

Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT

1962



PETER E. DAVIS

Warden

PRICE 5/-

Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

Trustees

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Hon. Treasurer :—Mr Ian R. Pitman, 48 Castle Street, Edinburgh 2.

Warden :—Mr Peter E. Davis, The Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland.
(Tel. : Fair Isle 8).

Solicitors :—J. & F. Anderson, W.S., 48 Castle Street, Edinburgh 2.

Auditors :—Lindsay, Jamieson and Haldane, C.A., 24 St Andrew Square,
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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION — “*Friend of Fair Isle*” — **ONE GUINÈA.**

Please support by Donation or Legacy—

THE FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY ENDOWMENT FUND.

With the generous help of the Pilgrim Trust, the Observatory Trustees have established an Endowment Fund for Ornithology and Bird Preservation in Scotland. The objects are :—To establish the Fair Isle Bird Observatory on a permanent financial basis; to extend Fair Isle research methods to other stations in Scotland; and finally to develop Bird Sanctuaries and Bird Protection in general.

Capital subscribed to the Fund will be held as a permanent Endowment by the Trustees and cannot be spent. Income from the Fund will be carefully used by the Bird Observatory Executive Committee in keeping with the above objects.

Please write to the Hon. Secretary for particulars.

GEORGE WATERSTON,
Hon. Secretary.

21 Regent Terrace, EDINBURGH 7.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

Annual Report for 1962

FOREWORD

I MUST apologise first of all for the delay in issuing the Report for 1962—due to various exigencies.

You will see that 1962 has been a somewhat disappointing year—both ornithologically and financially. Despite the lack of unusual birds on migration, the Warden and his helpers ringed 5754 birds of 125 different species—both record totals for the Observatory. This reflects very much the enthusiasm and keenness of the staff.

Financially this has been an unrewarding year, principally due to the decrease in the number of people staying at the Hostel during the mid-summer period. As the Hon. Treasurer has stated, we continue to work on a very narrow margin, and once again I would like to draw your attention to the urgent need for us to build up a substantial Endowment Fund. Legacies and donations to this would be warmly welcomed.

As we go to press we have received the sad news that the Davis family are leaving us in the autumn of 1963. Peter has been offered and has accepted a post with the B.T.O. at their new H.Q. at Tring. Since they came to Fair Isle in 1957, Peter and his wife Angela have not only maintained the high standard of ornithological work on the island but have also operated the Hostel for visitors most efficiently. We wish them well in their new work. In their place, the Trustees have appointed Mr and Mrs Roy H. Dennis. As a former Assistant Warden, Roy knows Fair Isle well, and we are confident that he and his wife will continue to maintain the high standards set by their predecessors.

Work at Fair Isle Bird Observatory continues to supply migration research workers with invaluable data for their studies. The Observatory is also of great value in enabling young ornithologists to obtain unrivalled opportunities of studying some of our rarer migrants in the field, and being given expert tuition in bird-ringing, mist-netting, and laboratory techniques.

This work cannot go on without regular subscriptions from "Friends of Fair Isle" and I sincerely hope you will continue to give us your support.

ARTHUR B. DUNCAN,
Chairman.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

TREASURER'S REPORT

I am afraid that 1962 has been, financially, a poor year, mainly due to weather conditions and to a falling off in the number of visitors. Only 180 visitor-weeks as opposed to 262 in the previous year.

1. *Hostel Account*

This account shows a loss of £369 as against a profit for 1961 of £216. The difference is accounted for mainly by the drop in Board and Booking fees as a result of the poor season. Apart from this I have no comment except to point out that there was a considerable increase in repairs and renewals due to the installation of new stoves. Even Angela and Peter Davis cannot make the Hostel pay unless they get enough visitors. As usual they have done a first class job and we are very grateful to them.

2. *Trust Revenue Account*

We managed to keep expenses down sufficiently to show a small profit, which was insufficient however to offset the Hostel loss. The final result was therefore a loss for the year of £198, 4s. not in itself serious, but showing once more on what a narrow margin we work, and must continue to work, until the Endowment Fund is built up. The steady decrease year by year in income from subscriptions is bound to continue unless new friends of Fair Isle can be interested. But our sheet anchor must be the Endowment Fund. Legacies or donations would be welcome.

3. *Balance Sheet*

I have no comment here. There is little change from last year.

4. *Endowment Account*

A short statement showing the present position of the fund is given below:—

(Trustees, Bank of Scotland)

Property and Investments held as at 30th June, 1962

		Market Value at 31st Dec., 1962.	
1. 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh at cost	£3050 0 0		
2. £4300 3% Savings Bonds, 1960/70	3659 9 0	£3827 0 0	
3. £70, Whitbread & Co. 'A' Ord. Stock	313 11 0	507 10 0	
	<u>TOTAL</u> £7023 0 0		

Note: The Regent Terrace property is the Headquarters of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Scottish Office), and the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust. As such it is non revenue producing, but all expenses and outgoings are borne by the first named body to whom it is leased. The annual income from the Fund is paid to the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trustees. The Capital is held in perpetuity.

You will see that the value of the Investments held has continued to rise.

