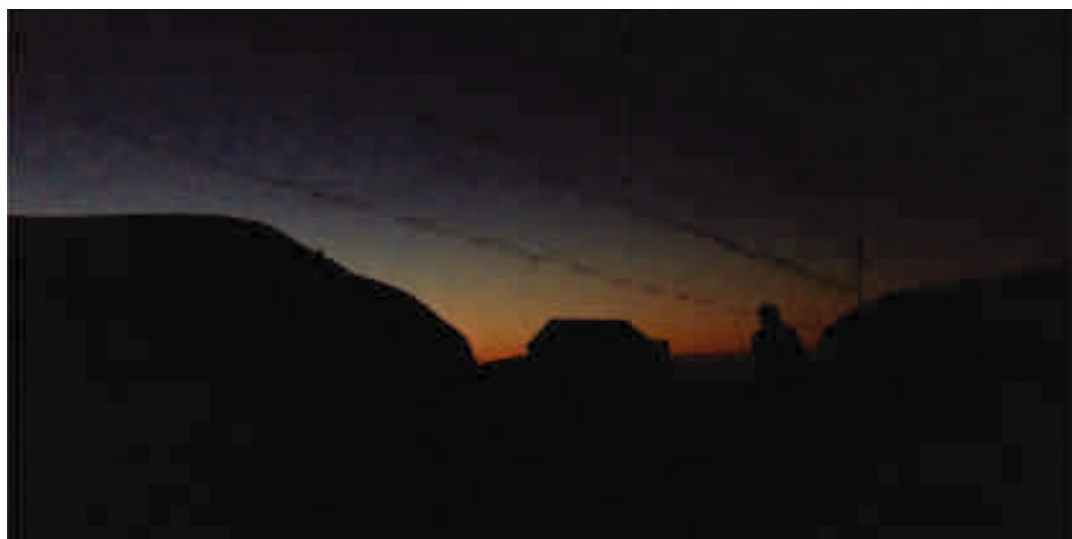
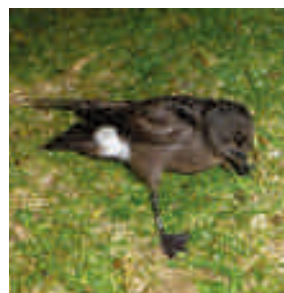


Plate 117. Storm Petrel ringing, the Haven, 21st July 2016. © Lee Gregory

FIBOT FINANCIAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR 2016

Mike Wood

FIBO's income in 2016 exceeded £200,000 for the first time and, whilst an increasing proportion of this is required to be compliant with Living Wage laws, the overall financial picture was of another excellent year. The guest bed-nights and income figures for the years since 2005 (excluding the 'Observatory rebuild' years) are below.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Bed-nights	2,739	2,610	3,047	2,977	2,972	2,905	3,147	3,277	3,247	3,188
Income (£)	101,388	99,328	119,400	111,897	146,977	164,011	181,262	191,467	192,102	218,763

Our target is to maintain the number of revenue-earning guest-nights at around 3,100 per year, so the recent years are encouraging steps against that objective. Key to achieving the target is the enjoyment, value, comfort and hospitality enjoyed by our guests. Approximately 97% of our recent guests rate the Observatory as "Excellent" or "Very Good" according to Trip Advisor. Many guests have commented favourably on the quiet, warm and comfortable accommodation, excellent food including (where possible) special dietary requirements, brilliant scenic views, well-stocked bar and the unique, friendly ambience of the Observatory. More than that, they have enjoyed a range of different experiences within a few days that is arguably unique.

With scheduled flights to and from the Mainland Shetland every day except Sunday during the summer, together with three days on which the Good Shepherd sails between Fair Isle and Shetland, getting to and from the island is much easier and more predictable than in past years.

We have continued to receive valuable grant income from the JNCC and SNH for seabird monitoring work and the provision of a Fair Isle Ranger Service respectively. This income is important for the continued financial health of FIBO and we are working hard to ensure we continue to fulfil their requirements.

