



FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Report for 2013



Siberian Rubythroat, October, Upper Stoneybrek. Top © K. Kelly; Bottom © D. Parnaby



Fair Isle Bird Observatory Report no. 65 (2013)

Edited by David Parnaby

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Front cover: Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll, Nether Taft, September by Steve Arlow

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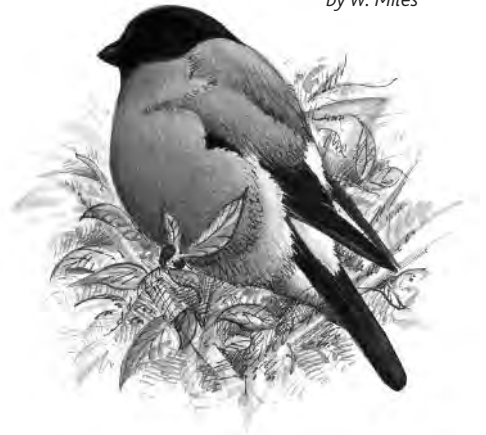
FIBOT Chairman's Report

Roger Riddington

Looking back over the year of 2013, the abiding memories of anyone closely connected with Fair Isle will be of a year of great sadness and loss. The passing of Mires Jimmy (see p. 10) in January 2013 was not unexpected - in that Jimmy was almost 102 and had lived a full life, the vast majority of it on Fair Isle. Of course, it was still a shock, the more so because the man had seemed almost indestructible. When, in the summer, first Cathy Stout and then Lise Sinclair passed away, followed late in the year by Judy Broad (see p. 12), all three of them victims of cancer of one sort or another, it was impossible not to feel that a part of Fair Isle's soul had been wrenched away. Lise enthralled guests and staff at our now-famous 'Fair Isle Thursday' events with her exceptional voice and musical talent - songs and tunes, always with a story to tell. Cathy, who in a variety of roles delivered much laughter, and Judy, both of whom first came to the island to work at the Observatory, were not island residents in 2013 - yet the isle would have recognised all of them as still a part of its community. In a small, tightly knit place such as this, these losses have an especially large effect. Our thoughts go out to Ian, Michael and Roger, and the immediate families of all three women, all of whom will long be remembered with great fondness at the Obs. The island, as it always has done, will bounce back, but 2013 was a tough year, make no mistake about it.

The year also brought a great variety of migrant birds, headlined by the extraordinary story of two separate Swinhoe's Petrels in the latter part of the summer (see p. 112), and the continued decline of many of our seabird species. Our directors' meeting and AGM, held this year on the weekend of 8th-9th June, was blessed by some good weather, some great migrants, marvellous views of Killer Whales - and yet, the lack of noise and smell from the cliffs still seems so alien to those who lived on the isle 20-30 years ago when the island was simply alive with seabirds in the summer months. The observatory building continues to settle into the landscape and is proving a solid, comfortable and highly regarded place to stay. Visitor numbers were at a record high this year; that, and the positive feedback of so many of our guests, both old and new, is a great tribute to our staff, and forms a base for us to look forward to what surely will be a brighter year for Fair Isle.

'Northern Bullfinch'
by W. Miles



Warden's Report

David Parnaby

Fantastic for birds and a very good year for the Obs in terms of guests, 2013 will be also be remembered as an especially sad one for the Fair Isle community and its friends around the world, with the death of Mires Jimmy at the start of the year and the tragic losses of Lise Sinclair and former island resident Cathy Stout (whose daughter Jenny was our childcarer during the season) in the summer, followed by former FIBO Administrator Judy Broad later in the year. The whole island was affected by the events of the summer, when prolonged periods of fog added to the gloomy mood.

Mires Jimmy was fondly remembered by many, having played a huge part in the early history of ornithology on Fair Isle and shared many a dram with Wardens and visiting birders over the years. Sadly I never got to meet him as he had moved to Lerwick by the time we arrived on Fair Isle, but I heard many amusing stories and tales of his expertise.

Losing Lise after a short illness left many people stunned and, whilst she was widely known for her musical and writing talents, we also knew her as passionate about her family, Fair Isle, its community and traditions. She was a very intelligent and thoughtful person and lots of fun to be around, and the thoughts of everyone at the Obs remain with her family. At the difficult time for the island, we were thankful for the thoughtful approach shown by several groups who were due to visit, especially the Shetland Wildlife Explorers who cancelled their trip to free transport space for people attending Lise's funeral. Hollie Shaw has written a moving obituary for Lise on page 13.

Throughout the year, the Obs remained almost continually busy and it proved to be a record year for visitor numbers. Throughout this, the domestic team coped well with the numbers of people passing through, especially given the extra pressures placed on them by the seemingly regular flight disruptions caused by the summer fog and some windy spells in the autumn. Jenny Stout was particularly welcome as childcarer, introducing Grace and Freyja to many Fair Isle places, stories, words and traditions.

My wardening team this year was composed of Senior Assistant Will Miles, who continued in post for his third year, and Richard Cope, who arrived as Assistant Warden from Lista Bird Observatory in Norway (where he caught one of 'our' Goldcrests last autumn just a week after we had ringed it!). The Ranger post was occupied by Teresa Donohue, who returned to FIBO after having spent time with us as a JHMF volunteer in 2011. With the increased visitor numbers, the magnificent autumn birding and a full Storm Petrel season, it was a busy year for the whole of the wardening team, who coped with their duties (and more!) very well. A series of

excellent volunteers assisted the team throughout the season and our thanks are due to Steffan Walton, Billy Dykes, Noa Eden, Daniel McGibbon, Kieran Lawrence, Alex Rhodes, Jacob Wood, Livvy Glatt and Chris Dodd, I'm sure we'll see several of them back at FIBO in the future. We were also joined for the summer by Rob Hughes and Tegan Newman, who were tracking seabirds for the RSPB STAR project and also helped out with several tasks for the Obs.

Seabirds had another disastrous breeding season, with only Fulmars and Puffins showing increases in breeding success from 2012, and Arctic Skuas, Kittiwakes, Arctic Terns, Common Terns and Guillemots all failing to fledge any chicks. The long-term decline of several species failed to slow, with the Arctic Skua and Kittiwake colonies on Fair Isle looking increasingly precarious, whilst an intensive scouring of the entire coastline produced a total of only 204 Shag nests.

The poor breeding season contributed to another low ringing total, with the year's final figures producing the slightly bizarre statistics of as many Red-backed Shrikes as Razorbills and Great Spotted Woodpeckers as Guillemots ringed.

The five Great Spotted Woodpeckers ringed represented a new record total for that species, with highest ever totals also achieved for Yellow-browed Warbler and Leach's Petrel. The fantastic year for Leach's Petrels was somewhat overshadowed by the catching of not one, but two Swinhoe's Petrels. Fair Isle never fails to surprise, but this was still a totally amazing record, which is written up in detail on page 112.

With Swinhoe's Petrel becoming the 380th species on the Fair Isle list, it wasn't long until the 381st turned up, when a Red-eyed Vireo was found in October. Arguably the bird of the autumn though was the male Siberian Rubythroat which appeared later in the month, whilst an outstanding list of vagrants through the year included: White's Thrush (on an amazing day for rarities), Grey-cheeked Thrush, Collared Flycatcher, Sykes's, four Lanceolated, River, four Blyth's Reed, two Paddyfield, Booted, two Dusky, four Arctic, two Greenish, Melodious and five Subalpine Warblers, nine Two-barred Crossbills, four Thrush Nightingales, three Citrine Wagtails, Red-throated and four Olive-backed Pipits, Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll, two Ortolan, two Rustic and ten Little Buntings, American Golden Plover, Buff-breasted and two Pectoral Sandpipers, Temminck's Stint, Ring-billed Gull, Roseate Tern, Honey-buzzard, Hobby, Nightjar and two Grey Phalaropes. Fair Isle: there's nowhere quite like it!

This impressive list of rarities contributed to a total year list of 212, just five short of the year list record set in 1992 (providing that all of the 74 or so descriptions are accepted by the relevant committees). For the first time, Olive-backed Pipit was not a BBRC description species, with the changing status of formerly mythical Sibes being further shown by the Rubythroat being the fourth since 2003, whilst it almost seemed a surprise not to get a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (there having been six

in the previous six years). Other commoner species missing from the year list included Bean and Canada Geese, Velvet Scoter, Gadwall and Curlew Sandpiper, whilst the ever shifting fortunes of different birds were illustrated by another blank year for Yellow-breasted Bunting, which has now not been recorded since 2006. In a similar vein, another former 'Fair Isle special', Great Snipe seems to have reverted to recent form, with the three in 2011 the only records since 2001.

There is perhaps no species that better illustrates changing status than Yellow-browed Warbler, with the record ringing total reflecting a huge arrival across Northern Europe that brought large numbers to Fair Isle. These fascinating variations in occurrence over time, which presumably reflect either a shift in breeding areas, wintering distribution or migration routes (or a combination of the three) are best recorded by the long-standing systematic observations at Bird Observatories. Analysis of this long term data has now been enhanced by the completion of the computerisation of all the FIBO Logs, thanks to a generous grant by SOC. This opens up a whole new area for research; we shall hopefully see the use of this data appear in several papers in the near future.

Like the Log data, a lot of bird records and old reports are now increasingly available in online and electronic formats and this has helped the continued updating of some of the statistics for rarer visitors to Fair Isle; there are some revisions to the numbers of previous occurrences in the checklist and species accounts.

Technology continues to play an increasing part in birding and we're thankful to Professor Martin Collinson at Aberdeen University for his work in analysing DNA of several birds in the last three years; just one example of how birding has changed in recent times.

It's pleasing though that, despite DNA analysis, internet forums, Twitter and all the other recent advances, the basics of getting out and looking for birds is still exactly the same as it has been for the last sixty plus years of FIBO's history and beyond. The buzz of a new bird is no doubt the same for me when glimpsing a Red-eyed Vireo as it was for Mires Jimmy on discovering an unusual pipit in October 1925 that proved to be the UK's first Pechora. As ever, I'm more than thankful to be here on Fair Isle experiencing it and being able to share it with my family, friends and FIBO guests.

Administrator's Report

Susannah Parnaby

Every year brings something different on Fair Isle, and 2013 was no exception. The year at the Obs started early, with a Bistro Night in March, organised by Angela Wiseman from Barkland, who provided near enough the whole island with a variety of wonderful dishes, rounded off by a performance by the choir of the hauntingly lovely Seal Lullaby and a rousing medley of Beatles songs. The early preparation stood us in good stead for the arrival in early April of Will, Sean and Christian from Swinging Gibbon Access, who battled the vagaries of the transport system, the remote location and some unexpectedly hard bits of rock to install a new *via ferrata* system, to enable more secure access to the seabird colonies by the wardening team. Contributions towards the installation of this system were gratefully received from the SOC and Seabird Group.

The domestic team started to assemble through mid-late April, with regular staff members Becki Rosser and Tracey Weekes returning for another season as domestic assistants, with Julia Hubbard as cook, Graham Gordon as domestic volunteer and Tim Murphy as bar volunteer. Angela Wiseman and Hollie Shaw both helped out in the kitchen at various points in April, until the arrival of Sally Ellwood as assistant cook in early May.

We also welcomed back Rob Hughes for another year monitoring Fair Isle's seabirds as part of the ongoing FAME/STAR project, along with Tegan Newman, and briefly Jess Walkup, who spent a few days topping up her Starling data before completing her PhD at Aberdeen University. Our first JHMF of the year, Steffan Walton, arrived and settled into Obs life very quickly, enjoying it so much he came back to volunteer again in October.

By May we were all into the swing of things and pleased to play host to the NTS Patrons group for several days in early May, followed closely by a week's visit by three employees of the Jordanian Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), organised by Pete Ellis, a FIBOT Director, who has close links with the RSCN. June was, as ever, very busy, with the isle at its best for the directors meeting at the Obs early in the month, producing both a Collared Flycatcher at the Mast and great views of Killer Whales amongst other things. Fair Isle is becoming known as a great destination for birding photography and June also saw the arrival of two photography groups, who spent an enjoyable week amongst the Puffin colonies of Bunes. As amateur photographers, it was very interesting to get an idea of the technical side of photography, and the amount of work that goes into producing the perfect shot.

July saw little let up in the numbers of visitors, a nice position to be in in what can be a quieter month for the Observatory, though the prolonged fog inevitably resulted in a number of cancellations. New volunteers arrived, including Billy Dykes who, like Steffan, enjoyed his first visit so much he came back, JHMFs Kieran Lawrence and Daniel McGibbon, followed by Jacob Wood and Alex Rhodes in August, and Rachael Redfern who replaced Tim Murphy as bar volunteer. In the kitchen Angela Wiseman took over from Julia until the arrival of Ann Prior in early August, with Graham moving up to the position of assistant cook and regular volunteer Maggie taking on the domestic volunteer duties through the autumn.

July and August were months of somewhat surreal highs and lows, with the ongoing excitement of the Swinhoe's Petrels amidst the passing of Cathy Stout at the end of June, followed by Lise in early August. Many visitors to the Obs will remember Lise singing and playing on Fair Isle Thursdays, music which entranced both our small children, but I'm sure there will be many other more personal memories. For me, it's the beautiful bunch of flowers from Kenaby brought on my first birthday on the isle, the gift of plants which still grow in our garden at the Obs and the time she took playing with and encouraging our girls.

As ever, time moves quickly at the Obs, and the arrival of the Sea Change project group on the Swan at the end of August marked the shift from summer visitors to autumn birders. The Sea Change expedition around the Northern Isles brought together a number of artists and scientists investigating island communities and their responses to climate change, with a number of members of the group spending several days on the isle, talking to and forging connections with many of the islanders. As they travelled on, we also said goodbye to Jenny Stout, our childcarer, replaced by Janet Gibson, who some may remember as Hollie's childcarer for several years, and to the summer volunteers and turned our attention to the business of autumn birding, and the arrival of the 'Shetland' film crew for several days in mid-September.

With a full Obs for much of September and good numbers through October, the birding didn't disappoint, though the best of the birds came late in both months, with stunning views of a White's Thrush on 25th September, and the male Siberian Rubythroat which arrived on the 21st October. The latter was a major consolation prize to those (un)lucky enough to be stuck on Fair Isle in strong winds and a fitting finale to the end of the season, topped only by the amazing views of Killer Whales hunting seals in Furse and North Haven as staff prepared to head home in early November.

A season to be remembered, for the good and the bad. As ever we are grateful for the staff and volunteers who worked hard throughout the season and to the community of Fair Isle for their support, tolerance and willingness to be involved with the Observatory. It has also been particularly pleasing to have had such a great team of young volunteers, many of whom are already making their mark in the ornithological world and whom we hope to welcome back in the future.



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The National Trust for Scotland, Fair Isle in 2013

Alexander Bennett (Group Manager, Countryside and Islands North)

Trust personnel responsible for the management of Trust interests on Fair Isle remained similar during 2013 with me in the Group Manager role supported by Alan Barrow as Rural Surveyor and Rob Dewar our Nature Conservation Advisor.

Unfortunately Angus Jack left the Trust during 2013. Angus spent many years working on Fair Isle and during this time he formed many close relationships with islanders. Angus was always very dedicated to delivering for Fair Isle within his role and we are quite sure that these friendships will continue.

It was reported last year that Glyn Young, who is also based at the Inverness office, was covering in Angus's absence and that continued as an interim position throughout 2013.

Early in the year Rob was involved with Alan in working with Nick Riddiford and Dave Wheeler to focus on the condition of the SSSI on the Common Grazing in the northern half of the island, which had been declared a Special Area of Conservation but had been determined as in unfavourable condition. This culminated in an island visit in the early summer and an agreement from SNH that given the very specific nature of the Fair Isle climate that it was, as Nick had always ascertained, in an acceptable condition.

In 2013 Trust staff also put effort into making the Puffin ready for the annual work parties. This included Fire Risk assessments and we were very grateful to have agreed to work in partnership with FIBOT during this process so that we were all able to benefit from economies of scale. We also put forward a project to replace the Puffin roof, this was agreed in autumn and Glyn will deliver this project in spring 2014.

Unfortunately however we were unable to deliver the renovation of Midway and Downstairs Lighthouse into affordable accommodation during 2014. Resource restrictions forced us to look externally for the project management and when the proposals were assessed costs proved to be restrictive.

Senior managers and in particular the new Director of Property and Visitor Services, Patrick Duffy, recognized that it was important to understand the island and the issues that are key to its sustainability when assessing these types of proposals and accordingly in late 2013 Patrick organised to visit in early 2014, to spend time on the island. This visit will ensure that he is best equipped to understand the islands' core issues and champion the Fair Isle case from our Headquarters at Edinburgh.

All that said the year was a very hard one on Fair Isle and staff at Balnain House were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Lise Sinclair in the summer. We can only imagine the true sorrow this caused. We saw firsthand the underlying dignity and strength of islanders as they mourned. Lise was a cultural keystone in a community who are wholeheartedly steeped in their own history and sense of place but we are always very mindful that above all she was a much loved daughter, wife, mother and friend.

James Anderson Stout (1911–2013)

James A. Stout, more commonly known on Fair Isle as 'Mires Jimmy' or 'Jimmy Midway' died in January 2013, a few weeks short of his 102nd birthday. He was the last of the Fair Isle men who had known all the key people involved with the discovery of Fair Isle as a hotspot for migratory birds and those involved with the establishment of the Bird Observatory. It is no exaggeration to say that Mires Jimmy was valued and respected for his ornithological knowledge and his friendship in equal measure, not only by every Obs warden but by all the 'birdy folk' who spent any time on the isle.

Jimmy was born at Field, on 7th March 1911, to George and Helen Stout. In 1941 he married Edith Eunson and they lived in the house at Midway, adjoining the old Mires croft. The couple had five children: Jimmy, Teddy, Edith Ann, Andrew and Maurice (Teddy and Maurice pre-deceased their father). In December 2008, Jimmy moved to Overtonlea care home at Levenwick, mainland Shetland, where he was able to receive 24-hour care.

Jimmy's father, generally known simply as Fieldy, was one of three islanders who were enlisted to help the early ornithological pioneers who visited Fair Isle. After his first visit, in 1905, Dr William Eagle Clarke (who was instrumental in identifying Fair Isle as a special place for the observation of migratory birds), trained up first George Wilson Stout, of Busta, and Jerome Wilson, of Springfield. Clarke's successor was Surgeon Rear-Admiral John H. Stenhouse, who first visited the isle in 1921. Fieldy effectively became Stenhouse's protégé and, in the interwar years, Fieldy and Jerome Wilson were key to maintaining the recording effort on the island.



Plate 1. In January 1941, Jimmy watched as a German Heinkel 111 bomber crash-landed on Vaassetter, killing two of its five-man crew. When the pilot, Karl 'Heinz' Thurz, returned to Fair Isle in 1987, Jimmy was the first person to welcome him back to the isle. Heinz then went on to inspect the remains of his aircraft. © *Dennis Coultts*

It is clear that Jimmy inherited his father's interest in birds at an early age. Jimmy was an astute observer and a decent shot even then - and he kept those qualities sharp until well into his old age. The first of his landmark ornithological achievements came when he was just 14 - the discovery of Britain's first Pechora Pipit at Gaila on 23rd September 1925 (his attention was drawn to the bird by its unfamiliar call). Stenhouse shot the bird the following day and its identity was confirmed. Two days after that Stenhouse, Jerome Wilson and Fieldy came across Britain's first Paddyfield Warbler, later shot by Fieldy. Those of us who have seen Fair Isle at its best can only imagine the effect of such a spell on the enthusiasm of a youngster. Stenhouse was staying at Field (as he did habitually) and throughout his life Jimmy spoke with enthusiasm and respect for the man.

Jimmy played a key role in another addition to the British List: Pallid Harrier in 1931. A second-summer male, present on the isle from 24th April was eventually shot by Jimmy on 8th May. The bird, confidently identified by Fieldy, was sent away for confirmation. The specimen was sent to the NMS in Edinburgh initially, where its identity was questioned, but Fieldy was robust in his reply and the bird was eventually sent to London, where the identity (as Pallid) was confirmed. Two other exceptional records from Jimmy include a Crested Lark seen near the Chapel on 2nd November 1952 (this remains the only Scottish record); and a bird shot by him in October of about 1928, thought to have been a Calandra Lark. That would have been the first British record too, but alas the specimen was lost in the post.

Between the wars, there was a great demand for specimens from museum-based ornithologists, and Jimmy was paid a small sum for each rare bird he shot - for a really good one, it might have been as much as a guinea (£1.05). While the money was an incentive, there is no doubt that Jimmy had a genuine interest in the birds as well. A more lucrative market was for Woodcock, which the Fair Isle men shot in late autumn, and which were shipped to game dealers on the mainland. Jimmy was a regular on the hill with his gun in late autumn and, in later life, he would recount tales of good Woodcock days with particular relish. He also retained an interest in, and a deceptively good knowledge of, the rarer visitors to Fair Isle. Meeting an obs regular returning north one spring day in the late 1990s, Jimmy stopped to ask what was around that day. The main news that day happened to be not one but two Thrush Nightingales, a national rarity. Quick as a flash, and with a twinkle in his eye Jimmy said: 'Ah! Short first primary!'. As some - but by no means all - enthusiasts will know, the most reliable means of distinguishing the Thrush Nightingale from the almost identical Common Nightingale, at least in the hand, is the short first primary of the former. Jimmy knew it, and without reference to any books.

Mires Jimmy was an approachable, articulate and unassuming man who would undoubtedly have described himself as a crofter rather than an ornithologist. His life revolved around his family, Fair Isle, the croft and the sea (he was a crew member of the *Good Shepherd* for 36 years, latterly its skipper). The hospitality offered by Jimmy and Edith was legendary, and the conversation there might range across any number of subjects, but there is not one person who came away from a visit to Midway without the feeling that their life had been enriched by the experience.

Roger Riddington and Dennis Coutts

Judy Broad (1946–2013)

Judy Broad was the Administrator of the Bird Observatory from 1971 to 1978 while her husband, Roger, was Warden there. Judy was born in Stuttgart, Germany but while she was still very young, the family moved to South Wales. She was educated at Whitchurch Grammar School near Cardiff and later at Aberystwyth University where she read German.

While at university, Judy met Roger and they were married in September 1969. A short holiday on Fair Isle instilled in them a love of the island and, when the Administrator's and Warden's posts became vacant as Roy and Marina Dennis left, they applied for and were appointed to run the then 'new' observatory, positions that they held for the next seven years.

Judy is remembered on the island with huge affection and stories are still told of the steep learning curve she underwent as she had to learn how to run a small hotel on

the UK's most remote inhabited island. Extremes of weather occasionally caused drama, Judy herself being directly involved when pregnancy complications meant that she had to be flown off the isle in the dead of night and in the most atrocious weather imaginable. The pilot (Alan Whitfield) later recalled that it was the worst ambulance flight that he had ever undertaken!

Judy ensured that she, Roger and their children, Adam and Jenny, were fully integrated into the Fair Isle community and this was further enhanced when they became the first observatory staff to overwinter on the island thus enabling Christmas parties and dances to be held in the spacious new building.

On leaving the island in 1978, Judy and her family settled in Culloden near Inverness, Judy working as a nursing auxiliary at Raigmore Hospital. When Roger's work with the RSPB saw them move south to Killearn near Glasgow, Judy undertook a year's teacher training course at Jordanhill that enabled her to find a post at Lenzie Primary School where she remained until her retirement.

Judy took great delight in her family, even more so when three grandchildren came along. She was also an enthusiastic tennis player and loved walking, music and travelling abroad. All of this was perhaps to be expected but what surprised everyone was when she took to 'biking'! Judy just loved motor bikes and her prize possession was her 1000cc Yamaha Fazer!

Judy led a very full life and it was a shock to everyone who knew her to learn that, in October 2013, she had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, the condition that caused her death less than three months later.

Eric Meek

Lise Sinclair (1971–2013)

The Fair Isle summer of 2013 will always be remembered for the tragic and sudden loss of Lise Sinclair. The persistent fog, week after week, seemed to be mirroring the mood of the island community as we struggled to process the fact that Lise was being taken from us. A deep sense of unreality and an increasing feeling of disbelief shadowed us all, none more so than her family. Lise was a hugely charismatic woman, bursting with creative talent, full of integrity and dignity, deeply proud of her heritage, strongly committed to her community, passionate about numerous causes and ideals but most of all devoted to her family.

Lise was born in Lerwick on 4th March 1971 and raised in Fair Isle by her parents, Anne and Barry Sinclair, with her brother Steven. She was surrounded by family also living on the isle, including her maternal grandparents, Annie and Stewart Thomson,



Plate 2. Lise Sinclair. © Cheryl Barnett

two uncles and aunts and a number of cousins. She attended Fair Isle Primary school in her formative years and then Anderson High School in Lerwick for the first years of her secondary education. Interrupted by M.E., her studies were completed at sixth form college in Wiltshire. She gained a place at Glasgow School of Art on the strength of her portfolio alone and later returned to Fair Isle to marry Ian Best in 1991. The next few years of Lise's life revolved almost solely around her growing family, with Tom born in 1991, Hannah in 1993, Alice in 1996 and Lowri in 1999. She was a dedicated and deeply caring mother, bestowing upon her children the qualities that she herself upheld, of generosity, loyalty and hospitality. To see them now growing into adulthood, it is clear that as with so many aspects of her life, she did a wonderful job.

I first met Lise when I moved to Fair Isle in 1999. We were both pregnant at the time and later that year we both had sons, who subsequently grew up in Fair Isle, side by side. The bond between the boys, particularly when they were young helped forge a close friendship between Lise and myself. I spent many an hour sitting round the Kenaby kitchen table, often with an infamous 'Kenaby gin and tonic' in my hand, whilst Lise and I (and often others) put the world to rights. It was clearly evident during these informal, social gatherings that Lise was a force to be reckoned with in the area of debate and her intelligent, well informed and carefully thought out dialogue, could often make the listener see issues from a different perspective, or change even the strongest opinion.

As with many people who live on small islands, Lise was involved in several threads of island life; she taught music at the local primary school, led the island choir, played the organ at church, edited the island newspaper and sat on several sub-committees including the Housing Forum and Community Hall Committee. She was an active member of Fair Isle Primary School Parent Council for all the time she had children attending that school and then moved on to be a member of the Anderson High School Parent Council when her children progressed to secondary school. No musical or creative event on Fair Isle ever took place without Lise being heavily

involved, or more often at the helm. Our lives as islanders were frequently enriched with musical events and concerts that many of us would never have had the chance to see (or even taken the time to see) if Lise had not made the considerable effort it takes to organise the musicians, transport, accommodation etc and bring the concert to Fair Isle. Almost all of these roles were unpaid and took up much of her time but her commitment to her community and her desire to improve and protect the unique way of life on her beloved island never wavered.

At home at Kenaby Lise's easy hospitality was legendary and she always had time for folk passing by or calling in. She had a true generosity of spirit, a disarming openness and a smile that remained with the visitor long after they had left. Lise's ability to nurture clearly showed in the Kenaby croft, yard and greenhouse, with the garden overflowing with an abundance of home-grown vegetables and flowers each year. Additionally her creativity in the kitchen, often using her own produce was a sight to behold, with the Kenaby kitchen bursting with activity, colour and mouth-watering smells. As with everything she took on, she was relaxed and welcoming as a host and she seemed unphased by the frequent housefuls of hungry folk that she and Ian had to stay.

As her children grew past toddlerhood and she had more time to work on new projects, she became well known in poetry, dialect and song-writing circles as an exceptional talent. She had sung for many years with her mother and two uncles (and later her cousins) as part of the family singing group 'Fridarey'. They participated in several local, Scottish and Scandinavian folk festivals and concerts, but it was as a solo artist that Lise gained international recognition with her lyrics and poems being translated into Estonian, Latvian, Icelandic and Norwegian. In 2008 she released 'Ivver Entrancin Wis', a collection of Shetland poems set to music, including cello, harp, viola and voice, all composed and arranged by Lise herself, mostly in her sunlit extension at Kenaby - no mean feat for someone with no formal musical training. Her poetry and musical achievements were more far-reaching than we as her friends and neighbours knew because above all else Lise had a great sense of humility - I often knew when she was away for a period of time that she was involved in some artistic/musical endeavour in another country but unless you specifically asked she would not elaborate on, or brag about, her success. I was humbled and a little ashamed that I did not already know, when I learnt about all she had achieved within the musical field in her all too short life. In 2012 she released another CD entitled 'A Time to Keep', a collection of songs inspired by the stories of George Mackay Brown. This collaborative work, involving Icelandic and Orcadian colleagues and her Fair Isle cousins Ewen and Inge Thomson received critical acclaim and was to be a fitting swan-song for such a raw and natural talent.

In May 2013, shortly after returning from singing at the Shetland Folk Festival, Lise was diagnosed with a brain tumour and was taken to Aberdeen for treatment. Her absence and that of Ian also, especially under these circumstances, was palpable and

the entire community and even the weather went into a state of suspended animation whilst we waited for news. Despite an operation and a brief return to Fair Isle, her illness progressed with an alarming rapidity and she never recovered. She died in Glasgow on 4th August aged 42. I do not have words to describe the pain this brought to her family and friends but I know Lise would be immensely proud of how her loved ones have dealt with the indescribable heartache. She is sorely missed and will be for a long time to come.

The impact of Lise's untimely passing was felt much further afield than her native isle. Such was the strength of feeling that a minutes silence was held at the musical venue, Mareel, in Lerwick and also the Bonhoga gallery in Weisdale on the day of her funeral. Many of the tributes to Lise that have been written since her death have celebrated and remembered the public side of Lise; the poet, the musician, the singer and the song-writer. However that is not the side of Lise that I knew best and I will remember her always as a mother, my neighbour, my colleague, a hugely important figure in our community, but most of all my friend. I am not as skilled with words as Lise was, in fact it was one of the many things I would turn to her for help with over the years, so I will use other people's words to end; shortly after her death a mutual friend wrote a tribute to Lise and in it he said 'it is a sad truth that those who shine brightest in life leave behind the darkest shadows'.

Another tribute included this poem by Edna St Vincent Millay, (Lise's family then chose to include it in the 'order of service' at her funeral) and for me it says it all:

*Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind;
Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty the brave.
I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.*

Hollie Shaw

Ornithological monthly summary

David Parnaby

January

Species Recorded: 58, Year List at end of month: 58, Birds Ringed: 15, Species Ringed: 5

There were 44 species recorded on 1st January, including a few decent birds lingering from 2012, including the female Great Tit (which remained through the month), male Goosander (the only live winter sighting) and two Moorhen (with one still present at the end of the month). Other decent birds bringing in the year included a male Goldeneye, two Water Rail (at Chalet and Gilly Burn, with regular sightings throughout the winter), Woodcock (one of several sightings during the month) and an adult Glaucous Gull. A typical set of wintering wildfowl included peaks of 80 Greylag, 23 Mallard, 14 Wigeon, two Teal, two Long-tailed Duck and singles of Common Scoter and Red-breasted Merganser. There were also Merlin, Peregrine and a couple of Robins present, whilst Guillemots began the year on the cliffs in good numbers. Unsurprisingly, there were few new arrivals early in the month, although there were four Cormorant (5th) and a very unseasonal Crossbill at the Obs (7th–8th). A good selection of birds on 9th was headlined by a first-winter Ring-billed Gull (which was seen irregularly to 21st), whilst there was also an Iceland Gull, Great Northern Diver and Little Auk. The 12th saw a peak of 30 Purple Sandpiper and there was a juvenile Glaucous Gull the following day (which was joined by a second on 14th); the 14th also saw a juvenile Greenland White-fronted Goose arrive, which remained until February. The 15th saw some reasonable thrush counts in the south of the island, with 55 Fieldfare, 43 Blackbird, 36 Redwing and three Song Thrush, whilst there was also a Water Rail in Meadow Burn. A quiet spell saw Golden Plover arrive on 17th (peaking at seven on 21st), the first Oystercatcher (20th), two Snow Bunting (23rd), juvenile Glaucous Gull (25th) and a peak of ten Lapwing (26th). A spell of SE winds at the end of the month delivered a Coot (29th), whilst the same day also saw 92 Eider sheltering around the island, Dunlin, Jack Snipe (flushed from amongst 66 Snipe) and a movement of Kittiwakes off South Light.

February

Species Recorded: 53, Year List at end of month: 64, Birds Ringed: 10, Species Ringed: 5

The month began with a familiar feel on the bird front, with lingering Great Tit, Moorhen, Greenland White-fronted Goose (until 25th), Merlin, Peregrine, Water Rail and up to nine Wigeon, two Long-tailed Duck and a Red-breasted Merganser, whilst the Coot remained until 2nd only. High seas early in the month reduced the South Light wall to rubble and a spell of wintry weather mid-month allowed the building of snowmen. An adult Iceland Gull (8th) was more expected than the Waxwing the same day, whilst a Puffin in South Haven on 10th was also unseasonable. Four Glaucous

Gulls sheltered from the winds on Bunes on 11th, with regular sightings of one or two later in the month. The 12th saw monthly peaks of 65 Greylag and six Golden Plover and an unseasonal Knot. The first Skylark returned on 13th, swiftly followed by Ringed Plover the following day, whilst Oystercatcher (which were present throughout) reached double figures for the first time on 15th. There were 42 Fieldfare on 18th, when Ringed Plover had risen to eight and a Jack Snipe was amongst 45 Snipe. There was an oiled Guillemot on 19th (and another on 24th), whilst more positive news on 20th was an increase of Oystercatcher to 28 and a small arrival on 21st saw counts of 33 Fieldfare, 25 Blackbird, 11 Redwing and two Song Thrush, up to nine Skylark, and Common Scoter increased to three. A rise in Lapwings to 22 on 22nd was accompanied by a Woodpigeon (present to 25th) and a Snow Bunting. The first singing Skylark brightened the skies on 24th and numbers of this species had increased to over 35 by the last day of the month when there were also seven Teal.

March

Species Recorded: 68, Year List at end of month: 82, Birds Ringed: 67, Species Ringed: 16

The Great Tit, a Moorhen and two Water Rails were present throughout. The 2nd saw juveniles of both Iceland and Glaucous Gull, with the latter still present the following day. The 4th saw signs of spring, with a Fair Isle Wren singing in Hjukni Geo, Oystercatchers increasing to 54 and a juvenile Peregrine the first of at least three individuals seen during the month. A Snow Bunting the following day was the first of up to three during the month when there was also a Killer Whale seen from the Good Shepherd and the 9th saw the first Mistle Thrush arrive. A Killer Whale was seen from the Good Shepherd on 13th, when there were nine Ravens over Malcolm's Head, which were probably migrants, with a Grey Heron overhead on 15th definitely a new arrival. Easterly winds mid-month brought the first sign of a fall, with counts in the south of the island only on 16th including four Mistle Thrush, 80 Skylark, 10 Woodpigeon, the year's first Goldcrest, 14 Ringed Plover, 61 Lapwing and a Dunlin. The following day Lapwings had increased to 112, there were five Woodcock, approximately 100 Blackbirds and nine Song and one Mistle Thrush in the north, as well as a Meadow Pipit, six Black-headed Gull, three Common Scoter, and Kittiwakes had returned to the cliffs. The juvenile Iceland and Glaucous Gulls on 18th were more wintry, although Rook and Chaffinch also arrived, with two of the latter present from the next day until the end of the month, when Woodpigeons peaked at 12 and there were Dunnock, Meadow Pipit, two Grey Heron (with irregular sightings of this species to the end of the month), and Razorbills returned en-masse to the cliffs. On 21st there were Dunnock and Reed Bunting (with sightings on 26th and 29th possibly the same bird), and monthly peaks of six Dunlin and 60 Fieldfare. The first real avian highlight of the month was an early male Marsh Harrier on 26th, which was followed the next day by two Hen Harriers and a Sparrowhawk, along with Golden Plover, two Grey Wagtails and the year's first *alba* wagtail. There was an adult Iceland Gull on 28th, when Rock Pipits started singing, a male Hen Harrier was present again on 29th and on 30th there were Sanderling, Rook and 174 Tystie on the first survey of the year of this species. The month ended with a good arrival including a new ringtail

Hen Harrier, the first Bonxie, Puffin, Collared Dove, two Rook, 81 Blackbird, 23 Fieldfare, 20 Redwing, a Pied Wagtail and two Meadow Pipit.