The Helena Howden fund is held by the Bank of Scotland as Trustee to the order of the Fair Isle Trustees, who can draw upon both capital and income for the purpose of establishing or helping to establish a bird sanctuary (or sanctuaries) in Scotland. To date the capital has not been drawn on since no suitable project has arisen, but income has been used, in conjunction with other bodies, such as the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, for various minor projects. Grants have been made with a view to establishing the Isle of Handa as a permanent sanctuary and towards the salary of a warden on the newly formed Lochmaben Nature Reserve. The Fair Isle Trustees would be interested in supporting any genuine project which was aimed at establishing a Scottish Bird Sanctuary.

YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1962

1.—Hostel Revenue Account

1961	<i>Expenditure</i>	1962
£93 0 0	Stores at 1st January	£75 0 0
745 11 9	Food Stuffs, Supplies etc.	766 1 11
17 19 10	Telephone	43 12 5
235 12 7	Wages & National Insurance	218 19 4
21 17 2	Sundry Payments	16 15 0
113 12 9	Bird Ringing & Trap Repairs	80 5 1
60 18 9	Insurance of Huts	61 15 0
109 13 10	Fuel	146 18 0
101 4 5	Repairs & Renewals	229 6 0
<u>£1499 11 1</u>		
	Shetland Model Boat	35 0 0
216 7 5	Profit for Year	0 0 0
<u>£1715 18 6</u>		<u>£1673 12 9</u>
1961	<i>Income</i>	1962
£1627 3 0	Board & Booking Fees	£1166 2 2
13 15 6	Miscellaneous Receipts	28 16 10
0 0 0	Donations towards Repairs to Traps damaged by Winter Gales	0 0 0
75 0 0	Stores	110 0 0
		<u>£1304 19 0</u>
0 0 0	Loss for Year	368 13 9
<u>£1715 18 6</u>		<u>£1673 12 9</u>

2.—Trust Revenue Account

1961	<i>Expenditure</i>	1962
£621 19 10	Wages & National Insurance	£671 10 2
8 15 0	Rents, Rates & Taxes & Insurance	9 15 0
113 14 2	Printing, Stationery etc.	125 4 2
30 0 7	Interest Paid	11 14 0
76 4 8	Travelling Expenses—Hostel	64 3 3
78 9 0	Do.—J. & F. Anderson	0 0 0
9 17 2	Repairs & Renewals	13 1 10
185 0 0	Amount written off Furniture, Furnishings etc.	0 0 0
98 8 0	Expenses of Administration	106 12 8
<u>£1222 8 5</u>		<u>£1002 1 1</u>
	Loss on Hostel for 1962	368 13 9
257 15 5	Profit carried to Balance Sheet	0 0 0
<u>£1480 3 10</u>		<u>£1370 14 10</u>

1961	<i>Income</i>	1962
£539 8 8	Subscriptions	£490 12 2
371 5 4	Income Tax Recovered	386 18 10
11 16 0	Interest on Savings Bonds etc. ...	19 11 6
141 6 5	Income from Endowment Fund	149 15 11
200 0 0	Legacy Received	97 19 5
0 0 0	Donation Received	27 13 0
216 7 5	Profit on Hostel for 1961	0 0 0
		£1172 10 10
	Loss for year carried to Bal. Sheet	198 4 0
£1480 3 10		£1370 14 10

Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1962

1961	<i>Liabilities</i>	1962
£1465 19 10	Capital Account—Balance per last Balance Sheet	£1723 15 3
	Less: Loss for year per Trust Revenue Account	198 4 0
257 15 5	Profit	
		£1525 11 3
	Balance due to Messrs J. & F. Anderson, W.S.	72 7 1
£1723 15 3		£1597 18 4

1961	<i>Assets</i>	1962
£200 0 0	Buildings, Traps etc. written down	£200 0 0
300 0 0	Furniture, Furnishings etc. at Fair Isle as written down	300 0 0
150 0 0	Scientific Equipment as written down	150 0 0
619 1 3	Investment £642 3% Savings Bonds 1960-70 (Market value as at 31st Dec., 1962 £571 7 7)	619 1 3
	<i>Consumable Stores:</i>	
	Food Stuffs	£20 0 0
	Livestock	40 0 0
75 0 0	Fuel	50 0 0
		110 0 0

<i>Cash in Bank:</i>				
	Trust Account	£12	3	6
	Hostel Account	201	12	3
		<hr/>		
		£213	15	9
304	18	5	Cash on hand	... 5 1 4
		<hr/>		
				218 17 1
74	15	7	Balance in hands of Messrs J. & F. Anderson, W.S.	... 0 0 0
		<hr/>		
		£1723	15	3
				£1597 18 4
		<hr/>		

12th JUNE, 1963. Examined and found correct.

(Sgd.) LINDSAY, JAMIESON & HALDANE, C.A.