Please be aware of the grants available from FIBO through the John Harrison Memorial Fund and the Simon Aspinall Bursary Fund and encourage any young (under 25 years old) birdwatchers you know to apply for one or other of these grants.

My personal thanks go to David, Susannah and our seasonal staff for their hard work and skill in making the Observatory such a brilliant place to stay. It is not just the comfort of the new building and excellent food that determines whether or not a guest has an enjoyable stay at the Observatory, it is the friendliness and helpfulness of the staff that contribute massively to the high levels of visitor satisfaction.

Whilst our finances continue to be in a satisfactory state, any readers wishing to make a specific or non-specific donation to support the Observatory can be assured it would be gratefully received and effectively used. A summary of FIBO's draft accounts for the year ended 31st October 2016 appears on the opposite page. The full statutory accounts can be seen at the Observatory on Fair Isle.

Mike Wood
Finance Director

Income and Expenditure Report for the year ended 31st October 2016

Sales Income	2016 (£)	2015 (£)	Balance Sheet as at 31st October 2016		
Accommodation & Meals	180,090	156,424	Fixed Assets	31/10/16 (£)	31/10/15 (£)
Shop Sales	13,854	12,535	Tangible Assets (excluding buildings)	74,490	88,281
Bar Sales	24,819	23,143	Investments	0	0
	218,763	192,102	74,490	88,281	
Cost of Sales			Current Assets		
Purchases	76,418	73,483	Stocks	21,562	21,244
Wages & Salaries	75,049	69,957	Debtors	28,457	42,679
	151,467	143,440	Cash at bank and in hand	42,747	56,610
Trading Profit	67,296	48,662		92,766	120,533
Other Income			Creditors: amounts falling due		
Interest Received	5,461	6,141	within one year	(34,588)	(32,883)
Subscriptions	6,303	6,143	Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)	58,178	87,650
Donations	3,080	5,934	Total Assets less		
Grants Received	21,311	22,950	Current Liabilities	132,668	175,931
Other Income	0	0	Creditors: amounts falling due		
	36,155	41,168	after more than one year	(0)	(0)
				132,668	175,931
Gross Profit	103,451	89,830	Representing:		
Other Expenses			Accumulated Surplus	132,668	175,931
Administration	10,852	13,544	Appeal Reserve	0	0
Establishment	31,030	20,786		132,668	175,931
Energy	12,450	13,039			
Insurance	20,818	20,802			
Sales & Marketing	4,330	6,351			
Financial & Legal	8,188	7,160			
Depreciation	13,791	15,324			
	101,459	97,006			
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	1,992	(7,176)			

SYSTEMATIC CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF FAIR ISLE

David Parnaby

The table below is a checklist of the birds of Fair Isle at the end of 2016. All decisions follow those of the BBRC and BOURC (although note that the totals include all 2016 records, which may remain subject to ratification by the relevant committee), with the main list comprising all species on the Categories A–C, with those species on Categories D (uncertain origin) and E (presumed escapes), along with one extinct species included at the end of the list for completeness.

With the addition of Little Egret, Black-browed Albatross and Siberian Accentor, the Fair Isle list stands at 388 at the end of 2016.

Status Categories:

Vagrant	V (no. of records)	ten records or less in the past 20 years
Rare	R (no. of records)	11–40 records in the past 20 years
Scarce	S	averaging 10 records or less per annum
Regular Migrant	RM	averaging 11–40 records per annum
Frequent Migrant	FM	averaging 41–500 records per annum
Common Migrant	CM	averaging more than 500 records per annum

Breeding Categories:

Small Numbers	BS	on average less than 100 pairs per annum
Moderate Numbers	BM	on average 101–1,000 pairs per annum
Large Numbers	BL	on average more than 1,000 pairs per annum