April

Species Recorded: 114, Year List at end of month: 124, Birds Ringed: 263, Species Ringed: 33

Typically an exciting month that sees a big leap in the year list as common migrants arrive, the 1st began with the first Linnet of the year along with a few other migrants including Sparrowhawk, 32 Fieldfare (with records then regular until 20th), Mistle Thrush (until 6th), Pied Wagtail (the first of regular sightings), Dunlin, Wigeon and four Cormorant. Bonxies were now around regularly and 28 Puffins were counted (although there were none on 2nd). The ringtail Hen Harrier remained until 3rd and there were Teal, three Common Scoter, two Merlin and occasional sightings of Water Rails throughout the month, although the wintering Great Tit wasn't seen again after 1st. The 2nd saw the first Kestrel and Shelduck of the year, along with a Collared Dove, the start of regular Snow Bunting sightings and a peak of 27 Ringed Plover. A quieter 3rd saw two Rook, Grey Wagtail and the first *littoralis* Rock Pipit of the spring along with a monthly peak of 31 Curlew, an increase of migrants on 4th included the first Common Redpoll and three Lesser Black-backed Gulls along with 60 Meadow Pipit, five Grey Wagtail and nine Snow Bunting. A Jack Snipe (5th), two Sparrowhawk (6th) and Kestrel (7th) were trumped by a Coot in Hesti Geo (7th–8th), before a Slavonian Grebe and Red-throated Diver were added to the year list (8th) when Puffins arrived in larger numbers. The earliest ever Whimbrel for Fair Isle appeared on 9th, with Brambling, Siskin (three) and Yellowhammer also debuting for the year and other migrants included a Hen Harrier (that remained until 11th), two Collared Dove (the start of daily sightings), Rook, Mistle Thrush, two Chaffinch, two Linnet and 12 Snow Bunting. An early Green Sandpiper on 10th (until 12th) arrived the same day as the first three Wheatears, accompanied by a Goldcrest, 33 Robin, two Dunnock and an increase in Mistle Thrush to nine. Another good day of arrivals on 11th included the first Chiffchaff, Ring Ouzel, Black Redstart (with daily sightings until 15th) and Lapland Bunting of the year, along with a Waxwing and increases of Song Thrush (12), Mistle Thrush (20), Siskin (seven) and Chaffinch (six), with other good counts including 33 Robin and 120 Purple Sandpiper. Continued migration saw the first Long-eared Owl, two Greenfinch and Whooper Swan of the year and a good supporting cast of four Waxwing (with two remaining to 14th), 93 Robin, 36 Dunnock, 30 Song Thrush, 112 Meadow Pipits, 26 Chaffinch, eight Brambling, seven Woodcock (with smaller numbers present to 21st), 12 *alba* wagtails and the first double figure counts of Bonxie (with 15 recorded). Things slowed up a bit the next day, with the first Carrion Crow of the year (with up to three and a hybrid during the month), two Rooks (which were then present regularly), Goldcrest (with daily sightings thereafter), and peaks of 71 Robin, 29 Chaffinch, 11 Brambling and three Siskin. Two each of Sand Martin and Goldfinch, along with a White Wagtail led the way on 14th, when Redwings increased to 84 and a new Great Tit arrived and there were also two Sparrowhawk and a Jack Snipe. Two Greenshank and a Swallow were the first of the year on 15th, when there were also Jack Snipe,

Stonechat (until 24th), Lapland Bunting (the start of regular sightings), nine Wheatear and eight Siskin. The 16th saw some interesting birds, with Shetland's earliest ever Swift, a Stock Dove and a Short-eared Owl, whilst Meadow Pipits increased to 230 and there were Sand Martin, five Swallow, 17 Wheatear and a Greenfinch. On 17th there was a Ring Ouzel, a peak of six Goldcrest, three Goldfinch, two *littoralis* Rock Pipit, 11 Siskin and Red-throated Diver. Blackcap, Willow Warbler, Moorhen and Jackdaw all arrived on 18th, along with two Sparrowhawk and a peak of 18 Woodpigeon. Another Great Tit arrived on 19th (with both present until 24th and one until 26th) along with Black Redstart, Hen Harrier, Green Sandpiper, Greenshank, Long-tailed Duck and monthly peaks of 230 Skylark and 302 Meadow Pipit. Teal increased to 13 on 20th and were joined by a Shoveler (until 21st), when there were also three Sand Martin, two Chiffchaff (the start of regular sightings), 74 Wheatear, a peak of 13 Siskin and a second Lapland Bunting (joining a long-staying bird), whilst there was also a blue Fulmar. A smart Hawfinch on 21st led an arrival that included Moorhen, Black-tailed Godwit, five Rook, ten Swallow, two each of Blackcap and Black Redstart, 95 Wheatear, Tree Pipit and a flyover redpoll species, along with a pale phase Arctic Skua, the precursor of regular sightings. The 22nd saw the first Redstart, along with a Cormorant, Knot and Willow Warbler, with Grasshopper Warbler, Black Redstart, Blackcap and Wigeon the following day, when a pair of Whimbrel were displaying at Suka Mire, although Puffins were strangely absent during most of the week. On 24th, there were six Pink-footed Geese, two Red-breasted Merganser and three Cormorant, with passerine migrants including Blackcap, Black Redstart, Redstart, an arrival of 68 Wheatear (including Greenland birds), and two each of Mealy Redpoll (Common Redpolls of the race *flammea*), Lapland Bunting and Reed Bunting. A rare spring sighting of Great Spotted Woodpecker on 25th (which remained until 29th) coincided with a Waxwing (which remained until 26th), Fieldfare, Willow Warbler, six Collared Dove, *littoralis* Rock Pipit, a peak of ten Linnet, three Lapland Bunting, Knot and eight Whimbrel. An Iceland Gull and freshly dead Little Auk added a wintry feel to 26th, whilst more seasonal sightings included monthly peaks of 16 Swallow and six Chiffchaff, along with two Ring Ouzel, Black Redstart, 92 Wheatear and Sparrowhawk. The 27th saw three Tufted Duck, a count of 119 Eider, a Moorhen and four Lapland Bunting, whilst Long-eared Owl and Short-eared Owl were present on 28th and the month closed with Long-eared Owl, Dunlin and two each of Ring Ouzel, *littoralis* Rock Pipit and Goldfinch.

May

Species Recorded: 144, Year List at end of month: 164, Birds Ringed: 251, Species Ringed: 50
Westerly gales at the start of the month brought Pink-footed Goose, Barnacle Goose and Black-tailed Godwit, whilst there was also a Kestrel and the first *flava* wagtail of the year. A Lesser Whitethroat made it in on 2nd, when Rock Pipits peaked at 65, there were 15 Ravens and the first Shag eggs were seen. Improved conditions on 3rd brought more birds in, including the first Whinchat, Sedge Warbler, House Martin and Common Sandpiper of the year, along with Waxwing, Long-eared Owl,

Moorhen, Mistle Thrush and counts of two Ring Ouzel, five Fieldfare, ten Redwing, two Black Redstart, 29 *alba* wagtails (including at least 20 Whites), two Tree Pipit (which were then seen daily until the end of the month), 11 Brambling, five Siskin, nine Snow Bunting, 23 Rook, 32 Golden Plover and ten Whimbrel. The following day saw increases in Ring Ouzel (four), Fieldfare (11), Wheatear (158) and Dunnock (five) and there was also Sparrowhawk, Merlin and two Goldfinch (with sightings then regular throughout the month). On 5th a blue Fulmar was noted along with good counts of Lesser Black-backed Gull (49), Woodpigeon (20) and Carrion Crow (34) and there were three Lapland Buntings (the peak of daily sightings from 1st–8th) and a Greenshank. Waders were clearly on the move with the light southerly winds on 6th and included a Pectoral Sandpiper, Knot, three Sanderling, Greenshank, 13 Whimbrel and 14 Dunlin, an Osprey passed over and there were two Shelduck, a Tufted Duck, Stonechat, Lesser Whitethroat, Grasshopper Warbler, Sedge Warbler, seven Tree Pipit, 17 Brambling and a large arrival of 427 Meadow Pipit. Another Osprey sighting on 7th led the way, with other sightings including two Cormorant, seven Goldcrest, three Sand Martin, Whitethroat, Redstart (the first of the month), a monthly peak of 172 Wheatear and a Greenfinch. Light easterlies and sunny conditions on 8th brought a Thrush Nightingale to Pund, our earliest ever Icterine Warbler, to Dronger, and increases in common migrants including Short-eared Owl, nine Sand Martin, 58 Swallow (bizarrely including a juvenile bird), eight Chiffchaff, 22 Willow Warbler, 12 Blackcap, three Grasshopper Warbler, Fieldfare (with regular sightings to 18th), Mistle Thrush, three Spotted Flycatcher, three Black Redstart, a *flava* wagtail, 17 Tree Pipit, five Linnets and six Mealy Redpoll. There were also a few waders on the move with Common Sandpiper and Green Sandpipers, three Sanderling, 27 Dunlin and 15 Whimbrel as well as the first Arctic Tern of the year. Continued easterly winds on 9th saw an increase in several migrants, with counts of nine Chiffchaff, six Whitethroat, five Sedge Warbler, five Ring Ouzel, nine Blackbird (with one male singing at the Obs for the rest of the month), three Fieldfare, ten Redstart, five Whinchat, 158 Wheatear and seven Chaffinch, with highlights including the first four Pied Flycatchers of the year, Red-backed Shrike, Long-eared Owl and the Thrush Nightingale still present, whilst there was also two Jackdaws (the only ones of the month) and three Tufted Duck. The 10th saw Thrush Nightingale, Icterine Warbler, Red-backed Shrike and Long-eared Owl still present, whilst a Hawfinch, Cuckoo and Short-eared Owl were new and there were slight increases in Song Thrush (five), Mealy Redpoll (seven), Pied Flycatcher (six) and House Martin (16). Light drizzle and continued light easterlies brought an arrival of new species, with 21 Tree Pipit, 16 Pied Flycatcher, eight Lesser Whitethroat and ten Reed Bunting being the most obvious, and bringing with them a Wryneck, Wood Sandpiper, four Common Sandpiper, 13 Whimbrel and seven Knot, whilst there were still Long-eared Owl, two Short-eared Owl, Red-backed Shrike and five Ring Ouzel. Possibly the highlight of the day though was the discovery of two Peregrine chicks in a nest at Guidicum. A pleasant southerly breeze on 12th brought an impressive selection of scarcities headlined by a smart male Ortolan and also including Dotterel, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Wood Warbler, Red-backed Shrike,

Wryneck and Osprey. Other birds included 11 Reed Buntings, three Short-eared Owls and a Pink-footed Goose, whilst the first Razorbill egg of the year was noted at Easter Lothar. A quieter day on 13th saw Red-backed Shrikes increase to two, the first Garden Warbler of the year, a Black-tailed Godwit and six Sedge Warbler, along with the first Bonxie egg. The continued southerlies brought another Osprey, a late Waxwing (which lingered to 23rd), an Iceland Gull and 23 Carrion Crow on 14th, along with a peak of four Tufted Duck, Common Scoter and Greenshank, whilst some of the scarcities remained and Goldfinches increased to four. The same day saw seven Killer Whales off Wester Lothar (with another off North Light on 16th). The wind gained a slight element of SE on 15th and Melodious Warbler, Icterine Warbler, Hawfinch, Wood Warbler and Osprey led the way amongst the new birds, with a Pomarine Skua from the Good Shepherd also a good sighting. Other new migrants included 52 Swallow, Redwing, Black Redstart, Yellowhammer, five Goldfinch and Sanderling, whilst the first Guillemot egg was seen. The 16th produced a good fall with a female Bluethroat, Red-backed Shrike, five Grey-headed Wagtails, Osprey, Long-eared Owl and the Melodious Warbler present, along with increased counts of 45 Tree Pipits, 36 Willow Warbler, 25 Garden Warbler, 19 Pied Flycatcher, 13 Whitethroat, 13 Redstart, 11 Spotted Flycatcher, ten Blackcap, eight Sedge Warbler, three Grasshopper Warbler and 13 Whimbrel. There was also a Swift, the first Goldcrest of the spring and the first Fulmar egg. A northerly wind on 17th saw a Long-tailed Duck arrive in the Havens and breeding news involved the first Oystercatcher egg, food-carrying Rock Pipits and a Lapwing chick. There were also more migrants, with two male Bluethroats, a new Wryneck, Icterine Warbler, Cuckoo, two Swift, Wood Sandpiper (which remained until 20th) and Whinchats increased to five. The continued northerlies kept things relatively quiet on 18th, although there were two Red-backed Shrikes and Marsh Warbler newly arrived, with Wryneck and Bluethroat amongst the birds still present. A slight element of east in the northerly on 19th didn't bring many new birds, although a Rustic Bunting more than made up for that and there were also Lapland Bunting, three Bluethroats, three Red-backed Shrikes, Wryneck and Marsh Warbler present, along with eight Redstart, Sanderling, 14 Whimbrel, four Common Sandpiper, a female Long-tailed Duck (that joined the lingering male), the first larger arrival of Arctic Terns and the first Gannet chicks at Guidicum. Ravens had fledged by 20th and, although there were several good birds still around, new arrivals were limited to Kestrel, Cuckoo and Knot, then a slight increase of Swallows (51) on 21st also saw five Red-backed Shrikes, Bluethroat, Long-eared Owl and Sanderling present. With westerly winds finally getting hold of the weather, things became quieter for a while, although lingering Red-backed Shrikes were present daily. Ringed Plover were on the move on 22nd, when there was also a Greenshank, Dunnock and plenty of 'Greenland' Wheatear amongst the 105 counted, with a blue Fulmar, singing Redwing (which remained into June), Crossbill and 15 Snow Bunting (which preceded regular sightings to the end of the month) on 23rd. Migrating Greylags woke up several staff in the early hours of 24th, and Barnacle Goose and Wigeon arrived, with Storm Petrels singing in the Kirn o'Skroo and migrants including Icterine Warbler, four

Red-backed Shrikes, Bluethroat and 136 Wheatear. A calm day on 25th saw another arrival of migrants, with the traps producing an Eastern Subalpine Warbler, Marsh Warbler and Bluethroat and highlights from elsewhere on the island including seven Red-backed Shrike, Corncrake, Stonechat, six Tree Sparrow, Short-eared Owl, 20 Lesser Whitethroat, seven Ring Ouzel, 47 Snow Bunting and 77 Swallow. A quieter day on 26th did see three Marsh Warbler, three Bluethroat, four Red-backed Shrike, two Stock Dove, Pied Flycatcher, two Black-tailed Godwit, Green Sandpiper and five Common Sandpiper. The first Ringed Plover chick was seen and Oystercatchers peaked at 157, with six Cormorants also seen. The highlight of 27th was a Blyth's Reed Warbler at the Obs (until 31st), with four Crossbill also new. A Honey-buzzard drifted over Malcolm's Head during easterlies on 28th, when there was also Short-eared Owl, six Red-backed Shrike, two Marsh Warbler and Bluethroat, whilst 21 Dunlin included a singing bird. The wind switched to the NW on 29th, which brought a surprisingly good selection of birds, headlined by two Thrush Nightingales a few hundred yards apart in the south, Hobby, singing Common Rosefinch and Icterine Warbler, two Bluethroat, three Marsh Warblers, six Red-backed Shrike and Osprey. Other migrants included ten Spotted Flycatcher, Reed Warbler, Black Redstart, two Pied Flycatcher and Water Rail, whilst a Whimbrel was singing at Taing and Kittiwakes were nest building. The month came to an end with lingering Red-backed Shrikes and Marsh Warbler, whilst there was Cuckoo and Water Rail (30th) and seven late Pink-footed Geese (30th–31st).

June

Species Recorded: 117, Year List at end of month: 173, Birds Ringed: 332, Species Ringed: 30

The month in which breeding birds become more prevalent (the first Arctic Skua egg and Mallard ducklings were seen on 1st) also sees migration continuing and birds still present on the 1st included Blyth's Reed Warbler, Marsh Warbler, two Red-backed Shrikes, a *flava* wagtail, three Short-eared Owls (with regular sightings during month of this species), Goldfinch, Reed Warbler, Sedge Warbler, four Chiffchaff, two Willow Warbler, two Blackcap, six Woodpigeon, two Tufted Duck and five Dunlin. The 2nd saw a light SW wind and a few new birds, with Spotted Flycatchers increasing to three and bringing another Red-breasted Flycatcher with them, Reed Warbler, Mealy Redpoll, Ring Ouzel (probably the bird that remained through the month), and a somewhat unseasonal Iceland Gull (until 4th) and two Redwings included a singing bird. Similar weather on 3rd brought a memorable day, beginning with a fine male Western Subalpine Warbler trapped, followed by a stunning male Rustic Bunting at the Raevas and ending with a Montagu's Harrier in the evening. Other migrants the same day included Osprey, Hen Harrier, Quail, four Lesser Whitethroat, three Garden Warbler, four Collared Dove, 11 Carrion Crow, 26 Swallow and nine House Martin. Breeding news included the first fledged Fair Isle Wrens on 4th and the first Kittiwake eggs seen on 5th, when Storm Petrels were singing in the Kirn o'Skroo. The 5th also saw a River Warbler found at Schoolton, with Pied Flycatcher, Common Sandpiper and Wigeon also new in. The 6th saw Marsh Warbler and Mealy Redpoll, with Red-throated Diver, Manx Shearwater and

12 Storm Petrel at sea, whilst Ringed Plover were moving, Dunlin peaked at eight and the first Puffin chick was found. The impressive start to the month continued with a long-overdue Temminck's Stint on 7th when there was also a new Red-backed Shrike, Common Sandpiper and Sanderling. A few more migrants on 8th included two each of Wood Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher, along with Pied Flycatcher, Grey Wagtail, seven Common Scoter and Whimbrel peaked at 12. Arctic Terns peaked at 205, with the first egg also seen, and a Common Tern seen with them, whilst the first Starlings fledged, but the day was best remembered for 15 Killer Whales that circled the island for several hours. The SW winds were eventually replaced with very light easterlies on 9th and a Collared Flycatcher was the undoubted highlight of a day that also saw Pied Flycatcher, Redstart and a new Red-backed Shrike, along with a pod of 150 White-sided Dolphins. There was an Ortolan and two Marsh Warblers on 10th, as the continued easterlies prolonged the spring, with Osprey, Sanderling and three Red-throated and two Great Northern Divers also seen. A Black Redstart, Sedge Warbler and Tree Sparrow arrived on 11th, with the latter later joined by another, with both remaining through the summer. Still more new birds arrived on 13th, with Icterine and Marsh Warbler, Crossbill and Sandwich Tern the highlights and a blue Fulmar was seen off Bunes. There were two Icterine Warblers the following day, another sighting of (presumably the same) Ortolan, two Marsh Warbler, Whinchat, Spotted Flycatcher and Tree Pipit, with the first Bonxie chick and fledged House Sparrow seen and 36 Greylag passing through. A Lesser Whitethroat was new on 15th, but otherwise work was concentrated on breeding birds, with 3924 Gannet nests counted, the first Razorbill chick seen and the exciting news of a fledged Peregrine chick. Light SW winds brought fog on 16th, but when this cleared there had obviously been another small arrival of birds, with Red-backed Shrike, Marsh Warblers increasing to three, along with three each of Willow Warbler, Blackcap and Spotted Flycatcher and singles of Whitethroat, Tree Pipit and Goldfinch, although the star was a Paddyfield Warbler found just before lunch. A new male Western Subalpine Warbler was the highlight on 17th, when there was also a Great Northern Diver and Tufted Duck, with the lowlight undoubtedly being the continued decline of the Kittiwake population, with only 771 occupied nests counted. Red-backed Shrikes had increased to two on 18th when there were also two Goldfinch and on 19th new birds included Common Rosefinch, an increase in Marsh Warblers to three, eight Crossbill, Sedge Warbler, two Sand Martin, Sparrowhawk, Teal and Red-throated Diver. A Reed Warbler on 20th, an increase in Spotted Flycatchers to three and 12 Crossbill showed birds were still coming in. The following day saw a *flava* wagtail, two Pintail and the first Guillemot chicks (although it was to be an ill-fated year for this species). Things were finally starting to slow down by 22nd when there were 24 migrant Curlew (although two Marsh Warblers were still present). Lapwing and Greylag were on the move the following day when Reed Warblers increased to two. On 24th Dunlin and Bar-tailed Godwit were typical wader movements, although a new Red-backed Shrike was rather late. Red-throated and Great Northern Diver were both recorded on 25th with the 26th seeing an incredible late rush of birds, with a new female Subalpine Warbler (which sadly didn't meet

the long-staying male) and an impressive five Marsh Warblers (three of which were newly arrived), three Blackcap and a Reed Warbler. Although at least two Marsh Warblers remained until the end of the month, new migrants were then thin on the ground, with Black Redstart (27th) and a surprising record of Long-eared Owl (29th) the highlights. The end of the month also saw some species fledging young, with Oystercatchers (27th), Wheatear and Twite (29th) but sadly the only Arctic Skua chick of the year was seen on 29th only.

July

Species Recorded: 92, Year List at end of month: 180, Birds Ringed: 907, Species Ringed: 30

Following on from an impressive June, there were still several migrants lingering at the start of the month including a Robin and two each of Tree Sparrow and Chiffchaff that were present throughout, Marsh Warbler (lingering until 12th), Reed Warbler (present to 19th) and Ring Ouzel to (8th). The 1st also saw Wigeon and Tufted Duck, the first visiting juvenile Black-headed Gull and the first Kittiwake chick. A male Red-backed Shrike on 2nd showed there were still birds on the move and two Swifts were present on 3rd, the start of regular sightings. Two new Marsh Warblers arrived on 4th to join the long-stayer and there were also three Crossbill, with a Pomarine Skua and two Manx Shearwater from the Good Shepherd. A Western Subalpine Warbler on 5th went on to linger throughout the month and arrived on a day when there were also Short-eared Owl, Green Sandpiper and Red-breasted Merganser. An influx of 120 Arctic Tern on 6th brought with them a Roseate Tern and the same day saw Common Rosefinch, 17 Crossbill (the start of regular sightings to 14th), Grey Heron and two Sand Martin, whilst House Martins were noted nest building, although they didn't go on to breed. The 8th saw 49 Lesser Black-backed and 14 Black-headed Gulls, and also 26 Storm Petrels trapped (the start of regular sessions) and two Leach's Petrels heard at the nets. A Common Rosefinch from 10th–14th was probably the same as seen earlier in the month and the 11th saw two Grey Phalarope, two Bar-tailed Godwit, a new Blackbird and a Grey Heron, which became oiled and later died as a result of preying on Fulmar chicks. Red-throated Divers passed through on 12th, 16th and 17th, with a Great Northern Diver on 15th, when a Short-eared Owl was also present. The 17th saw a Sand Martin and four Crossbill, with a Knot (increasing to two on 19th) and Black-tailed Godwit the following day when there was also the first fledged Bonxie. Petrel ringing on 21st also produced two Leach's Petrels, the start of regular records for the rest of the month. The early hours of 22nd saw the start of a remarkable series of Swinhoe's Petrel records, with one heard calling in the Havens. Later in the day a Pectoral Sandpiper, the first juvenile Dunlin of the year, two Grey Heron and the first fledged Lapwing were all seen. Crossbills were still moving on 24th, when 13 were seen, with birds present to the end of the month. Three Sanderling, a Green Sandpiper and two Carrion Crow were logged on 25th, along with five Killer Whales, then the 26th saw a very early Icterine Warbler and, even rarer, a Pochard, which went on to linger to 30th. The excitement of the Pochard was quickly forgotten on 27th when a flock of Two-barred Crossbills were found on Hoini, with other migrants including Marsh

Warbler and Mealy Redpoll. Things got even better that night though (for everyone who was on the island, for those that weren't it was a reminder that there is no good time to take holiday from Fair Isle!), when a Swinhoe's Petrel was trapped. The rest of the month saw the Two-barred Crossbills remaining and light wader passage, with Ruff, Sanderling, Green Sandpiper, Greenshank, Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Common Sandpiper and Dunlin amongst those on the move, whilst up to five Grey Heron, two Shelduck and 160 Common Gull were also seen.

August

Species Recorded: 106, Year List at end of month: 186, Birds Ringed: 887, Species Ringed: 33

With July having been so productive, August saw a good range of birds present at the start of the month, with a Western Subalpine Warbler and two Tree Sparrows present throughout and seven Two-barred Crossbills (to 4th), up to 14 Crossbill and Marsh Warbler all still present. Storm Petrel ringing sessions were productive, with Leach's Petrels also recorded regularly. A Greenshank (1st), Green Sandpiper (2nd–10th), two Knot (regularly through the month) and 111 Oystercatcher (the peak on 2nd) showed typical wader movement, with other typical early autumn birds on 3rd including two Common Scoter, Sooty Shearwater and Swift (which were then regular throughout the month). Wader passage continued on 4th, with three Ruff, 20 Black-tailed Godwit, four Green Sandpiper and there was also a peak of 344 Common Gull, whilst a new Two-barred Crossbill arrived on Bunes. A Willow Warbler on 5th was joined by two more the following day, with occasional sightings throughout the month. The 7th saw a lucky reprieve for the staff who were on holiday when the Swinhoe's Petrel was caught, when a second individual was amazingly found in the nets. This bird went on to be recorded regularly during petrel ringing sessions for the rest of the month. Common Sandpiper, ten Golden Plover (both 8th) and Greenshank (9th) continued the light wader passage, with Manx Shearwater (9th), eight Common Scoter and a Red-throated Diver (10th) at sea. Also at sea during the middle of the month were Killer Whales on 9th (two) and 13th (one). Passerine migration slowly picked up as mid-month approached, with Sedge Warbler (10th), Reed Warbler and Cuckoo (11th) and then Citrine Wagtail (12th), which arrived along with the first three White Wagtails of the autumn. A Spotted Redshank (12th–18th) was a rare twitchable individual, with Ruff records also becoming more frequent. Two Garden Warbler and a Sand Martin (15th) were followed by the autumn's first Barred Warbler and three Reed Warblers (16th), when a second Citrine Wagtail joined the lingering bird and Ruff increased to four, with 23 the next day, when there was also a Bar-tailed Godwit. Wader passage on 18th included monthly peaks of 46 Sanderling, 43 Redshank and 111 Turnstone as well as four Black-tailed Godwit. A Common Rosefinch arrived on 19th, with another Barred Warbler, Reed Warbler and over 600 Meadow Pipits the following day, when there were also peaks of 92 Ringed Plover, 43 Golden Plover, 37 Black-tailed Godwit and 137 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, with a Sooty Shearwater also recorded. The light SW winds were encouraging passerine passage, with the 21st seeing large counts of several species included 633 Meadow Pipit, 175 Rock Pipit, 188 Twite and 177

Wheatear, with new birds including a Grasshopper Warbler and two Crossbill. North-easterly winds arrived on 22nd, bringing with them a Booted Warbler (until 28th), along with eight Willow Warbler and singles of Barred, Marsh and Sedge Warblers, Pied Flycatcher and 127 *alba* wagtails. The following day saw a Corncrake and Barred Warbler, along with Lesser Whitethroat, Whitethroat, two Tree Pipit, 27 Willow Warbler and monthly peaks of ten Pied Flycatcher, 710 Meadow Pipit and 50 Dunlin. With the wind switching to the SE more migrants started arriving, with Wryneck, Grasshopper Warbler and two Whinchat (24th), Icterine Warbler, Common Rosefinch, 32 Willow Warbler, four Redstart, four Tree Pipit and Kestrel (25th). The fog that had accompanied much of the summer lifted enough on 26th for a Thrush Nightingale and two Greenish Warblers to be found, along with seven Garden Warbler, seven Whinchat, three Whitethroat, three Reed Warbler, Blackcap and 39 Black-tailed Godwit. A quieter day on 27th saw new arrivals limited to Spotted Flycatcher, Grasshopper Warbler, two Robin, Merlin and Sparrowhawk, with blue Fulmar and two Sooty Shearwater at sea. The Thrush Nightingale was relocated at Haa on 28th, when there were also two Corncrake and a Wood Sandpiper and a Basking Shark off Bunes. Tree Pipits peaked for the month with six on 29th, when there were also seven Garden Warbler and a light Swallow passage. Seven Crossbill and eight Grey Heron were amongst the new birds on 30th and the month ended with strong south-westerlies and a new Citrine Wagtail, three Sooty Shearwater and an impressive 42 White-beaked Dolphins and five Killer Whales off Bunes.

September

Species Recorded: 139, Year List at end of month: 200, Birds Ringed: 226, Species Ringed: 45

The always highly anticipated month began with SW winds limiting passage and, although the Citrine Wagtail was present until 3rd, things were generally quiet with three Pintail and a Tufted Duck (1st) and small numbers of passage waders amongst the birds noted in the first couple of days of the month. Petrel ringing saw the Swinhoe's trapped again in the early hours of 3rd, with other seabirds that day including Red-throated Diver, blue Fulmar and two Sooty Shearwater. The lighter winds also encouraged a large southerly passerine passage with counts including 827 Meadow Pipit, 212 Twite, 132 *alba* wagtails and 150 Wheatear, bringing with them Common Rosefinch, Tree Pipit and Grasshopper Warbler. An Arctic Warbler on 4th was the first new BBRC rarity of the month on a day that saw a clear (albeit small) arrival of birds. Meadow Pipits increased to 913 and other counts included 20 Willow Warbler, seven Whinchat, five Garden Warbler, three Pied Flycatcher, two each of Sedge Warbler and Tree Sparrow (all month), Tree Pipit, Sparrowhawk and 85 Dunlin, with highlights including two Icterine Warbler, Common Rosefinch, Lapland Bunting, Corncrake and the first records for the month of Blackcap and Lesser Whitethroat. A new Arctic Warbler on 5th was joined by two Barred Warbler, Wood Warbler, Corncrake, four Lapland Buntings, a slight increase in several commoner migrants and a peak of 976 Meadow Pipits, with a Basking Shark seen from the Good Shepherd. The Arctic Warbler was relocated on 6th when there was a Red-backed Shrike, three Common Rosefinch, Reed and Grasshopper Warbler and

Merlin. A quiet, drizzly day with northerly winds on 7th was enlivened by a Blyth's Reed Warbler trapped in the Gully, with easterlies on 8th bringing rather few migrants, although these included Little Stint and nine Lapland Buntings and a monthly peak of 111 Rock Pipits. The 9th saw a second Red-backed Shrike join the lingering bird, and there were nine Siskin, Barred Warbler as well as several lingering migrants. An early Little Bunting was the highlight of 10th, when there were also two Little Stints and an Icterine Warbler, then Jack Snipe and Snow Bunting arrived from 11th. An American Golden Plover interrupted filming of the BBC drama 'Shetland' at North Light on 12th, when it flew over the actors who were using the Warden's telescope as a prop and it was the highlight of a day of breezy SW conditions, although there were also four Common Rosefinch and a Sooty Shearwater. Lighter winds on 13th allowed more migrants in, including an Arctic Warbler, an increase of Red-backed Shrikes to three, five Common Rosefinch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Marsh Warbler, ten Lapland Buntings, 116 Skylark, 18 Willow Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Tree Pipit, two Reed Warbler and Merlin. Whinchats increased to ten on 14th, when there were also Pintail and Sooty Shearwater and the long-staying Western Subalpine Warbler was seen for the final time. The first 15 Pink-footed Geese of the autumn and a Sooty Shearwater were noted on 15th, with the continued NW winds bringing some migrants on 17th when the first Yellow-browed Warbler, two Great Spotted Woodpecker (the start of daily sightings), Common Rosefinch, 127 Snow Buntings, two Jack Snipe, Common Redpoll (with small numbers of both Mealy and North-western birds of the subspecies *rostrata* or *islandica* recorded during the month) and Spotted Flycatcher were seen. Yellow-browed Warblers increased to two the following day, with three Common Rosefinch, 345 Snow Buntings and 149 Snipe amongst the species to increase, with two Fieldfare and Brambling amongst the signs of the advancing season. An increase in warblers on 19th saw counts of three Yellow-browed Warbler, 12 Willow Warbler, six Blackcap, two Barred Warbler, five Lesser Whitethroat, four Whitethroat and a Grasshopper Warbler, with other migrants including Red-breasted Flycatcher, Hen Harrier, two Common Rosefinch, two Great Spotted Woodpecker, a North-western Redpoll and increases in Rock Pipit (110) and Twite (249). A further increase on 20th saw Yellow-browed Warblers rise to seven, with other counts of two Bluethroat, four Barred Warbler, two Great Spotted Woodpecker, Red-breasted Flycatcher, three Common Rosefinch, six Jack Snipe, Corncrake, nine Lesser Whitethroat, Grasshopper Warbler, three Pied Flycatcher, and the first Chaffinch and six Goldcrest of the autumn. A good selection of scarcities remained on 21st, when a second Red-breasted Flycatcher arrived, as did 141 Pink-footed Geese. Pink-feet had increased to 471 the following day, when a Slavonian Grebe was new and a similar selection of migrants remained, whilst SW winds saw a largely quiet 23rd for new birds. North-easterly winds on 24th saw a better day, with scarcities including seven Yellow-browed Warbler, two Common Rosefinch, Barred Warbler, the first Turtle Dove of the year and six Great Spotted Woodpecker, with 22 Redwing and two Long-tailed Ducks the first of the autumn and other migrants including Chiffchaff, 13 Fieldfare, eight Whinchat, four Pied Flycatcher, Redstart, three Mealy Redpoll,

nine Crossbill, nine Jack Snipe and 620 Meadow Pipit, whilst seven Slavonian Grebes was a record count. A light NE breeze and pleasant conditions on 25th saw an epic birding day, beginning with an Olive-backed Pipit trapped at the Obs, which was almost forgotten about as a White's Thrush was found at Bullock Holes before breakfast. Further good birds followed, with a Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll showing well at the Chapel and a Lanceolated Warbler trapped at Da Water. An impressive back-up was headlined by 16 Yellow-browed Warbler, two Red-breasted Flycatcher, Bluethroat, two Barred Warbler and two Common Rosefinch with other migrant counts including 22 Jack Snipe, five Great Spotted Woodpecker, 156 Skylark, two Chiffchaff, five Blackcap, seven Willow Warbler, three Garden Warbler, six Lesser Whitethroat, 24 Fieldfare, Spotted Flycatcher, Brambling and the first Blackbird of the autumn. There was no let up the following day, with Sykes's Warbler, Nightjar and 40 Yellow-browed Warbler the highlights, with several of the previous day's migrants still present and increases including three Red-breasted Flycatcher and three Redstart. The SE winds continued on 27th, but new migrants were thin on the ground, with 39 Fieldfare and Crossbill amongst the new birds, although a juvenile Storm Petrel in South Raeva was an unusual sighting. Light SW winds on 28th brought a Lanceolated Warbler, Corncrake, an increase in Brambling (to 25) and Common Redpolls, with many of the scarce birds still present and 15 Barnacle Goose and Sooty Shearwater also recorded. A breezy SE day on 29th saw increases in several migrants, with counts of 29 Yellow-browed Warbler, 96 Fieldfare, 34 Redwing, 27 Robin, 27 Brambling, 15 Blackcap, ten Chaffinch, ten Lapland Bunting and four Siskin, whilst there were also four Scaup, Hen Harrier, three Kestrel, four Merlin, two Grey Plover as well as Stonechat, two *flava* wagtails and Reed Bunting. Continued SE winds saw the month end with two Little Buntings and Dotterel and increases in some species seeing counts of 65 Golden Plover, 24 Goldcrest, six Chiffchaff, two Ring Ouzel, five Blackbird, 49 Redwing, three Redstart, 14 Whinchat, 13 Crossbill and three Reed Bunting.

October

Species Recorded: 148, Year List at end of month: 211, Birds Ringed: 667, Species Ringed: 37
 The month opened with a tremendous variety of migrants, led by two Richard's Pipits (with one remaining to November), Little Bunting, nine Yellow-browed Warbler (which would be present almost daily until 10th), Dotterel (lingering until 17th) and Corncrake. Counts of other migrants included three Great Spotted Woodpecker, 65 Brambling, 52 Song Thrush, 15 Goldcrest, eight Chiffchaff, ten Blackcap, two Willow Warbler, six Redstart, three Ring Ouzel, two Stonechat, 11 Crossbill, 16 Reed Bunting, five Mealy Redpoll and two Lesser Redpoll (the first of the year), as well as *flava* wagtail, Mistle Thrush, Woodcock, Tree Sparrow (a lingering bird present throughout the month), two Hen Harrier, Slavonian Grebe, Sparrowhawk, four Kestrel and Short-eared Owl. The 2nd saw an Olive-backed Pipit arrive in howling SE winds, but conditions were difficult with other sightings including 24 Robin, 12 Chaffinch, Greenfinch, Whitethroat, nine Jack Snipe, seven Barnacle Geese (increasing to 15 the next day), two Tufted Duck and a Scaup. With

the wind in the south west, there were limited new birds coming in, with the 4th seeing four Garden Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Reed Warbler, two Ring Ouzel, seven Whinchat, six Crossbill, five Lapland Bunting and 16 Reed Bunting . A Great Grey Shrike arrived on 5th when there was also Long-eared and two Short-eared Owls, Moorhen and an increase in Song Thrush to 72. The gusty SW winds on 6th brought Fair Isle's first Red-eyed Vireo, to Easter Lother, whilst a Lanceolated Warbler was found nearby at Wirvie shortly after. Other migrants were limited, although there was an increase in Yellow-browed Warbler to ten, Long-eared Owl, ten Dunnock, 132 Pink-footed Geese and seven Whooper Swans. The next day there were 342 Greylag Geese and a Barred Warbler, with 870 Greylag and 194 Pink-footed Geese on 8th, when the blustery SW winds also delivered an Olive-backed Pipit. Stronger NW winds on 9th brought an elusive Buff-breasted Sandpiper to the west cliffs and southerly Skylark passage dropped a Short-toed Lark to the Havens, whilst there was also a Little Bunting, Goldfinch, Pintail and 27 Barnacle Geese. Greenfinches and Goldfinches both increased to two on 10th, when Mealy Redpolls started to arrive, there were ten Jack Snipe, Sparrowhawk, five Whooper Swans and 11 Long-tailed Ducks. Light WNW winds on 11th saw an increase in many migrants, but the star bird was the Grey-cheeked Thrush found at the School whilst the entire Obs staff were helping with the Sheep Hill. The supporting cast was largely from the east, headlined by a Blyth's Reed Warbler, with Little Bunting, seven Yellow-browed Warbler, three Great Spotted Woodpecker, ten Goldcrest, eight Chiffchaff, ten Blackcap, two Garden Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, 111 Redwing, ten Blackbird, Mistle Thrush, 14 Robin, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart, 104 Snow Bunting, five Lapland Bunting, four Woodcock (the start of daily sightings through the month), 16 Woodpigeon as well as Pintail, Shoveler and two Slavonian Grebes. The 12th saw a continued NE wind and a new Blyth's Reed Warbler was found, along with Red-throated Pipit, Olive-backed Pipit (with regular sightings of this species until November, although it wasn't entirely clear how many individuals were involved) and two Little Buntings. An increase in many other typical north-easterly migrants including nine Yellow-browed Warbler, six Great Spotted Woodpecker, 71 Goldcrest, 27 Chiffchaff (including at least four *tristis*), 28 Blackbird, 364 Redwing, 47 Brambling, 13 Chaffinch, 11 Siskin, three Lesser and ten Mealy Redpoll, 134 Snow Bunting and singles of *flava* and Grey Wagtail. More NE winds on 13th brought more thrushes, with counts of 600 Redwing, 326 Fieldfare and 65 Blackbird and other increasing counts included 14 Blackcap, 12 Mealy Redpoll, seven Lapland Buntings, two Sparrowhawks and 45 Barnacle Geese, with highlights from the day including a Dusky Warbler, two Richard's Pipits and two Bullfinches. Light north-easterlies on 14th brought more migrants including Arctic Warbler, a second Olive-backed Pipit to join the lingering bird, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Jackdaw (the only one of the month), three Mistle Thrush, Ring Ouzel, Tree Pipit, Sedge Warbler, Turtle Dove and a juvenile Glaucous Gull. With the 'rare' conditions of light NE winds continuing on 15th, it was the turn of warblers to be on the move, with two Dusky Warblers amongst the 61 Blackcap and 41 Chiffchaff (most of which were *tristis* Siberian Chiffchaff), and also increased numbers of Woodpigeon (24), Snow Bunting (206)

and Woodcock (eight), with other migrants including Red-breasted Flycatcher, five Lesser and 32 Mealy Redpoll, Pintail, 14 Goldeneye and a late Whimbrel. Although there were still plenty of birds around on 16th (including the last Yellow-browed Warbler of the year), there were few new migrants, although there was also a Pied Flycatcher, Mealy Redpolls increased to 44 and there were 21 blue Fulmars. Fieldfares increased to 400 the following day and Blackbirds to 77, with Red-breasted Flycatcher, Lesser Whitethroat and Crossbill all also new. The 18th saw Little Bunting, Red-breasted Flycatcher and Bluethroat, whilst Snow Buntings increased to a monthly peak of 220 and Mealy Redpolls to at least 60. The two long-staying Bullfinches were joined by two more on 19th, when there was also a Hawfinch and Black Redstart on a very wet day. The strong ESE wind on 20th was accompanied by heavy rain until the afternoon and when it cleared a Lanceolated Warbler was found at North Shirva, amazingly the fourth of the year for Fair Isle, whilst no others were recorded in the UK in 2013. Other birds new in the same day included two Waxwings, two Yellowhammer, Goldfinch and four Crossbill, with increases recorded for Blackcap (58), Blackbird (262), Redwing (230), Mistle Thrush (four), Brambling (54), Barnacle Goose (83) and Jack Snipe (nine). With conditions improving on 21st an impressive period of birding was capped by the arrival of a stunning male Siberian Rubythroat, accompanied by a fall of 1393 Fieldfare, 1133 Redwing, 606 Blackbird, 38 Song Thrush, 125 Brambling, 68 Blackcap, 23 Woodpigeon, 20 Woodcock, five Ring Ouzel, four Reed Bunting, three Bullfinch, two Great Spotted Woodpecker, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Long-eared Owl and Redstart. The Rubythroat remained the next day, with Fieldfares, Redwings and Robins increasing and 11 each of Chiffchaff and Goldcrest present, with the headline amongst the new birds being a Paddyfield Warbler, whilst a Waxwing was also new. A gloomy day saw the Rubythroat still present on 23rd when there was also two Little Buntings, a Barred Warbler, three Yellowhammer, Siskin, Ruff, Iceland Gull and a dead Little Auk. Although there were a few migrants still coming in, the rest of the month was generally quieter as an excellent autumn finally started to wind down. A Killer Whale was seen on 24th, with a group (seen from the DirectFlight plane) off North Light the following day. A breezy westerly wind brought four Whooper Swan, 164 Greylag Geese, Sooty Shearwater and two Iceland Gull, with six Whoopers, Little Auk and an increase in Blackcaps to 38 on 25th. The 26th saw Little Bunting, Red-breasted Flycatcher, 17 Chaffinch, and wildfowl passage produced eight Whooper Swan, 567 Greylag Geese, 23 Long-tailed Duck as well as three Slavonian Grebe and a Glaucous Gull, with two Greenland White-fronted Geese the following day, when there was also Red-breasted Flycatcher, Waxwing, Garden Warbler and Grey Wagtail. The 28th saw a slight increase in thrush and Snow Bunting numbers, but little else accompanied them, with Bullfinch, Little Auk, five Greenfinch and 132 Snipe amongst the other species noted. Six Whooper Swans, a late Sooty Shearwater and two Glaucous Gull were seen on 29th, 24 Pink-footed Geese and two Grey Wagtails were noted on 30th then the month ended with 31 Woodcock, Long-eared Owl, Little Auk and Glaucous Gull as SW winds ushered in a more wintry feel to proceedings.