WARDEN'S REPORT FOR 1962

In 1962 the observatory was in operation from 26th January until 16th December. One hundred and fifty people stayed at the hostel, for a total of one hundred and eighty-nine visitor-weeks, a substantial decrease on the 1961 figures. This decrease was due largely to the absence of the tourist type of visitor from May to July, a scarcity which was general in Shetland and indeed in most other parts of Scotland in 1962. In addition, there were very few bookings from people with business on the island; in 1961 the figure had been greatly inflated by parties of Royal Engineers and Ordnance Surveyors. By contrast, the number of bird-watchers visiting the isle was as great as in any previous year. The following table shows the fluctuations in the numbers of visitors since 1957:

	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962
No. of Visitors	139	100	154	150	189	150
Visitor-Weeks	197	141	199	180	254	189

In 1962 there was a remarkably high quota of visitors from overseas, from as far afield as the United States, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden.

Staff. My wife continued to be responsible for the domestic work and hostel accounts and booking correspondence. Miss Pat. Adams continued her excellent service in the hostel kitchen, assisted for two months of the summer by Miss

Urda Stelltner. The new assistant Warden, Barry Spence, proved to be one of the most competent and hard-working assistants I have had, and it is very satisfactory to know that he will be with us again in 1963.

Island Events. The population of the crofts decreased a little further, to thirty-seven (plus four children at school in Lerwick). Three elderly inhabitants, Thomas Stout of Houll and James and Jane Wilson of Haa, died during the year; and there was one newcomer, a son born to Mr and Mrs Alex. Stout of Stackhool. Towards the end of the year the National Trust for Scotland advertised for two families to take up vacant crofts at Quoy and Haa, and it is hoped that this will result in immigration during 1963.

The islanders had a reasonably prosperous year; three boats fished the lobsters during part of the summer, there was work at the rebuilding of the Shirva house from September to December and fairly good prices were obtained for island products. Although neither of the N.T.S. cruises succeeded in landing on the island, there was no difficulty in disposing of the knitted and woven goods; indeed the problem was to fulfil orders within a reasonable time.

Parties of volunteers from the International Voluntary Service organisation and from the Architectural Association under the direction of Mr Alex. Warwick, were on the island from June to early September, laying electricity cables and helping with rebuilding and repairs to property. They made a notable contribution to the social life of the isle, organizing concerts, dances, a "sports day", and several football matches.

The N.T.S. electricity scheme, based on diesel generators was a boost to morale, and most of the houses will be connected to the supply before the end of the winter. The Bird Observatory's generator was the first to come into regular operation, at the beginning of November.

Acknowledgments. As in all previous years we are greatly indebted to the islanders for practical help, co-operation and tolerance, and this is gratefully acknowledged.

We are also greatly obliged to the National Trust for Scotland for the provision of a Lister "Start-O-Matic" generator at the hostel, and to Mr Gordon Cornish for help and advice in the installation.

Messrs J. Bayes and P. J. Sellar generously donated bicycles to the hostel. K. Goodchild kindly undertook the repair of expensive laboratory equipment.

We continued to enjoy the loan of a collection of bird-skins from the Royal Scottish Museum.

Non-Ornithological Studies

We were very glad to welcome several botanists to the island, including the well-known student of island ecology Dr Mary E. Gillham, who spent a very fruitful three weeks in Fair Isle, and who will, we hope, be returning to continue her studies in future years. Dr G. Russell (from Port Erin Marine Station) and Miss Kathleen Atkinson collected marine algae; and Mrs B. Christopher (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew) collected mosses, since determined by Prof. Warburg.

Two antiquarians, Alexander Fenton (National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh), and Dr Holger Rasmussen (National Museum, Copenhagen) stayed at the hostel whilst conducting an inquiry into the old equipment and practices of the crofts, and tape-recording the reminiscences of the islanders.

A geography student, R. W. Butler, made some preliminary investigations with a view to preparing a thesis on the island and its economy.

A large-scale map to show the results of my collecting of island place-names (many of them obsolete or obsolescent) was printed in December.

A collection of bees was made, on behalf of Dr G. Kruseman of the Zoological Museum, Amsterdam.

Ornithology

The work of making the daily census of migrants; trapping and laboratory examination; and the ringing of sea-birds continued as in earlier years. The special study of the Arctic Skua was wound up this year, although it was possible to have a complete record of the composition of the colony by trapping only those ringed birds which could not be identified by colour-rings. In June 1963 I propose to devote two or three weeks to a search for ringed Arctic Skuas in the Shetland colonies, in an attempt to assess the volume of dispersion from Fair Isle; and certain other aspects of the bird's breeding-biology must continue to receive attention on the island.

We continued in close co-operation with the Migration Research Officer, by furnishing him with monthly reports on migration and responding to several requests for other data. This is by no means a one-way traffic, for we greatly benefit from his practical help and advice. At the time of writing, the future of the Migration Research Office is a matter of considerable concern, and we earnestly hope that the B.T.O. will succeed in finding the funds to allow its work

to continue, and indeed to be expanded. It is obvious that if there ceased to be a centre for analysing and disseminating the data we collect at the Bird Observatories there would be little point in their continued operation.

A good deal of information was also supplied in 1962 to private workers. We never begrudge the time spent in answering such requests and would be happy to have many more analyses of the Fair Isle data. Samples of Fulmar oil were supplied to a London firm of chemists.