No.	Species	Status	(individuals)	No.	Species	Status	(individuals)
1	Mute Swan	V	(13)	29	King Eider	V	(17)
2	Bewick's Swan	V	(17)	30	Steller's Eider	V	(1)
3	Whooper Swan	FM		31	Harlequin Duck	V	(2)
4	Bean Goose	R	(c215)	32	Long-tailed Duck	RM	
5	Pink-footed Goose	CM		33	Common Scoter	RM	
6	White-fronted Goose	S		34	Surf Scoter	V	(2)
7	Greylag Goose	CM		35	Velvet Scoter	R	(180)
8	Greater Canada Goose	R	(79)	36	Goldeneye	RM	
9	Barnacle Goose	FM		37	Smew	V	(7)
10	Brent Goose	R	(c244)	38	Red-breasted Merganser	RM	
11	Shelduck	S		39	Goosander	R	
12	Mandarin Duck	V	(2)	40	Quail	S	
13	Wigeon	FM		41	Red-throated Diver	RM	
14	American Wigeon	V	(1)	42	Black-throated Diver	V	(7)
15	Gadwall	R	(82)	43	Great Northern Diver	S	
16	Teal	FM		44	White-billed Diver	V	(4)
17	Green-winged Teal	V	(3)	45	Black-browed Albatross	V	(1)
18	Mallard	RM BS		46	Fulmar	CM BL	
19	Black Duck	V	(1)	47	Cory's Shearwater	V	(3)
20	Pintail	S		48	Great Shearwater	V	(16)
21	Garganey	V	(23)	49	Sooty Shearwater	RM	
22	Shoveler	S		50	Manx Shearwater	S	
23	Pochard	R		51	Storm Petrel	CM BS	
24	Ring-necked Duck	V	(2)	52	Leach's Petrel	SM	
25	Tufted Duck	RM		53	Swinhoe's Petrel	V	(2)
26	Scaup	S		54	Gannet	CM BL	
27	Lesser Scaup	V	(1)	55	Cormorant	RM	
28	Eider	FM BS		56	Shag	CM BL	