November

Species Recorded: 80, Year List at end of month: 212, Birds Ringed: 120, Species Ringed: 12

November opened in spectacular style, with a group of five Killer Whales hunting seals around the North Haven and Furse on 1st, and there was a typical selection of birds lingering from the previous month including the final sightings of Goldcrest (1st) and Olive-backed Pipit, Bullfinch and Woodpigeon (all 2nd), along with small numbers of lingering Blackcaps and Chiffchaff, two Black Redstart (2nd) and good numbers of thrushes and Snow Bunting. There were also some typical winter fare, with two Whooper Swans lingering to 6th (and seven more passing through on 2nd), Hen Harrier (at least one lingering to 9th), 17 Pink-footed Geese, 15 Long-tailed Duck and the first of several sightings of juvenile Iceland and Glaucous Gull throughout the month. A few late migrants were still on the move, including Knot (3rd), Kestrel (5th) and Short-eared Owl (6th), whilst 365 Greylag on 4th included passage flocks. Three Little Auk and ten blue Fulmar were seen from the Good Shepherd (5th), whilst a few signs of passage on 7th included nine Brambling, ten Mealy Redpoll and Jackdaw, with wader counts the same day including 142 Snipe, three Jack Snipe, 256 Turnstone and 52 Redshank. The last Bonxie was seen on 8th, Snow Buntings peaked for the month at 98 the following day and a Little Auk was in the Havens on 10th. The evening of the 11th saw strong southerly winds bring the start of an unexpected late fall, with the 12th headlined by a Shore Lark and counts included 646 Blackbird, 164 Fieldfare, 93 Redwing, 37 Woodcock, 11 Robin, three Jack Snipe, three Blackcap, Great Northern Diver and Short-eared Owl. Things then quietened down considerably, with the last sighting of the long-staying Richard's Pipit (17th), Linnets (14th and 17th), two Glaucous Gulls (16th) and three Whooper Swans moving south (17th). The 19th saw the last Blackcap and Chiffchaff of the year with a Moorhen newly arrived and a count of 303 Greylag. Three Goosander (21st–22nd), two Goldfinch (21st–25th) and three Mealy Redpolls (23rd–24th) were the last notable birds of the month.

December

Species Recorded: 53, Year List at end of month: 212, Birds Ringed: 1, Species Ringed: 1

A typically quiet month, with generally unexceptional weather causing little in the way of bird movements. Wintering fodder included at least two Water Rail, up to five Lapwing, up to three Pink-footed Geese, Merlin, Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser and Long-tailed Duck. Grey Heron remained until 13th and Barnacle Goose to 3rd. A Black-tailed Godwit on 5th was unusual, more expected was an Iceland Gull from 9th. A Whooper Swan was resident on Golden Water from 17th, when there was also a Jack Snipe. There was a peak of three Glaucous Gull on 18th, with another unseasonal Black-tailed Godwit on 19th. A second Whooper Swan joined the lingering bird on 21st, with a Woodpigeon arriving the following day. Then as Christmas festivities kicked in, sightings became more sparse, although there was a Great Northern Diver (26th) and the year closed with unseasonal records of Puffin and Meadow Pipit on 29th.

Systematic List

David Parnaby

Notes

The species order is taken from the 'British List' published by the BOU in January 2013. 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 Number - less than 100 pairs per annum

Moderate Numbers - 101–1000 pairs per annum

Large Numbers - more than 1000 pairs per annum

Abbreviations

AIA - Apparently Incubating Adult

AON - Apparently Occupied Nest

AOS - Apparently Occupied Site

AOT - Apparently Occupied Territory

Obs - Fair Isle Bird Observatory

** - Indicates record(s) requiring assessment by the relevant records committee*

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring

None were present in the first winter period and one on 12th April was the only spring record. Autumn passage was fairly light, with seven on 6th October rising to eight the following day and one lingering until 19th, when it was found dead. During this time there were also four more on 10th October, with another flock of four on 24th, then six on 25th rising to a peak of eight on 26th October. Two adults then lingered until 6th November, with additional sightings of two more on 29th October and seven more on 2nd November. Three adults flew south on 17th November and then a new bird lingered from 19th November to the end of the year and was joined by a second during 21st–26th December.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring

With no birds overwintering from 2012, the first of the year were six on 24th April, with one remaining until 2nd May and later spring migrants on 12th–24th and 30th–31st May. Fifteen on 15th September were the first of regular sightings in the autumn, with higher counts of 141 on 21st and 471 on 22nd September. Counts were then less than 50 until 132 on 6th and 194 on 8th October, with the only count over 20 after that occurring on 31st October when 24 were present. Up to three were seen regularly until 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*

A juvenile was at Utra from 14th January to 25th February, but was later found dead. In a very quiet year for White-fronted Geese, the only other record was two (probably of this subspecies) on 27th October.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Common spring and autumn migrant

Maximum monthly counts of Greylag Goose on Fair Isle 2013:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
80	65	50	57	10	36	0	6	23	870	365	300

Numbers in the first two months of the year were relatively low, with just small fluctuations in numbers until 8th April, when numbers started decreasing rapidly, with four remaining into May when they departed on 24th (noisily at just after midnight, waking up several staff in the east facing rooms of the Obs as they passed very close to the building!). There were just occasional records in June, although larger flocks included 36 on 14th, 12 on 16th and 22 on 23rd, with no further sightings until 13th August. Small numbers throughout the rest of the month and September preceded the main autumn passage in October, with birds regularly present and peak days of passage producing counts of 342 on 7th increasing to 870 on 8th then 480 the following day, 205 on 16th Oct and 567 on 26th October. Days of higher passage in November produced 365 on 4th and 303 on 19th, with most counts around 150. In early December, around 300 were present, with numbers settling at around 200 until the end of the year.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

Frequent autumn migrant, occasional in spring

A quiet spring passage consisted of singles on 1st and 24th May. Autumn passage began with 15 on 28th September, with further records of one on 30th September, seven on 2nd and 15 on 3rd October. From six on 8th October there were daily sightings for the rest of the month, with numbers generally around 25 from 9th but further peaks of 45 on 13th, 34 on 18th, 83 on 20th and the year's peak of 90 on 22nd, with a decrease to

just four by 29th October, which went on to linger until 17th November, with eight present over 5th–7th November and a late individual on 2nd–3rd December.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

Spring passage was relatively quiet with a single on 2nd April and two on 6th May. Autumn was similarly subdued, with two from 29th July to 5th August joined by a third on 2nd–3rd August.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter

Up to 14 were present in the first winter period, although numbers decreased through March. Only two were seen in April and three in May, with up to two on 5th–7th June. Up to three in early July were a not atypical summer occurrence. Autumn migrants appeared from 14th August, after which sightings were regular throughout the rest of the autumn, with monthly peaks of 22 in August, 38 in September and 60 in October, although only single figures were being recorded by the end of the latter month. Small numbers lingered around South Harbour at the end of the year, with up to 20 seen.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter

Two were seen throughout January, with numbers increasing to seven by the end of February and similar counts recorded during March. An increase in April saw up to 13 recorded, In May there were scattered records until 26th after which sightings of up to seven were virtually daily until 9th June, with one on 19th–21st June. There were occasional sightings in July and they were present regularly from mid-August peaking at 57 on 25th, but there were no more than 33 in September and a peak of just 15 in October. Occasional records later in the year suggested up to five birds were overwintering.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, semi-domestic and feral birds cloud true status

The maximum count from the first winter period was 23 on 20th January and, whilst four or five pairs were present in March, only two or three probably bred, with the first ducklings seen on 1st June. Around 20 were present from 20th October, with the maximum count in the second winter period of 25 in late December.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Two flew over South Harbour on 21st June and represented the only spring record, whilst autumn began with three off South Light on 1st September and continued with one at Utra on 10th September and sightings on 9th, 11th, 15th and 21st October that were all likely to have referred to the same bird.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

Scarce and irregular spring and autumn migrant

A male was on Da Water on 20th–21st April and one was in South Harbour on 11th October in a relatively quiet year for the species.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*

Rare migrant; 55 previous records of 69 individuals (most August to December)

A female or juvenile on Golden Water on 26th–30th July was only the third record since 1999 and the first since 2007. Most records are later in the year and this was only the third for July.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

A strong spring showing began with three heading north off Da Burrian on 27th April. A female arrived on 6th May and remained until 6th June during which there were also an additional pair on 9th–15th May, a fourth bird (a male) on 14th May and a male on 20th and 29th May to 1st June. There were also males on 17th–25th June and 1st–2nd July. Autumn saw a single on 1st September, three on 30th September, with two to 2nd October (the third was found dead) and one to 6th October. The final bird of a good autumn was seen on 13th–24th October.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

There were four on 29th September, with two still the following day and singles on 2nd and 4th October.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Resident, breeds in small numbers

A count of 92 sheltering around the island on 29th January was the highest in the first winter period, with counts in the spring peaking at 146 (69 males and 77 females) on 4th May. Attempts to monitor the post-breeding flocks were hampered by the weather, with the only large count, of 72 in the south-west census area only on 14th October, a significant undercount of the island population.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

At least three were seen irregularly during the first winter period until 22nd February, whilst spring passage consisted of one on 19th April, a male from 17th–26th May, which was joined by a female from 19th–31st May, with another female seen on 27th May. These birds often showed off their breeding plumage just off the North Haven beach. In the autumn two were off North Light on 24th September, with one seen the following day. There were no more sightings until 11 on 10th October, after which sightings were virtually daily for the rest of the month, peaking at 23 on 26th October, the highest count since 2005. There were sightings

throughout November, although after 15 on 1st, no more than six were seen and two individuals remained in December.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*
Scarce spring, autumn and winter migrant

Regular sightings of one from early January to 15th February probably involved the same bird, with three present on 21st February and irregular sightings of three to 16th April and two until 29th April possibly involving the same group. There were further singles on three dates from 14th–19th May, 31st May and 3rd June before the spring peak of seven on 8th June. Autumn passage began with two males in North Haven on 3rd August, increasing to four the next day, with two remaining to 9th August. There were eight from the Good Shepherd on 10th August then from 13th October there were regular sightings of one or two until 26th, with a higher count of eight on 19th October. Occasional sightings to the end of the year were normally of singles, but there were five on 10th November.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*
Regular winter, spring and autumn migrant

An overwintering drake was in South Harbour on 1st January with further winter sightings of a female on 18th–19th January, two on 20th February and one on 26th February. The first of the autumn were three on 24th September. There were no more sightings until 12th October, increasing to 14 on 15th October (the third highest Fair Isle count after 21 on 12th November 1994 and 17 on 28th October 1961), with up to three regularly to the end of month. One lingered through November, with a second on 21st, and a male remained until the end of the year.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*
Frequent spring and autumn migrant

An overwintering bird provided occasional sightings until 26th March. Spring passage began on 24th April, with regular sightings until 18th June and a maximum of six on 2nd June. Summer records involved one on 5th–7th July, two on 28th–29th July and one on 8th August. There was then one on 8th September and from 21st September there were regular sightings throughout the autumn, peaking at six on 16th and 25th October. Three remained in early November, with one present until the end of the year.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*
Rare migrant in winter, spring and late autumn

The overwintering male that first appeared in October 2012 was last seen on 1st January, but was found long-dead in early February. Three in South Haven on 21st November were seen in Johnny Arcus Park the next day - the largest count since 2007.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*
Scarce spring, summer and autumn migrant; has bred (last confirmed attempt in 2003)

For the second consecutive year there was just a single record, with one flushed from Taing on 3rd June.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

Regular migrant, mainly late spring and autumn

Sightings on 8th and 17th April, on four dates from 25th–30th May and five dates in June were all of singles apart from three on 10th June. There were four singles recorded in the second half of July, one on 10th August and records of eight birds on six dates in September (peaking at two), before a bird took up residence around the Havens from 4th–26th October, during which time another bird was seen on 8th October.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring

For the second consecutive year, there was an early winter record, with one off South Light on 9th January. Spring sightings of two on 10th and singles on 17th and 25th June were probably all immature or non-breeding birds, whilst one on 15th July may also have been a wandering immature. Autumn passage saw one on 29th September, one lingering from 23rd–30th October, another passing Meoness on 28th October and a later bird on 12th November. One appeared in North Haven on 26th December for the second consecutive year.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Resident, breeds in large numbers (last count 29640 AOS in 2011)

The first eggs of Fair Isle's commonest seabird were noted in the parks on 16th May. The breeding season was another reasonable one, with numbers in the population plots declining slightly (by 7.6% from 2012), which fits with the general small fluctuations of the population in recent years. The first chicks were seen on 10th July and breeding productivity increased by 22.9% from 2012 with 0.59 chicks fledged per AOS. Typically, small numbers of juveniles became stranded in windy conditions, with a particularly stormy spell in early September seeing several needing rescue. Darker northern 'blue' birds were noted from 20th April, with further sightings on 5th and 23rd May, 13th June, 27th and 29th August, eight dates in September and then in greater numbers in October, when 11 dates produced a total of 39 birds, including a peak of 21 on 15th, with most of these being from the Good Shepherd. The final records of this form were one on 4th and around ten (from the Good Shepherd) on 5th November.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

Regular autumn migrant

In August birds were seen on 3rd, 20th, 27th (two) and 31st (three), with records on six September dates, all singles except for two on 3rd. In October there were sightings on 5th and 24th, with one seen from the Good Shepherd on 29th the latest record since 1997.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

A very quiet year, with the only records on 6th June, 4th July (two), 2nd August (two) and 9th August.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus***Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers but non-breeders common**

The first record was of two at the breeding colony at Kirn o'Skroo on 24th May, with ringing there seeing 16 trapped (five new and 11 retraps) during four sessions in June. There were irregular sightings from the Good Shepherd in Fair Isle waters between 6th June and 5th September, peaking at 13 on 10th August, with a late bird seen on 5th October. As usual, most birds were recorded from overnight tape-luring sessions in the Havens, where a total of 1303 (1210 new birds and 93 retraps) were caught on 32 dates between 8th July and 3rd September. Numbers peaked in late July/early August, with a high of 146 (including 134 new birds) on the night of 10th/11th August. The only diurnal record from land was a juvenile found in South Raeva on 27th September.

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa***Scarce migrant, summer and early autumn**

A record-breaking year for the species, with all records occurring during nocturnal tape-luring sessions at the Havens. Two were heard at the nets on 8th July, then between 21st July and 1st August birds were caught on all but three of the trapping sessions, totalling 14 individuals, with at least four others heard. The peak night was 30th July with four recorded (two caught and two others heard). Birds were also regular in August, with a further seven trapped (including one bird retrapped twice) and at least one calling regularly until 17th August. There was a record total of 19 birds ringed during the summer, whilst the retrapped bird also proved interesting. It was caught twice during the summer (31st July and 11th August) having been ringed on 1st August 2012. It was the first Leach's Petrel to be retrapped on Fair Isle after the year of its ringing and the first to be caught more than once in a year. Leach's Petrel was regularly heard calling at around the same time as the Swinhoe's Petrel and the fact that this bird was either lingering or regularly revisiting the locality (and was trapped within 15 minutes of the Swinhoe's Petrel on 11th August) could suggest that it was this individual (which DNA analysis proved to be a female) that was regularly accompanying it. The presence of mud or sand on its feet on both occasions it was caught suggested it may have been singing from land nearby and added further to the intrigue.

Swinhoe's Petrel** *Oceanodroma monorhisVagrant; no previous records**

One of the most phenomenal records, not just of the year, but arguably of Fair Isle's illustrious ornithological history was the occurrence of two of these Pacific breeding, all-dark petrels in the summer. Despite mixed tapes that included this species being used at petrel ringing sessions during the last three years, it was still an incredulous team that heard a Swinhoe's Petrel replying to the tape on 22nd July, although the bird wasn't seen. On 27th July, a male Swinhoe's Petrel was caught in the early hours of the morning and then, remarkably, a second bird (also a male) was trapped on 7th August. The first bird was never seen again, but the second individual was retrapped on 8th August and again nightly from 11th–15th August,

17th August and finally on 3rd September (and was presumably present in the area throughout this time when trapping didn't take place as it was heard calling from the Havens on at least one occasion when there was no catching session). These occurrences are written up in detail on page 112.

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Breeds in large numbers, seen offshore all year

Small numbers were seen offshore in the first winter period, with the first chicks noted on 19th May at Guidicum. The whole island count produced an increase of 1.6% from 2012, with 3924 AON recorded, suggesting that the population may have levelled off (for now at least) at around 4000 pairs. Productivity was down on the record level of 2012, but at 0.68 chicks per AON was still good. All chicks fledged from the monitoring plots by 2nd October (although some chicks were still present elsewhere on the island on 15th October). By the end of October there was a noticeable decrease of birds present around the island, although small numbers were seen offshore until the end of the year.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring

The only winter sighting was of four on 5th January. Spring passage began with four on 1st April, then singles on 8th and 22nd–26th April, with another two also present on 24th April. In May there were sightings on nine dates, usually of one or two, but six on 26th, with one on 14th June and two on 19th June. The only record in July was two on 12th, with singles on three August dates and records on 20 dates in September, usually one or two but five on 5th, seven on 19th and four on 25th. There were six sightings between 13th–28th October of up to two, with none in the later winter period.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers (last count 235 AON in 2008)

Nest building was first noted from 4th March, with the first eggs on 2nd May (at Mavers Geo) and chicks on 13th June (at Johnny's Peats). It was another poor year for breeding, with plot counts down 34.4% from 2012 and breeding productivity down 32.6% to 0.64 chicks fledged per AON. A whole island survey during the summer produced 204 AON, a decrease of 5% since the last count and a new record low, although the total could perhaps have been worse, given the 60% decline in the plots during the same time.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring

A very quiet spring saw up to two birds on five dates from 15th–30th March. A juvenile from 6th July was probably the heavily-oiled bird that lingered in late July until it was found dead. The reason for the oiling became clear on 19th when it was seen predated a Fulmar chick in Mavers Geo. Numbers rose to three by 23rd and five by 29th July, then regular sightings in August peaked at eight at the end of the

month, with virtually daily sightings in September peaking at nine on 26th and up to six in October. Scattered sightings of one in November and then up to 13th December may have been the same lingering bird.

Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritis*

Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring

After 2012's no-show (the first blank year since 1998), 2013 proved to be an excellent year. The first was a superb breeding-plumaged bird in Furse on 8th April, the first spring record since 2008. In autumn, one was seen on 22nd September, then seven were present on 24th (five at South Light and two at Furse), eclipsing the previous record count of five in October 2010. There were then counts of between one and four until 1st October and later sightings on 11th (two), 16th, 26th (three) and 27th (two) October.

***Honey-buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

Rare spring and autumn migrant; 53 previous records (55 individuals)

One was seen low over Malcolm's Head on 28th May before drifting north-west, the first record since 2010.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Rare migrant; 45 previous records (35 in spring, ten in autumn)

A male in the south of the island on 26th March was the second earliest ever record.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Two on the 27th March (an adult male and a ringtail) were only a day later than the earliest ever spring arrival date, with the male remaining until 29th March. Further ringtails appeared on 3rd, 9th–11th and 19th–20th April whilst a late male on 3rd and 5th June brought the record spring total to six birds. The first autumn migrant was a male on 19th September, with virtually daily records from 29th September to 9th November involving at least two birds, one of which regularly roosted in Gilsetter towards the end of its stay.

***Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

Vagrant; two previous records (August 1992 and May 2002)

A first-summer ringtail harrier was seen over Da Water in the afternoon of 3rd June and then roamed the south of the island for a short while before heading south out to sea over South Light at 6.15pm. It was thought at the time to be a Pallid Harrier *C. macrourus*, but later analysis of photographs suggested that it was most likely to be a Montagu's Harrier, just the third record for Fair Isle if accepted.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

After the first on 27th March, there were regular sightings of up to two throughout April and on eleven May dates. A late spring migrant was present on 19th–20th June,

with the first early autumn migrants seen on 27th August and 4th September. From 26th September until 26th October there were records on 18 dates, although possibly just six birds were involved and there was a peak of just two on 13th October.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Scarce migrant; 116 individuals, with 97 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)

With sightings on nine dates thought to represent eight individuals it was a record-breaking year for this now regular raptor (the last blank year was in 1997). The first headed south over the Obs on 6th May with presumably the same bird seen heading south-east out to sea on 7th May. The second was seen at several sites across the island on 12th May, with sightings on 14th, 15th and 16th May thought to relate to separate individuals (the first two were both seen heading north from North Light in very strong southerly winds). Further birds were seen on 29th May (again heading north), 3rd June and 10th June.

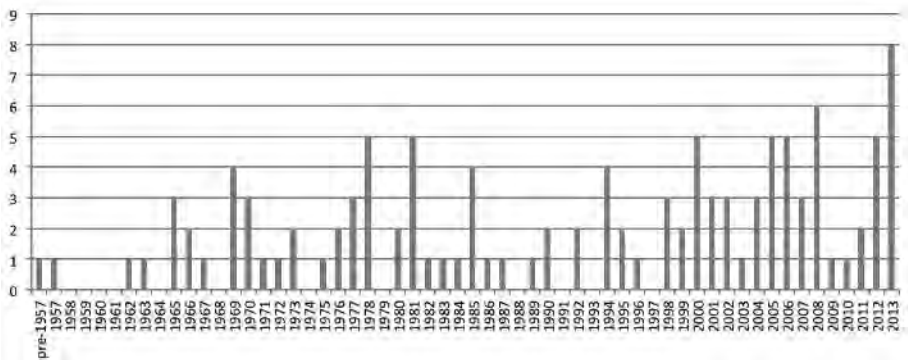


Figure 1. Annual occurrences of Osprey on Fair Isle. Note the general increase in records, with multiple individuals now recorded regularly.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage was relatively quiet, with the first on 2nd April then singles on eight further dates (involving perhaps just three individuals) in the month from 7th, with one lingering until 3rd May and the last of the season on 20th May. One arrived on 25th August, then from 4th September there were almost daily sightings until 5th October, with numbers peaking at four on 1st–2nd October. A late migrant was then seen on 4th and 7th November.

Merlin *Falco columbarius***Regular spring and autumn migrant, small numbers overwinter**

At least one was present in the first winter period and, by early April two were seen regularly. There were regular sightings of one until 13th May and later singles on 20th and 26th May. The first autumn migrant was present on 27th–28th August, with sporadic sightings in early September and more regular records from the third week. Three were seen from 23rd September, including one seen approaching the island from the Good Shepherd as it made the crossing from Grutness. There were four regularly seen from late September to early October, with up to three virtually daily for the rest of the month. At least two remained through November, whilst one seemed set to overwinter in the south of the island.

Hobby** *Falco subbuteoRare spring and summer migrant, vagrant in autumn; 55 previous records**

One briefly near Springfield on 29th May was a typical arrival date; the first since 2011.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus***Regular spring and autumn migrant; bred regularly until 1973 then again in 2008–2009**

An adult female was present from the start of the year, with a juvenile bird also present in March and, by the end of the month, a pair of adults was regularly present on the west coast. A first-summer bird was also present on 10th May. With the adult pair (one of which, intriguingly, was ringed) apparently on territory, it was hoped that there would be a repeat of the recent breeding attempts and a nest was found with two chicks on 11th May. The first chick had fledged by 15th June and there were regular sightings of it in the following weeks, although it is thought that only one chick fledged successfully. There was very little evidence of autumn passage and none were seen after 5th November.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus***Regular spring and autumn migrant, occasionally overwinters**

At least three were present in the first winter period, with birds at Chalet, Gilsetter and the Meadow Burn, with sightings at these locations through March presumably referring to the same birds. One at Stackhoull on 1st April may have been the first spring migrant, with two on 14th and singles on four other April dates also possibly migrants, as were birds at Boini Mire on 29th and Hegri Burn on 30th May. Autumn migration was first detected on 23rd September, with singles on three other September dates and sightings on eight dates from 6th–29th October also of singles, apart from two on 21st (when one was also found dead). In November, one was at Lower Stoneybrek on 7th then there were regular sightings at Schoolton in December, with at least two birds present.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

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

One calling between Quoy and Kenaby on the nights of 24th and 25th May was the first singing bird since 2009. A good showing in the autumn began with one at the Plantation on 23rd August, which was seen later in the day at Field Ditch. One at Setter on 28th August may have been the same, whilst the same date saw one at Da Water, which may have been the bird at Burkle on 30th and Lower Leogh on 31st August. Early September saw singles at the Plantation on 4th and Furse on 5th, whilst later in the month there was a showy bird at Wirvie on 20th and one at Stackhoull on 28th September. The final sighting was of one at Easter Lother on 1st October.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

The first overwintering record since 2007/2008 involved two in the Meadow Burn that were present from 2012 until 1st January, with one remaining until 17th March. In the spring there was one on 18th and 21st April, another on 27th–28th April and the last on 3rd May. The only autumn records were a juvenile in the Meadow Burn on 5th–6th October and one at Quoy on 19th–20th November.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Rare visitor; 87 previous records, most in spring, also late autumn–winter, has summered

Recorded for the fourth consecutive year, with birds at Utra on 29th January to 2nd February and Hesti Geo on 7th–8th April.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The first was recorded three days later than 2012, on 20th January, with numbers building to eight by early February and 28 by the end of the month. Numbers continued to climb, although relatively slowly, with at least 54 by 4th March and a peak in April of just 97 on 21st, with counts generally around 70–80. Counts in May were mostly over 100, with up to 157 regularly noted. The first egg was recorded on the relatively late date of 17th May and it appeared to be a poor breeding season, with only 20–40 pairs present and very few young fledging (the first of which was noted on 27th June). The year's peak was 161 on 2nd–3rd June, with an August peak of just 111 and numbers decreasing rapidly in the last ten days of the month. In September, after 22 on 2nd, there were just single figures, with no more than two after 20th and the last record on 12th October.

***American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica*

Vagrant; ten previous records (mid-August to early November)

An adult at North Light on 12th September was the first record since 2005.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

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

Up to seven were present in the early part of the year, with spring migration beginning from 6th April and increasing records during the month rising to 23 on 21st April. Up to 32 in early May preceded almost daily sightings during the month, and included birds displaying at Pund on 3rd and Setter on 28th May, with smaller numbers until 13th June and a later bird on 20th June. From 1st July there were scattered records of up to 12 during the month and increasing sightings during August saw numbers rise to 43 on 20th, including an interesting-looking leucistic bird from mid-month. In September the peak was 65 on 30th with numbers rising to 74 in early October with less than 20 remaining into November.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring and winter

After a blank year in 2012 (the first since 2009), the only record was of two on 29th September.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

Up to ten were recorded in January, increasing to 22 by February then a large arrival from mid-March peaked at 112 on 17th, the highest spring count since 2007. Light northerly passage was then noted later in March and counts in early April were generally between 15 and 28. By May, those birds present were mostly the breeders, with around six pairs holding territory. The first chick was noted on 17th May and the first (and possibly only) fledgling taking flight on 22nd July. By mid-June small flocks were appearing on Meoness as the first non-breeding (or failed) birds visited the island. The autumn peak was just 26 on 27th August and numbers were unremarkable through the rest of the year, with peaks of 23, 15 and 15 in September to November respectively and just single figures in December.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The first was on the slightly early date of 14th February (the earliest since 2008), with up to eight present later in the month and 14 by mid-March. Passage in early April saw a peak of 27 on 2nd, with a flock of 21 in Muckle Uri Geo on 27th May also indicating migrants moving through, as did a count of 33 on 24th May. Around 15 territories were occupied around the island, a typical number for recent years. The first chick was noted by 26th May, although a count of 39 on 6th June indicated that migrants were again on the move. Fledged youngsters were noted from 7th July and numbers rose as the autumn progressed, peaking at 92 on 20th August. A peak in September of 51 on 9th preceded a rapid tailing off in numbers with just single figures after 12th September until the last two were seen on 16th October.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

One was on Vaassetter on 12th May and a juvenile associated with Golden Plover at Barkland from 30th September to 17th October. The last blank year for this species on Fair Isle was 2001.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

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

The first, on 9th April, was the earliest ever Fair Isle sighting, three days earlier than the previous record set in 2010. It preceded frequent sightings in April, which rose to eight on 25th, with almost daily sightings the following month, peaking at 15 on 8th May. From mid-April a pair displayed at Suka Mire for over a week, whilst a bird was singing at Taing on 29th–30th May. Small numbers in early June increased to 12 on 8th, with up to three later in the month and one or two on most dates in July as spring and autumn passage merged into each other. There were sightings on 14 dates in August, with a maximum of just three, four singles in September and a late bird on 15th October.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

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

There were 30 in the first winter period, with numbers decreasing to around 12 in the first half of April, with passage later in the month peaking at 27 on 26th and a maximum the following month of just 20 on 4th May. Although six pairs held territory and the first chicks were present from 10th June, breeding success appeared to be poor. By the end of June passage was evident, with high counts including 24 on 22nd June and 27 on 12th August. For the rest of the autumn numbers didn't rise above 15, with wintering numbers at the end of the year peaking at 20 on 29th December.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Spring migrants were represented by singles on 21st April, 1st May and 13th–14th May and up to two on 26th–28th May. An early autumn migrant appeared on 18th July, with the next arrival not until 4th August, when a record-breaking count of 20 was made. There were then daily sightings from 18th August to 19th September, with numbers peaking at 37 on 20th then 39 on 26th August, the hat-trick of record-breaking counts this autumn coinciding with the largest ever influx into the south of Shetland. Singles on 5th and 19th December were the first records for that month, although with a small wintering flock having become established on North Ronaldsay since January 2013, they were perhaps not a surprise.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring

One was in South Harbour on 4th May, with a single in June (a breeding-plumaged bird on 24th at Houll) possibly a late spring migrant. Autumn passage consisted of two on 11th July and singles on 30th July and 17th–18th August, then six were seen from the Good Shepherd on 23rd September before the final of a good year was seen on 26th September.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter, spring and autumn migrant

Maximum monthly counts of Turnstone on Fair Isle 2013 compared with previous ten-year average 2003–2012 average

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
122	130	146	138	54	13	37	80	109	179	130	105
2013 count											
170	180	57	123	82	10	21	111	131	207	256	140

Numbers more or less followed the expected pattern, although spring passage was low and autumn figures were slightly above average, whilst the count of 256 on 7th November was the highest since 2008.

Knot *Calidris canutus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring, rare in winter

The 11th winter record was around Nether Taft from 12th–14th February and, given the similarity to the tenth winter record (near Lower Leogh on 9th–13th February 2012), it seems highly possible that the same bird may have been involved in both sightings. A light spring passage saw probably the same bird present on three dates between 22nd–26th April, a single on 6th, 11 on 7th and two on 20th May. Autumn passage commenced on 18th July, with two the next day before one or two were seen from 29th July to the end of the month, and then on ten August and 15 September dates until 23rd, with a late bird at South Light on 3rd November.

Ruff *Calidris pugnax*

Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring

A fairly typical year of sightings began with one on 30th July, three from 4th–5th August then regular sightings from 11th August to 25th September, with no more than four, aside from a peak of 23 on 17th August. A later bird was present in early October until 9th and the final sighting was of one on 23rd October.

*Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

Vagrant; 17 previous records (11 in spring, six in autumn)

Probably the most overdue bird on the Fair Isle list (with the last record back in 1987) finally made a reappearance when one spent 7th–8th June on Da Water, with occasional visits to Utra scrape.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

Regular autumn migrant, less common in spring

An early spring bird was present on 30th March, with the next not until three on 6th and 8th May. From 15th May to 11th June there were sightings on ten dates, all singles apart from five on 27th May. Autumn passage commenced from 25th July, rising to four on 30th July with occasional sightings in early August becoming daily from 17th August. An early surge in records saw 46 on 18th August (comfortably beating the previous highest Fair Isle count of 31 in July 2006), with

numbers rapidly decreasing and only single figures from 22nd to the end of the month. Counts in September never exceeded seven and only three remained into October with the last of the year on 4th October.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; has bred (last suspected in 2007)

Typically there was only one record in the early winter period, on 29th January, with spring passage from 16th March seeing numbers rise to six by the end of the month. There were just two singles in April then sightings became daily from 3rd May until 15th June, peaking at 27 on 8th May. During this time, a displaying bird was noted near the Vaadal, whilst an interesting occurrence was one on Swey on 26th June. There were scattered records in July, with the first juveniles noted from 22nd and daily sightings in August, with counts up to ten until an influx of 46 from 18th that peaked at 50 on 23rd August. In September, the year's peak occurred on 4th, when 85 were recorded but there were then less than 40 for the month and up to 24 in early October, with declining numbers until the last of the year was seen on 24th October.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, also overwinterers

Only small numbers were present in the first winter period, peaking at 30 on 12th January. Spring passage included a count of 120 on 11th April, the highest ever spring count for Fair Isle (and second highest ever count after 150 in November 1974). There were 48 on 10th May then none after 28th May. Autumn passage began with nine on 7th July, with small numbers seen regularly from the end of the month, but double figures weren't reached until ten on 7th November. Small numbers were recorded in the later winter period, peaking at 15 on 18th December.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Scarce autumn migrant, vagrant in spring

There was one in North Haven then down the island on 8th September and two were present on 10th September, a typical showing for recent years.

***Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Calidris subruficollis*

Vagrant; 13 previous records (of 14 birds), all arriving in September

One flushed from the wet area behind North Naaversgill on 9th October was seen the following day briefly near the same area before settling on Hoini in the afternoon. It was the latest arrival on Fair Isle by almost a fortnight (although one previously lingered to 1st October).

***Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*

Rare visitor; 30 previous records, most from August to October, but three in spring

One opposite Stackhoull on 6th May was the earliest ever spring record (the previous earliest being 23rd May 1975), whilst at adult at Kirki Mire then Da Water from 22nd–24th July was the first record for that month.