A number of our visitors were given training in bird-ringing and laboratory techniques.

Breeding Birds

Arctic Skua. In the last season of intensive study seventy pairs bred, an increase of three pairs over 1961. They reared eighty-three chicks from 136 eggs, slightly below average success. The loss of experienced breeders was abnormally high, but so was the increment of first time breeders which more than offset the losses. Another unusual feature was that only a sixth of the newcomers were birds bred at Fair Isle, compared with up to a half in recent years. Other notable aspects of the season included the earliest eggs on record—a clutch laid between 15th and 17th May; our first sight-record of an Arctic Skua in first-summer plumage on the island; the first instance of replacement laying after the death of small chicks (all replacements hitherto have followed losses in the first half of the egg-stage), and two cases of females laying three eggs.

Bonxies. The breeding population increased by five pairs to twenty-five, but as the result of "discouragement" they reared only eleven chicks. A four-year-old bird was caught as a first-time breeder.

Among the less common breeders, the Peregrines reared two young; at least two pairs of Corncrakes bred; and a pair of Swallows at Ward Hill reared three young, a remarkable achievement in such an exposed place in such a grey and windy summer. There is no previous documented record of the species nesting at Fair Isle. Storm Petrels were proved to breed, for the first time since 1943.

Most other species bred later, and in smaller numbers, than in 1961, probably as a consequence of the severe winter and late spring.

Migration

In retrospect 1962 was an uninspiring year for migration, particularly in comparison with the brilliant autumn of 1961. May and September, which often bring the highlights of the year, were both particularly disappointing months. However, there were a number of compensations at other times, particularly in the strength of the earliest and latest movements of the year, and in the Crossbill irruptions of July and October.

The main movements of the spring were big arrivals of Redwings, with Woodcocks and Blackbirds, on 26th-27th March; a much larger arrival of Blackbirds and Starlings on 30th March and many Robins on 17th-19th and 22nd April, accompanied by unprecedented numbers of Hedge Sparrows. The earlier summer visitors, such as Wheatear and Ring Ousel, were up to two weeks late in arriving, though paradoxically many of the later migrants were a good deal earlier than usual, and such species as Corncrake, Swift, and Wryneck achieved their earliest records for the island. In May there was a good fall of Greenland Wheatears on the 5th and of Meadow Pipits next day, but in the virtual absence of easterly winds there were no important arrivals of small continental night-migrants and in fact few species ever attained double figures.

The rarer birds in spring included a Blue Tit (our first spring record) on 24th April, an Osprey on the 25th, two Rustic Buntings between 13th and 18th May, Collared Doves on 13th May and 15th June, a male White-spotted Bluethroat 21st May, two Common Cranes (first for Fair Isle) on 29th May, Red-breasted Flycatcher 4th June, a male Black-headed Bunting 5th to 13th June (believed to be an escape), four Canada Geese on 6th June, and an Alpine Swift on 20th June (both new to the island).

July brought the Crossbill irruption, with birds seen daily from the 7th, peaking at over 100 on the 18th; an immature male Two-barred Crossbill was present from 29th to 31st. Another Common Crane arrived on 19th July and stayed until 28th August.

August was notable for the strong passage of waders, particularly of Knots and Ruffs, which peaked at 200 and 32 respectively, on the 4th; and also for a big movement of Wheatears (probably from Iceland) on the 26th. Several Barred Warblers appeared from the 20th, an Aquatic Warbler was trapped on the 23rd, an Icterine seen on the 31st, but there were few other warblers. An American Pectoral Sandpiper from 27th August was joined by another on 29th, when one was caught.

It was the quietest September since 1953; there were no important movements of continental birds until the 27th, and even such bread-and-butter birds as Wheatear and Meadow Pipit were conspicuous by their absence. This was surprising in view of the persistent westerly winds, for the numbers of Lapland Buntings (peaking at about forty on 18th to 20th) and Snow Buntings (over 250 on 18th and 23rd) were above average. A few rarities appeared, notably an Arctic Warbler on 1st, a Marsh Warbler 2nd, two Scarlet Grosbeaks between 12th and 15th, a Yellow-breasted Bunting 12th to 15th, a Yellow-headed or Citrine Wagtail 22nd to 24th, and a Richard's Pipit on 24th. Things improved on the 27th and 29th with south-east winds and moderate falls of Redwings and Song Thrushes, with Garden Warblers, Goldcrests, Siskins, and other continentals. Two Yellow-browed Warblers were seen on the 29th. Also from the 27th a party of some thirty Crossbills was present, and when these settled down and allowed themselves to be caught a few days later it was discovered that they were in fact Parrot Crossbills; an invasion on a scale never previously known in Britain.

October started well, with a massive fall of over ten thousand Redwings on the 4th, and there was a fair variety of small night-migrants at this time, though the Robin was a notable absentee. Odd Bluethroats were seen, there were Yellow-browed Warblers 5th and 7th, a Richard's Pipit from the 6th. The next important fall was on the 11th, with Siskins and Goldcrests, at least a dozen Great Spotted Woodpeckers, and some twenty more Parrot Crossbills. Until now they had nearly all been females and immatures, but the newcomers were mostly red males; before the last of them departed ten days later, we had ringed thirty-four. The only Little Bunting of the year also came on 11th October.