No.	Species	Status	(individuals)	No.	Species	Status	(individuals)
57	Little Bittern	V	(1)	115	Ruff	RM	
58	Night-heron	V	(2)	116	Curlew Sandpiper	R	
59	Little Egret	V	(2)	117	Red-necked Stint	V	(1)
60	Great White Egret	V	(1)	118	Temminck's Stint	V	(19)
61	Grey Heron	FM		119	Sanderling	FM	
62	Purple Heron	V	(3)	120	Dunlin	FM	
63	White Stork	V	(4)	121	Purple Sandpiper	FM	
64	Glossy Ibis	V	(6)	122	Baird's Sandpiper	V	(4)
65	Little Grebe	R	(41)	123	Little Stint	S	
66	Great Crested Grebe	V	(14)	124	White-rumped Sandpiper	V	(5)
67	Red-necked Grebe	V	(22)	125	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	V	(16)
68	Slavonian Grebe	S		126	Pectoral Sandpiper	R	(34)
69	Honey-buzzard	R	(59)	127	Semipalmated Sandpiper	V	(3)
70	Black Kite	V	(1)	128	Red-necked Phalarope	V	(25)
71	Red Kite	V	(8)	129	Grey Phalarope	R	(50)
72	White-tailed Eagle	V	(14)	130	Terek Sandpiper	V	(1)
73	Marsh Harrier	R	(50)	131	Common Sandpiper	FM	
74	Hen Harrier	S		132	Spotted Sandpiper	V	(1)
75	Pallid Harrier	V	(5)	133	Green Sandpiper	RM	
76	Montagu's Harrier	V	(3)	134	Solitary Sandpiper	V	(1)
77	Goshawk	V	(6)	135	Spotted Redshank	R	
78	Sparrowhawk	RM		136	Greenshank	RM	
79	Buzzard	R		137	Lesser Yellowlegs	V	(3)
80	Rough-legged Buzzard	V	(49)	138	Wood Sandpiper	S	
81	Golden Eagle	V	(1)	139	Redshank	CM	
82	Osprey	S	(131)	140	Jack Snipe	FM	
83	Water Rail	RM		141	Long-billed Dowitcher	V	(2)
84	Spotted Crake	R	(51)	142	Woodcock	FM	
85	Little Crake	V	(1)	143	Snipe	CM BS	
86	Baillon's Crake	V	(2)	144	Great Snipe	R	(46)
87	Corncrake	S		145	Collared Pratincole	V	(1)
88	Moorhen	S		146	Black-winged Pratincole	V	(1)
89	Coot	R	(93)	147	Pomarine Skua	R	(123)
90	Crane	R	(39)	148	Arctic Skua	FM BS	
91	Sandhill Crane	V	(1)	149	Long-tailed Skua	R	(108)
92	Little Bustard	V	(1)	150	Great Skua	FM BM	
93	Great Bustard	V	(1)	151	Puffin	CM BL	
94	Stone-curlew	V	(8)	152	Black Guillemot	FM BL	
95	Avocet	V	(1)	153	Razorbill	CM BL	
96	Oystercatcher	FM BS		154	Little Auk	RM	
97	Grey Plover	R		155	Guillemot	CM BL	
98	Golden Plover	FM		156	Brünnich's Guillemot	V	(1)
99	American Golden Plover	V	(11)	157	Bridled Tern	V	(1)
100	Pacific Golden Plover	V	(2)	158	Gull-billed Tern	V	(1)
101	Dotterel	S		159	Caspian Tern	V	(2)
102	Ringed Plover	FM BS		160	Black Tern	V	(2)
103	Little Ringed Plover	V	(5)	161	White-winged Black Tern	V	(3)
104	Lapwing	FM BS		162	Sandwich Tern	S	
105	Caspian Plover	V	(1)	163	Common Tern	RM	
106	Kentish Plover	V	(1)	164	Roseate Tern	V	(5)
107	Upland Sandpiper	V	(2)	165	Arctic Tern	FM BM	
108	Hudsonian Whimbrel	V	(2)	166	Ivory Gull	V	(2)
109	Whimbrel	FM		167	Sabine's Gull	V	(7)
110	Curlew	FM BS		168	Kittiwake	CM BM	
111	Black-tailed Godwit	S		169	Black-headed Gull	FM	
112	Bar-tailed Godwit	S		170	Little Gull	R	(32)
113	Turnstone	CM		171	Laughing Gull	V	(2)
114	Knot	RM		172	Mediterranean Gull	V	(2)