Montagu's Harrier, Da Water, June. © D. Parnaby



Dotterel, Barkland, September. © S. Arlow



Nightjar, Gully, September. © D. Parkin



Temminck's Stint, Da Water, June. © D. Parnaby



Great Spotted Woodpecker, Haa, April. © D. Parnaby





Melodious Warbler, Field, May. © D. Parnaby



Booted Warbler, Chalet, August. © D. Parnaby



Icterine Warbler, Vaila's Trees, August. © D. Parnaby



Red-eyed Vireo, Easter Lother, October. © D. Parnaby



Grey-cheeked Thrush, School, October. © I. Andrews



Waxwing, Obs, April.
© D. Parnaby



Red-backed Shrike, Vaadal, May. © D. Parnaby





Red-breasted Flycatcher, N. Raeva, October.
© S. Arlow



Thrush Nightingale, Pund, May. © C. Maconnachie



Red-throated Pipit, Utra, October. © D. Parnaby



Bullfinch, Gilsetter, October. © I. Andrews



Rustic Bunting, South Raeva, June. © D. Parnaby



Ortolan Bunting, South Harbour, May. © K. Kelly



Two-barred Crossbills, Hoini, July. © D. McGibbon





Beautiful Golden-Y, Obs, September. © T. Donohue



Twin-spot Plume, Schoolton, July. © N. Riddiford



Risso's Dolphins, Ditfield, September. © D. Parnaby



Freyja and Susannah with Stuart Thomson of Shirva, 4th July. © D. Parnaby



Elizabeth Riddiford and cruise ship visitors, 5th July. © D. Parnaby



The choir performing in the Obs lounge, 16th March. © D. Wheeler



'Bistro night' at the Obs, 16th March. © D. Wheeler



The choir perform at the Christmas Tree, 27th December. © D. Wheeler

***Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Rare visitor; 45 individuals previously recorded (including several multiple records); most September and October, but also recorded in January, May, August and November

Two 'grey' birds (presumably first-summer individuals) seen from the Good Shepherd one and a half miles north of Bunes on 11th July represented the first record for that month.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

There was one on 3rd May, up to four from 8th–21st May, then five on 26th May, with smaller numbers to 29th May and one from 5th–8th June. Autumn passage was relatively quiet, with singles on four dates between 26th July and 8th August, up to three during 20th–29th August and singles regularly during 4th–13th September.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

The earliest spring record since 2003 was present from 10th–12th April, with further regular records from 19th–28th April. In May, there were sightings from 8th–11th and 28th–29th. Autumn passage began early with one on 5th July then from 25th July there were regular sightings through to 10th August, peaking at four on 4th, with the last of the year being the latest record since 2000, on 21st September.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*

Rare autumn migrant, vagrant in spring

One first heard over Bunes on 12th August went on to linger at Da Water until 18th August; only the second record since 2008 of this elegant wader.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Two on 15th April began a reasonably good spring showing, which continued with one on 19th April, one on 5th–6th May and further singles on 14th and 22nd May. The first of the autumn were two on 30th July, which was also the peak count for the season, with only singles seen on seven dates until 30th August.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

As usual, Da Water provided a magnet for this species with the first of the year there on 11th May and another on 17th and 19th–20th May. One at Utra on 28th August was the only autumn record.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

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

Counts of wintering birds were generally around 25 birds, with a peak in the first half of the year of 27 on 28th April. Numbers declined to single figures from 5th May,

with the last of the spring seen on 10th June. What were probably the first autumn visitors appeared on 28th June, with numbers rising to 13 in early July and 21 in early August, and counts increasing later in the month, to a peak of 57 on 28th August. Autumn numbers were unexceptional with monthly peaks of 33 in September, 39 in October and 52 in November, with around 30 still present in December.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring

Occasional sightings in the first two months of the year suggested a small overwintering presence, whilst records on 5th, 14th and 15th April were more likely to be spring migrants. The first of the autumn were found on 11th September with daily sightings from 17th September to 31st October, usually of less than ten, but peaking at 22 on 25th September. There were still counts of three in November and singles in December suggested that birds were again spending the winter on the island.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Regular spring and frequent late-autumn migrant, occasionally overwinters

There were small numbers wintering on the island, with one or two seen on several dates in January and February. By mid-March, spring migrants were probably passing through, with a peak of five on 17th March. Once census started in April there were almost daily records until 21st, peaking at seven on 12th April. The first autumn bird was seen on 1st October, with daily sightings from 11th October until the end of the month, with arrivals of 20 on 21st and 31 on 31st October. Numbers declined sharply in early November as census came to an end, although 37 were noted on 12th November with smaller numbers until later in the month.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

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

Numbers in the first winter period peaked at 66 on 29th January, with drumming first noted from 24th February. Spring passage was generally low, with a peak of 61 on 4th April, although counts were mostly between 20 and 30. Numbers in summer were low as just the breeding birds remained and chicks were noted from 4th June. Counts increased from the last week of August, with 61 on 20th, and in September numbers were generally over 50 with a notable increase from 18th when there were 149, the highest count since 2005. Numbers in October were usually 40–80, although there were 132 on 28th, with high numbers persisting into November, with a peak of 142 (in the south of the island only) on 7th, with just small numbers lingering throughout December.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Rare spring and autumn migrant; at least 66 previous records, most May–June and September–October

Single adults were seen from the Good Shepherd on 15th May and 4th July, the latter (which followed the boat for about five miles as it approached the island) being only the seventh midsummer record.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Frequent passage migrant, breeds in small numbers

The first arrived on 21st April, but birds seemed slow to make it back, with the first double-figure count not until 7th May. Most birds were probably on territory by the third week, but just 19 AOT were located, one less than in 2012 and a new low for the Fair Isle Arctic Skua colony since numbers started to increase in the 1950s. The first egg was seen on 1st June, but it is likely that not all pairs even laid, with most of the eggs that were produced being predated in the early stages of incubation. Only one chick hatched (on 29th June), but did not survive long, so for the fifth time since 2004 productivity was zero. By early August, counts barely exceeded double figures as birds left the island and by the third week of August most sightings were of birds at sea, with the last two being seen on 28th August.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Frequent passage migrant, breeds in moderate numbers

The first returning bird was back on 31st March, slightly later than usual and birds were generally slow to arrive, with the first double-figure count not until 12th April, although numbers then started to rise more rapidly. The first egg was found on 13th May (just one day later than 2012) and 266 AOT were located during the summer, an 11.3% decrease from the record population figures of 2012. Chicks were first seen on 14th June, and the first fledgling was on the wing by 18th July, although the breeding season seemed somewhat more protracted than usual. Breeding success was relatively poor at 0.36 chicks fledged per AOT, a 32.1% decrease from 2012. There were still over 400 present in early September, with over 50 remaining on the island in early October. At least four stayed into early November, with the last seen on 8th, the latest record since 2007.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers

For the second consecutive year there was an unusual early winter record, with one in South Haven on 10th February. The next record was on the more expected date of 31st March, with numbers building up during the first week of April, although by the end of the month birds had still not really settled into a routine and this, combined with poor weather, prevented a full census of the Puffin population. By early May, birds were finally starting to settle on the island and the first chicks were noted at Greenholm on 6th June. Productivity was good at 0.73 chicks per egg laid, an increase of 21.7% on 2012, with food samples showing that it was largely small sandeels and clupeids that were being brought in. Birds remained highly visible on the island until early August, with sightings through until 1st September and one autumn seawatching record on 12th October. The year finished with another winter record from South Haven on 29th December, the first record for that month since 1992.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers

Birds were present offshore in small numbers throughout the year. The counts of breeding-plumaged adults on the east coast monitoring plot (North Light to South Light) produced a maximum total of 174 on 30th March, a 4.4% decrease on the 2012 peak, but continuing the lightly fluctuating, gradual increase since 1997.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers (last count 1365 individuals in 2010)

The first arrival was on 19th March, with large numbers in the north and birds regularly on the cliffs from 26th March. The first egg was fairly late, in Easter Lothar on 12th May. The number of birds on the Lericum plot increased by 34.9% since 2012 (to just 22 individuals), but the number of eggs laid was actually down, suggesting that many birds didn't even attempt breeding. The first chick was seen at Gunnawark on 15th June, but productivity of the monitored nests was very poor, at just 0.04 chicks fledged per egg laid. Birds lingered around the island until 8th August, with later birds seen on 11th September and from the Good Shepherd on 5th November.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

Frequent late autumn and winter visitor

Only one was seen in the early winter period, when it passed South Light on 9th January, followed by a very late bird being found freshly dead at Kenaby on 26th April. Autumn passage began with another dead bird (this time at Hesswalls) on 23rd October. Other late October records were of one past Meoness on 25th, one in South Haven on 28th and one flying haphazardly over the Kirk on 31st in stormy conditions. The final records were of three from the Good Shepherd on 5th November and one in North Haven on 10th November.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Common passage migrant, breeds in large numbers (last count 19501 individuals, 2010)

Although birds were present at the cliffs in good numbers from the start of the year, it proved to be a disastrous breeding season for this species. Although the first eggs were seen on 21st May and the first chicks on 21st June, numbers on the population plots were 29.7% down on 2012. No chicks fledged (for only the fourth time, following total failures in 2004, 2008 and 2011) and very few eggs were laid in the monitoring plots. The feeding watch at Pietron had to be cancelled as not a single chick hatched there. After August there were only a few birds seen offshore, in decreasing numbers until the end of the year.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Scarce spring and summer migrant, rare in autumn

A single record, when one flew north over the island on 13th June; a typical record of this just-about annual visitor.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor, formerly bred in small numbers (until 2005, with one pair in 2012)

The first of the year was not seen until the very late date of 25th May when one was in North Haven. Two were present on 26th and 28th May, which proved to be the highest count of a very disappointing year, with one lingering until 31st May. As the tern colony on Bunes was virtually non-existent it was no surprise that there was no repeat of the 2012 breeding attempt. The only records during the summer were of singles on 8th and 10th June, 1st, 7th and 8th July and 18th August with the last of the year being one in the Havens on 15th September.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii

Vagrant; two previous records (May 1988 and July 1996)

One of the highlights of the summer was an adult of this species at the tern roost at South Light during the late evening of 6th July. It appeared during an increase in first-winter Arctic Terns, suggesting it was possibly a wandering non-breeding bird. With extralimital Roseate Terns also recorded in Shetland mainland, North Ronaldsay and Iceland (a first record for that country), during June/July there appeared to be an unusual northwards dispersal of this species in 2013.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor, breeds in variable numbers

The first arrival wasn't until 8th May, with the first larger numbers noted from 19th, with 65 counted and courtship display noted for the first time. Northward passage was also noted late in the month and counts reached up to 100 by 26th May. The peak count of the year was on 8th June, when 205 were noted and the first egg was also seen. However, with birds regularly seen catching moths from 19th June, it was no surprise that it was a poor breeding season and only 29 nests were recorded, with no chicks hatching; since 2000, only three years have seen chicks fledge. First-summer birds were noted from 14th June and peaked at 25 on 6th July, usually in the roost at South Light. That roost started building up from late June and peaked at 120 on 6th July. There were still 90 on 5th August, but after 12th August there were sightings on just six more dates with the last on 15th September.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Common passage migrant, breeds in moderate numbers

Small numbers were seen offshore in all months, with birds regularly back on the cliffs from 17th March, although nest-building wasn't noted until 29th May. Sadly, but unsurprisingly, it was another poor breeding season, with the whole island population declining by 37.1% from 2012, to just 771 AON. The first eggs were noted on 5th June and, although a chick was seen on 1st July, all nests had failed by 19th July and productivity was zero for the fourth consecutive year. Birds had left the island by mid-August, although small numbers were seen offshore until the end of the year.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Unusually there were none until six on 17th March with further occasional sightings until records became regular from the third week of April, with up to 11 recorded. In May, the peak was 27 on 6th and smaller numbers were present throughout June. The first juvenile arrived on 1st July, with the highest count in the month of 14, then daily records in August peaked at 28 on 21st and up to 17 in September. There were no larger counts later in the autumn, with sightings of smaller numbers becoming less regular as the year went on, with one first-winter remaining at the end of the year.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Common spring and autumn migrant, breeds in small numbers

There were small numbers present in the first three months of the year, with counts rising in the spring to a peak of 57 in early May. The first eggs were recorded on Bunes on 4th June and ten AON were noted during the summer (nine on Bunes and one at Goorn) and although the latter got as far as the chick stage, no chicks fledged. As usual, there were larger numbers from early autumn, with a peak of 344 on 4th August. Small numbers were present thereafter, with generally just single figures by the end of the year.

***Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis*

Vagrant; three previous records (April, June and August)

The second record in as many years involved a first-winter from 9th–14th January, which was usually seen in the vicinity of Setter and the Parks.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The first three of the year arrived on 4th April, a late date for the first record. Sightings became daily from late April, with small influxes in May producing counts of 49 on 5th and 35 on 13th May. Four pairs nested on Goorn, where the first chick was seen on 29th June, and a pair lingered at Houll during the summer. A summer arrival saw 49 on 8th July and then another arrival from 18th August saw numbers peak at 137 on 20th before dropping away rapidly. There were 47 on 1st September, then much smaller counts through to 17th September, after which the only sighting was a first-winter on 22nd October, the latest record since 2001.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Resident, breeds in small numbers, also hard-weather migrant in autumn and winter

Birds were incubating from 20th May and a minimum of 50 AON was recorded (41 on Goorn, six on Greenholm and single pairs on Lerness, Hesswalls and Da Burrian), an increase of five pairs on 2012. The largest count from birds sheltering during autumn storms was 1050 in the north of the island only on 25th October.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides***Scarce migrant in winter and spring**

The only record in January was a first-winter on 9th, whilst an adult on 8th February was the sole record for that month. Sightings of young birds on 2nd and 18th and an adult on 28th March may all have been spring migrants, as was the immature on 26th April. Late first-year birds were present on 14th–15th May and 2nd–4th June. A first-winter on 23rd October was the first of the autumn and was joined by an adult the following day, whilst first-winters seen on 1st, 14th, 20th and 23rd November and 9th and 17th–19th December may all have been the same individual.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus***Regular migrant in spring, late autumn and winter**

An adult was present on 1st January, whilst irregular sightings (often during stormy conditions) of first-winter birds from 13th January to 18th March peaked at four on Bunes on 11th February (the highest count since 2006). In autumn a first-winter was at Easter Lother Water on 14th October, with further singles on two more October dates, three dates in early November and 5th December. Higher counts during this period were of two on 29th October (an adult and first-winter) and 16th November (both first-winters), with the highest count of the latter part of the year consisting of three first-winter birds on 18th December.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus***Resident, breeds in small numbers, also hard-weather migrant in autumn and winter**

Seven pairs were recorded breeding this year (two on Da Burrian and singles at Dronger, Lerness, Greenholm, Hesswalls and Goorn), with birds incubating full clutches by 29th May. The largest counts of birds sheltering from storms in the autumn were up to 800 in late October and early November.

Rock Dove *Columba livia***Resident, breeds in small numbers**

Although numbers are not recorded on daily census, irregular counts in the spring were generally in the region of 30 birds. A fledged juvenile was at Haa on the early date of 15th May. The highest count in the autumn was on 30th August when 79 were in the south-east census area alone, a higher count than most recent years.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas***Scarce spring and autumn migrant**

One on Meoness was recorded on 16th–17th and 20th April and two were seen heading south over the Double Dyke on 26th May.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus***Frequent spring and autumn migrant**

An early bird was present on 22nd–25th February. Ten arrived on 16th March, increasing to 12 later in the month, with virtually daily sightings through the spring.

A further wave of arrivals occurred in mid-April peaking at 18 on 16th, with numbers decreasing to seven by the end of the month. In May regular sightings included peaks of 20 on 5th and 9th May, with numbers then decreasing and just a small peak of six on 1st June, with one to 20th June and up to three then seen in early July. Autumn passage started on 31st August and regular sightings in September peaked at six on 25th, with highs in October of 16 on 11th, 24 on 15th and 23 on 21st with the last on 2nd November. One from 22nd December to the end of the year was the first in this month since 2004.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*
Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

The first arrived on 31st March and there were regular sightings of one or two during the following month, increasing to six on 25th April, with a high turnover of birds suspected during this time. Up to two were regularly present in early May and, although there was one singing during this time, there were no breeding attempts despite up to four then being present from late May to 8th June. There were occasional sightings of singles in late June and early July, before three were seen on 8th July, with irregular sightings of one throughout the month before there were three again on 1st August and singles on 2nd, 15th and 18th August.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*
Scarce spring and autumn migrant

For the first time since 2008 there were no spring records, with the only sightings at Lower Stoneybrek then South Light on 24th September and a juvenile at Haa on 14th October (the latest record since 2006).

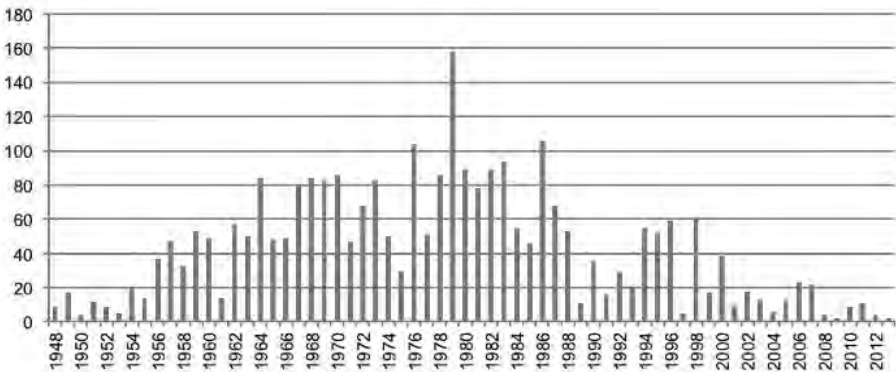


Figure 2. Turtle Dove bird-days (the sum of the daily Log counts throughout the year) on Fair Isle during the FIBO period 1948–2013.

The dramatic decline of the species since the mid-1980s is clearly illustrated and, although numbers were also low in the early FIBO years, the two bird-days recorded in 2013 and 2009 are record low counts.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus***Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn, has bred (most recently in 2002)**

There were singles on 10th, 17th, 20th, 29th and 31st May, a much improved spring showing after last year's dismal single record. A juvenile present from 11th–19th August meant that this was only the second year since 2008 to produce an autumn record.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus***Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring**

Another good spring saw records in the Gully on 12th and 28th April and the Obs on 30th April. On 3rd May one was at Furse, with a bird at Barkland from 9th–11th May, with further records in the month on 16th, 18th and 21st–24th, before the last of the spring on the very late date of 29th June. A quiet autumn saw one on 5th–6th October with further singles on 21st and 31st October.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus***Regular spring and autumn migrant**

The first of the spring was on 16th April, with further singles on 28th–29th April and 8th May. One was seen coming in off the sea at South Light on 10th May which preceded daily sightings until 16th, peaking at three on 12th–14th May. There were occasional sightings later in the month and then three again on 1st June, with several sightings of up to two until the last was seen on 21st June with unusually late records on 5th and 15th July. Although birds were regularly seen in potentially suitable breeding habitat around Da Water, there was no reason to suspect a nesting attempt. Autumn records were regular from 26th September until 27th October, singles being recorded on 15 dates with two noted on 5th and 23rd October. Late migrants were present on 6th and 12th November.

Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeusVagrant; 27 previous records, 19 in spring (mostly May), three in July, four in autumn (August–October) and one undated**

The first autumn record since 1976 (and the first in any season since 2009) concerned a juvenile flushed from the Gully early on the morning of 26th September before being trapped there later in the afternoon. After being released at the Obs it settled for a short while in the garden before flying to the Havens then heading north up the island.

Swift *Apus apus***Frequent spring, summer and autumn migrant**

One from 16th–19th April was comfortably the earliest ever Fair Isle record (the previous were birds on 29th April 2001 and 2008). Up to two during 16th–18th May were more normal and spring passage typically merged into the first returning birds, with birds on 13 dates between 4th–26th June and nine dates during 3rd–17th July, with peaks of three in each period. One on 29th and two on 30th July heralded the start of the heaviest period of passage of the year, with almost daily sightings from 3rd–23rd August, peaking at 11 on 5th–6th, before the last birds were seen on 27th and 30th August.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A sometimes elusive individual was found at Utra and remained in the area around South Harbour until 19th May. The only other record in this season was one trapped in the Gully on 17th May, two individuals representing the quietest spring since there were none in 2010. One in the Vaadal on 24th August was the only other record of the year, making it the poorest autumn since just a single was recorded in 1964.

Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*

Rare (and irruptive) migrant, mostly in autumn

A first-summer male that usually frequented the area around Haa from 25th–29th April was a rare spring record (although the fourth since 2002) and the first in any season since 2009. A large autumn influx began with one on 13th September and there were then daily records from 17th September to 17th October, with most counts of two or three, but peaks of six on 23rd September and again on 12th October. Another batch of daily records from 20th–24th October included what was probably the last new arrival, on Dronger on 21st, bringing the autumn total to an estimated minimum of 22 birds.

***Red-eyed Vireo** *Vireo olivaceus*

Vagrant; no previous records

One of the highlights of the autumn was the first Fair Isle record of this striking North American vagrant, foraging on the cliff face at Easter Lothar on 6th October. See page 121 for further details.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

An early female was present on 9th–13th May, with a male noted from 12th–16th May. Two females arrived on 18th May, with birds then present daily until 3rd June. During this time, numbers rose to three on 19th, five on 21st and seven on 25th with the last new arrival on 30th May. At least 12 individuals were involved during this period, including a pair that frequented the Meadow Burn area for at least a week that were seen copulating, although it was not thought that any serious breeding attempt took place. During a spell of cold weather around 23rd May, a male Red-backed Shrike at South Harbour was seen feeding on several Swallows and a Sand Martin that had become exhausted. Further records were then of a male from 7th–9th June that was joined by a second on the latter date, a female on 16th–18th June that was also joined by another on 18th, a female on 24th–25th June and a late male on 2nd July; the 20th individual of the spring. In the autumn birds were present daily during 6th–26th September, with new arrivals on 7th, 9th, 13th (when the autumn peak of three was noted) and 17th (the fifth individual of the autumn), with just one lingering after that.

Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

A sometimes elusive bird was found on Dronger on 5th October, before moving to

the Mast until 8th and then Setter and the Parks until 11th October. Just one record makes this the quietest year for this species since 2009.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A quiet year saw singles in spring on 18th–20th and 23rd–26th April, with two on 9th May. In the autumn the only records were one on 14th October and another on 7th–10th November.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

An early single was present on 18th and 20th March before a strong spring passage began on 30th March, with regular records through April, peaking at five later in month. In May, a flock of 23 on 2nd was the highest count since 1980, with one or two until eight on 10th, with decreasing numbers until just a single remained, from 19th May to 14th June. There were no autumn records for the first time since 2009.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

One on 13th April preceded regular sightings of up to three until the end of the month, with an arrival in early May peaking at 40 on 6th, with numbers then dropping off rapidly until a second wave of arrivals mid-month brought a peak of 23 on 14th–15th May. There were then no more than nine throughout the rest of May, with a flock of 11 on 3rd June the last arrival of the spring. Sightings of one or two irregularly through June to August were probably left-overs from the spring. Autumn records of a single regularly from 13th September to 24th October were probably all the same bird, which was joined by a second from 13th–14th October. The spring influxes also included occasional records of hybrids with Hooded Crow.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Resident, breeds in small numbers

There were four occupied territories, with the first chicks fledging on 4th July, but unusually, there was no evidence of passage during the spring or autumn (although small numbers of migrants may be hard to detect amongst the breeding birds).

Raven *Corvus corax*

Resident, breeds in small numbers. Also regular spring and autumn migrant

In the spring there was some evidence of passage, with nine over Malcolm's Head on 13th March likely to be migrants (and six still present the next day), along with singles on 25th April (which was seen coming in off the sea at South Light) and 29th April and a count of 15 on 2nd May that was likely to involve migrant birds. Three territories appeared to be held on the island, with the first fledged chick noted on 20th May at Wester Lother. The only sign of autumn passage was a single bird heading south across the island on 6th September.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

One in North Raeva on 16th March was the only record until 10th April, with daily sightings of up to six from 13th–29th April and regular sightings to 10th May, peaking at seven on 7th, with the last of the spring on 16th May. Autumn passage began on 20th September, with just small numbers until the first sizeable fall on 30th September produced 24. There were regular records throughout October peaking at 71 on 12th, with numbers then declining until the last small arrival of 11 on 22nd October, then just single figures after that with the last on 1st November.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Rare spring and autumn migrant; 38 previous records involving around 52 individuals

The female that arrived in October 2012 remained in the south of the island until 1st April, the first overwintering record since 2001/02. Another female arrived on 14th April and was joined by a second on 19th April, with both remaining until 24th and one until 26th April.

***Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

For the second consecutive year there was just a single record, with one in the Havens on 9th–10th October.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

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

The first was not recorded until 13th February, with the first bird in song by 24th and numbers increasing to 35 by the end of the month. The peak in March was 80 with then up to 130 regularly recorded in April, with a spring peak of 230 on 19th April. Numbers settled around 40–60 throughout May and June, which were mostly breeding birds. The first fledged chicks were seen on 9th June (one day earlier than 2012). In August numbers were no more than 40 until 56 were present on the last day of the month and numbers increased throughout September, rising to 156 on 25th September. There were 149 on 5th October, with southerly passage producing several counts of around 100 over the next few days. Counts thereafter in October were 40–50, with just single figures in the following month with none after 17th November.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

One at the North Light helipad on 12th November was only the third autumn record since 2004.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

A reasonable spring passage began with two on 14th April, with sightings of up to three on six more dates later in the month. There were sightings on 7th–10th May, peaking at

nine on 8th, and up to four from 15th–17th May, with two late migrants on 19th June. There were up to two on 6th–10th July and one on 17th July, with a quiet autumn restricted to further sightings on 15th and 25th August, then five on 3rd September.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Common spring and autumn migrant; occasionally breeds

The first on 15th April was an average arrival date and preceded daily records through the spring. The highest count in April was just 16, then waves of passage in May saw peaks of 58 during 8th–11th, 52 on 15th–21st and 77 on 25th May. Interestingly, a juvenile present on 8th–9th May was presumably raised in the south of the species' breeding range earlier in the year before being caught up with other north-bound migrants. There were up to 26 in early June, with numbers decreasing through the month and, although up to five were seen during the summer, there were no breeding attempts for the first time since 2009. A slight increase was noted from mid-August, with an autumnal peak of 29 on 29th and then up to 17 during regular sightings in September and later singles on 9th–10th and 14th October.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

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

The first arrival on 3rd May was the latest since 2002 and preceded regular sightings from 8th May through the spring, peaking at just 16 on 10th May. Nine in early June decreased to regular sightings of four during the rest of the month. The protracted presence in the spring resulted in birds seen nest-building on the cliffs at Fillsi Geo (on Meones) on 6th July, with the nest (which was only visible from the sea) discovered on 12th, although it appeared to be incomplete when it was abandoned. Occasional sightings in August were probably lingering birds, with the only autumn migrants being two on 27th August and one on 21st September.

***Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Rare migrant; 42 previous records (34 autumn and 8 in spring)

Two together at Kenaby on 26th–27th August were the first autumn birds since 2009.

***Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*

Rare migrant; 84 previous records, most in August and September, also recorded in June (two), July (four) and October

A series of records in early September saw one trapped in the Gully on 4th, an unringed bird at North Light on 5th, with what was probably the same bird at Pund on 6th September. The third of the month was at Taft on 13th September, before a late bird was trapped at the Obs on the evening of 14th October and was seen near Shirva the following day. There have now been 15 Arctic Warblers in the last four years on Fair Isle, including the sixth October record this year, following the fifth in 2012.

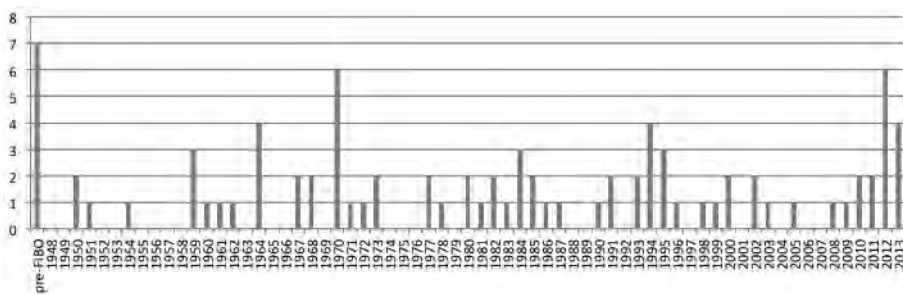


Figure 3. Annual occurrences of Arctic Warbler on Fair Isle.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Regular autumn migrant

There were daily records from 17th September to 9th October, with numbers building to seven on 20th then decreasing before rising again to seven on 24th, 16 on 25th and a peak of 40 on 26th September. There were then daily counts of 32, 20, 29 and 12 to the end of the month. After nine on 1st October, counts were of seven or less, apart from ten on 6th October. A further arrival from 10th saw seven found, with numbers increasing to nine on 12th and four still present until 15th, with the last of the year on 16th October. A huge arrival of these Siberian pioneers was noted across the Northern Isles and Scandinavian countries from early September and Fair Isle logged its highest ever annual total, with at least 70 recorded, and the second highest day count (after a minimum of 45 on 24th September 2008), along with the highest ever total of birds ringed (16).

*Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

Vagrant; 13 previous records, all in autumn (September to November)

The first since 2007 was found in a small flock of *phylloscops* and Goldcrests at the top of North Fellsigeo on 13th October. On 15th October, a fall of Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps saw two more of these Siberian strays recorded, with birds at Setter and Lower Leogh, the latter of which remained in the south of the island until 17th October. Although it is possible that three individuals were involved in these sightings, it is perhaps equally as likely that the Fellsigeo bird moved to the south of the island.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

May records comprised of singles on 12th and 15th May, with two late spring migrants appearing on 8th June with one remaining to the following day. In the quietest autumn since 2007, the only record was of one at Upper Stoneybrek on 5th September.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

One on 11th April was the latest first arrival since 1986, with records of up to six on seven more dates to the end of the month. There were then daily records from 1st May into July, peaking at just nine on 6th May and four in June. For the fourth consecutive year, the species was present throughout the summer, with up to two in July and August. A third bird was present on 31st August, but sightings to 6th September may have been the summering individuals. Migrants appeared on 14th and 18th September, with regular sightings then from 24th September into early November. Numbers rose to eight on 1st October, then a mid-month arrival saw 27 on 12th, numbers dropping to just nine over the next two days before rising to 41 on 15th October. This fall consisted largely of birds most closely resembling 'Siberian Chiffchaff' *P.c.tristis*, with the two trapped birds that provided samples for DNA analysis on this date confirmed as this subspecies. Numbers then decreased to mostly single figures after 18th, although there were 11 on 22nd October, with counts of 'Siberian Chiffchaffs' during this time generally of three or less. The last two Chiffchaffs remained into the following month, with the final record on 19th November.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first on 18th April was over a week later than those in the previous two years, with just two more during the month. There were virtually daily sightings in May, with peaks indicating arrivals including 22 on 8th, 36 on 16th and 12 on 25th May. Up to three regularly in June until 10th included occasional pale *acredula*-type birds, with a late arrival on 16th June seeing up to three recorded until 29th June. Autumn passage began on 5th August with single figures regularly recorded during the month, then numbers rising from 22nd to a peak of 32 on 25th, with further arrivals including 13 on 30th August. Sightings were virtually daily during the following month, with peaks of 20 on 4th, 18 on 13th and 12 on 19th and 26th September, with up to four present until 16th October.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Common spring and autumn migrant

After the first on 18th April there were scattered sightings throughout the rest of the month with then almost daily sightings in May. Numbers were generally in single figures, with peaks including 12 on 8th, ten on 16th and eight on 25th May, with up to two in early June. A small fall then saw up to four present from 16th–29th June, with an even-later female arriving on 4th July. Autumn passage started with one on 26th August, then sightings were regular from 4th September. There were four early in the month, with further small peaks of six on 19th, seven on 27th and 15 on 29th September. By early October, counts were usually in double figures, before an impressive arrival in the middle of the month saw 61 on 15th, with counts then decreasing before rising again to 58 on 20th and 68 on 21st, with 15–38 for the rest of the month. Small numbers lingered into the following month, with the last of an impressive autumn passage seen at Haa on 19th November.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

After the first on 13th May, numbers rose sharply to 25 on 16th (the highest spring count since 1996), with less than ten then seen daily until 11th June and later birds on 15th and two on 19th–21st June. After two on 15th August there were regular sightings throughout the autumn, with peaks of seven in August (on 26th and 29th), six in September (18th) and smaller numbers the following month peaking at four on 4th, with a late single on 27th October.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

Regular autumn migrant, vagrant in spring (three records)

The 16th August saw the first of the autumn, when one was at Vaila's Trees. Singles on 20th–23rd August involved three individuals with then no more until two on 5th and one on 9th September. Two on 19th September began a series of daily records until 28th September, with a peak of four on 20th September and the last new arrival on 21st September, after which no more than two were seen. The final records were singles on 7th and 23rd October, bringing the autumn total to 15 birds, fewer than recent years.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

There was one on 2nd May, then daily sightings from 6th May to 9th June, with peaks of eight on 11th and 20 on 25th May, with a bird singing at the Obs from 7th–9th June. Sightings of three singles during 16th–21st June rounded off a reasonable spring. There were singles from 23rd–29th August and up to two from 4th–6th September, then regular sightings from 11th to 27th September, often up to six and with a peak of nine on 20th before later records on 30th September (three), 11th–12th and 17th–20th October.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

Daily sightings from 7th May until 1st June peaked at 13 on 16th May, with sightings on five further dates in June until 23rd in a reasonable spring showing. There were regular sightings in the autumn from 23rd August to 24th September, with a peak of four on 19th September, and later sightings on 2nd and 5th October.

***Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans*

Rare migrant; 80 previous records (76 in spring and four in autumn). Most currently unraced, although at least 13 thought to be *S.c.albistriata*.

Western Subalpine Warbler *S.c. cantillans*

A first-year male was trapped in the Plantation on 3rd June and remained around the Obs until 14th June and another male was trapped on 17th June and lingered at the Obs until 27th June. The third confirmed Western Subalpine Warbler of the year was a male at Haa on 5th July, which lingered in the south of the island until 14th

September, preferring Schoolton for most of its stay. The two trapped birds had their identification confirmed by DNA analysis.

Eastern Subalpine Warbler *S.c.albistriata*

A female trapped in the Gully on 25th May was identified in the hand as belonging to this subspecies, the identification later being corroborated by DNA analysis.

unraced Subalpine Warbler *S.c.cantillans/albistriata*

A female Subalpine Warbler was at the Plantation on 26th June before being seen near the Chapel later in the day, views on both occasions too brief to identify the bird to subspecific level. The last blank year for Subalpine Warbler sightings on Fair Isle was 1999.

***Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata*

Scarce autumn migrant; 84 previous records (between 4th September and 1st November)

The best year since five were seen in 2007 began with the first trapped on the typical date of 25th September at Da Water. A confiding, unringed bird was at Shirva on 28th September, scuttling just a few feet below observers as it fed under the rose bushes. One at the Wirvie Burn on 6th October also showed well and the fourth of the year was a more elusive individual found at North Shirva on 20th October. There are only two later arrivals than the latter bird (1st November 1960 and 24th October 1925), although a tailless individual in 2012 lingered until 22nd October.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

The first on 23rd April was a typical arrival date, then from 6th–21st May birds were seen on 11 dates, peaking at three on 8th and 16th–17th May. Singles were seen on five August dates from 21st and seven dates in September until 20th, with the last of the year at Field on 4th October.

***River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis*

Vagrant; 16 previous records, eight in May–June (one lingering until July) and eight in September–October

A skulking bird was at Schoolton on 5th–6th June, a typical date. This species has seen an upsurge in fortunes in recent times, with seven records in the last eight years.

***Booted Warbler** *Iduna caligata*

Vagrant; 12 previous records, all in autumn (late August to early October)

The fifth August record for Fair Isle, coming just two years after the last, occurred on 22nd when one was found at the Chalet. The following day it was at the Obs before relocating down the island to the Da Water area where it remained until 28th August.

***Sykes's Warbler** *Iduna rama*

Vagrant; two previous records (both August)

One was at Lower Stoneybrek then Vaila's Trees on 26th–30th September, where it showed very well at times. The previous records (the first two for Britain) occurred in 1959 and 1977, so this one was perhaps overdue (see article on page 124).

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

One at Dronger on 8th May was four days earlier than the previous earliest ever record in 1999 and was presumably the bird seen at North Light on 10th May. There were further singles in May on 15th at Easter Lother, 17th at Da Water, 24th at Field and a singing bird on 29th at Schoolton. One was present in the south of the island from 13th–16th June, with the seventh of the spring at Kirn o'Skroo on 14th June. The first of the autumn occurred on the very early dates of 26th–30th July at Schoolton. Although there have been a few early July records thought to be late spring migrants, this is the earliest autumn record other than a juvenile trapped on 18th July 2003. The next was not until 25th August, which lingered in the south of the island until 4th September, during which time a second was seen in the north on 4th–5th September. The fourth of the autumn was at South Harbour on 10th September.

***Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta*

Vagrant; 17 previous records, five in spring (June) and 12 in autumn (August and September)

One at North Raeva on 15th May was relocated the following day at Chalet, then Field, the earliest Fair Isle record by three weeks. The most recent records were two in 2011, but this is the first in spring since 1990.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

There was one on 3rd May, then regular records from 6th May to 3rd June, peaking at eight on 16th May, with the last spring records on 11th and 19th June. A quiet autumn saw singles on four August dates from 10th, up to three during 4th–9th September, and one on 14th–15th October the latest record since 1980.

***Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola*

Vagrant; 20 previous records, 15 in autumn (14 September, one October) and five in spring (May and June, one lingering until July)

For the second consecutive year there was one in June and another in the autumn, with one at Charlie's Trees on 16th June and one at Barkland on 22nd October, the latter being the latest Fair Isle record by eight days.

*Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Rare migrant; 31 previous records, 23 in autumn (September–October) and eight in spring (May–June)

The third spring record in the last four years was at the Obs from 27th May to 2nd June, during which time it was trapped. The earliest autumn record for Fair Isle was trapped in the Gully on 7th September. In October one that was missing tertials from its left wing was at Springfield on 11th, with a new bird at Schoolton from 12th–15th October that was sporting a full set of flight feathers.

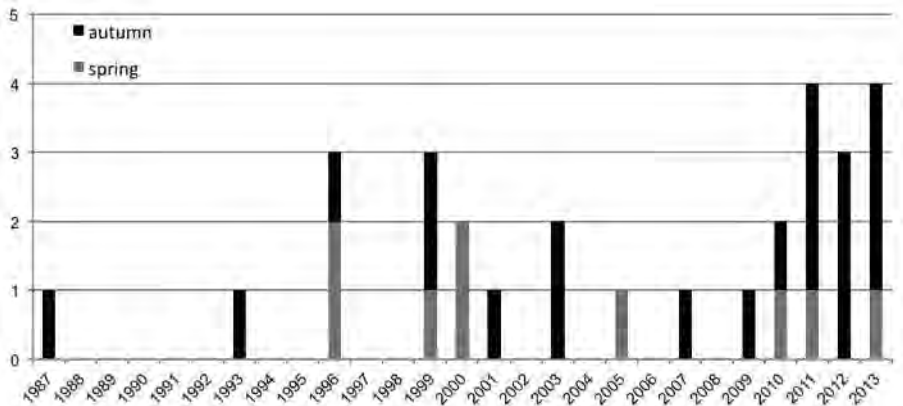


Figure 4. Annual and seasonal occurrences of Blyth's Reed Warbler on Fair Isle (showing all records since the establishment of FIBO in 1948).

There were also six autumn records from 1910–1928, all of which were shot. Note the dramatic change in status from mega-rarity to seemingly expected annual rare migrant in less than two decades.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

One at Shirva and Lower Leogh on 18th–19th May was the earliest ever Fair Isle record (the previous earliest was 22nd May 1984). The next was trapped at the Plantation on 25th May and was joined by two more the following day, with daily records until 3rd June, including a new arrival on 29th May. Another was found on 6th June, then two more arrived on 10th, one remaining to the following day. From 13th June to 12th July birds were seen daily, with further arrivals in mid-June (when up to three were seen), 26th June (when the annual peak of five was noted, including three at the Obs) and 4th July (when two more arrived, bringing the total present to three). The spring total of 16 individuals is the best on record. Autumn passage began just 15 days after the last spring bird was seen, with an early juvenile at the Obs from 27th July until 1st August, and further autumn birds were seen at Schoolton on 22nd August and 13th September.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Scarce spring migrant, regular in autumn

The first was at Lower Leogh from 29th May to 1st June, with a new bird trapped on 2nd June. Further spring birds were found on 20th–23rd June, with another from 23rd June that lingered to 19th July and one trapped on 26th June. Autumn passage began with one from 11th–16th August, with three recorded on the latter date, then regular sightings from 20th–29th August that peaked at three on 26th–27th August. September sightings were restricted to one on 6th and two on 13th, with the last bird lingering during 4th–16th October joined by a second on the latter date.

Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

Scarce/irruptive autumn migrant, rare in spring and winter

Winter records are rare, but are occurring with increasing regularity and one was seen on 8th February. As is often the case after a large autumn arrival, there were spring records, with one on 11th April, increasing to four the next day and two lingering to 14th April. Further singles were seen on 25th–26th April, 3rd–4th May and 14th–23rd May, the latter the third latest spring record. A quieter autumn saw two present on 20th October and a single on 22nd October.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

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

The first singing bird of the year was heard at Hjukni Geo on 4th March and surveys revealed 33 territories, five less than 2012. It is possible that the poor weather that hampered survey attempts may have meant that some territories were missed, especially as Vaasetter and Malcolm's Head (both areas that receive less intensive coverage on census) recorded fewer territories than recent years. The first fledged birds were seen six days earlier than in 2012, on 4th June at Roskillie (only three days later than the earliest recorded fledging date). Birds trapped on 4th May and 5th November were both considered to be possible nominate race birds.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers. Also common spring and autumn migrant

There were no significant counts during the year and there were generally lower numbers of pairs breeding than in recent years. The modal laying date of monitored nests was 8th May (a relatively early date), with clutch sizes rather small (a mean of 4.3) and, although hatching success was high (94.9%), fledging success was slightly lower than average (74.7%), with the first fledged birds noted from 8th June (a typical date).

***White's Thrush** *Zoothera dauma*

Vagrant; 11 previous records, ten in autumn (September–October), one in February

The stunning highlight of a very impressive day on 25th September was this magnificent thrush found just before breakfast behind the generator at Bullock Holes. After flying up to the nearby heathery slope it showed well at times for the rest of the morning, although it could often spend long periods down rabbit burrows.

The first since five were found during an impressive spell from 2007 to 2009.

***Grey-cheeked Thrush** *Catharus minimus*

Vagrant; three previous autumn records (September–October)

After a 49-year wait between the second and third records, the fourth appeared after a gap of just six years, when one was found by the School on 11th October. It went on to show well until early afternoon as it fed in the open in the fields at Chatham's Land.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A male from 11th–13th April preceded scattered records throughout the month, although the maximum was just two. Present almost daily in May, with peaks of four on 4th, five on 9th and 11th and seven on 25th, with one remaining until 4th June. Sightings of males on 15th June and 30th June to 8th July appeared to involve a slightly injured bird, lingering from the spring and was the first July record since 1998. A quiet autumn began with two on 30th September and up to three were recorded on only three dates until 14th October, which preceded records on eight dates until 23rd, peaking at five on 21st October.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Common spring and autumn migrant, small numbers overwinter; has bred (last recorded 2011)

There were generally small numbers in the early part of the year, but 43 in the south of the island on 15th January suggested an arrival. There were up to 25 in February and numbers were low in March until around 100 arrived on 17th March. Numbers had decreased to less than 50 by early April, although another arrival saw 112 on 12th, but counts after 22nd April were all in single figures. Only small numbers were seen in May, including a male that sang at the Obs from 8th and lingered into July (when a female was noted around the Vaadal from 11th–17th). After the first autumn migrant on 25th September, there were just single-figure counts until 10th October, with numbers increasing to a peak of 606 on 21st. Up to 50 remained into November until a fall from late on 11th saw 646 present the following day, with numbers decreasing rapidly thereafter and only around 20 lingering into December.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Common spring and autumn migrant, often overwinters

With winter numbers usually around 25, counts of 55 on 15th January, 42 on 18th and 60 on 25th February probably reflected new arrivals. Spring passage included up to 40 in early March, 60 on 21st March and up to 41 in early April, with smaller numbers seen daily until 20th April. Later records included a single on 25th April, up to 11 on 3rd–4th May and up to three from 8th–18th May. Autumn migration began on 24th September, but counts were in single figures until 326 arrived on 13th October, with further arrivals of 400 on 17th and 1494 on 22nd October. Numbers then decreased rapidly, although a late fall saw 164 arrive on 12th November, but just single figures remained by the end of the year.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

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

There were up to three early in the year, with the first sign of passage being nine on 17th March. Sightings of up to four were almost daily in April, although a fall during 11th–13th peaked at 30. A small arrival in May peaked at five on 10th–11th and there were still two in June, with the last of the spring seen on 10th June. Two on 18th September preceded an arrival from 24th, peaking at 96 on 29th September. Numbers then dropped away until another fall on 5th October brought 72 to the island, with a smaller arrival of 38 on 21st October. Just two remained in November, with a single lingering to the end of the year.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

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

There were up to 35 in the first winter period, with counts dwindling to single figures by early April until an arrival in mid-month peaked at 84 on 14th, with up to ten remaining until 10th May. There was then one on 15th–16th May and up to three between 23rd May and 10th June, including one regularly singing in the area from Barkland to Stackhoull. The 24th September signalled the start of autumn passage, when there were 22 followed by a few small waves of arrivals, but numbers didn't reach three figures until 11th October, then rose rapidly to 600 by 13th October. The next fall from 21st October saw numbers increase to an autumn peak of 1144 on 22nd, with 200 remaining until early November. After that, numbers decreased (other than a fall on 12th November which saw an increase to 93), with counts then of around 20 until the end of the year.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

After one on 9th March, there were four in the south on 16th March and one in the north the following day, with smaller numbers then recorded regularly to 6th April. Between 9th–15th April there was a notable arrival, peaking at 20 on 11th (the joint third highest spring counts after 26 in March 2006, 23 in April 1987 and 20 in March 1996). There were later singles on 3rd and 8th May. A reasonable autumn showing saw up to four on 15 dates between 1st and 25th October.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Remarkably, an arrival of three on 8th May was the same date as the first sighting in each of the last two years. There were then smaller numbers present to 12th May, with a larger arrival of 11 noted on 16th, followed by almost daily sightings until the end of the month, with a further arrival of ten on 29th May. In June there were records on ten dates up to 21st, with peaks of three on 3rd, 10th, 16th and 20th all indicating new arrivals. Autumn passage was quiet, with one on 27th August, up to three on 7th–9th September and further singles on 17th and 25th September and 11th October (the latter the latest record since 1987).

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Common spring and autumn migrant

There were at least a couple in the early winter period, with spring passage seeing a decent-sized fall in mid-April. Numbers rose to 93 on 12th April, but dropped to single figures from 20th, apart from 13 on 26th April. Up to three lingered throughout May and June, with one still present at the Obs until 18th July. Autumn passage began on 27th August, with virtually daily sightings from then on of up to three birds. The first significant fall was 27 on 29th September, with other falls consisting of 31 on 5th, 27 on 22nd, 26 on 26th and 28 on 28th October. Smaller numbers in November peaked at 11 on 12th and at least five remained until the end of the year.

*Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*

Rare migrant; 57 previous records, 47 in spring and ten in autumn

Three in May made it the best spring for this species since 1998, with the first at Pund on 8th–10th and then two on 29th: one at Haa and another at Utra. The second consecutive year with an autumn record saw one at North Haven on 26th August, with the same bird relocating to Haa on 28th and Schoolton on 29th–30th August.

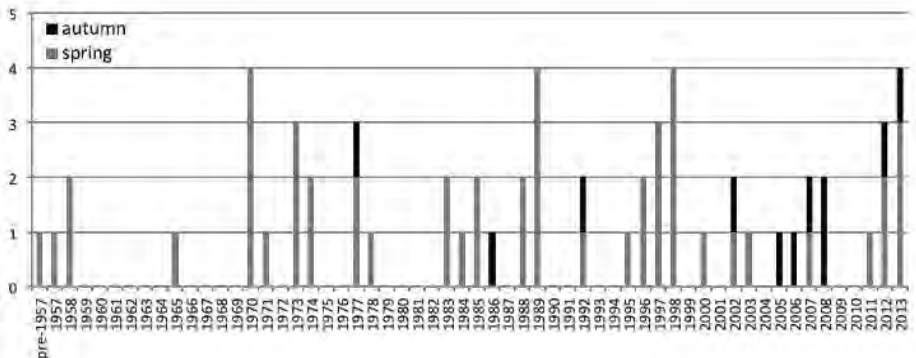


Figure 5. Annual and seasonal occurrences of Thrush Nightingale on Fair Isle.

Note the 'surges' of spring occurrences, often followed by sparser spells, along with the increasing frequency of autumn records.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

Regular spring and scarce autumn migrant

Spring passage was restricted to 16th–21st May (peaking at three on 19th and involving a total of four males and two females) and 24th–29th May (peaking at three on 26th and involving three males and two females). In autumn there were sightings of two on 20th September and singles on 25th September, 30th September and 18th October.

***Siberian Rubythroat** *Luscinia calliope*

Vagrant; four previous records, all in October

A luscious first-winter male was found at Upper Stoneybrek on 21st October, where it showed very well at times. It was at Chalet the next day, where it was last seen on the morning of 23rd October. It occurred at the classic time for this species on Fair Isle (previous records were 9th–11th October 1975, 17th–19th October 2003, 23rd–27th October 2005 and 23rd October to 3rd November 2012), but was a long-awaited first male for the island.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

Rare in spring (31 previous records), scarce autumn migrant

The best spring since 2009 saw female-type birds in North Haven on 12th–18th May and Lower Stoneybrek on 2nd June. In September one was in Swarzie Geo on 19th–20th, singles were at the Obs and Easter Lothar on 21st, two were in North Raeva on 25th, with three in that area on 26th, two remaining the following day and one lingering to 29th September. One of the birds on 26th was an adult male that was ringed, although unfortunately no details of the ring could be made out. An interesting series of records in October involved singles at North Felsigeo (14th), Stackhoull (15th), Plantation (17th), Dronger (18th), Hesswalls (21st), Meoness (26th) and North Light (27th). Given the scatter of locations, it would appear that these were all separate individuals, giving a remarkable autumn total of 13 birds.

***Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis*

Vagrant; four previous records, three in spring, one in autumn

One found at the Mast on 9th June was the latest spring arrival and the first female in this season. It was trapped to confirm the identification and was seen at the Mast until late afternoon (see article on page 127). The species appears to be increasing in frequency, with previous records in 1986, 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2011.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

After four on 9th May, present daily until 20th, with a peak of 16 on 11th, then up to five until the next arrival peaked at 19 on 16th, the highest spring count since 2009. There were further spring records on 26th May, 29th–31st May (up to two), 5th and 8th–9th June. August passage commenced on 22nd and increased to ten the following day, with up to five daily until the end of the month. In September there were two on 2nd, three on 4th then daily records until 14th, peaking at five on 5th September. After one on 16th and three on 20th September, four arrived on 24th, with one or two daily until 27th September, before a late bird on 16th October.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

Two birds were involved in sightings during 11th–14th April, with counts of up to two on five more dates during the month, then a scatter of records on 12 dates in

May, peaking at three on 8th, with later birds on 11th–16th and 27th June. In the autumn, the first was on 19th October, with up to two on seven further October dates, then two on 2nd November and the last of the year on 4th November.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Males on 22nd and 24th April began a decent spring passage, with the next arrival on 7th May and daily sightings until 26th May, with waves of arrivals producing peaks of ten on 9th, 13 on 16th and eight on 19th May. There was another small arrival of up to five from 28th May to 1st June and the last of the spring on 9th–10th June. The first autumn arrivals were four on 25th August, with birds remaining until 28th August. In September there were only two on 8th until 24th, when there were then regular records until 6th October, peaking at six on 1st October. Later birds were present on 11th–15th and 21st October.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A fine male on Dronger on 3rd–5th May was the first of the year, with sightings then regular from 8th May to 1st June and a late bird on 14th June. Spring counts peaked at five on 9th and 17th–18th May. Two on 24th August rose to seven on 26th, with regular sightings then throughout the rest of the autumn. Peaks during this time included seven on 4th, ten on 14th and 14 on 30th September, with numbers after 5th October decreasing to three or less, until the last was seen on 29th October.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

After the lack of records in 2012 (the first blank year on Fair Isle since 1957), there were three in the spring; a male around the Chapel area from 15th–24th April, a female on 6th May and another on 25th May. In the autumn, one lingered around Chalet from 29th September to 10th October, whilst a second bird was seen at Utra on 1st October.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small/moderate numbers

The first was not seen until 10th April, the latest arrival date since 1975, with numbers rising to 95 by 21st and the first ‘Greenland’ birds *O.o.leucorrhoa* noted from 24th April. A notable increase at the start of the next month saw high counts of 158 on 4th and 9th and 172 on 7th May. After 12th May, numbers ranged between 62–95 until another arrival from 22nd when 105 included a high percentage of *O.o.leucorrhoa*. Numbers remained high for around a week and peaked at 136 on 24th May, then decreasing into June. The first fledged youngster was seen on 29th June (nine days later than 2012). The highest counts in August were 142 on 2nd then 177 on 21st. After 150 on 3rd September, counts were usually between 50 and 70 until the end of the month. There were still 32 on 1st October, with just single figures recorded from 17th until the final record of the year on the last day of the month.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

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

There were singles on 19th, 21st and 26th March, with two on 10th April beginning a fall which increased to 36 on 12th, the highest count of the year. Numbers declined through late April, up to five remained into early May, with just three singles seen after 10th and the last on 25th May. Up to two were recorded on 21st–22nd September, there were then almost daily sightings until 23rd October, peaking at just ten on 6th October.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Resident, breeds in small numbers

Counts in April and May indicated a breeding population of around 25–30 pairs, suggesting a relatively stable population in recent years. The first fledged chicks on 14th June were 12 days later than in 2012 and it appears that the breeding season may not have been a good one, with a peak autumn count of just 77 birds on 12th August.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

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

Six arrived at the Obs on 25th May, with at least three of those present until 2nd June. One was seen on 11th June, and was joined by another from 20th June, with both then remaining at the Obs until 30th September with one present until 6th November. These birds were the first summering individuals since one in 1980, although no breeding attempt took place.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Grey-headed Wagtail *M.f.thunbergi*

Five males graced the south of the island on 16th–19th May, with two remaining until 20th and one to 21st May. From 25th May to 1st June, there were regular sightings of up to two *flava* wagtails, with all the sightings probably referring to two lingering male Grey-headed Wagtails.

Unidentified *flava* wagtail

The first *flava* of the year was on 1st May, with daily sightings of single unidentified *flava* wagtails daily until 7th May. A bird found on Lerness on 8th May, before relocating to South Harbour and remaining until 10th, showed a stronger pale supercilium than would be expected for a 'pure' Grey-headed Wagtail, so may have been a hybrid. Further *flava* wagtails (mostly flyover birds) were recorded on 14th–15th May and 21st June. In the autumn, all *flava* wagtails went unidentified to subspecific level, with two on 29th September and singles on 1st and 12th October.

***Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*

Rare migrant; 71 previous records, 68 in autumn and three in spring

One flew south from Landberg on 12th August and roamed the island (often being seen at Field and Da Water) until 21st August. Suspicions that more than one bird

was involved in the sightings were confirmed on 16th August when two were together at Da Water, with one remaining until 19th August. The third of the year was at Easter Lothar Water from 31st August to 3rd September.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

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

A good spring passage began with two on 27th March, with one the following day, then records on 16 dates between 2nd–25th April, peaking at five on 4th, and a late bird on 8th June. Autumn saw one on 12th October, then again on 14th–16th October and irregular sightings from 27th October, with two on 30th and one lingering until 16th November.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

'Pied Wagtail' M.a.yarrelli and 'White Wagtail' M.a.alba frequent spring and autumn migrants; M.a.yarrelli breeds in small numbers

The first returning *alba* wagtail was on the late date of 27th March, numbers not reaching double figures until 12th April. The first White Wagtail arrived on 14th April and both Pied and Whites passed through in small numbers after that, with Whites peaking at 20 in May and last recorded on 7th June. Pied Wagtails again had a good breeding season with at least four pairs nesting (two pairs at the Obs/Havens and others at Easter Lothar and South Light). Small numbers of Pied Wagtails passed through in August, with numbers increasing from 12th (when the first White Wagtails were also noted) and a monthly peak of 127 *alba* wagtails (33 White, 7 Pied and 87 unidentified to subspecies) on 22nd August. There were still good numbers in early September, peaking with a rather high count of 132 (including 40 Whites and 85 *albas*) on 3rd, but there were generally less than 20 after 10th and just single figures remained into October until 25th, most of which were Pied, with the last White on 15th October.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Scarce autumn migrant, vagrant in spring (four spring records)

Two arrived on 1st October, with birds at Midway and Wester Lothar. The third of the autumn was found on 5th October at Bull's Park and was probably then responsible for sightings around the Nether Taft area until the late date of 17th November. During this time, another was seen at Guidicum on 13th October.

***Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*

Scarce migrant; 87 previous records, 85 in autumn and two in spring

The first of four in the autumn was trapped at the Obs during an early morning mist-netting session on 25th September, although was not seen before capture or after release. The next was at the Sheep Cru on 2nd October, before it flew towards the airstrip and was not relocated. One at Hesswalls on 8th October began a series of records from around the island, with birds seen on 15 of the 23 dates from 11th October to 2nd November. There were two together on 14th October at Midway, but otherwise the series of October sightings were taken to referring to one widely-ranging individual, which eventually settled in Boini Mire, then the Taft area.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

After one on 21st April there were none until daily sightings from 3rd to 31st May, with peaks during this time including 21 on 11th and 45 on 16th May. There were then later singles on 14th and 16th June. Autumn passage began with birds present from 23rd–29th August, peaking at six on the latter date, which proved to be the high count of a quiet autumn, with the only other records of singles on 3rd–4th, 13th and 28th September and a late bird on 14th October.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Common spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

After irregular records from 17th March, birds were seen daily from 31st March rising to 60 on 4th, 124 on 13th and 302 on 19th April. Counts then reduced to around 150 before an arrival in early May peaked at 427 on 6th, with numbers then dropping to generally less than 100 for the rest of the month and around 40–50 in June. The first fledged youngster was noted on 19th June, slightly later than in 2012, although there was no count made of the breeding population. August opened with counts of around 110 before passage in the last week saw numbers peak at 710 on 23rd August. There was then a slight lull in counts before another wave of passage in early September brought a peak of 976 on 5th (there were also counts of up to 100 moving south past the Good Shepherd as it crossed to Shetland during that period). Counts for the rest of the month were usually between 300 and 500 apart from a later peak of 620 on 24th September. In October around 300 were present at the start of the month before dropping by almost 100 a week, with just small numbers passing through in early November and occasional singles lingering until the end of the year.

***Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*

Rare spring and autumn migrant; around 79 previous records

A dowdy first-winter bird was heard over Pund on 12th October before being relocated at Utra scrape. It remained in the south of the island, usually either at Utra or Haa until 24th October. This particularly long-stayer was the first record since 2010.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

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

Although present all year, birds became more noticeable on 16th March, which may have indicated passage or returning migrants. Singing was noted from 28th March and counts during the spring of 30 to 50 presumably reflected mostly breeding birds, although 78 on 4th May probably included some migrants (interestingly, sightings of colour-ringed birds seen on single dates suggested passage in early / mid-May). Food carrying was noted from 17th May and the first fledged chick on 16th June, six days later than 2012, with at least two of the breeding adults being birds that had been ringed as winterers in North-east Scotland. Increasing numbers throughout August were partially due to family parties coming onto the island top, although a marked increase later in the month coincided with Meadow Pipit passage and presumably

involved passage migrants. Highest counts in the autumn were 175 on 21st August, 111 on 8th, 110 on 19th September and 90 on 28th October. Typically there were reduced numbers in the second winter period.

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

There were records of up to four on several dates from 3rd April to 3rd June, whilst one held territory on Bunes and was noted alarm-calling in July.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Common spring and autumn migrant

There were up to two regularly from 18th March, rising to six on 11th April with a spring peak of 29 on 13th April, with smaller numbers until 3rd May. A small arrival on 8th May saw three increase to seven the following day, with up to five then daily until 30th May. The first autumn migrant on 20th September kicked off regular sightings of ten or less until the end of the month. Although there were daily sightings in October, only low numbers were involved, with peaks of 12 on 2nd, 13 on 12th and then numbers rising to 19 by 27th October. Birds remained into the following month, although no more than six were counted, with the last two present until 27th November.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Common spring and autumn migrant

One on 9th April rose to 11 on 13th, with counts of single figures then virtually daily until early May with peaks of 11 on 3rd and 17 on 6th and the last on 26th May. One on 18th September was the first of the autumn, with regular records from 25th September and counts rising rapidly to 65 on 1st October. Numbers were then generally around 20 until mid-month when another arrival peaked at 51 on 14th and, after a slight lull, counts rose to 125 on 21st October, with up to nine remaining into the following month, until the last was seen on 18th November.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

There were two on 12th April with one the following day, then one from 16th–18th April and singles on 7th and 10th May. Autumn was quiet, with a single from 2nd–12th October joined by a second on 10th, followed by five on 28th October.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A strong spring passage from this increasingly recorded delightful finch (it was considered a vagrant to Fair Isle up to 1990, but has been recorded annually since 1991) began with daily sightings of up to three from 14th–24th April. There were two on 30th April and then from 4th–24th May birds were seen on all but one date, peaking at five on 15th with a high turnover of individuals likely, before the last of the spring was seen on 1st–2nd June. Autumn was also good, beginning with one on 9th October, joined by a second the following day. A further single lingered during 20th–27th October, there were then three on 2nd November and two on 20th–25th November.

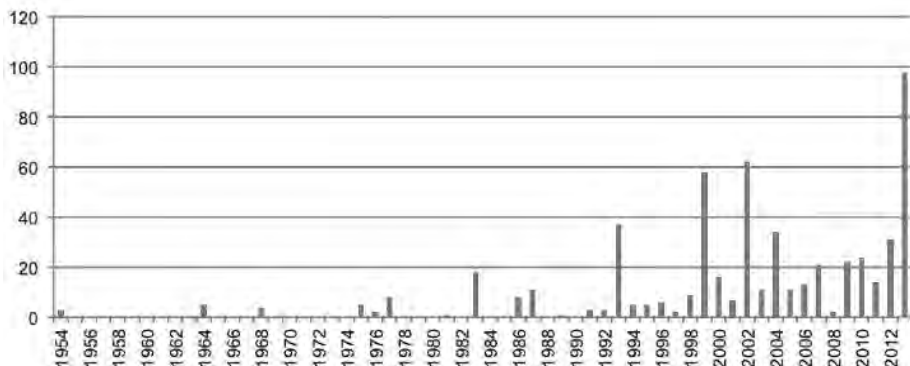


Figure 6. Goldfinch bird-days (the sum of daily Log totals) during FIBO history. Note there was also an individual recorded on one date in 1929.

Note the increasing frequency with which the species is seen and the record breaking total of bird-days recorded in 2013, which reflected a record movement in Shetland at the same time.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Regular sightings from 9th–26th April peaked at 13 on 20th, with up to five from 2nd–6th May, then ones and twos regularly until 26th May. The last of the spring were two from 16th–18th June. Autumn passage saw up to nine from 7th–13th September, singles over 21st–24th and up to four from 28th–30th September. A generally quiet autumn saw one on 7th October, 11 on 12th and one on 23rd–24th October.

Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

From 1st April seen regularly throughout the month, peaking at ten on 25th April. There were also regular sightings throughout May, with up to five seen early in the month but from mid-month just one or two were seen irregularly until 27th. A late spring bird on 5th June signalled the end of spring passage, with no repeat of 2012’s possible breeding attempt. In autumn there were daily sightings of up to two from 11th–15th October, then two on 27th October and singles on 14th and 17th November.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Common spring and autumn migrant, small numbers breed and overwinter

Maximum monthly counts of Twite on Fair Isle 2013

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
22	28	21	56	54	45	n/c	240	280	166	15	6

Only small numbers were present in both winter periods, although the lack of observer coverage at that time of year should be borne in mind when interpreting these figures. Spring counts were fairly consistent with recent years, although no estimate of breeding numbers was made. Ringing recoveries again showed that a large percentage of the Fair Isle breeding population moved to Orkney for the winter.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*

Scarce migrant in spring, summer and autumn

An arrival of 'Mealy Redpolls' in October brought small numbers of their smaller, browner cousin. The first two were seen early in the arrival on 1st October, remaining until 4th with one still present on 6th October. Another wave of redpolls on 12th October brought three Lessers with them, which increased to five by 15th, with one to five counted regularly until 23rd and later singles on 26th and 28th October.

Common Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Mealy Redpoll *C.f.flammea*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

In spring there were records on 4th April, 24th–29th April (two) and up to seven on 8th–25th May, with late singles on 2nd and 6th June and midsummer records of one on 27th–29th and two on 31st July. From 17th September to 4th October there were regular sightings of up to five. Another wave of arrivals from 10th October saw numbers rising steadily to 60 on 18th, then dropping off again to single figures from 24th, with a small late arrival seeing ten on 7th November and later birds on 18th and 23rd–24th November (three).

North-western Redpoll *C.f.rostrata/islandica*

Scarce autumn migrant

There were counts of up to two, probably *C.f.rostrata*, regularly between 19th September and 4th October.

***Arctic Redpoll** *Carduelis hornemanni*

Rare migrant; approximately 88 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 (with around 53 accepted records), many of them have occurred in major influx years; in the last decade nine of the twelve accepted Arctic Redpolls have been Hornemann's.

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

Around 25 of the accepted records of Arctic Redpoll have been assigned to this subspecies

A striking bird was found near the Chapel on 25th September and remained in the area near Taft until 28th, although it also ventured to the Gully on 26th September.

***Two-barred Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera*

Irruptive vagrant; 25 previous records of 49 individuals (most July and August, although six in September and singles in June and October)

A flock of eight (two males, a female and five juveniles) were found at Gorson's Geo on Hoini on 27th July, with at least seven remaining until 4th August. They spent most of their time on the sheer cliff, ranging across the south face of Hoini to Hjukni Geo, often forming small flocks alongside a group of Common Crossbills, so getting precise counts of birds present was not always easy. On 4th August a new juvenile arrived on Bunes in the company of a Common Crossbill. These are the first records since 2009, with other recent occurrences also involving flocks coinciding with large movements in Scandinavia (in 2002 and 2008).

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Irregular irruptive summer and autumn migrant

A male at the Obs on 7th–8th January was only the second record for that month (following one in 1964), although it was later found dead. Early spring records were one on 23rd May and four on 27th May, with a single on 12th June preceding a small arrival from 19th–25th June, peaking at 12 on 20th and 24th June. In July there were records from 4th, with numbers fluctuating throughout the month and peaks of 17 on 6th July and 18 on 26th July, with up to 14 still in early August and 13 still on 8th, with the last on 13th August. Late August saw the start of another small arrival, with records from seven dates until 4th October, peaking at 13 on 30th September. A late run of records saw regular sightings of up to four from 14th–28th October. Interestingly, although the four trapped in the summer all had typical measurements of Common Crossbill, one caught in October had a larger bill, with the length fractionally outside the range stated in Svensson and the width just within the 'diagnostic' range for Parrot Crossbill (12.2mm), although other measurements confirmed the identification as Common Crossbill. At the time there was an invasion of Parrot Crossbills occurring in the UK, although there were also several records of what were believed to be large-billed Common Crossbills as well, which would be borne out by the Fair Isle bird.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

The species made its entrance in dramatic style on 29th May when an adult male was singing at Schoolton, but the only other spring records were an immature male on 19th–21st June and a very late bird present at Schoolton on 6th July, with presumably the same individual around the Obs from 10th–14th July. The three records made for the quietest spring since 2001, when just one was recorded. An average autumn

(with 11 individuals recorded) began with singles on 19th–21st and 25th–29th August. One on 3rd September at North Light may have been the same bird seen down the island over the next couple of days, with it being joined by two more on 6th, all three remaining until 9th September. By 12th September there were four at Schoolton, which increased to five the following day, the peak count for the year. One then arrived on 17th and numbers rose to three from 18th–22nd, with two on 26th and the last of the year on 28th September.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

A pair arrived on 13th October and roamed the island until 23rd October, with further birds seen on 19th October, when two males were at Gunnawark, and 21st October, when one was on Dronger; the first records since 2011.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A typical set of spring occurrences began with a male at the Obs on 21st April, followed by a female at Burkle on 10th May and a female at Haa on 15th–16th May. The only autumn record was also at Haa, where one was present on 19th–22nd October, the fourth latest record (after birds on 10th December 2002, 12th–14th November 2010 and 6th November 1997).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Common spring and autumn migrant, often overwinters

There were only single-figures early in the year, with sightings of up to 12 regular in April and up to 9th May. There were then two on 18th May, with 15 on 23rd May signalling an unusual late spring influx (that was also noted on North Ronaldsay),

Snow Buntings by W. Miles



with an increase to 47 on 25th and up to 11 remaining until 9th June, that included six in potential breeding habitat on Ward Hill. The first of the autumn appeared on 11th September, with single-figure counts increasing rapidly to 127 on 17th then 345 on 18th, with up to 190 until 25th September. There were then less than 50 regularly until mid-October when numbers rose again to 220 on 18th and fluctuating counts to the end of the month, peaking at 209 on 28th, with up to 98 in November and only small numbers until the end of the year, including 28 on 29th December.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*
Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

Another year of decent spring passage saw the first arrive on 11th April, before one on 15th April began a series of regular sightings rising to two by 20th and four by 27th April, with daily records from 1st–8th May peaking at three on 5th, before a late female lingered at Da Water on 19th–25th May. In autumn, the first was seen on 4th September, with almost daily sightings until 29th October. Numbers were lower than recent autumns, with peaks of just ten on 9th and 15 on 18th September and no more than eight throughout October.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*
Regular spring and autumn migrant

One from 9th–15th April was joined by a second on 12th, with the only other spring sighting on 15th–20th May. A fairly quiet autumn saw two from 20th October until 26th October, which were joined by a third on 23rd–25th October.

***Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*
Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A stunning male was at South Harbour from 12th–19th May, whilst a duller bird at Schoolton on 10th June was probably the same bird that was singing in Hjukni Geo on 14th June; the second consecutive year with a spring occurrence, but the first time more than one has been seen at this season since 2006.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*
Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring (27 previous spring records)

The earliest autumn arrival since 1997 was at Chalet on 10th September, with the next record not until 30th September when there were two; one at Setter and one at Guidicum and Ward Hill, the latter of which was presumably responsible for the record of one at Wester Lothar on 1st October. One was at Chalet on 9th October, with a new bird in the Nether Taft area from 12th–15th, during which time there was also a showy individual at the Havens on 12th and a bird trapped at the Obs in the evening of 14th October. One was present on 18th October then two arrived in the south of the island on 23rd, with still one on 24th and presumably the same bird seen again on 26th October. A total of probably ten individuals is the best showing since 2000.

*Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; 128 previous records (64 in spring, mostly in May and June with three in April and 64 in autumn, mostly September and October with one in November)

Following the absence of records in 2012 (the first blank year since 2002), there were two in the spring. The first was an elusive male at the Hill Dyke on 19th May, a typical arrival date, with another male found at South Raeva on 3rd June that eventually showed well at Utra.

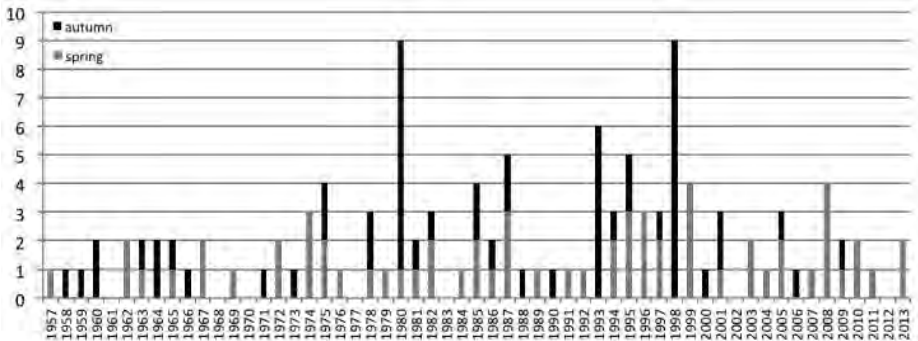


Figure 7. Annual and seasonal occurrences of Rustic Bunting on Fair Isle since the opening of FIBO in 1948.

Spring occurrences have perhaps tailed off slightly in the last decade, but the most notable change has been the scarcity in recent time of autumn records, with the last 12 years producing just three records. There were also ten pre-FIBO records (three spring and seven autumn).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Sighting of males on 21st, 26th and 29th March may all have been the same bird, with up to two seen on ten scattered dates in April. There were virtually daily sightings in May, with numbers increasing to peaks of 11 on 12th and 17th and the last lingering to 5th June. One on 29th September preceded regular sightings until the last on 26th October, with numbers peaking at 16 on 1st and 4th October and counts generally decreasing after that.

Ringling summary

Will Miles

A total of 3746 birds of 103 species were ringed during 2013. As in recent years, non-passerines contributed little to the annual ringling totals, in particular seabirds (with the notable exceptions of Storm Petrels, Great Skuas and Puffins). The breeding performance of Guillemots and Razorbills in 2013 was again very poor, probably due to localised food shortages. These species were once ringed in large numbers on the isle; however, this year very few chicks were seen and, as in many recent years, the majority that did hatch did not reach an age and size suitable for ringling. The Helgoland Traps accounted for the vast majority of passerines ringed. Between late March and early November they were run daily, weather permitting, with standardised morning and afternoon trap rounds from mid-April to mid-June and from mid-August to 31st October (the peak migration periods). Table 1 shows the ten most commonly ringed species in 2013.

Table 1. Ten most commonly ringed species on Fair Isle in 2013, with species totals (2012 totals for comparison).

Species	2013	2012
Storm Petrel	1211	870
Blackbird	361	223
Starling	360	389
Redwing	161	97
Blackcap	159	87
Great Skua	129	320
Meadow Pipit	126	157
Robin	98	399
Brambling	92	222
Puffin	86	113

In 2013, there was one species addition to the Fair Isle ringling totals: Swinhoe's Petrel. Two individuals of this species were mist-netted during night time petrel ringling sessions, held as usual throughout the summer. One individual was trapped in the early hours of 27th July (it, or possibly another, had been heard calling in South Haven during the petrel session on July 22nd) and a second trapped in the early hours of 7th August. In addition, a variety of other unusual and exciting species were encountered during daylight hours in the mist-nets and Helgoland traps. These included the second Collared Flycatcher to be ringed on the island (a female, mist-netted at the Mast in amazingly calm and sunny weather on 9th June), the seventh Nightjar, tenth Olive-backed Pipit, 12th Paddyfield Warbler, 20th and 21st Blyth's Reed Warblers, 35th, 36th and 37th Subalpine Warblers (including one individual, a female, of the eastern race *Sylvia cantillans albistriata*), 38th and 39th Arctic Warblers, 42nd Lanceolated Warbler, 42nd Little Bunting, seven Marsh Warblers (bringing the ringling total for this species up to 166 individuals), 20 Leach's Petrels (128 have now

been ringed, the 2013 year total comprised 19 new birds and one retrap) and 16 Yellow-browed Warblers (the 13th of which became the 200th individual of this species to be ringed on Fair Isle).

There were five record-highest or joint record-highest species year totals in 2013, including the total for Leach's Petrel (see above, the previous highest being 14 in 1999), five Great Spotted Woodpeckers (previous highest record being four in 1962), the total for Yellow-browed Warbler (see above, 14 in 2006 was the previous highest total), the total for Marsh Warbler (see above, joint highest with the 1988, 1992 and 2002 year totals) and the 2013 Subalpine Warbler trio (see above, joint highest with the 1975 total). Other notable high species year totals in 2013 included the total for Storm Petrel (see Table 1, this was the seventh highest year total), 18 Woodcock (joint fourth highest year total, after 30 in 1976, 29 in 2011, 24 in 2009 and 18 in 1984) and, surprisingly, three Goldfinches (joint third highest total, after five in 1999, four in 2005 and three in 2007).

Two colour-ringing projects continued to be run on the island in 2013: the long-term Starling research project, started in 1980, and the Shag colour-ringing project started in 2012, which uses red darvic rings with white, individual three-letter codes. The Shag project forms part of a large-scale study being run up and down the east coast of Scotland by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and University of Aberdeen, studying adult and juvenile Shag dispersal, survival and wintering ecology.

Occasionally, capture of a healthy, dry bird and examination and measurement of it in the hand is crucial for identification. In 2013, a total of four birds were deliberately trapped for identification purposes: female Eastern Subalpine Warbler, female Collared Flycatcher, Lanceolated Warbler and Blyth's Reed Warbler. In addition, a Paddyfield Warbler was deliberately captured in order to remove it from the attentions of a cat (the bird was soon safely released well away from the predator).



Swinhoe's Petrel by W. Miles

Table 2. Numbers of birds ringed on Fair Isle in 2013, ringing recoveries/controls received in 2013, and cumulative totals since 1948.