The only important migrant in the rest of October was the Iceland Redwing, which made moderate falls on the 15th, 20th and 23rd. A second Richard's Pipit joined the "resident" on 20th, and both were trapped; they stayed until the end of the month, and one until at least 10th November. A Black-bellied Dipper made a similarly protracted stay, being first seen on the 17th, trapped on 20th, and still present on 11th November. A late Scarlet Grosbeak was caught on 25th October.

In November there was one massive movement of Blackbirds and Woodcocks, with Fieldfares and Redwings, from the 6th to the 8th. A few Song Thrushes and Robins, a late Bluethroat (7th), a Waxwing (8th), and at least two Great Grey Shrikes (8th and 12th) also appeared at this time. Another Blue Tit was caught on the 6th, and a Goshawk was watched on several occasions between the 14th and 24th. The big catch of Blackbirds, together with a steady flow of

Starlings during a period of snow from 14th to 20th, resulted in almost 800 birds being caught during the month, more than in any other month except July.

A hundred and eighty-three species were observed during the year; five of these, Canada Goose, Goshawk, Crane, Alpine Swift, and Parrot Crossbill, had their first definite records for the isle.

The Traps

The existing traps were maintained and in some cases slightly modified, but no new ones were built. The new Hjon Dyke trap, erected in August 1961, proved a useful addition, and was especially successful with Wheatears. Mist nets were used whenever possible; with the introduction of smaller-mesh nets and "tefethered" nets their potential was further improved. Dazzle-netting accounted for a fair variety of waders and other birds but, unfortunately there were no accessible gull-roosts this autumn.

Ringing

The year's ringing totalled 5754 birds of 125 species, an increase of 100 birds and 14 species over 1961; the species-total was nine more than our previous record, set up in 1959. Forty-nine of the birds, mostly Bonxies, were ringed for us by Magnus Sinclair in Unst.

The leading scores were Blackbird 1039, Starling 585, Puffin 562, Shag 537, Wheatear 477, Meadow Pipit 277, Fulmar 270, Robin 255, and Redwing 238. Species ringed for the first time at Fair Isle were Wood Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank, Raven, Blue Tit (2), and Parrot Crossbill (34). Other unusual birds in the list were Peregrine (2), Whimbrel, Bar-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper (4), Greenshank, Little Stint, American Pectoral Sandpiper, Swift (4), Great Spotted Woodpecker (4), Wryneck (2), Rook, Dipper, Marsh and Aquatic Warblers, Barred Warbler (6), Wood Warbler (2), Arctic and Yellow-browed Warblers, Red-breasted Flycatcher (2), Richard's Pipit (2), Yellow-headed Wagtail, Waxwing, Great Grey Shrike (2), Linnet (4), Bullfinch, Scarlet Grosbeak (2), and Ortolan (2).

Barry Spence has undertaken the considerable task of checking the published annual ringing-totals against the ringing records, eliminating a number of errors and also removing from the totals the "re-rings" which were counted as new birds up to 1956. The revised annual and cumulative totals are given in Table 1.

Table 1.

Year	No. of Birds	No. of Species
1948	288	38
1949	1505	63
1950	2394	74
1951	2234	77
1952	1932	74
1953	2550	80
1954	2317	75
1955	2457	82
1956	3290	81
1957	2924	87
1958	4572	101
1959	4761	116
1960	5110	112
1961	5656	111
1962	5754	125
Grand Total	47744	186

Table 2, which has also been compiled by Barry Spence, gives the ringing totals for the individual species, together with the number of recoveries of each species away from Fair Isle (or, in a few instances, away from the ringing-locality in Shetland).

Table 2.

Species	Numbers Ringed			Numbers Recovered		
	1948-61	1962	Total	1948-61	1962	Total
Slavonian Grebe	1		1			
Little Grebe	1		1			
Storm Petrel	58	2	60	1		1
Fulmar	907	270	1177	4	3	7
Gannet	6	2	8			
Cormorant	2	1	3			
Shag	1930	537	2467	55	22	77
Heron	4	1	5			
Mallard	1	1	2			
Teal	5	1	6	1		1
Wigeon	3		3			
Scaup	1		1			
Goldeneye	2		2			
Long-tailed Duck	1		1			
Velvet Scoter	1		1			
Eider	20	1	21			
Red-br. Merganser	1		1			
Grey Lag-Goose	1		1			
White-fronted Goose	1		1			