No.	Species	Status	(individuals)	No.	Species	Status	(individuals)
173	Common Gull	CM BS		231	Coal Tit	V	(7)
174	Ring-billed Gull	V	(4)	232	Woodlark	V	(56)
175	Lesser Black-backed Gull	FM BS		233	Skylark	CM BS	
176	Herring Gull	CM BS		234	Crested Lark	V	(1)
177	Iceland Gull	S		235	Shore Lark	R	
178	Glaucous Gull	RM		236	Short-toed Lark	S	(179)
179	Great Black-backed Gull	CM BS		237	Bimaculated Lark	V	(1)
180	Pallas's Sandgrouse	V	(40)	238	Calandra Lark	V	(6)
181	Rock Dove	FM BS		239	Sand Martin	RM	
182	Stock Dove	S		240	Swallow	FM	
183	Woodpigeon	FM		241	House Martin	FM	
184	Collared Dove	FM		242	Red-rumped Swallow	V	(10)
185	Turtle Dove	S		243	Greenish Warbler	R	(54)
186	Rufous Turtle Dove	V	(1)	244	Arctic Warbler	R	(91)
187	Cuckoo	SM		245	Pallas's Warbler	V	(40)
188	Barn Owl	V	(6)	246	Yellow-browed Warbler	RM	
189	Scops Owl	V	(2)	247	Hume's Warbler	V	(3)
190	Snowy Owl	V	(24)	248	Radde's Warbler	V	(8)
191	Long-eared Owl	RM		249	Dusky Warbler	V	(17)
192	Short-eared Owl	RM		250	Western Bonelli's Warbler	V	(3)
193	Nightjar	V	(29)	251	Wood Warbler	RM	
194	Swift	FM		252	Chiffchaff	FM	
195	Pallid Swift	V	(1)	253	Willow Warbler	CM	
196	Alpine Swift	V	(7)	254	Blackcap	CM	
197	Little Swift	V	(1)	255	Garden Warbler	FM	
198	Hoopoe	R	(41)	256	Barred Warbler	RM	
199	Bee-eater	V	(8)	257	Lesser Whitethroat	FM	
200	Roller	V	(1)	258	Sardinian Warbler	V	(2)
201	Kingfisher	V	(1)	259	Moltoni's Subalpine Warbler	V	(2)
202	Wryneck	RM		260	Subalpine Warbler	R	(96)
203	Great Spotted Woodpecker	S		261	Whitethroat	FM	
204	Lesser Kestrel	V	(1)	262	Dartford Warbler	V	(1)
205	Kestrel	RM		263	Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	R	(24)
206	American Kestrel	V	(1)	264	Lanceolated Warbler	S	(95)
207	Red-footed Falcon	V	(5)	265	Grasshopper Warbler	RM	
208	Merlin	RM		266	River Warbler	V	(17)
209	Hobby	R	(60)	267	Savi's Warbler	V	(7)
210	Gyr Falcon	V	(13)	268	Thick-billed Warbler	V	(2)
211	Peregrine	RM		269	Booted Warbler	V	(15)
212	Red-eyed Vireo	V	(1)	270	Sykes's Warbler	V	(3)
213	Golden Oriole	R	(48)	271	Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	V	(3)
214	Brown Shrike	V	(1)	272	Icterine Warbler	RM	
215	Isabelline Shrike	V	(4)	273	Melodious Warbler	V	(18)
216	Red-backed Shrike	RM		274	Aquatic Warbler	V	(38)
217	Lesser Grey Shrike	V	(21)	275	Sedge Warbler	FM	
218	Great Grey Shrike	S		276	Paddyfield Warbler	R	(25)
219	Southern Grey Shrike	V	(2)	277	Blyth's Reed Warbler	R	(45)
220	Woodchat Shrike	V	(29)	278	Marsh Warbler	S	
221	Magpie	V	(1)	279	Reed Warbler	RM	
222	Jackdaw	S		280	Great Reed Warbler	V	(14)
223	Rook	RM		281	Waxwing	S	
224	Carrion Crow	FM		282	Treecreeper	V	(9)
225	Hooded Crow	RM BS		283	Wren	RM BS	
226	Raven	RM BS		284	Starling	CM BM	
227	Goldcrest	FM		285	Rose-coloured Starling	R	(45)
228	Firecrest	V	(8)	286	Dipper	R	(37)
229	Blue Tit	V	(14)	287	White's Thrush	V	(14)
230	Great Tit	R	(c51)	288	Hermit Thrush	V	(3)