Species	Ringed as:		Total 2013	Total 1948–2013	Recoveries/controls	
	Ad / Juv	Pullus			2013	1948–2013
Whooper Swan	-	-	-	51	-	8
Bean Goose	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pink-footed Goose	-	-	-	18	-	1
White-fronted Goose	-	-	-	3	-	1
Greylag Goose	-	-	-	101	-	17
Barnacle Goose	-	-	-	4	-	-
Shelduck	-	-	-	5	-	-
Wigeon	1	-	1	58	-	5
Teal	2	-	2	88	-	4
Mallard	-	-	-	17	-	1
Pintail	-	-	-	2	-	1
Shoveler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pochard	-	-	-	3	-	-
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	1	-	-
Tufted Duck	1	-	1	26	-	-
Scaup	-	-	-	8	-	-
Lesser Scaup	-	-	-	1	-	-
Eider	-	-	-	172	-	1
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	-	19	-	1
Velvet Scoter	-	-	-	2	-	-
Goldeneye	-	-	-	23	-	1
Red-breasted Merganser	-	-	-	3	-	-
Goosander	-	-	-	3	-	1
Quail	-	-	-	8	-	-
Red-throated Diver	-	-	-	1	-	-
Fulmar	30	46	76	17833	1	186
Storm Petrel	1211	-	1211	34172	66	1339
Leach's Petrel	19	-	19	128	1	5
Swinhoe's Petrel	2	-	2	2	-	-
Gannet	1	-	1	645	1	19
Cormorant	-	-	-	7	-	-
Shag	5	7	12	23763	3	596
Grey Heron	-	-	-	23	-	-
Little Grebe	-	-	-	10	-	-
Great Crested Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Slavonian Grebe	-	-	-	3	-	-
Marsh Harrier	-	-	-	1	-	-
Hen Harrier	-	-	-	2	-	-
Goshawk	-	-	-	2	-	-
Sparrowhawk	6	-	6	441	-	25
Water Rail	2	-	2	341	-	3
Spotted Crake	-	-	-	20	-	-
Little Crake	-	-	-	1	-	-
Baillon's Crake	-	-	-	1	-	-

Species	Ringed as:		Total 2013	Total 1948-2013	Recoveries/controls	
	Ad / Juv	Pullus			2013	1948-2013
Corncrake	-	-	-	44	-	2
Moorhen	-	-	-	107	-	3
Coot	1	-	1	17	-	1
Great Bustard	-	-	-	1	-	-
Oystercatcher	5	2	7	1595	2	75
Golden Plover	-	-	-	27	-	-
Grey Plover	-	-	-	1	-	-
Lapwing	-	2	2	381	-	6
Little Ringed Plover	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ringed Plover	9	-	9	818	-	6
Dotterel	-	-	-	4	-	-
Whimbrel	-	-	-	18	-	-
Curlew	1	-	1	221	1	7
Black-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	1	-	-
Bar-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	9	-	2
Turnstone	3	-	3	117	-	-
Knot	-	-	-	109	-	4
Ruff	-	-	-	41	-	1
Curlew Sandpiper	-	-	-	6	-	-
Temminck's Stint	-	-	-	2	-	-
Sanderling	4	-	4	129	-	1
Dunlin	7	-	7	631	-	8
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	193	-	1
Baird's Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Little Stint	-	-	-	123	-	-
White-rumped Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	-	-	5	-	-
Western Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-necked Phalarope	-	-	-	5	-	-
Grey Phalarope	-	-	-	3	-	-
Common Sandpiper	-	-	-	70	-	1
Green Sandpiper	-	-	-	63	-	1
Spotted Redshank	-	-	-	3	-	-
Greenshank	-	-	-	15	-	-
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	19	-	-
Redshank	-	-	-	294	-	3
Jack Snipe	1	-	1	155	-	3
Woodcock	18	-	18	572	1	29
Snipe	10	-	10	576	-	4
Great Snipe	-	-	-	2	-	-
Pomarine Skua	-	-	-	1	-	-
Arctic Skua	-	-	-	4057	-	71
Great Skua	-	129	129	4242	5	65
Puffin	43	43	86	14197	-	34
Black Guillemot	1	-	1	1679	-	19
Razorbill	9	-	9	11875	6	302

Ringed summary

Species	Ringed as:		Total 2013	Total 1948–2013	Recoveries/controls	
	Ad / Juv	Pullus			2013	1948–2013
Little Auk	-	-	-	14	-	-
Guillemot	3	2	5	37859	2	1108
Common Tern	-	-	-	485	-	3
Arctic Tern	-	-	-	11900	6	45
Kittiwake	-	-	-	7188	-	39
Black-headed Gull	-	-	-	51	-	2
Little Gull	-	-	-	1	-	-
Common Gull	-	-	-	322	-	4
Lesser Black-backed Gull	-	3	3	1473	-	36
Herring Gull	-	27	27	4628	3	105
Iceland Gull	-	-	-	1	-	-
Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	40	-	1
Great Black-backed Gull	1	1	2	2872	1	115
Rock Dove	8	-	8	196	1	1
Woodpigeon	-	-	-	76	-	2
Collared Dove	5	-	5	421	-	6
Turtle Dove	-	-	-	82	-	2
Cuckoo	2	-	2	113	-	1
Scops Owl	-	-	-	2	-	-
Snowy Owl	-	-	-	1	-	1
Long-eared Owl	3	-	3	279	-	14
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	18	-	-
Nightjar	1	-	1	7	-	-
Swift	-	-	-	19	-	1
Hoopoe	-	-	-	3	-	-
Wryneck	2	-	2	262	-	-
Great Spotted Woodpecker	5	-	5	34	-	-
Kestrel	1	-	1	54	-	8
Red-footed Falcon	-	-	-	1	-	-
Merlin	-	-	-	199	-	12
Peregrine	-	-	-	6	-	1
Golden Oriole	-	-	-	9	-	-
Brown Shrike	-	-	-	1	-	-
Isabelline Shrike	-	-	-	2	-	-
Red-backed Shrike	9	-	9	375	-	-
Lesser Grey Shrike	-	-	-	7	-	-
Great Grey Shrike	-	-	-	120	-	1
Woodchat Shrike	-	-	-	13	-	-
Jackdaw	-	-	-	16	-	-
Rook	-	-	-	10	-	-
Carrion Crow	1	-	1	3	-	-
Hooded Crow	-	-	-	49	-	-
Raven	-	-	-	29	-	-
Goldcrest	12	-	12	2001	-	4
Firecrest	-	-	-	2	-	-
Blue Tit	-	-	-	2	-	-
Great Tit	1	-	1	15	-	-

Species	Ringed as:		Total 2013	Total 1948–2013	Recoveries/controls	
	Ad / Juv	Pullus			2013	1948–2013
Coal Tit	-	-	-	1	-	-
Short-toed Lark	-	-	-	8	-	-
Woodlark	-	-	-	3	-	-
Sskylark	6	-	6	1434	-	3
Shore Lark	-	-	-	5	-	-
Sand Martin	-	-	-	8	-	-
Swallow	-	-	-	324	-	2
House Martin	-	-	-	150	-	1
Greenish Warbler	-	-	-	25	-	-
Arctic Warbler	2	-	2	39	-	-
Pallas's Warbler	-	-	-	4	-	-
Yellow-browed Warbler	16	-	16	203	-	-
Hume's Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Radde's Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Dusky Warbler	-	-	-	7	-	-
Western Bonelli's Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Wood Warbler	-	-	-	119	-	-
Chiffchaff	41	-	41	1768	1	6
Willow Warbler	49	-	49	4320	-	7
Blackcap	159	-	159	6543	1	27
Garden Warbler	30	-	30	3913	2	8
Barred Warbler	2	-	2	474	-	1
Lesser Whitethroat	13	-	13	918	-	1
Whitethroat	6	-	6	1103	-	-
Subalpine Warbler	3	-	3	37	-	-
Sardinian Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	-	-	-	14	-	-
Lanceolated Warbler	1	-	1	42	-	-
Grasshopper Warbler	2	-	2	162	-	-
River Warbler	-	-	-	11	-	-
Savi's Warbler	-	-	-	4	-	-
Thick-billed Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Booted Warbler	-	-	-	8	-	-
Sykes's Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Eastern Olivaceous Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Icterine Warbler	1	-	1	143	-	-
Melodious Warbler	-	-	-	13	-	-
Aquatic Warbler	-	-	-	25	-	-
Sedge Warbler	11	-	11	617	2	3
Paddyfield Warbler	1	-	1	12	-	1
Blyth's Reed Warbler	2	-	2	21	-	1
Marsh Warbler	7	-	7	166	-	-
Reed Warbler	5	-	5	358	-	1
Great Reed Warbler	-	-	-	8	-	-
Waxwing	-	-	-	250	3	5
Treecreeper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Wren	19	-	19	1048	-	-

Ringed summary

Species	Ringed as:		Total 2013	Total 1948–2013	Recoveries/controls	
	Ad / Juv	Pullus			2013	1948–2013
Starling	219	141	360	30947	6	213
Rose-coloured Starling	-	-	-	3	-	-
Daurian Starling	-	-	-	1	-	-
Dipper	-	-	-	17	-	-
White's Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Hermit Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Grey-cheeked Thrush	-	-	-	2	-	-
Ring Ouzel	4	-	4	548	-	9
Blackbird	361	-	361	25671	3	352
Eyebrowed Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	1
Dusky Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Black-throated Thrush	-	-	-	2	-	-
Fieldfare	12	-	12	686	-	1
Song Thrush	31	-	31	3307	-	32
Redwing	161	-	161	10153	-	75
Mistle Thrush	1	-	1	24	-	-
Brown Flycatcher	-	-	-	1	-	-
Spotted Flycatcher	6	-	6	881	-	4
Robin	98	-	98	10045	3	45
Rufous-tailed Robin	-	-	-	1	-	-
Thrush Nightingale	-	-	-	38	-	-
Nightingale	-	-	-	31	-	-
Bluethroat	2	-	2	317	-	2
Siberian Rubythroat	-	-	-	2	-	-
Red-flanked Bluetail	-	-	-	2	-	-
Red-breasted Flycatcher	-	-	-	63	-	-
Collared Flycatcher	1	-	1	2	-	-
Pied Flycatcher	15	-	15	1035	-	-
Black Redstart	3	-	3	167	-	-
Redstart	13	-	13	1935	-	1
Rock Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Whinchat	2	-	2	697	-	2
Stonechat	-	-	-	62	-	-
Wheatear	74	-	74	18980	2	85
Black-eared Wheatear	-	-	-	3	-	-
Pied Wheatear	-	-	-	1	-	-
Duncock	35	-	35	2901	1	11
House Sparrow	19	-	19	2013	2	6
Tree Sparrow	2	-	2	123	-	1
Yellow Wagtail	-	-	-	11	-	-
Citrine Wagtail	-	-	-	7	-	-
Grey Wagtail	1	-	1	61	1	2
Pied/White Wagtail	23	6	29	1034	2	7
Richard's Pipit	-	-	-	13	-	-
Blyth's Pipit	-	-	-	2	-	-
Tawny Pipit	-	-	-	3	-	-
Olive-backed Pipit	1	-	1	10	-	-

Species	Ringed as:		Total 2013	Total 1948–2013	Recoveries/controls	
	Ad / Juv	Pullus			2013	1948–2013
Tree Pipit	3	-	3	683	-	-
Pechora Pipit	-	-	-	10	-	-
Meadow Pipit	126	-	126	12144	2	47
Red-throated Pipit	-	-	-	9	-	-
Rock Pipit	39	-	39	10101	4	34
Brambling	92	-	92	4427	1	23
Chaffinch	41	-	41	3438	-	15
Hawfinch	-	-	-	31	-	1
Pallas's Rosefinch	-	-	-	1	-	-
Common Rosefinch	2	-	2	270	-	2
Bullfinch	-	-	-	309	-	-
Greenfinch	2	-	2	543	-	33
Linnet	1	-	1	214	2	7
Twite	67	-	67	7074	29	81
Lesser Redpoll	6	-	6	38	-	-
Common Redpoll	25	-	25	927	1	7
Arctic Redpoll	-	-	-	25	-	-
Two-barred Crossbill	-	-	-	7	-	-
Common Crossbill	5	-	5	575	-	2
Parrot Crossbill	-	-	-	37	-	-
Goldfinch	3	-	3	26	-	1
Citril Finch	-	-	-	1	-	-
Siskin	4	-	4	662	2	3
Snow Bunting	1	-	1	680	-	3
Lapland Bunting	1	-	1	105	-	-
Savannah Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-	-
Song Sparrow	-	-	-	3	-	-
White-crowned Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pine Bunting	-	-	-	2	-	-
Yellowhammer	1	-	1	74	-	-
Ortolan Bunting	-	-	-	20	-	-
Cretzschmar's Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Yellow-browed Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Rustic Bunting	-	-	-	17	-	1
Chestnut-eared Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Little Bunting	1	-	1	42	-	1
Yellow-breasted Bunting	-	-	-	6	-	-
Reed Bunting	11	-	11	548	-	3
Pallas's Reed Bunting	-	-	-	2	-	-
Black-headed Bunting	-	-	-	4	-	-
Red-headed Bunting	-	-	-	5	-	-
Corn Bunting	-	-	-	4	-	-
Chestnut Bunting	-	-	-	2	-	-
Tennessee Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Blackpoll Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Totals	3337	409	3746	370913	170	5556

Ringling recoveries and controls reported to Fair Isle Bird Observatory in 2013

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

Order of data for each record:

Ring number - age of bird - date of record - location (with distance (km), direction (°) and duration (days) between ringling and recovery/control)

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 ringling
- 4 hatched before calendar year of ringling, but exact year unknown
- 5 definitely hatched during calendar year previous to year of ringling
- 6 hatched before calendar year previous to year of ringling, but exact year unknown
- 7 definitely hatched in the calendar year 2 years previous to the year of ringling
- 8 hatched three or more calendar years previous to year of ringling, exact year unknown

Sex: M = male, F = female

Condition at recovery:

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

Listed below are ringling recoveries and controls for which details were reported to Fair Isle in 2013 by the BTO or other national ringling schemes.

Fulmar

FP18488	1	23/07/09	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	11/09/13	Bride's Ness, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (48km, 245°, 1511 days)

Storm Petrel

2221264	4	26/07/79	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	04/08/79	Foula, Shetland (72km, 340°, 9 days)
2552879	4	30/07/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	25/07/12	Nolsoy, Torshavnar kommuna, Faroe Islands (387km, 316°, 361 days)
2606641	4	23/08/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	30/07/12	Nolsoy, Torshavnar kommuna, Faroe Islands (387km, 316°, 342 days)
2638053	4	30/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	01/08/12	Nolsoy, Torshavnar kommuna, Faroe Islands (387km, 316°, 2 days)

2551986	4	03/08/07	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	07/07/13	Eilean nan Ron, Highland (190km, 235°, 2165 days)
2638445	4	24/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	28/07/13	Norwick, Unst, Shetland (149km, 19°, 338 days)
2638238	4	06/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	10/08/13	Sandwick, Shetland (57km, 24°, 369 days)
2638210	4	05/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	07/07/13	Eilean nan Ron, Highland (190km, 235°, 336 days)
2607000	4	29/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	24/07/13	Nolsoy, Streymoy, Faroe Islands (387km, 316°, 360 days)
2606471	4	18/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	24/07/13	Nolsoy, Streymoy, Faroe Islands (387km, 316°, 371 days)
2638389	4	22/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	31/07/13	Eilean nan Ron, Highland (190km, 235°, 343 days)
2690806	4	12/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	13/08/13	Newark Bay, Deerness, Orkney (94km, 223°, 1 day)
2690782	4	12/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	16/08/13	Newark Bay, Deerness, Orkney (94km, 223°, 4 days)
2680783	4	07/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	06/09/13	Bur Wick, South Ronaldsay, Orkney (117km, 221°, 30 days)
2680683	4	01/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	14/09/13	Duncansby Head, Highland (129km, 219°, 44 days)
2652994	4	31/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	07/08/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 7 days)
2652990	4	31/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	11/09/13	Duncansby Head, Highland (129km, 219°, 42 days)
2652908	4	28/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	11/09/13	Duncansby Head, Highland (129km, 219°, 45 days)
2652905	4	28/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	14/09/13	Duncansby Head, Highland (129km, 219°, 48 days)
2652827	4	27/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	05/08/13	Annagh Head, Bellmullet, Mayo, Ireland (782km, 222°, 9 days)
2652819	4	27/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	31/07/13	Birsay, Orkney (104km, 243°, 4 days)
2652812	4	27/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	10/08/13	Sandwick, Shetland (57km, 24°, 14 days)
2652756	4	25/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	31/07/13	Birsay, Orkney (104km, 243°, 6 days)
2652734	4	24/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	14/09/13	Duncansby Head, Highland (129km, 219°, 52 days)
2652694	4	23/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	31/07/13	Birsay, Orkney (104km, 243°, 8 days)
2652550	4	12/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	08/08/13	Marrister, Whalsay, Shetland (98km, 21°, 27 days)
2652509	4	10/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	14/08/13	Sandwick, Shetland (57km, 24°, 35 days)
2638469	4	25/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	10/09/13	Auckengill, Highland (138km, 218°, 381 days)
2638386	4	22/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	31/07/13	Nolsoy, Streymoy, Faroe Islands (387km, 316°, 343 days)

Ringling summary

2638306	4	17/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	30/07/13	Nolsoy, Streymoy, Faroe Islands (387km, 316°, 347 days)
2638130	4	04/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	28/07/13	Birsay, Orkney (104km, 243°, 358 days)
2638048	4	30/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	14/08/13	Sandwick, Shetland (57km, 24°, 380 days)
2606969	4	25/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	29/08/13	Holms of Ire, Sanday, Orkney (63km, 246°, 400 days)
2606803	4	18/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	15/08/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 393 days)
2540908	4	23/08/11	Tres Ness, Sanday, Orkney
	R	08/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (61km, 55°, 716 days)
2540566	4	23/08/11	Tres Ness, Sanday, Orkney
	R	11/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (61km, 55°, 688 days)
	R	20/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (61km, 55°, 697 days)
2533897	4	10/08/12	Holms of Ire, Sanday, Orkney
	R	28/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (63km, 66°, 352 days)
2533796	4	01/08/12	Holms of Ire, Sanday, Orkney
	R	22/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (63km, 66°, 355 days)
2533705	4	30/07/12	Holms of Ire, Sanday, Orkney
	R	30/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (63km, 66°, 365 days)
2533591	4	11/08/12	Birsay, Orkney
	R	23/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (104km, 63°, 346 days)
2533119	4	30/07/12	Birsay, Orkney
	R	03/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (104km, 63°, 369 days)
2533112	4	30/07/12	Birsay, Orkney
	R	30/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (104km, 63°, 365 days)
2533017	4	16/08/11	Birsay, Orkney
	R	08/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (104km, 63°, 692 days)
2523933	1	14/09/11	Mousa Isle, Shetland
	R	22/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (56km, 207°, 677 days)
2454391	4	06/08/12	Duncansby Head, Highland
	R	23/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (129km, 39°, 351 days)
2454086	4	26/07/12	Auckengill, Highland
	R	28/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (138km, 38°, 367 days)
2454081	4	26/07/12	Auckengill, Highland
	R	06/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (138km, 38°, 376 days)
2444497	4	23/07/00	Noss, Shetland
	R	31/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (75km, 207°, 4756 days)
2400882	4	21/08/12	Marrister, Walsay, Shetland
	R	06/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (98km, 201°, 350 days)
2387443	1	06/09/11	Mousa Isle, Shetland
	R	11/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (56km, 207°, 705 days)
2365338	4	04/07/12	Ballyreagh, Londonderry, Ireland
	R	11/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (570km, 33°, 403 days)
N05495	4	08/06/13	Ponta de Almadena, Faro, Portugal
	R	07/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (2549km, 12°, 60 days)
N05488	4	04/06/13	Ponta de Almadena, Faro, Portugal
	R	07/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (2549km, 12°, 64 days)

2681325	4	25/07/12	Eilean nan Ron, Highland
	R	11/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (190km, 55°, 382 days)
2675766	4	28/07/13	Norwick, Unst, Shetland
	R	11/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (149km, 199°, 14 days)
2669954	4	07/08/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	11/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 4 days)
2669854	4	30/07/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	07/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 8 days)
2669801	4	05/08/12	Bewan, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	10/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (46km, 69°, 339 days)
2647250	4	05/07/11	Faraid Head, Highland
	R	06/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (208km, 61°, 763 days)
2645152	4	23/08/12	Holms of Ire, Sanday, Orkney
	R	10/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (63km, 66°, 321 days)
2621294	4	07/08/09	Tres Ness, Sanday, Orkney
	R	05/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (61km, 55°, 1459 days)
2600888	4	15/08/11	Tres Ness, Sanday, Orkney
	R	05/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (61km, 55°, 721 days)
2594678	4	22/07/09	Isle of May, Fife
	R	11/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (377km, 9°, 1481 days)
9944235	4	30/07/13	Nolsoy, Torshavnar kommuna, Streymoy, Faroe Islands
	R	07/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (387km, 136°, 8 days)

A bird ringed on Fair Isle on 26th August 2006 was caught again on the isle on 22nd July 2013 (2522 days). Another ringed on Fair Isle on 3rd September 1999 was retrapped on 23rd July 2013 (5072 days). 2013 was an outstanding year for petrel ringling on Fair Isle, with the capture of the two Swinhoe's Petrels, a record number of Leach's, a high year total for the number of Storm Petrels ringed and, as is clear from the data above, an excellent number and diversity of recoveries and controls, across a wide area of the north-east Atlantic and North Sea.

Leach's Petrel

NB84891	4	01/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	31/07/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (364 days)
	R	11/08/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (375 days)

A promising record, being the first time that a Fair Isle ringed Leach's Petrel has been retrapped on the isle in a year subsequent to being ringed (note retraps are relatively unusual during petrel mist-netting sessions, except at or near to breeding colonies). When this individual was trapped in 2013 it was found to have mud on its feet the first time and sand on its feet the second time, raising an intriguing question as to whether the bird had just flown out from an active breeding burrow (and, therefore, whether the species now breeds somewhere on the island?). A year between captures would not, however, automatically preclude it from being a non-breeding immature bird, since this species has a protracted pre-breeding period, normally of about five years but sometimes longer, during which time young birds prospect potential breeding islands. Feathers dislodged in the mist net were collected and sent to Martin Collinson at the University of Aberdeen for DNA testing. These analyses showed that this individual was a female.

Gannet

1374237	1	27/06/03	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	06/12/12	near Sidi Ouassai, Morocco (3333km, 191°, 3450 days)

Shag

1186058	1	10/07/84	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	13/04/13	Inga Ness, Orkney (84km, 251°, 10504 days)
1247853	1	05/07/89	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	05/09/13	Balintore, Highland (237km, 214°, 8828 days)

Ringed summary

1427159	1	17/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
(RED 'HRF')	VV	01/03/13	Yell ferry terminal, Shetland (120km, 7°, 227 days)
1427162	1	26/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
(RED 'HRU')	VV	21/06/13	Noss, Shetland (75km, 27°, 330 days)

So far, 24 Shags have been colour ringed on Fair Isle as part of the darvic project that started as recently as 2012. It is encouraging that these birds are being resighted and that the project is generating data about Shag movements already.

Oystercatcher

487290	1	17/06/96	Seleyri, Kaldalon, NorAour-A, Iceland
	X	23/09/12	Fair Isle, Shetland (1279km, 125°, 5942 days)
FA43843	1	09/07/91	North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	XF	23/02/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (49km, 68°, 7900 days)

Curlew

FC99515	1	06/06/05	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	26/05/13	Foula, Shetland (71km, 341°, 2911 days)

Woodcock

EW47179	4	14/10/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	+	19/01/13	Skerne, East Riding of Yorkshire (623km, 174°, 97 days)

Great Skua

MA22286	1	02/08/09	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	30/10/10	Foncaude, Gruissan, Aude, France (1853km, 170°, 453 days)
MA31184	1	28/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	30/10/12	Chez Criteau, Charente-Maritime, France (1567km, 177°, 94 days)
MA31117	1	06/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	23/06/13	Ayr Racecourse, South Ayrshire (486km, 202°, 352 days)

A bird ringed on Fair Isle as a pullus on 20th July 2006 was found dead on the isle on 30th September 2012 (2264 days). Another ringed as a pullus on Fair Isle on 13th July 2009 was found freshly dead on 29th September 2012 (1147 days). Three individuals ringed as pulli on 2nd, 10th and 20th July 2012 were later found dead on 30th September (90 days), 18th October (90 days) and 26th September (78 days), respectively, of the same year.

Razorbill

M75143	8	14/06/91	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	06/04/13	Blackhall, Durham (534km, 178°, 7967 days)
M79367	1	26/06/95	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	06/02/13	Vejers Strand, Ribe, Denmark (725km, 127°, 6435 days)
M81266	1	23/06/93	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	31/03/13	Holy Island, Northumberland (430km, 182°, 7221 days)
M96022	1	23/06/00	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	30/05/13	Skerry Harbour, Highland (190km, 235°, 4724 days)
M75213	8	22/06/91	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	24/07/13	St Cyrus, Aberdeenshire (309km, 189°, 8068 days)

A bird ringed on Fair Isle as a pullus on 19th June 1991 was found freshly dead on the isle on 10th June 2013 (8027 days).

Guillemot

T10516	1	27/06/86	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	03/05/13	Gl. Skagen, Nordjyllands Ant, Denmark (732km, 107°, 9807 days)
R59327	6	25/06/10	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	24/08/13	Lossiemouth, Moray (224km, 206°, 1156 days)

Arctic Tern

SX96283	1	30/06/97	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	04/08/12	Ratray Head, Aberdeenshire (214km, 184°, 5514 days)
XR72089	1	28/06/91	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	04/08/12	Ratray Head, Aberdeenshire (214km, 184°, 7708 days)
SX51746	1	01/07/95	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	09/08/13	Ythan Estuary, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire (248km, 185°, 6614 days)
SX33380	1	30/06/92	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	08/08/13	Ythan Estuary, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire (248km, 185°, 7709 days)
SV23105	1	02/07/00	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	04/07/13	Ham, Foula, Shetland (71km, 341°, 4750 days)
SX32023	1	22/06/92	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	11/08/13	Mill Pond, East Burra, Shetland (64km, 17°, 7720 days)

Herring Gull

GA22500	1	08/07/09	Fair Isle, Shetland
	VV	02/08/10	Den Haag, Zuid-Holland, The Netherlands (905km, 157°, 390 days)
	VV	28/08/10	Den Haag, Zuid-Holland, The Netherlands (905km, 157°, 416 days)
	VV	04/09/10	Den Haag, Zuid-Holland, The Netherlands (905km, 157°, 443 days)
	VV	22/10/10	Den Haag, Zuid-Holland, The Netherlands (905km, 157°, 471 days)
GA23776	1	17/06/00	Inver, Dunbeath, Highland
	XF	29/01/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (178km, 36°, 4609 days)
GA22064	8	17/10/98	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	10/10/13	Evenskjer, Troms, Norway (1334km, 42°, 5472 days)

Only in recent years has the reading of engraved number and letter codes on metal rings, such as GA22500 above, by telescope and even binoculars become a relatively frequent occurrence. This very welcome practice is a tribute to advances in the quality of optics and the determination and skill of birders to read metal rings in the field.

Great Black-backed Gull

HT64825	10	08/02/98	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	13/11/12	Dales Voe, Lerwick, Shetland (75km, 19°, 5392 days)

Rock Dove

A bird ringed on Fair Isle as an adult on 20th May 2007 was found dead on the isle on 5th October 2012 (1965 days).

Chiffchaff

DLE823	5	16/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	06/06/13	Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (49km, 248°, 21 days)
	R	20/09/13	Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (49km, 248°, 127 days)
	R	28/09/13	Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (49km, 248°, 135 days)
	R	06/10/13	Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (49km, 248°, 143 days)

It is intriguing to speculate whether this Chiffchaff spent the summer on North Ronaldsay, or, if it was a late-migrating individual that passed through Fair Isle and North Ronaldsay in the spring, summered and/or bred elsewhere in July and August, and then stopped off on North Ronaldsay again on its autumn migration.

Blackcap

Y123950	5F	08/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	10/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (2 days)

Garden Warbler

A bird ringed on Fair Isle on 16th May 2013 was found freshly dead on the isle on 20th May 2013, having been predated by a cat (four days). Another ringed on 3rd September 2013 was found dead on 11th September 2013, having suffered the same fate (eight days).

Ringling summary

Sedge Warbler

Y875000	3	21/08/12	South Milton Ley, Devon
	R	16/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (1040km, 8°, 268 days)
L740297	3	02/08/12	Graemeshall Loch, Holm, Orkney
	R	13/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (103km, 45°, 284 days)

Waxwing

NW62620	3M	04/11/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	09/12/12	Newtown, Powys (789km, 188°, 35 days)
NW62551	3M	03/11/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	04/11/12	Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (49km, 248°, 1 days)
NW62620	3M	04/11/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	15/11/12	Kincorth, Aberdeen (270km, 186°, 11 days)

Starling

LC44864	1	02/06/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	VV	08/02/13	Scatness, Shetland (251 days)
LA56100	1	04/06/08	Fair Isle, Shetland
	VV	08/10/12	Sanday, Orkney (65km, 239°, 1587 days)
	VV	19/04/13	Sanday, Orkney (65km, 239°, 1780 days)
LE13473	3J	19/06/13	Fair Isle, Shetland
	VV	26/08/13	Skeld, Shetland (74km, 9°, 68 days)

A bird ringed on Fair Isle as a juvenile on 20th June 2011 was found dead on the isle on 11th October 2012 (479 days). Another individual that was ringed as a pullus on 2nd July 2012 was found dead on 8th October 2012 (128 days). Another bird that was ringed on the island as a juvenile on 10th October 2012 was found dead on 18th December 2012 (69 days).

Blackbird

LA03778	6M	05/04/08	Fair Isle, Shetland
	XF	01/12/12	Stoke Park, Coventry, West Midlands (793km, 180°, 1671 days)
LA03735	5M	30/03/08	Fair Isle, Shetland
	X	04/06/13	Bull Island, Dublin, Ireland (739km, 202°, 1892 days)

A young male ringed on Fair Isle on 24th March 2013 was found dead on 20th April 2013 (27 days).

Robin

Y123610	3	27/09/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	22/04/13	Store Faerder, Tjome, Vestfold, Norway (692km, 95°, 207 days)

A bird ringed on Fair Isle as a juvenile on 16th October 2012 was found dead on the isle on 24th December 2012 (69 days). An adult that was ringed on 12th April 2013 was found dead on 9th May 2013 (27 days).

Wheatear

VS18806	1	11/06/09	Fair Isle, Shetland
	VV	08/09/13	Pen y Cloddiau, Nannerch, Flintshire (713km, 189°, 1550 days)
VS18964	1	06/07/09	Fair Isle, Shetland
	VV	10/04/12	Tourlaville, Manche, France (1099km, 180°, 1009 days)

These two resighting records add to many others of colour-ringed Wheatears that have been received by the Observatory since 2008. These records now form a useful legacy of the Wheatear colour-ringing projects run on the isle from 2008 to 2012.

Duncock

L274412 4 16/04/12 Fair Isle, Shetland
 XF 16/04/13 Stainton, Barnard Castle, Durham (554km, 182°, 365 days)

House Sparrow

A bird ringed on Fair Isle as a juvenile on 23rd September 2012 was found dead on the isle on 23rd October 2012 (30 days). Another that was ringed as a juvenile on 3rd August 2009 was found dead on 20th October 2012 (1174 days).

Grey Wagtail

Y123812 5M 09/04/13 Fair Isle, Shetland
 XF 22/04/13 Baltasound, Unst, Shetland (142km, 18°, 13 days)

Pied Wagtail

A bird ringed as a pullus on Fair Isle on 26th June 2012 was found freshly dead on the isle on 13th July 2012, killed by a cat (17 days).

Meadow Pipit

X713289 4 10/04/10 Fair Isle, Shetland
 SR 02/12/12 Elche, Alicante, Spain (2366km, 179°, 967 days)
 X249574 3 27/08/09 Fair Isle, Shetland
 R 20/08/13 Fair Isle, Shetland (1454 days)

Rock Pipit

2552406 4 15/04/09 Fair Isle, Shetland
 VV 30/12/12 Buchanhaven, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire (225km, 183°, 1355 days)
 2611363 3 12/11/12 Cairnbulg, Aberdeenshire
 VV 15/05/13 Fair Isle, Shetland (209km, 6°, 184 days)
 VV 17/05/13 Fair Isle, Shetland (209km, 6°, 186 days)
 VV 18/05/13 Fair Isle, Shetland (209km, 6°, 187 days)
 2611325 3 20/03/12 Cairnbulg, Aberdeenshire
 VV 15/05/13 Fair Isle, Shetland (209km, 6°, 421 days)
 VV 16/05/13 Fair Isle, Shetland (209km, 6°, 422 days)
 2611390 4 01/04/13 St Combs, Aberdeenshire
 VV 24/04/13 Fair Isle, Shetland (210km, 5°, 23 days)

An excellent series of colour-ring resighting records for this species, illustrating movements of birds between Fair Isle and the now well established Rock Pipit study areas in Aberdeenshire.

Brambling

L274953 5F 14/05/12 Fair Isle, Shetland
 R 11/02/13 West Tofts, Norfolk (797km, 170°, 273 days)
 R 10/03/13 West Tofts, Norfolk (797km, 170°, 300 days)
 R 05/04/13 West Tofts, Norfolk (797km, 170°, 326 days)

Linnet

Y123068 3J 03/08/12 Fair Isle, Shetland
 R 17/10/12 Nigg Bay, Cromarty Firth, Highland (244km, 215°, 75 days)
 Y123068 3J 03/08/12 Fair Isle, Shetland
 R 25/09/13 Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (49km, 248°, 418 days)

Ringling summary

Twite

X712777	3	28/07/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	03/12/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 494 days)
	R	03/04/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 615 days)
X712860	2M	26/09/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	23/02/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 516 days)
X713597	3	19/07/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	21/04/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 642 days)
Y123050	3J	18/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	02/12/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 137 days)
	R	01/04/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 257 days)
Y123054	3J	18/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	23/02/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 220 days)
Y123057	3J	20/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	23/02/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 218 days)
Y123060	3J	20/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	10/02/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 205 days)
Y123307	3	13/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	10/02/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 181 days)
Y123307	3	13/08/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	18/02/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 189 days)
Y123432	3	17/09/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	02/02/13	Stromness, Orkney (115km, 236°, 138 days)
Y123432	3	17/09/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	20/01/13	Stromness, Orkney (115km, 236°, 125 days)
Y123447	3M	01/10/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	18/04/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 199 days)
Y123503	3M	04/09/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	14/03/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 191 days)
X712497	6F	11/04/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	15/11/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 584 days)
X712924	3J	20/08/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	11/11/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 449 days)
X712579	3J	13/07/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	09/11/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 485 days)
X712761	3J	20/07/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	15/11/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 484 days)
X713599	3	19/07/11	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	29/11/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 499 days)
Y123255	3J	28/07/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	02/12/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney (51km, 247°, 127 days)
L832709	4F	24/01/12	Clachtoll, Lochinver, Highland
	R	30/09/12	Fair Isle, Shetland (261km, 55°, 250 days)
X409863	6F	11/03/12	Queena, Sandwick, Orkney
	R	15/04/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (110km, 59°, 400 days)
D089290	5	05/02/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	21/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 105 days)
	R	26/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 110 days)

D089271	2	03/12/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	27/03/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 114 days)
L717353	4M	31/01/12	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	04/04/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 429 days)
D397062	4M	18/04/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	25/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 37 days)
D397025	4M	04/04/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	11/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 37 days)
	R	13/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 39 days)
	R	21/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 47 days)
	R	26/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 52 days)
D089371	4M	28/02/13	Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	27/03/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (51km, 67°, 27 days)
D089176	5F	19/03/13	Holland, North Ronaldsay, Orkney
	R	02/06/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (49km, 68°, 75 days)

A young female ringed on Fair Isle on 2nd April 2009 was retrapped on the isle on 4th April 2013 (1463 days) and 28th April 2013 (1487 days). The records above provide further evidence of a now well established pattern of Twite movements between breeding/summering locations on Fair Isle and wintering locations in Orkney.

Common Redpoll

L741081	5M	13/05/13	Queenamidda, Rendall, Orkney
	R	25/05/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (99km, 59°, 12 days)

Siskin

L274584	4F	07/05/12	Fair Isle, Shetland
	R	20/04/13	Dalton, Lancashire (667km, 186°, 348 days)
Y673364	5M	20/02/13	Sandiway, Cheshire
	XF	26/04/13	Fair Isle, Shetland (705km, 5°, 65 days)

Common (left) and Lesser Redpoll, Chapel, October. © D. Parnaby





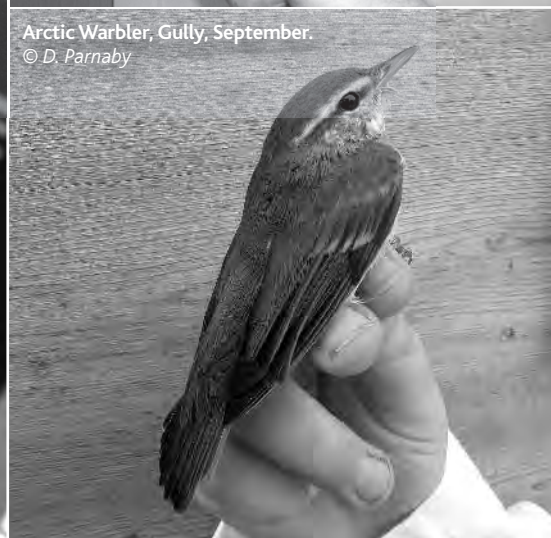
Collared (left) and Pied Flycatcher,
Mast and Plantation, June. © W. Miles



Lanceolated Warbler, Da Water,
September. © D. Parkin



Coot, Utra, February. © D. Parnaby



Arctic Warbler, Gully, September.
© D. Parnaby

Fair Isle's seabirds in 2013

Will Miles

Overview: 2013 was an exceptionally poor year for breeding seabirds on Fair Isle, with declines in population size and breeding performance observed for nearly every species. The only species for which population increases were recorded were Gannet and Razorbill and the only species for which increases in breeding performance were seen were Fulmar and Puffin. Declines occurred in all other cases, many substantial. For example, the whole island population of Kittiwakes went down by 37% and Guillemot numbers at the population plots went down by 30%, compared with 2012. In 2013, not a single chick fledged from the Arctic Skua, Kittiwake, Arctic Tern, Common Tern and Guillemot monitoring areas. Perhaps the greatest, and saddest, surprise of the year was just how few Guillemots at the productivity monitoring plots even laid an egg; then, how those that were laid all failed prior to hatching (just 30 birds laid eggs at Peitron, none at Da Swadin, this by far the lowest total on record; not a single Guillemot chick was ever seen at either of these colonies). Once again, it was a season that poignantly illustrated that breeding seabirds are in decline on Fair Isle, and that Kittiwakes and Arctic Skuas seem likely to go extinct as breeding species on the island within the next few years.

Fulmar: A decrease of 7.6% was recorded at the population monitoring plots in 2013 (304 AOS) in comparison with 2012 (329 AOS). The general long-term trend has been a fluctuating, gradual decline. Mean Fulmar breeding success increased by 22.9% from 2012 to 2013, from 0.48 to 0.59 chicks fledged per AOS. The long-term trend in breeding success is of neither consistent increase nor decrease, but is of short-term fluctuations. *Phenology records:* eggs were first seen on 20th May (at the Parks) and chicks on 10th July (at the Parks).

Gannet: In comparison with 2012, the island population of Gannets increased by 1.6% in 2013, from 3862 to 3924 AON. This may indicate that the population size is now stabilizing, after a long-term trend of increase since 1987, including particularly rapid expansion from 2008 to 2010. Gannet productivity in 2013 was 0.68 chicks fledged per AON, representing a decrease of 20% since 2012, when productivity was 0.85. Although slightly lower than the previous 5 years, the 2013 figure maintains the trend for productivity values to be relatively high during the last 13 years (above 0.6 in all years with data from 2001 to 2013). *Phenology records:* chicks were first seen on 19th May (Guidicum). All chicks had fledged from the monitored nest sample by 15th October.

Shag: The Fair Isle population of Shags has declined considerably since 1969. The total count from plots in 2013 numbered 21 apparently occupied nests, a decrease of 34.4% since 2012 (when 32 AON were found) and the third lowest plots total on record (after 20 AON were recorded in 2009 and 2011). The whole island count this

year numbered 204 AON, a decrease of 13.2% since the last full count (in 2008, when 235 AON were found) and the lowest count on record. In 1969, a whole-island total of 1530 AON was recorded. Shag productivity was 32.6% lower in 2013 (0.64 chicks fledged per AON) than in 2012 (0.95). The long-term trend since 1986 has been a gradual decline in productivity. The breeding Shag population on Fair Isle has declined severely and the total number of occupied nests in the productivity monitoring plots is now critically low (11 in 2013 compared with 68 in 1986). *Phenology records*: eggs were first seen on 2nd May (Mavers Geo) and chicks on 13th June (Johnny's Peats). Breeding was notably asynchronous, with the first chicks fledging from the productivity monitoring plots on 24th July and the last on 11th September.