Species	Numbers Ringed			Numbers Recovered		
	1948-61	1962	Total	1948-61	1962	Total
Whooper Swan	3		3			
Sparrowhawk	42	2	44	8		8
Peregrine	1	2	3			
Merlin	84	4	88	8	1	9
Kestrel	13	2	15	2	1	3
Red-footed Falcon	1		1			
Water Rail	93	11	104	1	1	2
Spotted Crake	2		2			
Corncrake	13	5	18	2		2
Moorhen	19	4	23			
Coot	2	1	3			
Oystercatcher	330	36	366	12	2	14
Lapwing	151	37	188		1	1
Ringed Plover	113	18	131	1		1
Turnstone	12	1	13			
Snipe	56	9	65	1		1
Jack Snipe	13	1	14			
Woodcock	67	13	80	2		2
Curlew	4	3	7			
Whimbrel	3	1	4			
Bar-tailed Godwit	3	1	4	1		1
Green Sandpiper	4	4	8			
Wood Sandpiper		1	1			
Common Sandpiper	10	3	13			
Redshank	24	10	34			
Spotted Redshank		1	1			
Greenshank	2	1	3			
Knot	16	6	22			
Purple Sandpiper	40	2	42			
Little Stint	7	1	8			
Western Sandpiper	1		1			
Am. Pectoral Sandpiper	1	1	2			
Dunlin	85	15	100	1	1	2
Sanderling	35	3	38			
Ruff	3		3	1		1
Red-necked Phalarope	2		2			
Arctic Skua	924	92	1016	15	2	17
Bonxie	255	39	294	3		3
Great Blackback	176	5	181	6	1	7
Lesser Blackback	158	15	173	3		3
Herring Gull	224	31	255	3	3	6
Common Gull	9		9			
Glaucous Gull	5		5	1		1
Black-headed Gull	33		33	1		1
Kittiwake	48	8	56			
Common Tern	4		4			

Species	Numbers Ringed			Numbers Recovered		
	1948-61	1962	Total	1948-61	1962	Total
Arctic Tern	95		95			
Razorbill	158	50	208	10	3	13
Little Auk	4		4			
Guillemot	173	18	191	7	1	8
Black Guillemot	146	25	171	2		2
Puffin	2313	562	2875	4		4
Wood Pigeon	10		10			
Turtle Dove	10	2	12			
Cuckoo	23	1	24	1		1
Long-eared Owl	20	3	23	1		1
Short-eared Owl	1		1			
Swift	1	4	5			
Great Spotted Woodpecker	3	4	7			
Wryneck	28	2	30			
Short-toed Lark	1		1			
Woodlark	1		1			
Skylark	249	37	286	1		1
Swallow	54	10	64	1		1
House Martin	17	1	18			
Raven		1	1			
Hooded Crow	6	1	7			
Rook	2	1	3			
Great Tit	1		1			
Blue Tit		2	2			
Treecreeper	1		1			
Wren	282	21	303			
Dipper	2	1	3			
Mistle Thrush	4	3	7			
Fieldfare	118	9	127			
Song Thrush	354	62	416	8	2	10
Redwing	1826	238	2064	17	1	18
Dusky Thrush	1		1			
Black-throated Thrush	1		1			
Ring Ouzel	43	8	51	1		1
Blackbird	5588	1039	6627	100	17	117
Grey-cheeked Thrush	2		2			
Wheatear	6281	477	6758	27	6	33
Stonechat	11	1	12			
Whinchat	164	11	175	1		1
Redstart	485	33	518			
Black Redstart	23	1	24			
Nightingale	1		1			
Thrush Nightingale	2		2			
Bluethroat	67	5	72	1		1
Robin	1245	255	1500	8	1	9

Species	Numbers Ringed			Numbers Recovered		
	1948-61	1962	Total	1948-61	1962	Total
Grasshopper						
Warbler	11	1	12			
Lanceolated						
Warbler	3		3			
Pallas's Grasshopper						
Warbler	1		1			
River Warbler	1		1			
Reed Warbler	23	2	25			
Marsh Warbler	9	1	10			
Paddyfield Warbler	1		1			
Thick-billed Warbler	1		1			
Sedge Warbler	89	10	99			
Aquatic Warbler	3	1	4			
Melodious Warbler	1		1			
Icterine Warbler	18		18			
Booted Warbler	1		1			
Blackcap	320	17	337	2		2
Barred Warbler	71	6	77			
Garden Warbler	391	36	427			
Whitethroat	272	11	283			
Lesser Whitethroat	105	12	117			
Subalpine Warbler	4		4			
Willow Warbler	622	30	652			
Greenish Warbler	5		5			
Chiffchaff	95	17	112			
Wood Warbler	6	2	8			
Donelli's Warbler	1		1			
Arctic Warbler	5	1	6			
Yellow-browed						
Warbler	16	1	17			
Dusky Warbler	1		1			
Goldcrest	269	15	284			
Spotted Flycatcher	112	9	121	1		1
Pied Flycatcher	235	26	261	1		1
Red-breasted						
Flycatcher	23	2	25			
Hedge Sparrow	171	95	266	1	1	2
Meadow Pipit	3153	277	3430	27	3	30
Tree Pipit	127	20	147			
Petchora Pipit	1		1			
Red-throated Pipit	1		1			
Rock Pipit	2601	166	2767	6		6
Richard's Pipit	1	2	3			
Tawny Pipit	1		1			
Pied/White						
Wagtail	192	14	206	2		2
Grey Wagtail	4		4	1		1