No.	Species	Status	(individuals)
289	Swainson's Thrush	V	(2)
290	Grey-cheeked Thrush	V	(5)
291	Siberian Thrush	V	(2)
292	Ring Ouzel	FM	
293	Blackbird	CM	
294	Eyebrowed Thrush	V	(2)
295	Dusky Thrush	V	(1)
296	Black-throated Thrush	V	(13)
297	Fieldfare	CM	
298	Song Thrush	CM	
299	Redwing	CM	
300	Mistle Thrush	RM	
301	Brown Flycatcher	V	(2)
302	Spotted Flycatcher	FM	
303	Robin	CM	
304	Rufous-tailed Robin	V	(1)
305	Thrush Nightingale	R	(62)
306	Nightingale	R	(55)
307	Bluethroat	RM	
308	Siberian Rubythroat	V	(7)
309	Red-flanked Bluetail	V	(16)
310	Red-breasted Flycatcher	S	
311	Collared Flycatcher	V	(7)
312	Pied Flycatcher	FM	
313	Black Redstart	RM	
314	Redstart	FM	
315	Rock Thrush	V	(1)
316	Whinchat	FM	
317	Siberian Stonechat	V	(44)
318	Stonechat	S	
319	Wheatear	CM BS	
320	Isabelline Wheatear	V	(1)
321	Desert Wheatear	V	(5)
322	Black-eared Wheatear	V	(5)
323	Pied Wheatear	V	(1)
324	Alpine Accentor	V	(2)
325	Siberian Accentor	V	(2)
326	Dunnock	FM	
327	House Sparrow	BS	
328	Tree Sparrow	S	
329	Yellow Wagtail	RM	
330	Citrine Wagtail	S	(76)
331	Grey Wagtail	S	
332	Pied Wagtail	FM BS	
333	Richard's Pipit	S	
334	Blyth's Pipit	V	(4)
335	Tawny Pipit	V	(18)
336	Olive-backed Pipit	S	(108)
337	Tree Pipit	RM	
338	Pechora Pipit	R	(44)
339	Meadow Pipit	CM BS	
340	Red-throated Pipit	R	(88)
341	Rock Pipit	FM BS	
342	Buff-bellied Pipit	V	(4)
343	Brambling	FM	
344	Chaffinch	FM	
345	Hawfinch	S	(138)
346	Common Rosefinch	RM	

No.	Species	Status	(individuals)
347	Bullfinch	S	
348	Greenfinch	RM	
349	Linnet	RM	
350	Twite	FM BS	
351	Lesser Redpoll	S	
352	Common Redpoll	FM	
353	Arctic Redpoll	R	(92)
354	Two-barred Crossbill	R	(58)
355	Common Crossbill	RM	
356	Parrot Crossbill	V	(68)
357	Goldfinch	S	
358	Citrel Finch	V	(1)
359	Serim	V	(3)
360	Siskin	FM	
361	Snow Bunting	FM	
362	Lapland Bunting	FM	
363	Savannah Sparrow	V	(2)
364	Song Sparrow	V	(3)
365	White-crowned Sparrow	V	(1)
366	White-throated Sparrow	V	(5)
367	Black-headed Bunting	V	(25)
368	Corn Bunting	R	
369	Chestnut-eared Bunting	V	(1)
370	Cretzschmar's Bunting	V	(3)
371	Ortolan Bunting	S	
372	Yellowhammer	RM	
373	Pine Bunting	V	(13)
374	Pallas's Reed Bunting	V	(2)
375	Reed Bunting	FM	
376	Yellow-breasted Bunting	R	(103)
377	Yellow-browed Bunting	V	(1)
378	Little Bunting	S	
379	Rustic Bunting	R	(133)
380	Black-faced Bunting	V	(1)
381	Bobolink	V	(1)
382	Brown-headed Cowbird	V	(1)
383	Baltimore Oriole	V	(1)
384	Tennessee Warbler	V	(2)
385	Magnolia Warbler	V	(1)
386	Blackburnian Warbler	V	(1)
387	Blackpoll Warbler	V	(2)
388	Yellow-rumped Warbler	V	(2)

Category D: Daurian Starling, Red-headed Bunting

Category E: Black Swan, Bar-headed Goose, Red-breasted Goose, Wood Duck, Lanner Falcon, Saker Falcon, White-shouldered Starling, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Lazuli Bunting, Indigo Bunting, Painted Bunting, Varied Bunting, House Finch, Pallas's Rosefinch, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Chestnut Bunting, Red-headed Bunting, Yellow-billed Grosbeak, Black-headed Grosbeak

Extinct: Great Auk

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY & GUESTHOUSE

fibo@btconnect.co.uk
01595 760 258

Main photo © James Gentes / www.gentes.info



Bird observatory
Accommodation
Getting to Fair Isle
and more...

www.fairislebirdobs.co.uk