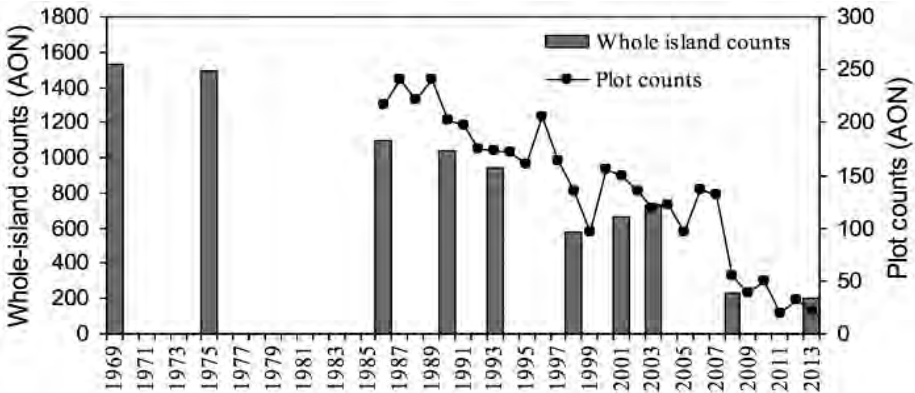


Figure 1. Population change of Shags on Fair Isle, 1969–2013 (whole-island counts and plot counts of apparently occupied nests - AON). Plot counts for each year are the sum of counts from five study plots.

Arctic Skua: Numbers of Arctic Skuas (AOTs) dropped by 5% in 2013 (19 AOT) in comparison with 2012 (20 AOT). Nineteen AOT is the lowest number on record since the species became established on Fair Isle in the 1950s. The long-term trend in the population has been a gradual decline with occasional fluctuations. In 2013, only one Arctic Skua egg hatched and no chicks fledged. Zero fledging has occurred in four previous years: 2004, 2007, 2008 and 2011. Arctic Skua breeding success has been consistently low during the last decade, never rising above 0.3. *Phenology records*: eggs were first seen on 1st June (Gilsetter) and a chick on 29th June (Buness).

Great Skua: A decrease of 11.3% in breeding Great Skua population was found in 2013 (266 AOT) in comparison with 2012 (300 AOT). The 2013 AOT count is at odds with the long-term pattern of population increase on Fair Isle, which was particularly rapid between 2004 and 2008, and this may be representative of the population level stabilizing. Breeding success was 32.1% lower in 2013 (0.36 chicks fledged per AOT) than in 2012 (0.53). Recent increases in the population of Great Skuas on Fair Isle have not been mirrored by reproductive performance, which has fluctuated, with no obvious long-term trend. *Phenology records*: eggs were first seen on 13th May (Hoini) and chicks on 14th June (Hoini).

Puffin: The population on Fair Isle was not monitored in 2013, since this was not a scheduled year for a whole-island count. However, the long-term trend in numbers from whole-island counts has been a gradual decline since 1989. Productivity was 21.7% higher in 2013 (0.73 chicks fledged per egg laid) than in 2012 (0.60). Overall, productivity values tended to be higher and less variable between 1987 and 2000 (14-year mean = 0.72, S.E. = 0.03) than between 2001 and 2013 (13-year mean = 0.52, S.E. = 0.05).

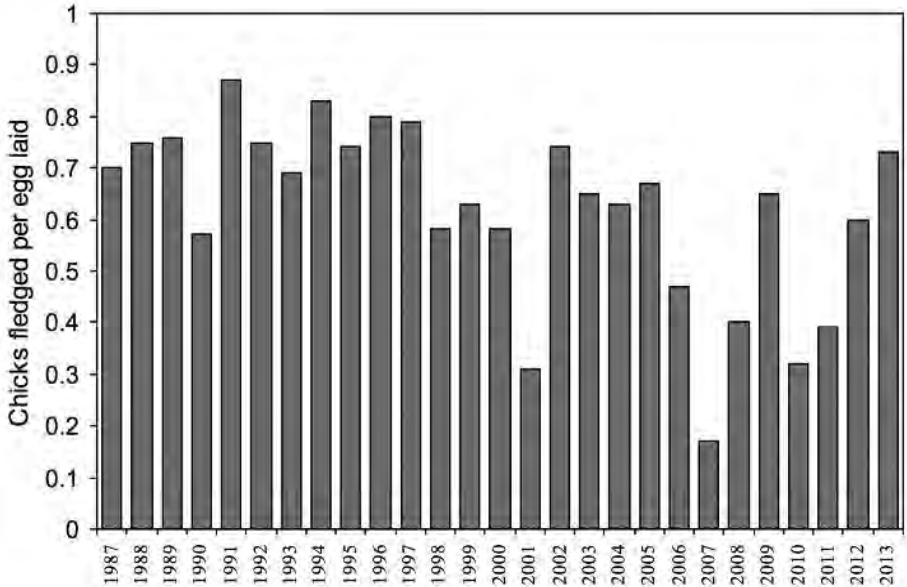


Figure 2. Breeding success of Puffins on Fair Isle, 1987–2013. Data are mostly representative of two monitoring plots (Easter Lothar and Greenholm).

In 2013, for the second year running, Puffin mark-resighting data from the breeding colony at Roskilie was analysed using Program MARK. The analyses showed that adult survival has not declined but has remained stable with only slight fluctuations since 1987, but that the probability of resighting adults has declined during this period. The Roskilie colony is heavily patrolled by Great Skuas, which hunt Puffins, and it seems likely that resighting colour-ringed adults is strongly affected by the presence of skuas. In recent years, the normal behaviour of Puffins at the colony has been that most come in irregularly, alone, land very close to their burrow, dart to the entrance and then quickly disappear underground (making reading colour-rings and trapping adults extremely difficult). Only on rare occasions do multiple birds arrive or do many spend time standing together out on the grass (and, lately, this has been observed most often late at night, when the light level is too low for accurate assessment of ring colours). Scaring away all skuas within c.300m of the colony at the start of each colouring-reading session seems to slightly increase the number of Puffins seen on land.

Small Sandeels (<100mm) were the most common identified prey-type seen being brought to burrows for Puffin chicks during the 24hr feeding watch in 2013 (33.0% of fish brought back were small Sandeels), then second most abundant were Gadoids (8.3%). By comparison, in 2012, small Sandeels were the most common prey-type (16.2%) and then Rockling (12.6%). The highly skittish behaviour of the Puffins at Roskillie (see above) now makes prey identification extremely difficult during feeding watches (52.3% of feeds were too quick for prey identification in 2013 and 62.2% were in 2012). In 2013, small Sandeels and Clupeids were the most abundant prey-types in food samples collected from Puffins (48.8% small Sandeels and 29.3% Clupeids), whereas in both 2012 and 2011, small Sandeels and Rockling were most abundant. The mean mass of food samples collected in 2013 (2.6g, SE = 0.24) was 62.5% higher than in 2012 (1.6g, SE = 0.25). Daily chick feeding frequency was found to be 51.4% higher in 2013 (3.30 feeds per burrow per day) than in 2012 (2.18 feeds per burrow per day). *Phenology records*: chicks were first located on 6th June, at Greenholm.

Black Guillemot: The number of Black Guillemots in breeding plumage counted along the east coast of Fair Isle (North Lighthouse to South Lighthouse) was 4.4% lower in 2013 (174 individuals) than in 2012 (182 individuals).

Razorbill: Razorbill numbers at the Lericum monitoring plot had increased by 34.9% in 2013 (22 individuals) compared with 2012 (17 individuals). In a generally very poor breeding season for seabirds this result was surprising. It is conceivable that the 2013 count at Lericum may not actually represent breeding birds, but instead individuals that failed very early at the egg stage and then stood around on the colony boulders before final departure back out to sea (in very poor breeding seasons such ambiguity is a potential artifact of the survey method used at Lericum). The number of breeding sites found at the Easter Lothar plot declined by 37.2% in 2013 (27 individuals with an egg) compared with 2012 (43). Whole-island counts since 1988 have shown a sustained, gradual decline in the island population. A decline in population since 1997 has also been seen at the Lericum plot; however, this is mostly accounted for by a large decrease between 2006 and 2007. Razorbill productivity was very low in 2013 (0.04 chicks fledged per egg laid), and had declined by 82.6% since 2012 (0.23). From 1990 to 2002, productivity fluctuated but remained relatively high at between 0.47 and 0.8. Since 2003 however, productivity has consistently been low (<0.5) or, in four years, been zero. *Phenology records*: eggs were first seen on 12th May (Easter Lothar) and chicks on 15th June (Gunnawark).

Guillemot: Plot counts showed a decrease of 29.7% in 2013 (928 individuals) compared with 2012 (1320 individuals). Breeding numbers of this species, recorded by plot counts and whole-island counts, have gradually declined since 1999. In 2013, Guillemot productivity was zero. This result has been previously observed in only three years: 2004, 2008 and 2011. The extraordinary thing about 2013 was that relatively very few birds at the productivity monitoring plots even laid an egg (30 birds at Peitron and none at Da Swadin, this by far the lowest on record); also, that all breeding attempts failed at the egg stage and therefore, for the first time, chick diet assessment was not possible.

Not a single chick was ever seen on the colony at Peitron, and not a single egg or apparently incubating adult was seen at Da Swadin. 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 (<0.5) or to be zero. *Phenology records*: eggs were first seen on 15th May (Lericum) and chicks on 21st June (South Ramnigeo). In 2012, most birds (150+) were ashore at the productivity plots (Peitron and Da Swadin) from 21st May onwards. By stark contrast, attendance was highly variable in 2013. On 27th May, 25 birds were ashore at Da Swadin, but these rapidly disappeared during the following week and none were seen thereafter. The following notes were taken at Peitron: 116 birds ashore on 15th May, one on 19th May, none on 20th May, five on 21st May, none on 22nd May, four on 24th May, 60 on 25th May, then between ten and 40 birds ashore daily from 26th May until 5th July (numbers of birds consistently low but variable at 40 or less, even within any one day), then seven were ashore on 9th July, six on 11th July, then none from 16th July onwards.

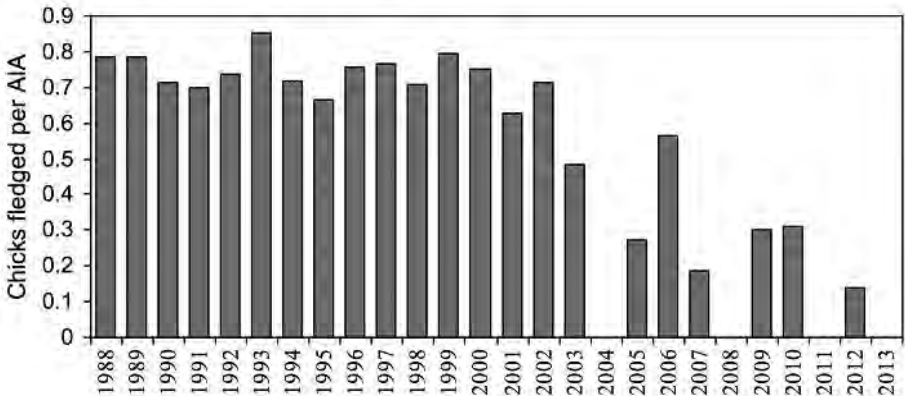


Figure 3. Breeding success of Guillemots on Fair Isle, 1988–2013. Data presented are means from two plots (Peitron and Da Swadin).

Common Tern: In 2013, no breeding attempts were made by this species. This was a return to the recent trend on the island, where no breeding attempts were made from 2006 to 2011.

Arctic Tern: The whole-island count showed a decrease of 87.2% in 2013 (29 AIA) in comparison with 2012 (227 AIA). Breeding numbers have fluctuated greatly since 1987, probably because Arctic Terns breed colonially but not always at the same site every year. Arctic Tern productivity was zero in 2013; a decline since 2012, when productivity was 0.03 chicks fledged per egg laid. All nests failed at the egg stage in 2013. Productivity has now been zero in seven years of the last decade (including 2010 and 2011). Breeding success for this species since 1988 has been highly variable, probably due to variable availability of small fish prey in Fair Isle waters. *Phenology records*: eggs were first seen on 8th June (Brecks of Busta).

Kittiwake: Since 1987, Kittiwakes have severely declined on Fair Isle. Plot counts in 2013 (36 AON) revealed a decline of 30.8% compared with 2012 (52 AON). Similarly, the 2013 whole-island count of 771 AON equated to a 37.1% decline since 2012 (1225 AON). The whole-island count and plot counts in 2013 were the lowest on record. During the 1969 whole-island census 12121 AON were recorded. In 2013, no Kittiwake chicks fledged at the productivity monitoring plots. This has occurred six times previously since 1986: five times in the last decade (2003, 2004, 2008, 2011 and 2012) and in 1990. Since 2000, Kittiwake productivity has been consistently low, never rising above 0.5 chicks fledged per AON. *Phenology records:* adults were first seen collecting nest material on 29th May (Utra), eggs were first seen on 5th June (Inner Sound o' Holms) and chicks on 1st July (Inner Sound o' Holms).

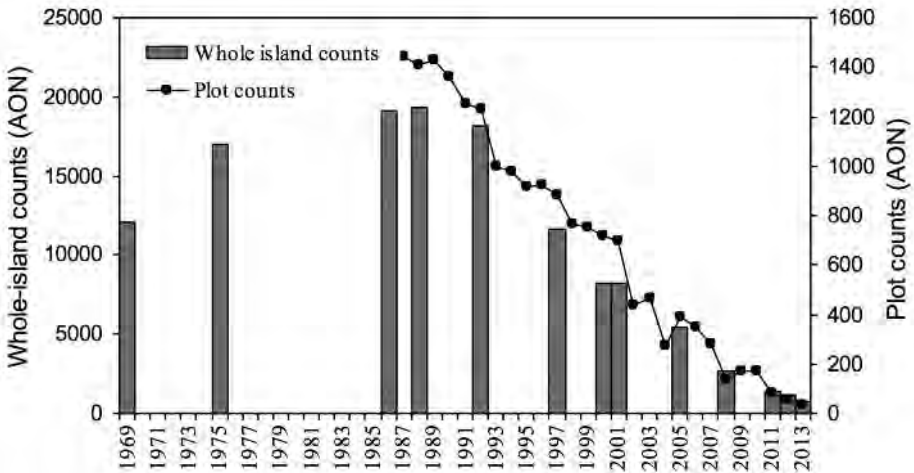


Figure 4. Population change of Kittiwakes on Fair Isle, 1969–2013 (whole-island counts and plot counts of apparently occupied nests - AON). Plot counts for each year are the sum of counts from ten study plots.

Note: As in previous years, monitoring of the populations, productivity, survival and diet of Fair Isle's seabirds was carried out by FIBO under government contract from JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee). JNCC contracts annual seabird studies at four key monitoring sites around UK waters (Isle of May, Fair Isle, Canna and Skomer), with Fair Isle representative of the far North. Full details of the 2013 season can be found in the annual seabird report (Miles, W. T. S., Parnaby, D., Cope, R. D., Donohue, T. & Hughes, R. D. 2013. *Fair Isle Seabird Studies 2013*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Aberdeen). **AON** = apparently occupied nest, **AIA** = apparently incubating adult, **AOT** = apparently occupied territory, **AOS** = apparently occupied site.

Other seabird studies on Fair Isle in 2013: For the fourth year running research was undertaken by RSPB to determine the foraging behaviour of Fulmars, Shags, Kittiwakes, Guillemots and Razorbills and identify important feeding areas for consideration as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) (see page 142). Additionally in 2013, nine Shags (seven chicks and two adults) were fitted with darvic rings (red

rings with white three-digit capital letter combinations) at South Ramnigeo and South Mila Hesslands. This work contributes to a project being run across North-east Scotland by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology looking at dispersal, survival, distribution and movement patterns of juvenile and adult Shags. Shag colour-ringing in 2013 was severely affected by week after week of thick summer fog and otherwise dangerous sea states, greatly limiting use of the boat to access the Shag colonies.

Installation and functioning of the via ferrata seabird colony access systems: During late March and early April 2013, permanently fixed climbing protection was installed for safe access of the cliff slopes at South Gunnawark and Easter Lother. This work was carried out by SG Access Solutions Ltd., specialists in rope access, work at height and difficult access environments.

The main objective of the work was to enable safer access to the seabird colonies at South Gunnawark and Easter Lother in compliance with Health and Safety legislation. The fixed climbing protection took the form of three via ferrata systems at Easter Lother and Gunnawark. A via ferrata is a system of interconnecting sections of stainless steel cables and ladder rungs, permanently anchored into the rock, to which workers/climbers can safely attach themselves at all times while traversing a slope (attachment is via a climbing harness and specialist energy-absorbing lanyards with auto-locking karabiners). In addition to the via ferrata systems, SG Access installed permanent anchor points for rope access to the seabird colonies at South Gunnawark, Lericum, South Naaversgil and Wester Lother.

The via ferrata systems and permanent anchors for rope access were used extensively for seabird fieldwork in 2013 and proved to be extremely useful, robust, safe to use, and an improvement on previous methods. Installation of these systems was funded by Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust, with contributions from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Seabird Group. FIBOT is very grateful to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and the Seabird Group for their support.



Arctic Skua by W. Miles

First and last migrant dates

David Parnaby

Species	Earliest ever	Earliest 2013	Latest ever	Latest 2013
Quail	30.04.61	3rd June	13.10.89	3rd June
Osprey	25.04.66	6th May	04.11.35	10th June
Corncrake	10.04.66	24th May	03.11.77	1st October
Dotterel	25.04.73	12th May	06.11.76	17th October
Whimbrel	12.04.10	9th April*	12.12.1907	15th October
Common Sandpiper	05.04.83	3rd May	02.11.1908	13th September
Green Sandpiper	08.04.79	10th April	12.11.70	21st September
Arctic Skua	04.04.88	21st April	25.10.	28th August
Great Skua	17.03.09	31st March	16.11.	8th November
Sandwich Tern	23.04.07	13th June	18.09.77	13th June
Common Tern	25.04.83	25th May	18.10.75	15th September
Arctic Tern	No data	8th May	30.10	15th September
Lesser Black-backed Gull	02.02.11	4th April	12.12.57	22nd October
Turtle Dove	23.04.71	24th September	01.11.82	14th October
Cuckoo	17.04.87	10th May	08.10.77	19th August
Swift	29.04.01	16th April*	26.10.75	30th August
Wryneck	18.04.81	19th May	17.10.74	24th August
Red-backed Shrike	04.05.84	9th May	08.11.93	26th September
Goldcrest	27.02.	16th March	19.12.03	1st November
Sand Martin	02.04.89	14th April	19.10.78	3rd September
Swallow	31.03.02	15th April	02.11.84	14th October
House Martin	10.04.11	3rd May	02.11.11	21st September
Wood Warbler	14.04.81	12th May	06.10.73	5th September
Chiffchaff	12.03.73	11th April	no data	19th November

Willow Warbler	25.03.10	18th April	23.11.27	16th October
Blackcap	27.03.12	18th April	20.12	19th November
Garden Warbler	21.04.68	13th May	20.11.76	27th October
Lesser Whitethroat	20.04.09	2nd May	08.11.	20th October
Whitethroat	11.04. Pre 59	7th May	21.10.78	5th October
Subalpine Warbler	20.04.00	25th May	29.10.07	14th September
Grasshopper Warbler	07.04.02	23rd April	23.10.00	4th October
Icterine Warbler	12.05.07	8th May*	13.10.76	10th September
Sedge Warbler	19.04.87	3rd May	11.11.75	15th October
Marsh Warbler	22.05.84	18th May*	06.10. Pre 63	13th September
Reed Warbler	28.04.01	29th May	31.10.80	16th October
Ring Ouzel	16.03.88	11th April	18.12.1909	23rd October
Spotted Flycatcher	20.04.49	8th May	26.10.85	11th October
Bluethroat	22.03.1908	16th May	13.11.83	18th October
Pied Flycatcher	21.04.83	9th May	29.10.85	16th October
Black Redstart	09.02.1989	11th April	22.12.86x	4th November
Redstart	12.04.1981	22nd April	11.11.81	21st October
Whinchat	14.04.81	3rd May	26.11.90	29th October
Wheatear	13.03. Pre 59	10th April	19.11.59	31st October
Yellow (flava) Wagtail	25.03.54	1st May	20.11.57	12th October
Pied Wagtail	20.02.03	27th March	17.11	25th October
Tree Pipit	14.04. Pre 63	21st April	09.11.1908	14th October
Red-throated Pipit	08.05.36	12th October	01.11.1908	24th October
Common Rosefinch	08.05.77	29th May	30.11.91	28th September
Ortolan Bunting	26.04.64	12th May	01.11.00	14th June
Rustic Bunting	25.04.80	19th May	08.11.75	3rd June
Little Bunting	04.04.58	10th September	19.11.75	26th October

*new record

x arrival date (went on to winter)

Swinhoe's Petrels in summer 2013; the first and second for Fair Isle

Will Miles

Petrel ringing sessions have been carried out annually by the wardens on Fair Isle since 1957 and over the years more than 34000 Storm Petrels have been ringed. Typically, playback of Storm Petrel and Leach's Petrel calls has been used to attract the birds in. Swinhoe's Petrel calls have been played only since 2011, with a sound track or two of Swinhoe's chatter calls included with tracks of the usual two species (the Swinhoe's tracks were from the brilliant *Petrels Night and Day*, produced by The Sound Approach Team). Playing Swinhoe's calls was always entirely speculative; a shot to nothing based on the off-chance that maybe one day a wandering individual might be attracted in.

Hearing the call

On the night of 21st/22nd July 2013 conditions for a 'stormie' session were absolutely perfect. Thick fog smothered the island, creating exceptionally dark conditions; the wind was very light, with just a breath of an easterly; and wave movements were minimal, so the night was also very quiet - ideal for play-back calls and real calls to be clearly audible. The previous night, conditions had been similar and a good early season total of 26 Storm Petrels and two Leach's Petrels had been trapped and ringed.

Just after midnight on the 22nd, the bird observatory team set up two mist nets, one facing north into North Haven and the other facing east into South Haven. Each net had a speaker system underneath it, each playing a mixed playlist of various petrel vocalisations. The speaker under the South Haven net was playing the following track sequence on repeat: Leach's - Leach's - Storm - Storm - Swinhoe's - Leach's - Storm - Leach's - Swinhoe's - Madeiran - Storm. The Swinhoe's track comprised both male and female chatter calls, occasionally with the calls of Streaked Shearwaters quietly in the background.

That night, Richard Cope and Teresa Donohue were manning the North Haven net, David Parnaby and Noa Eden were on the South Haven net, and Billy Dykes was ferrying petrels from the nets to the ringing garages, where I was based, ringing and releasing birds. At 2.30am I happened to walk out of the garages with BD and heard the chatter calls of a Swinhoe's Petrel being played from the speaker under the South Haven net, and the same calls coming from an area south of the net, just offshore. For a split second, I thought that the Swinhoe's calls coming from offshore must somehow be another recording or an echo, but then I realised that they were not in synchrony with the track being played, were totally pure (without Streaked Shearwater

recordings in the background), were not coming from the speaker under the North Haven net (set further north and not playing Swinhoe's then anyway) and that the source was in mid-air and moving rapidly around. The penny dropped and I ran towards South Haven yelling "There's a Swinhoe's calling!" or words to that effect.

DP and NE joined BD and me standing on the low cliff top, listening. The bird continued to call from out in the haven in front of us, very loud and clear. Suddenly however, the sound system automatically switched track from Swinhoe's to Madeiran Petrel, and with Madeiran playing the bird gave a few more chatter calls and then went silent. The track was quickly switched back to Swinhoe's and the result was immediate: the bird resumed chatter calling. With it calling again, DP ran back to the Observatory to get a sound recording device. The bird took off and flew around the haven calling for a while, but then went silent. DP came back with the device, but the bird was heard no more. It had called on and off for about ten minutes in total, out in the foggy darkness, but at no point was it ever seen.

We waited until well after dawn had passed before packing up that night, but the bird had gone. None of the team had any doubts about the identification and everyone was elated to have been involved in the record, but we also hoped that the story would not end there, with just the calls, the darkness, and nothing more.

The first sighting

From the 22nd to the 26th July the weather was calm on Fair Isle and the observatory team was able to do petrel ringing sessions every night. It was an excellent few days, with over 150 Storm and four Leach's Petrels trapped and ringed, magnificent views of a pod of four Killer Whales that toured the island on the afternoon of the 25th, and the discovery of a flock of eight Two-barred Crossbills on the 26th. The week was characterised by drifting fog, thickening on the 26th and greatly reducing light and visibility for the petrel session that night. It was the first night with similar conditions to those on the 22nd, when the Swinhoe's had been heard; however, the fog was *even* thicker and the air increasingly heavy and brooding, like that before a tropical storm. Fair Isle was conjuring a rare atmosphere, never before had the darkness felt so charged and promising. As I sat at the net that night, waiting for the first petrels to come in, it was as though the island was saying "get ready".

On the night of the 26th/27th the team put up two nets facing east into South Haven, and as on the 22nd, the speaker system under the nets was programmed to play vocalisations of various petrel species, including Swinhoe's. The night ticked along nicely and by 1.25am we had caught 32 Storm Petrels and a Leach's. At that time, I happened to be at the net with Daniel McGibbon when suddenly we heard the calls of a Swinhoe's seemingly very close to us, just a few feet away. I began to prepare some equipment to make a recording of the calls, but almost immediately saw a large petrel fly into the net just above the speaker. On quickly reaching the bird I gently took hold of it. It felt far larger than a Storm Petrel but slightly smaller than any Leach's I had ever held. It was

in the middle shelf of the net, just sitting in the pocket, and carefully I parted its wing tips to look at the rump - no white. The bird was all-dark, like a shadow in the mesh, and my brain began to spin! I quickly took the bird out of the net and placed it in a bird bag, we turned off the sound system, I asked everyone to double check that there were no other petrels in the net (which there weren't) and we then closed the mist nets.

We walked over to the ringing garages and there I examined the dark-rumped bird in the light. It had to be a Swinhoe's, but I wanted to see all the features to be certain. They were all there - it really was one! I put it back into the bird bag, we gathered up all the ringing kit, and took everything up to the observatory ringing room. As we walked up, the news was put out to various folk, including DP, who unfortunately was in Sunderland that night (his time would come though). The bird was ringed and measured, as an appreciative crowd gathered made up of observatory staff, guests, and many islanders (some in nightwear) who had driven up to the observatory to see the petrel - an amazing rarity, even by Fair Isle's standards.

The bird was soon taken back to South Haven to be released. I stood facing the sea with the petrel on the palm of my hand, letting it acclimatise to the night and free to go when it was perfectly ready. After a couple of minutes, it shuffled onto my fingertips, opened its wings and flew off strongly out into the darkness. As this happened however, three of us heard a distinctive chatter call come from far offshore. We only heard it once, very faintly, somewhere out in the gloom, but it had sounded like another Swinhoe's Petrel.

The second bird

Following the capture of the Swinhoe's Petrel on the 27th July, the weather remained calm and settled and petrel ringing sessions were carried out in the early hours of the 28th, 30th and 31st July and the 1st, 5th and 6th August. During these sessions 374 Storm and seven Leach's Petrels were trapped and ringed, but there was no further sign of the Swinhoe's.

On the night of 6th/7th August, the weather was slightly overcast but again very calm, and the observatory team set out for another petrel session at 11.30pm. One 18m mist-net was set facing into South Haven, the usual sound system was placed under the net, and once this was on a steady stream of Storm Petrels was trapped and ringed (86 in total) and at least two Leach's heard and seen frequently overhead (2013 was a record season for Leach's on Fair Isle, with a final total of 20 trapped and ringed. The previous highest total was 14 in 1999). The team that night comprised of DP (now back from Sunderland), Logan Johnson, Rachael Redfern, TD, DM, Kieran Lawrence and me.

At 2.20am, KL was sitting at the south end of the net and I was at the north end, when we saw a large petrel hit the mesh close to where I was standing. Given the obvious presence of Leach's Petrels that night, indeed within the previous two minutes, and total lack of any Swinhoe's calls, I approached the bird expecting it to be a Leach's. The first things I saw were its legs, neither of which was ringed. In the hand, it felt

about the right size for a Leach's, but on turning the bird over I saw that everything about it was dark. It was *another* dark-rumped petrel!

Feeling totally astonished, I extracted the bird and placed it in a bird bag, KL turned off the sound system, we checked that there were no more petrels in the net, and then furled the net shut. We took the bird over to the ringing shed, where DP and I quickly finished processing and releasing the last batch of Storm Petrels. Then, for the second time in 11 days, I sat down to check the features of a dark-rumped petrel - and confirmed the mind-bending truth, that it really was a *second* Swinhoe's Petrel. I looked up at the faces around the room and every single one was beaming happiness.

As with the first Swinhoe's, everything was then transferred the short distance up the hill to the observatory ringing room. There the bird was ringed, measured in detail and photographed, then soon taken back to South Haven to be released. Standing at the edge of the haven, with a small crowd gathered behind, I took the bird out of a bird bag and carefully placed it onto the open hands of Dennis Coutts (who, amazingly, happened to be visiting from Shetland that particular night purely on the off-chance that a Swinhoe's Petrel might be caught). The bird sat quietly for a few minutes on Dennis's binocular-worn palms, then fluffed itself up slightly, spread its wings and darted off towards the open sea.

The second Swinhoe's was recaptured during routine petrel sessions in the early hours of the 8th August, nightly from the 11th to 15th, on the 17th August, and finally on 3rd September. The first Swinhoe's was seen only on the 27th July. The second individual behaved unlike any other petrel ever caught during mist-netting sessions on Fair Isle by making regular returns to the trapping area (note that petrels attracted to sound-lures are almost exclusively non-breeding birds and, despite the unusual behaviour of the second Swinhoe's, there were no indications that the Swinhoe's were breeding on Fair Isle). Following detailed consultations between FIBOT and the BTO during this period, petrel sessions were not held at the Havens between 18th August and 2nd September and Swinhoe's tracks were not played during a session there on the 3rd September (and trapping operations ceased immediately when the bird was caught that night). This proved to be the last session of the year, since sessions stopped entirely at the end of the first week in September, the usual end point of the petrel ringing season on Fair Isle.

Identification of the calls

The calls on the 27th July were similar to Leach's, but faster and with a greater number of high-pitched flourishes. Each chatter call was amazingly loud and had a manic looping quality, like a very high-pitched racing car revving up a few times and then zooming away. Like Leach's, each call comprised of two parts. The first part was made up of roughly six notes in very rapid succession (Leach's is normally just five and slightly slower paced), beginning high pitched (one note), then low pitched rising up high to a big flourish (roughly four notes), then low again (one note). The

second part included at least eight or nine notes (Leach's usually just four or five), beginning with a big high-pitched flourish (one note), followed by a rapid-fire rising crescendo (seven or more short notes in increasingly quick succession) that started low but rose exponentially in pitch and volume to a shrill, twanging end. The second part was much less like a Leach's call than the first part, and by far the more distinctive sound. The second part of a Leach's chatter call typically involves four or five notes descending down in pitch relatively slowly and is quite different to the spritely, looping, flourish-and-zoom finale of Swinhoe's.

On the 22nd July, the really critical factor that helped us *all* identify the calls was that the Swinhoe's track was playing, the bird was calling back to it, and that it was possible to hear real and recorded Swinhoe's Petrel chatter calls at the same time - they were clearly a perfect match.

Identification in the hand

The criteria for identification of Swinhoe's Petrels are now well established (e.g. Cubitt *et al.* 1992, Cubitt 1995, Baxter & Scott 2000, Flood & Fisher 2011, Howell 2012). The Fair Isle birds both had an entirely dark rump patch with no trace of any pale feathering, distinct white bases to the exposed outer seven (1st bird) and outer six (2nd bird) primary shafts, a slightly V-shaped rather than U-shaped tail fork, and a short, deep bill structure relative to Leach's Petrel. In addition, both birds showed characteristic pale carpal bars, the underwing was glossy greyish-black with a grey-brown interior 'lining' and, surprisingly, in both birds the shafts of at least the outer three tail feathers were found to be white-based (this feature is unlikely to be visible in the field).

Final comments

The Fair Isle Swinhoe's Petrels are the latest addition to a series of extra-limital records of the species occurring in the North Atlantic, dating back to 1983 (see James & Robertson 1985, Bretagnolle *et al.* 1991, King & Minquiez 1994, Bolton 1998, Morrison 1998, Baxter & Scott 2000, Robb *et al.* 2008, Flood & Fisher 2011). To date, the only known breeding sites of Swinhoe's Petrels are around the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea and the only known wintering area is the northern Indian Ocean (Brooke 1994, Morrison 1998, Flood & Fisher 2011, Howell 2012). Encounters with this species in the Atlantic Ocean never fail to amaze and never fail to raise questions. Is there an Atlantic breeding population? Does the species 'wander' into the Atlantic via the tip of South Africa and/or via the Red Sea and then overland into the Mediterranean? Why do individuals return again and again to the same ringing site and sound-lure, when Storm and Leach's Petrels do not? Did more than two individuals visit South Haven on Fair Isle calling in 2013? Will the Fair Isle birds return in future years? The species has an alluring aura of mystique, and gaining answers to the many questions raised by the North Atlantic records presents a considerable challenge. Tracking petrels at sea using ultra-miniature data-loggers is in its infancy. However, these developing techniques combined with the species' site fidelity and responsiveness to sound-lures, may present ways to begin to understand the occurrence of this tiny seabird on the opposite side of the world to where it breeds.

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Results of biometric, sound and DNA analyses of two Swinhoe's Petrels on Fair Isle in 2013 and diagnosis of breeding status

Will Miles, J. Martin Collinson, David Parnaby and Richard Cope

Two Swinhoe's Petrels were mist-netted during routine petrel ringing sessions on Fair Isle during July to September 2013. These individuals add to a series of extralimital records of the species occurring in the Atlantic Ocean, dating back to 1983 (see James & Robertson 1985, Bretagnolle *et al.* 1991, King & Minquiez 1994, Cubitt 1995,

Bolton 1998, Morrison 1998, Baxter & Scott 2000, Flood & Fisher 2011). To date, the only known breeding sites of Swinhoe's Petrels are around the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea and the only known wintering area is the northern Indian Ocean (Brooke 1994, Howell 2012). Individuals discovered in the Atlantic never fail to raise questions; in particular, is there an Atlantic breeding population? Information on the sex and genetic identity of individuals encountered at European islands with breeding storm-petrel populations is of interest and potentially useful for diagnosis of breeding status. Here we document the results of biometric, sound and DNA analyses of the 2013 Fair Isle birds.

Biometric measurements were taken for each bird when first trapped (27th July and 7th August respectively), including wing length (maximum flattened, straightened chord), maximum tail length (outer feather), minimum tail length (central feather), bill length (to feathering) and tarsus length. Brood patch was scored for feather coverage (scale from 0 to 5; 0 = fully feathered, 5 = entirely bare) and vascularisation (scale from 0 to 2; 0 = skin as normal with no evidence of capillaries close to surface, 2 = brood patch heavily vascularised with obvious capillary network at surface). A chatter call emitted in the hand by the bird first trapped on 7th August was digitally recorded and a sonogram created using SYRINX Software (Burt 2013). Feathers dislodged from each individual in the mist-net and bird bag were collected and genetic analyses carried out by the University of Aberdeen.

Biometric measurements are presented in Table 1. Comparison of wing length measurements with published ranges for Swinhoe's Petrel suggested that Bird 1 could not be sexed on wing length but that Bird 2 was a female (male: 146–157mm, female: 150–165mm; Snow and Perrins 1998). Brood patch scores suggested that Bird 1 was not breeding (patch was completely feathered and skin not vascularised) and the breeding status of Bird 2 to be ambiguous (patch was nearly completely bare but skin not vascularised). In contrast to the identification from wing length of Bird 2 as a female, sonogram analysis of this bird's chatter call suggested it was a male. In Figure 1, each note is ill-defined and lacks clear harmonics (appearance of each note is longitudinally fuzzy with no clear horizontal separation within the structure). These features are characteristic of the chatter calls of males but not females, and represent harsh and rather scratchy sounds in comparison with the clearer, purer sounding notes of female calls (Taoka *et al.* 1989, Robb *et al.* 2008).

Table 1. Biometric measurements and brood patch scores (BP) of two Swinhoe's Petrels trapped in 2013 on Fair Isle, Shetland (All measurements are in mm).

Bird	Ring code	Date	Wing	Tail max	Tail min	Bill	Tarsus	BP
1.	NB84930	27/07/2013	154	74	58	14.1	24.3	0 / 0
2.	NB84938	07/08/2013	159	77	60	14.5	25.7	4 / 0

DNA was extracted from individual feathers from both birds and from shed feathers from a single Leach's Petrel also trapped during routine petrel ringing in 2013. Molecular genotyping using techniques described in Bantock *et al.* (2008) showed that both Swinhoe's Petrels were male, whereas the Leach's Petrel was female.

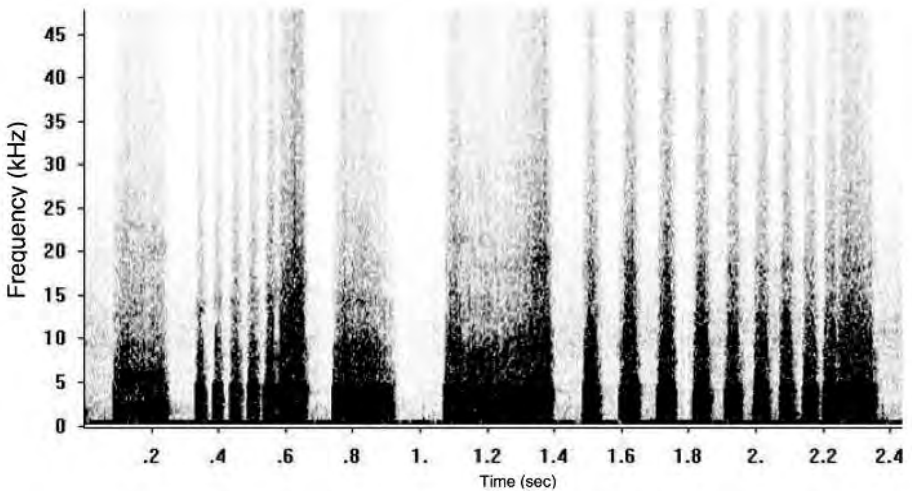


Figure 1. Sonogram of Swinhoe's Petrel chatter call (Bird 2) recorded on 17th August 2013, Fair Isle, Shetland. Each dark spike represents 1 note in the call sequence.