Species	Numbers Ringed			Numbers Recovered		
	1948-61	1962	Total	1948-61	1962	Total
Yellow Wagtail ssp.	5	1	6			
Yellow-headed Wagtail	2	1	3			
Waxwing	3	1	4			
Great Grey Shrike	9	2	11			
Lesser Grey Shrike	3		3			
Woodchat Shrike	2		2			
Red-backed Shrike	29	2	31			
Starling	3798	585	4383	26	2	28
Rose-coloured Starling	1		1			
Greenfinch	7	1	8			
Goldfinch	1		1			
Siskin	80	16	96			
Linnet	3	4	7			
Twite	1503	103	1606	2		2
Redpoll	79	12	91			
Arctic Redpoll	2		2			
Bullfinch	5	1	6			
Scarlet Grosbeak	13	2	15			
Crossbill	127	4	131	1		1
Parrot Crossbill		34	34			
Chaffinch	380	28	408			
Brambling	177	16	193			
Yellowhammer	10	2	12			
Corn Bunting	1		1			
Red-headed Bunting	3		3			
Yellow-breasted Bunting	1		1			
Orotolan	2	2	4			
Rustic Bunting	2		2			
Little Bunting	7		7			
Reed Bunting	58		58	1		1
Lapland Bunting	23	2	25			
Snow Bunting	109	36	145	2		2
Song Sparrow	1		1			
House Sparrow	717	29	746			
Tree Sparrow	6	3	9			
GRAND TOTAL	41990	5754	47744	395	75	470

Recoveries 1962

Recoveries of seventy-five birds ringed by the observatory were reported during the year. Four birds ringed elsewhere were found at Fair Isle, and details of another found in 1961

finally reached us during the summer. Full information about all these recoveries is given in the *Bulletin* for June 1963.

Fulmar chick ringed in 1959 was caught on a Russian vessel N.E. of Newfoundland in November 1961, and another, ringed on the same day, was netted at Videro in the Faeroes in August 1962. A young bird of 1962 reached Ribadeo in N. Spain by 15th December. *Shags* seem to be settling down to a steady recovery rate of about 4%, and as in 1961 twenty-two were reported. These had all been ringed as chicks between 1959 and 1962; nine were recovered in Shetland, seven in Orkney, two in Caithness, one Ross (the only west coast report), one Kincardine, one Berwick, and one eccentric bird in Buckinghamshire in April. A *Merlin* ringed in October 1961 was found near Edinburgh in early March and a *Kestrel* of early October 1962 was near Bremerhaven in N.W. Germany in late November. Our first distant recovery of a *Water Rail* concerned a bird ringed in September 1961 and found injured at Larne in N. Ireland in January.

Two *Oystercatcher* chicks of 1961 were recovered in Anglesey in January and in Dumfries in May 1962. A young *Lapwing* ringed in Unst by Magnus Sinclair in 1961 died near Vigo, N.W. Spain, during severe weather in early January. This was a striking example of "beginner's luck", for it was the only *Lapwing* ringed by Mr Sinclair that year, and it was also the first recovery of a *Lapwing* carrying a F.I.B.O. ring. A *Dunlin* ringed on 23rd May, 1961 was killed at Arriondas in N. Spain on 10th May, 1962. Two *Arctic Skuas* were reported, one 1959 chick from Bressay, Shetland, in August, and a 1962 chick from Gabol in Jutland on 26th August, only three and a half weeks after it fledged. A third-winter *Great Blackback* ringed in November 1959 was found near Peterhead (Aberdeenshire) in February 1962. A *Herring Gull* chick of 1959 was at Cadzand in N. Holland in late June 1962, and of two birds ringed at a roost on 13th December, 1961, one first-winter bird was recovered long-dead at Romo in Denmark in April, and an adult near Honningsvåg, Finnmark, in the extreme north of Norway, on 8th June. (The Russian-ringed *Herring Gull* mentioned below was caught in this same roost). Three young *Razorbills* and one young *Guillemot* ringed in 1962 were all killed in the usual areas off S.W. Norway in October and November.

A *Song Thrush* ringed on 5th October, 1955 was killed six and a half years later, in March 1962, at Macas de Dona Maria (Beira Litoral) in Portugal. Another ringed 1st March, 1960 was at Inverness in mid-April. A *Redwing*, ringed on its first autumn migration in October 1958, was also killed in the Beira Litoral province, in February. Seventeen *Blackbirds*

were notified. Eleven were in Scandinavia, nearly all between April and November but one December; three were in Scotland and two in Ireland between January and April; the remaining bird was by far our most southerly recovery to date, an adult female ringed 19th April, 1961 and found dead at St Savin de Blaye (Gironde), S.W. France, on 11th March, 1962.

Of six *Wheatear* returns, a local juvenile of 1959 was at El Viso (Cordoba) in October 1962; a 1st-summer female of May 1961 (probably a local breeder) was at Puerto Soller, Majorca, in early April; and a 1st-winter bird (probably local-born) ringed early August 1962 was caught near Bordeaux in early October. The other three were certainly passage-migrants at Fair Isle: a female Greater *Wheatear* ringed 21st May, 1961 was found at Puerto de Santa Maria (Cadiz) on 23rd September, 1962, and first-winter birds ringed on 26th and 27th August, 1962 were respectively near Rouen in late September, and at Knardijk (Ijsselmeer) Holland only three days after ringing. A *Robin* ringed on 29th April, 1962 was recovered at Dompierre-sur-Mer (Charente Maritime), France, about 23rd October.

A *Hedge Sparrow* ringed on 27th April, 1962 must clearly have overshot its breeding-area and rapidly returned south, for it was recovered at March, Cambridgeshire, on 3rd May. (There is an interesting parallel to this record in the bird of spring 1961 which was found in Heligoland a few days later).

A juvenile *Meadow Pipit* of June 1961 was shot at Ecija (Seville) on 24th January, and full-grown bird of August 1961 near Rabat, Morocco, about 25th January. A third *Meadow Pipit*, ringed 29th August, 1962, was caught at Lochgelly, Fife, during hard weather about 20th November. Finally, there were two reports of *Starlings*, one a 1959 juvenile near Invergordon (Ross) on 2nd December, 1962, the other a full-grown male of October 1962, found at Hamnavoe, Shetland, a month later.

Ringed strangers: A *Barnacle Goose* shot at Fair Isle on 12th November, 1962 had been ringed as a moulting adult at Hornsund, West Spitsbergen, on 24th July, 1962. The Russian-ringed *Herring Gull* caught at a roost in December 1961 was reported to have been marked as a chick on the Murmansk coast in June 1960. Two ringed *Blackbirds* were taken at Fair Isle during the November "rush"; one, trapped on 6th November, had been ringed as a chick at Hattula, Ihaniemi, in south-central Finland in May 1962; the other, trapped next day, had been ringed during a big migration at Spurn Bird Observatory, Yorkshire, on 5th November, 1961. A *White Wagtail* caught in the gully on 26th August had been marked as a chick at Horgardalur, N. Iceland, on 18th July, 1962.

Publications

The *Bulletin* Vol. 4, No. 8 appeared in June. As it has never proved possible to bring out the December issue before January, we dated Vol. 5, No. 1 "January 1963". The Annual Report did a little better than in recent years, being sent out in September.

The following notes and papers based on data collected at Fair Isle were published during the year:

CARPENTER, R. M. On the Invertebrate Fauna of Fair Isle.

Scot. Nat. 70: 91-95.

DAVIS, P. River Warbler at Fair Isle. *Brit. Birds* 55: 137-8.

Dusky Warbler at Fair Isle. *Brit. Birds* 55: 190-192.

Robin Recaptures on Fair Isle. *Brit. Birds* 55: 225-229.

Bonelli's Warbler on Fair Isle. *Brit. Birds* 55: 278.

NISBET, I. C. T. South-eastern Rarities at Fair Isle. *Brit. Birds* 55: 74-86.

A doctoral thesis by Peter O'Donald, entitled "Ecology and Evolution in the Arctic Skua" was deposited in the library. It is concerned chiefly with the genetical aspects of the bird's biology in the Fair Isle colony.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

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Warden

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12th August, 1963.

To the Trustees:

CONFIDENTIAL

APPOINTMENT OF NEW WARDEN

On 30th April I received a letter from Peter Davis intimating that he had been offered and had accepted a new post with the B.T.O. at Tring, and wished to tender his resignation as Warden in mid-summer.

On the same date, I immediately dispatched a circular letter to all members of the Executive Committee, quoting extracts from Peter's letter in which he suggested that the only possible successor he could think of was Roy Dennis, a former Assistant Warden at Fair Isle and employed this summer on "Operation Orne" by the R.S.P.B.

from our Chairman recommending that we should engage Roy Dennis and his wife on a short probationary period to see how they coped. Replies were received from members of the Executive agreeing (one with reservations) to the appointment.

It was thought at first that the Davis family might have to leave Fair Isle in mid-June, but fortunately it was agreed with the B.T.O. that Peter would not be required until October.

I decided therefore, before leaving for a month's tour in Scandinavia, to insert an advertisement about the post on Fair Isle in British Birds. Several applications were received during my absence abroad - one was from John Parslow who has good academic qualifications and was recommended by Dr David Lack. These applications reached me on my return from Scandinavia on 21st July. Parslow required a decision within a week, as otherwise he was buying a house in Oxford! I spoke to Dr Lack on the phone and explained to him that the Warden's wife has to manage the Hostel and attend to all bookings and accounts; and I rather gathered from Dr Lack that Mrs Parslow had insufficient experience.

As time was dragging on, and Sir Arthur Duncan was in Canada, I consulted with some local members of the Executive. It was agreed that in view of the feelings expressed earlier about Roy Dennis, to appoint him and his wife to the posts at Fair Isle on a year's trial. They will go into Fair Isle with me on 2nd September, and will take over administration on 1st October when the Davis family leave the Observatory.

In the Annual Report for 1962, Sir Arthur has made a statement in his Foreword about the appointment of the new Warden, and has paid a warm tribute to Peter and Angela Davis. A Press Notice about the new appointment has been issued simultaneously with the annual report.

George Waterston.
Hon. Secretary