To determine the genetic affinity of both Swinhoe's Petrels to each other and to other individuals of this species previously trapped in the North Atlantic, sequence data were obtained. Isolation and sequence of the mitochondrial cytochrome oxidase (*COI*) gene showed that the first Fair Isle bird was genetically identical (over 685 bp) to a bird captured at Hernyken, Norway, 64.2°N, 11.9°E, by Tycho Anker-Nilssen on 13th August 2006 (Accession number GU571508). This result does not automatically mean that these two birds were related, because such similarity could occur between unrelated individuals if there is little variation across the *COI* gene for this species as a whole. The second Fair Isle bird was one base pair different. Because mitochondrial DNA is inherited through the female line, this small difference in *COI* sequence would suggest that the two Fair Isle birds did not have the same female parent, i.e. they were not siblings. To further investigate the genetic differences between the two Fair Isle birds, we sequenced a different mitochondrial gene, cytochrome b (*cytb*). The two birds were four bp different over 1005 bp of this gene, confirming the likelihood that they are not siblings. The Norwegian bird had not been sequenced at the *cytb* locus, but 302 bp of *cytb* had been sequenced from a previous bird captured in England (the 1991 'Tyne Petrel') (Dawson 1992; Cubitt 1995). The Tynemouth Swinhoe's Petrel, the two Fair Isle birds, and also a South Korean bird previously sequenced by Rob Dawson and David Parkin (University of Nottingham) were all identical over this short stretch of sequence.

In summary, the genetic work showed that the two Fair Isle birds were both male, and that they did not share the same female parent. The implication is that whatever the origin of the Swinhoe's Petrels in the North Atlantic, they are derived from more than one female ancestor. The biometric and sound analyses suggested that sexing using wing length is not always reliable but using a chatter call sonogram was safe.

Both birds were male, one entirely lacking any form of brood patch, so it is certain that these two individuals were not breeding together on Fair Isle in 2013.

Acknowledgements

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Red-eyed Vireo, 6th October 2013; the first for Fair Isle

David Parnaby

A blustery day on North census was a pleasant enough walk, but the force 5–6 SW wind had not produced many migrants. News of an Ovenbird on Papa Westray was interesting (having crossed the Atlantic just ten miles or so too far south to have had Fair Isle as its first landfall!), but with the Northern Isles not being renowned for multiple falls of American landbirds, it felt we'd maybe missed out on our chance of a good bird. Reaching Easter Lothar, there was some shelter in the geo and several migrants were taking advantage. Typically, the longer I watched, the more birds appeared and in the end the total of around six Blackcap, four Dunnock, three Robin and singles of Goldcrest and Chaffinch was more than I'd managed on the windswept west cliffs. One bird was especially intriguing though, a warbler with pale green upperparts and clean white underneath. My initial hopes of perhaps a Bonelli's were scuppered by what appeared to be a well marked face, although as the bird was on the cliff face just above the beach, I just couldn't make out the details. The slightly 'ponderous' movements of the bird as it hopped from ledge to ledge should also have been a clue, but before my brain got into gear, it had vanished round a corner. With time ticking away, I'd already decided I'd have to come back and finish censusing the area around North Light after lunch, but with 40 minutes going by with no further sign, I had to write off Sunday lunch as well (never a decision to take lightly on Fair Isle!). Thankfully, the bird then reappeared, slightly closer this time and the grey crown was also visible. Suddenly, things clicked into place; surely this had to be a Red-eyed Vireo, although it then took flight, hovered briefly against the cliff face and alighted out of sight. It was another 15 or so minutes before it reappeared, slightly closer this time and the views were now better, with all the key features visible and identification now confirmed. Getting news out was slightly tricky, with everyone at lunch (with the Obs dining room being a reception blackspot), but thankfully Will decided to go and check for messages before pudding and so within a few minutes of my text, the first staff and guests were arriving. With more pairs of eyes present, the bird was picked up quickly and showed well, but distantly, for the rest of the afternoon. In classic 'Fair Isle style', a Lanceolated Warbler was found in the Wirvie Burn (just a couple of minutes walk from Easter Lothar) by Graham Gordon as he left the vireo.

Finding a first for Fair Isle is always going to be a good experience, but this was a bit of a bogey bird for me, so was even more special. I dipped my first in my home city of Sunderland in 1990 (after turning up several days after the bird had gone, when I read about the occurrence in the Sunderland Echo!), a year living in south-west England coincided with a total blank for the species in the UK, misreading a boat timetable meant I missed one on Scilly that I was within ten minutes walk of and the first for

Shetland (on Unst in 2012) was actually phoned into the Obs first as the visiting birders who found it were due to stay at FIBO and so ours was the only local number they had! I was starting to think that this was a species I was never going to see, which perhaps explains why it took so long to identify what was essentially a very distinctive bird!

Description

Size and structure: Once I'd got the scale of the bird sorted out, it was clearly built like a large warbler, perhaps similar to Garden Warbler or one of the green and yellow hippos. Stocky and well built, with a tendency to hop somewhat clumsily. Relatively short-tailed and long-winged. **Upperparts:** The mantle, tail and wings were a clean, pale (cold) green, with the primaries appearing dark brown/black, although edged in the same bright green. The head was well marked, with a mid-grey crown and a broad white supercilium that was ordered above by a thin dark stripe and below by a thin, prominent, dark eye stripe that extended from the bill to well behind the eye. The ear coverts were a washed out pale green, with the throat appearing white. **Underparts:** Clean white, the colour of the undertail coverts could not be seen. **Bare parts:** The eye appeared dark, the legs were grey and the bill, which was sturdy for a 'warbler', appeared largely pale grey, although with a darker tip. **Call:** Not heard to call

Weather

It is likely that some autumn occurrences of American passerines in the Northern Isles involve birds that have crossed the Atlantic further north before continuing their southerly migration; the Magnolia Warbler on Fair Isle in 2012 that arrived during light easterly winds being an example of a bird that was unlikely to be newly arrived in Europe. However, the weather at the time of this bird's arrival was conducive for trans-Atlantic vagrancy; a theory given further credence by the previously mentioned Ovenbird and also a Buff-bellied Pipit found on Yell the same day. Dave Wheeler has provided a summary of the weather around the time of the sighting, which suggested a direct route across the Atlantic was certainly a possibility:

Friday 4th: A deep, vigorous low off Newfoundland/Nova Scotia. Very strong NW to N'ly winds in NE USA and SE Canada. Bird could easily have been blown off shore

Saturday 5th: Low becomes complex, extending out into the Atlantic. W'ly winds carry bird out into the Atlantic between 40N–50N.

Sunday 6th: Now a large complex low pressure system from 50N 40E NE'ly to Norwegian Sea. Strong SW'ly winds on the SE side of this system blowing diagonally across the Atlantic to Fair Isle! With fronts aligned along the wind direction cloudy conditions would have prevailed.

In 72 hours the 30–40mph winds would equal a wind run of some 2500–3000 miles.

UK occurrences

This is the first occurrence of Red-eyed Vireo on Fair Isle, the second for Shetland, 16th for Scotland and 126th for the UK. All British occurrences have occurred between 12th September and 8th November, so this record fits into the established pattern.

American landbirds on Fair Isle

There has been much discussion in recent years about the records of American landbirds in the UK and whether the distribution of occurrence is changing, with a perceived decline in records in Scilly and the south-west of England coinciding with an increase in records from the Outer Hebrides and Northern Isles.

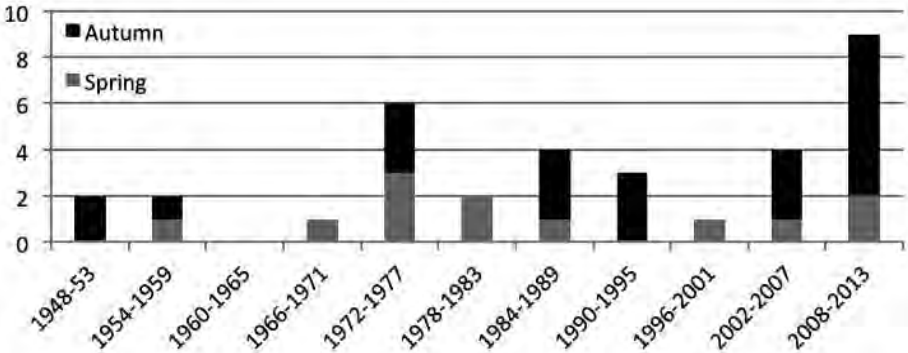


Figure 1. shows the distribution of American passerine records on Fair Isle which does appear to show a recent upswing in records. Although the 12 spring records (involving eight sparrows, two Yellow-rumped Warblers, Brown-headed Cowbird and Hermit Thrush) have a relatively even distribution since the late 1960s (perhaps even showing a slight decline since a peak in the 1970s, when there was also a spring American Kestrel), autumn records show a more striking increase since the start of the current millennium. Indeed, 41% of Fair Isle's 22 autumn American passerines have occurred in the last seven years.

Of course, with such a small number of records, there's no statistical significance to this pattern, but it is interesting to consider these figures in relation to the national trends. Bond (2014) suggested that although Scilly enjoyed a 'golden age' during the 1980s, this was perhaps a 'blip' and records had otherwise actually been relatively consistent, with an apparent increase in more northerly areas perhaps being due to increasing observer coverage. Given the consistent level of coverage thanks to the daily census, observer coverage on Fair Isle has remained relatively consistent. With the species involved, it is unlikely that increasing awareness will have been involved in the pattern of occurrences changing (even the nationally more abundant Buff-bellied Pipit was first seen on Fair Isle in 1953, showing that this potentially tricky to identify species has been on the Fair Isle 'radar' for a good while), whilst none of the keen-eyed and sharp-shooting islanders of the early 1900s ever recorded an American passerine.

So there is no obvious reason for the apparent increase in records of these exciting vagrants, but it is clear that there is no reason for being downhearted when birding in westerly winds on Fair Isle in the autumn. With the UK's first Tennessee Warbler and Grey-cheeked Thrush (and second UK records of both of these species too) and second Magnolia and Blackburnian Warblers already having occurred on Fair Isle in the autumn, the island has an impressive track record of major American birds, so perhaps that is the direction we should be looking for the next big bird.

References

Bond, T. 2014. North American Landbirds in Britain, *British Birds* 107: 66–82.

Sykes's Warbler, 26th September 2013; the third for Fair Isle

David Parnaby

Having had such a good day on the island on 25th (White's Thrush, Lanceolated Warbler, Olive-backed Pipit and Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll making for a remarkable day), the 26th broke clear and sunny with a light easterly breeze and was filled with promise. Despite a Nightjar flushed from the Gully before morning traps (which was caught in the Gully that afternoon), census started fairly quietly in SW. It was one of those days where everyone seems to have had the same idea and SW was full of birders. Being Fair Isle, I knew that it didn't matter if someone had checked a garden five minutes beforehand, there's still a chance of finding something new, but it did feel like anything good would already have been found. Still, it was a lovely day and it was just enjoyable birding the crofts.

I reached Lower Stoneybrek, where there was a selection of warblers flitting around, but one immediately caught the eye, an interesting-looking sandy brown bird. The combination of long bill, flatish head, very plain wings, long tail and distinct coloration immediately flagged this up as something good. Overall the bird put me more in mind of the Eastern Olivaceous Warbler from 2011 than the Booted Warbler from the previous month, but the lack of any wing panel or contrast in the wing (along with the general coloration) ruled that species out; this was a Sykes's Warbler. I could see Will Miles just over the border in SE census, so called him over for a second opinion; this wasn't an easy species to call and my only previous experience was a bird in India some years ago.

Although the bird became somewhat more elusive for a short while, Will also got decent views and we were both happy with the identification and the news was put out. Just before the rest of the birders arrived, the bird headed south and vanished for an anxious half an hour or so, before reappearing back at Lower Stoneybrek, where it showed well. It remained until 30th September, usually favouring Vaila's Trees. During the remainder of its stay it was often very confiding, allowing close views. At times it looked a bit ill, but the way it fed actively suggested that perhaps it was just digesting particularly hefty bluebottles when it was seen lazing around dozily.

Description (DP and WM)

Size and structure: A medium-sized warbler (similar to Lesser Whitethroat or Reed Warbler, although appearing perhaps slightly longer and more delicate), looking particularly extended at either end, giving it a long body shape, more like Reed or Olivaceous than Booted or Chiff type. The long bill and long tail gave an impression approaching Eastern Olivaceous Warbler. Although the crown could at times be more raised, it was generally flat, with a long sloping forehead, giving a weak, angled peak to the crown, not a domed head, giving a very different impression to the 'peaky' look of the Booted Warbler seen a few weeks previously. Detail of the wing formula could be assessed from some of the excellent photographs taken, with features of note including: Primary projection just under half length of exposed tertials (at times in the field this could be hard to judge, appearing longer at times, often when the wing was held in a more drooped position). Long P1, extending well beyond primary coverts. Emarginated on P2–P6 (less strongly on P6, although still appearing fairly pronounced). The emarginations on P4–P6 were all towards the latter third of the feather (falling between the secondaries and wingtip).

Behaviour

Generally fairly active, especially when first found, feeding in manner similar to (e.g.) Icterine Warbler, so not as flitty as a *phyllsoc*, but not so secretive and skulking as (e.g.) Reed Warbler. Although at times it could lurk in vegetation, that was often when it would call more frequently. It tended to perform short feeding circuits around the LSB area when first found, with more feeding in the small trees, tall grasses and walls around Stackhoull during the latter days of its stay. Foraging for insects was often successful, with large flies (presumably bluebottles) often seen being caught. As mentioned above, there were times it would allow very close approach which, when combined with the tendency to sit motionless and look drowsy for periods, could give the impression of the bird being unwell, although this appeared to be not the case, as active feeding and behaviour was usually noted shortly after these 'rests'. When feeding, it would often give upward tail flicks, although there were no associated wing movements. These tail movements were more like a nervous 'tic' than the rather more deliberate tail movements of Eastern Olivaceous Warbler.

Upperparts

Initially appearing a pale sandy colour, with a touch of cold orange to the plumage. The light could alter the appearance of the plumage tones, but a lack of warmth was consistent. Although at times the brown was more predominant-looking (especially in very dull conditions) and the grey tones could sometimes look more noticeable, the overall sandy appearance was always very distinct and unlike any of the common warbler species present. The upperparts also gave a very plain look, which also made the bird quite distinctive. The wings were very plain, with the overall impression being of plain, unmarked feathers. On some views the tertials could be seen to have darker centres, although they were only marginally darker sandy brown than the fringes, which were diffusely paler. There were no pale tips or markings on the primaries or secondaries, whilst the coverts were also noticeably plain and unmarked. Overall, the wings were virtually concolorous with the mantle. The head was also largely plain looking, with those markings that were present being subtle. The crown and ear coverts were largely the same sandy colour as the mantle. A

slightly diffuse, but relatively noticeable off-white (pale buff, or cream) supercillium was present in front of the eye, extending just a little way beyond the eye (barely noticeable in some views), where it ended diffusely. A dark smudge (not a well defined line) bordered the upper edge of the supercilium in front of the eye (this again, not being obvious in all views). There was no real eye stripe. The tail was also a similar sandy brown to the rest of the upperparts of the bird, with white outer feathers (the extent was difficult to judge in the field, although photos show the outer edge to the outer feather at least being fairly prominently pale). The wings and tail appeared from photographs to be fairly fresh, indicating the bird was possibly in first-winter plumage.

Underparts

Almost entirely plain white below from throat to undertail coverts, perhaps looking very slightly greyish (or at least not pure white) at times, and photos suggested a slight but very faint sandy wash at the very upper breast.

Bare parts

A small beady black eye. Legs grey and generally fairly well built looking, with fairly prominent feet a similar colour. Claws pale (noted from photos). Bill very long looking and relatively sturdy, not spiky. Bill largely pale orange, with darker area along top edge of upper mandible.

Call

Noted as a 'dry, hollow *tcheck*', or 'hard sounding, staccato *tack*, recalling Lesser Whitethroat', with an occasional bill-click heard before *tack* call, creating a disyllabic '*tuh-tack*' sound and very occasionally a brief dry churr.

Previous occurrences

The previous two occurrences on Fair Isle (29th–31st August 1958 and 20th–27th August 1977) were both trapped and identified as the *rama* subspecies of Booted Warbler (as Sykes's Warbler was formerly regarded) and became the first and second British records of Sykes's Warbler when the species was split. Fair Isle's third is the 17th UK record, seven of which have been in Shetland, with two elsewhere in Scotland.

Collared Flycatcher, 9th June 2013; the fifth for Fair Isle

Richard Cope

I was on North census and things had been slow with few birds around, despite the pleasant sunny conditions and light easterly breeze. As I approached the Mast I saw a bird fly up through the metalwork and vanish, although I considered it to be a flycatcher species. It reappeared and landed on a fencepost ahead of me, and was indeed a female *ficedula* species. My attention was instantly grabbed by the very prominent white patch at the base of the primaries and the overall cold, grey appearance of the bird. I took a few photos of the bird, then referred to the Collins Bird Guide to check the main features I'd noted, before calling David Parnaby. I advised him that I had a "very interesting female *ficedula* with cold greyish coloration and a very prominent white primary patch that they should come and see fairly urgently". Once DP was on his way with Will Miles and Roger Riddington (the bird having coincided nicely with the annual meeting of the FIBOT Directors on the island!) I took more photos and noted the greyish-white rump and the extensive white across the primary bases extending almost to the outermost primaries, which was especially evident in some of the flight photos I had of the open wing. I was in the process of writing a text message suggesting I was increasingly happy it showed all the field characters of a Collared when I heard the Transit approaching. Fortunately the bird was still feeding happily around the Mast and showing well. The bird was watched for maybe five minutes during which time DP, WM, RR and myself all agreed that it appeared to show a full suite of in-field characters that perfectly fitted a female Collared Flycatcher.

The general impression was of a cold greyish-brown and white flycatcher. It showed a long-winged appearance with a striking large primary patch reaching well into the primaries. The darkness of the wings and tail contrasted with the paleness of the rump and the greyish-brown mantle. The crown was a darker greyish-brown and this emphasised the pale greyish tones of the ear coverts and nape.

We were aware of the enormity and difficulties of identifying and documenting a female Collared Flycatcher just on field views, and we were unsure of being able to rule out a hybrid. The decision was therefore made to attempt to catch the bird to confirm the identification. It was caught fairly quickly, during which time most of the birders on the isle had reached the Mast and had seen the bird.

In the ringing room, Will Miles examined and processed the bird, with Deryk Shaw checking and confirming various features (having handled a hybrid that showed

many pro-Collared features in 1999). Myself, David Parnaby, Roger Riddington and Dave Okill were also checking literature or recording data or taking photographs.

One of the first measurements taken was wing length which came out at 81.5mm, which whilst still falling within the upper extreme for Pied Flycatcher, was very unlikely for a female of that species but was well within the range of Collared Flycatcher. The position of the second primary was checked, falling between the fourth and fifth primaries, being noted as nearer the fifth. This was found in 56% of Collared Flycatchers but just 8% of Pied Flycatchers (Mild 1993).

Next, the wing was examined in more detail; firstly the white on the primary bases was closely examined. The first area of white was a restricted patch on the outer web of P3, barely extending beyond the primary covert. The white patch on P4 was roughly three times the size of that on P3. It was most extensive on P5 and P6, before reducing gradually thereafter.

There were two distinct ages of greater coverts present, the outer three being browner and slightly shorter with fine light brown edging to them running right round the exposed edge of the feather. The new generation greater coverts showed pale buff edging, becoming a broad white tip reaching to the central shaft of the feather. This pale area also showed a 'thorn' reaching up the central shaft. Despite this contrast it was unclear whether the 'old' generation greater coverts were from post-juvenile or post-breeding moult. The tertials showed very thin pale edges, this was especially noticeable when compared with the Pied Flycatcher caught later the same day. The tertial patch was only present on the outer two tertials.

The precise pattern of the nape feathers exactly matched the figure given by Svensson (1992) for female Collared Flycatcher nape feathers: dull grey basal area, white bar running right across the middle of the feather and brownish-grey tip. The presence of this precise pattern on each nape feather was critical to a positive in-hand identification being made and the elimination (as far as possible) of a hybrid. After seeing this pattern, everyone was left feeling happy that we did indeed have a female Collared Flycatcher. It was the pattern on each nape feather that collectively produced the diffuse grey collar that was evident in the field. There was an area of buffish-white that ran around the back of the neck and behind the ear coverts.

The tail pattern showed white on the outer webs on the outer two tail feathers (T5–T6). The outermost feather (T6) showed a white bar reaching from the central shaft to the outside edge, running along 75% of the feather before tapering towards the outer edge. This continued as a very fine line of white reaching round the outer web as far as the central shaft. The next feather in (T5) showed white restricted to the outer half of the outer web immediately below the uppertail coverts. This broadened along the feather, covering 75% of the outer web roughly halfway along the feather before narrowing again with a clear cut edge. The rest of the tail feathers were blackish-brown.

The longest uppertail coverts were entirely blackish and appeared very similar in coloration to the tail feathers. The shorter coverts were noticeably contrasting being greyish-brown in colour, no pale fringes were noted.

The rump was another feature that I noted early on in the field and in photos I had taken whilst the bird was feeding. There was a noticeably large pale band across the rump. The mottled white and greyish brown reached from the base of the innermost tertial to the tip of the second tertial.

The bird showed a small buffish forehead patch and some very faint pale fringes to the median coverts. The eyes were uniformly dark blackish, as were the bill, legs and feet. The chin, throat, underparts and undertail coverts were all whitish with no change in tone. Unfortunately the bird was not heard to call.

After ringing, the bird was shown to the assembled crowd and was then released back up at the Mast where it continued to feed for the rest of the afternoon. It was not present the following day which, given the good fat and muscle score, wasn't surprising.

Ringling Data

Ring no.	Age /Sex:	Wing:	Fat score:	Pectoral muscle score:	Weight:
D008594	4 female	81.5mm	3 (out of 8)	2 (out of 3)	15.2g

References

Svensson, L. 1992. Identification Guide to European Passerines, Svensson, Stockholm.

Mild, K. 1993. Die Bestimmung der europäischen schwarzweißen Fliegenschnäpper Ficedula. Limicola 7: 222–276.



Decisions on rarities from 2012

BBRC - British Birds Rarities Committee

SBCRC - Shetland Bird Club Records Committee

SBRC - Scottish Birds Records Committee.

Species, Date, Location, Observers, Decision

Tundra Bean Goose (2), 20–27 Mar, Stackhoull, D.Parnaby *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Taiga Bean Goose, 21–23 Mar, Leogh, D.Parnaby *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Green-winged Teal, 31 Mar–6 May, Da Water, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Spotted Crane, 18 May, Pund, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Spotted Crane, 28 May, Chalet, B.Rosser, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Buff-breasted Sandpiper, 7–10 Sep, Meoness, D.Parnaby *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Pectoral Sandpiper, 19–21 Sep, Meoness, D.Parnaby *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Ring-billed Gull, 4–5 Jun, South Harbour, W.Miles *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Firecrest, 17 Apr, Lower Station, J.Moss - Accepted by SBCRC
Short-toed Lark, 21 May, Guidicum, W.Miles - Accepted by SBCRC
Woodlark, 16 Oct–5 Nov, Quoy and Haa, T.H.Hyndman, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by SBRC
Red-rumped Swallow, 22–24 May, Utra, D.Back *et al.* - Accepted by SBRC
Arctic Warbler, 19 Aug, Kirm o'Skroo, E.Tooth *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Arctic Warbler, 21 Aug, Gilsetter, J.Moss, W.Miles *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Arctic Warbler, 29 Aug–5 Sep, Gully, D.Parnaby *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Arctic Warbler, 21–23 Sep, Vaadal, W.Miles *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Arctic Warbler, 27–30 Sep, Midway, S.Arlow *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Arctic Warbler, 2 Oct, Wester Lother, D.Barr, P.R.Davis - Accepted by BBRC
Hume's Warbler, 17–18 Oct, Lerness, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Eastern Subalpine Warbler, 26–27 May, Leogh then Obs, W.Miles, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler, 3 Oct, Utra, W.Miles, H.Mitchell, M.Smith *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Lanceolated Warbler, 23 Sep, Da Water, N.Andrews, C.Fulcher, C. Holden *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Lanceolated Warbler, 26 Sep–22 Oct, Da Water & Field, C.Gooddie, R.Harris, A.Mears, A Rhodes *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Lanceolated Warbler, 2 Oct, Vastrass, J.Hopper *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Eastern Grasshopper Warbler, 20 Sep, Obs - In circulation with BOURC
River Warbler, 11 Jun–15 Jul, Steensi & Obs, W.Miles, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
River Warbler, 11–16 Sep, Obs, W.Miles, C.Round *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Paddyfield Warbler, 30 Jun–11 Jul, Plantation & Obs, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Paddyfield Warbler, 24 Sep–1 Oct, Setter & Stackhoull, P.Cook, G.Gordon *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Blyth's Reed Warbler, 22 Sep–1 Oct, Schoolton, P.Cook *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Blyth's Reed Warbler, 29 Sep, Obs, I.Cowgill, J.Moss, K.Snell *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Blyth's Reed Warbler, 11 Oct, Walli Burn, G.Gordon, W.Miles - Accepted by BBRC
Black-throated Thrush, 6 Oct, Hill Dyke & Barkland, A.Close, W.Miles *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Thrush Nightingale, 20–22 May, Gully & Obs, D.Parnaby *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Thrush Nightingale, 25 May, Gilsetter, P.Cottam, W.Miles, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Thrush Nightingale, 24–26 Aug, Gully & Obs, D.Parnaby *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Nightingale, 21 May, Plantation, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Siberian Rubythroat, 23 Oct–3 Nov, Schoolton & Walli Burn, N.Riddiford *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Citrine Wagtail, 14–16 Aug, Utra, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Citrine Wagtail, 14–15 Aug, Utra, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Citrine Wagtail, 25 Aug, Easter Lother Water, D.Parnaby - Accepted by BBRC
Citrine Wagtail, 21 Sep, Vaadal & Setter, J.Dunn, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Citrine Wagtail, 5 Oct, Gilsetter & S.Harbour, J.Ginnerver, W.Miles, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Olive-backed Pipit, 24–29 Sep, Haa, N.Andrews, C.Fulcher, C. Holden *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC

Olive-backed Pipit, 27–28 Sep, Setter, N.Andrews, C.Fulcher, C. Holden *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Olive-backed Pipit, 11 Oct, Vaila's Trees, D.Parnaby, D.Steel *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Olive-backed Pipit, 11 Oct, Lower Leogh, I.Court, P.Irving *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Olive-backed Pipit (up to 4), 16–26 Oct, Schoolton, W.Miles, J.Moss, D.Parnaby *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Pechora Pipit, 1–2 Oct, Shirva, J.Hopper, W.Miles *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Buff-bellied Pipit, 29 Sep, Furse & Obs, I.Andrews, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Coues's Arctic Redpoll, 14 Jul, Obs & Plantation, W.Miles, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll, 4 Jun, Plantation & Obs, W.Miles *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC
Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll, 18 & 25 Oct, Obs & Chapel, D.Parnaby, B.Rosser - Accepted by BBRC
Ortolan Bunting, 9–10 May, Lower Stoneybrek, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by SBCRC
Magnolia Warbler, 23 Sep, Lerness, W.Miles, J.Moss *et al.* - Accepted by BBRC

In addition, the following record that did not feature in the Annual Report was assessed:

Coues's Arctic Redpoll, 2 Nov, Stackhoull - Found not proven by SBCRC

Recently published records from previous years:

Rough-legged Buzzard (2), 16 Oct 2010, Vaasetter & Da Water S.Geary, M.Newell *et al.* - Accepted by SBRC
Radde's Warbler, 13–14 Oct 2010 Quoy, R.Nason *et al.* - Accepted by SBRC



Cetaceans and other marine wildlife

David Parnaby

For recording purposes Fair Isle cetacean sightings include all those made from the Good Shepherd in 'Fair Isle waters' (i.e. half way from Fair Isle to Shetland) as well as those from land. For the sake of completeness all sightings made from the Good Shepherd in 'Shetland waters' are also included here.

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

An early individual from the Good Shepherd on 26th March began an impressive year for this species, with the next on 8th June then the first land-based sighting from Dronger on 9th June. A further individual from the Good Shepherd on 25th July preceded seven sightings from the island in August, mostly from North Light and Bunes. There were further individuals on six dates (from Bunes and the Good Shepherd) up to 25th September.

In addition there were ten records of between one and three from the Good Shepherd in Shetland waters from 25th May to 12th September.

Risso's Dolphin *Grampus griseus*

Five were seen from North Light on 29th July, one was seen from Bunes on 13th September, then 11 lingered in Finnequoy before being tracked down to South Light on 19th September, with five seen two days later in a good year for this large and distinctive dolphin.

White-sided Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus acutus*

The only record of the year was a very impressive one, when a large pod of around 150 was seen distantly off Guidicum on 9th June, before tracking slowly south past the island.

In addition, there were two seen from the Good Shepherd in Shetland waters on 28th May.

White-beaked Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus albirostris*

A good run of records began with three from the Good Shepherd on 22nd August, with the largest count of the year on 30th August when there were 42 (40 from Bunes and another two from North Light). A good run of records from Bunes in September saw at least 15 on 11th, five on 13th and seven on 19th, with the last record of the year coming on 28th September, when four were seen from the Good Shepherd.

Killer Whale with Fulmars by W. Miles



Killer Whale *Orcinus orca*

A phenomenal year for sightings of this most impressive cetacean began with males seen from the Good Shepherd on 5th and 13th March. May saw seven (including at least one bull and two or three calves) from Wester Lothar on 14th, then one on 16th from North Light. One of the most memorable sightings was a group of 15 that spent around four hours repeatedly circling the island on 8th June, giving amazing views. The late summer period then produced five (including two bulls) on 25th July, two on 9th August, two (one bull) on 13th August and five (three bulls) on 30th August, with Bunes proving a good site to catch up with passing animals. A series of late autumn records involved a bull off Bunes on 24th October and a group seen the following day off North Light from the plane as it departed the island. The final sighting, on 1st November, provided a fantastic end to the season when five (including a bull and a calf) came into the North Haven and killed a seal before spending a couple of hours patrolling the coast between North Light and Bunes, making repeated visits into North Haven and chasing seals in Furse.

In addition there were sightings of one on 17th April and six on 2nd May in Shetland waters from the Good Shepherd.

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

Seen regularly throughout the year, with most sightings from the east coast between Bunes and Meoness. The first was recorded on 26th March, there were no more until June when one was seen on 8th and six on 17th, there were then four sightings of up to five in July, sightings of up to six on 12 August dates, then up to 15 were recorded on eight September dates and the final individual was recorded on 10th October.

There were also sightings of up to five on 11 dates between 1st June and 26th September in Shetland waters from the Good Shepherd, most in the vicinity of Sumburgh Head.

Unidentified cetaceans

There was a small whale off Wester Lothar on 31st March, an unidentified cetacean on 6th June and a probable dolphin from the Good Shepherd on 25th July.

Four dolphins, possibly White-beaked, were seen in Shetland waters from the Good Shepherd on 27th August.

Other Marine Wildlife

Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus*

The first pup was seen in Gunnawark on 11th October, with a minimum of 53 pups born over the following month, which continues the recent decline of youngsters produced.

Common Seal *Phoca vitulina*

The only confirmed records were on 3rd May and 28th August.

Basking Shark *Cetorhinus maximus*

The first records since 2010 occurred with sightings off Bunes on 28th August and three and a half miles north of Fair Isle on 5th September.

In addition one was seen at the mouth of Grutness Voe (in Shetland waters) from the Good Shepherd on 5th September.

White Skate *Rostroraja alba*

An egg case believed to belong to this species was found on South Haven on 1st January.

Cuckoo Ray *Leucoraja naevus*

An adult washed up alive in North Haven on 22nd February.

Eel *Anguilla Anguilla*

One was found in Gilly Burn on 12th October.

Cuttlefish *Sepia sp?*

Cuttle bones were regularly record in small numbers, but 25 in Busta Geo on 3rd March following high winds was a large concentration.

Jellyfish and comb jellies

Historically, jellyfish were common around the isle, including in the bays and havens, during the summer and early autumn and generally negotiated the inshore waters successfully. However, a pattern appears to be emerging of irregular

occurrence offshore interspersed with moderate to large wrecks on Fair Isle beaches. Several species have shown altered patterns in recent years that may be indicative of the impact that climate change is having on Fair Isle's marine ecosystem.

The following records are unlikely to be a complete record of the occurrence of this group (being influenced by days at sea in the FIBO inflatable for example), but are included to give an overview of this fascinating group.

Moon Jelly *Aurelia aurita*

There were large wrecks of this species on several dates in the last two weeks of August.

Lion's Mane Jellyfish *Cyanea capillata*

Several were seen on 11th July. This species was formerly abundant in Fair Isle waters, but is now recorded much less frequently.

Blue Jellyfish *Cyanea lamarckii*

At least one was seen on the west coast on 11th July.

Mauve Stinger *Pelagia noctiluca*

Large numbers were seen on 19th and 26th June, 11th July, 5th and 7th September then again in late September. Although only recently noted in Fair Isle waters in numbers, large wrecks of this species are now a regular occurrence.

Sea Gooseberry *Pleurobranchia pileus*

One seen on 8th July.

Comb jelly sp? *Beroe sp?*

Noted on 11th July at least.

Bioluminescence

Particularly impressive displays were noted on the nights of 10th and 17th August.

Other Wildlife

Common Frog *Rana rana*

The first spawn was noted on the typical date of 4th March, whilst large numbers in the Obs wader scrape in March showed that this relatively newly created habitat has been well and truly colonised.

Lepidoptera report

David Parnaby and Nick Riddiford

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

The only sightings were on 27th June and 14th July.

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

A much better year than 2012, with spring records on six dates from 19th May to 27th June. Autumn passage began on 2nd August, with further sightings on 3rd, 7th and on five dates from 25th to the end of the month, usually one to three, although there were 11 on 28th August. There were two on 8th September, with singles on 14th, 21st and 30th September.

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

There were singles on four dates on in July from 9th, with sightings on five August dates peaking at three on 25th, with up to two on four dates between 29th September and 4th October.

Peacock *Aglais io*

The first records since 2011 saw sightings on seven dates in August from 2nd, then 19th and 26th September, with a peak count of two.

Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

Another species that was recorded far more frequently than in 2012, with the first on 29th July, up to two on 12 dates in August, then three dates the following month until 26th September.

[**Green-veined White** *Pieris napi*]

There were reports on 5th July at South Harbour and 5th August at the Obs, although neither was photographed and so this species, which remains a tantalising potential addition to the island list, remains to be confirmed on Fair Isle.

Moths

The Observatory moth trap ran on 49 dates between 10th June and 5th September, with a total of 1252 moths caught of 34 species (27 macro-moths and seven micro-moths). The peak period was mid-August (with 111 moths on 11th August representing the best catch of the year).

Table 1: Summary of moths trapped at FIBO in 2013

	First Date	Last Date	nights trapped	No. of Max. catch	Max. catch date	Total individuals
Macro-moths						
Map-winged Swift <i>Hepialus fusconebulosa</i>	11th Jun	24th Jul	13	4	22nd; 25th Jun	24
Red Carpet <i>Xanthorhoe decoloraria</i>	19th Jul		1	1		1
Silver-ground Carpet <i>Xanthorhoe montanata</i>	5th Jul	1st Aug	6	3	12th Jul	10
Garden Carpet <i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata</i>	11th Jun	30th Jul	2	1		2
Yellow Shell <i>Camptogramma bilineata</i>	23rd Jul	5th Aug	2	1		2
Netted Pug <i>Eupithecia venosata</i>	10th Jun		1	1		1
Narrow-winged Pug <i>Eupithecia nanata</i>	17th Jul	19th Jul	2	1		1
The Magpie <i>Abraxas pantaria</i>	16th Jul	7th Aug	5	1		5
Northern Rustic <i>Standfussiana lucernea</i>	10th Jul	5th Sep	25	8	11th; 16th Aug	61
Large Yellow Underwing <i>Noctua pronuba</i>	7th Aug	5th Sep	8	5	23rd Aug	15
Autumnal Rustic <i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>	8th Aug	26th Aug	11	10	15th Aug	38
True-lover's Knot <i>Lycophotia porphyrea</i>	9th Jul	14th Aug	28	31	24th Jul	166
Ingrailed Clay <i>Diarsia mendica</i>	11th Jul	29th Aug	20	6	13th; 23rd Aug	66
Small-square Spot <i>Diarsia rubi</i>	16th Jul	5th Sep	11	7	21st Aug	26
Square-spot Rustic <i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	6th Aug	16th Aug	7	9	16th Aug	23
Shears <i>Hada plebeja</i>	10th Jun	22nd Jun	5	2	10th; 11th; 15th Jun	8
Marbled Coronet <i>Hadena confusa</i>	11th Jun	16th Jul	6	1		6
Antler <i>Cerapteryx graminis</i>	24th Jul	29th Aug	23	30	11th Aug	213
Angle Shades <i>Phlogophora meticulosa</i>	13th Jun	10th Jul	2	1		2
Dark Arches <i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	13th Jul	29th Aug	33	61	11th Aug	484
Clouded-bordered Brindle <i>Apamea crenata</i>	9th Jul		1	1		1
The Confused <i>Apamea furva</i>	19th Jul	29th Aug	8	2	19th Jul	9
Dusky Brocade <i>Apamea remissa</i>	5th Aug	11th Aug	3	7	6th Aug	9
Common/Lesser Common Rustic <i>Mesapamea secalis/didyma</i>	6th Aug	21st Aug	2	1		1
Rosy Rustic <i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	23rd Aug	26th Aug	2	1		2
Silver Y <i>Autographa gama</i>	16th Jun	1st Aug	7	3	18th Jun	10
Beautiful Golden Y <i>Autographa pulchrina</i>	7th Aug		1	1		1
Micro-moths						
Diamond-back Moth <i>Plutella xylostella</i>	12th Jul	25th Jul	4	1		4
White-shouldered House Moth <i>Endrosia sarcitrella</i>	5th Jul		1	1		1
<i>Eana osseana</i>	12th Jul	30th Jul	9	11	24th Jul	35
<i>Eana penziana</i>	16th Jul	30th Jul	5	6	24th Jul	14
<i>Acleris aspersana</i>	11th Aug	26th Aug	2	1		2
<i>Lobesia littoralis</i>	12th Jul	6th Aug	3	2	25th Jul	4
<i>Eucosma cana</i>	12th Jul	19th Jul	2	2	12th Jul	3

The Beautiful Golden Y was only the eighth island record of this species, which is either a rare migrant or perhaps has a small population on the island, with another trapped at Lower Stoneybrek on 13th August.

In addition there were several records of species not recorded in the FIBO trap. The rarest of these was a Garden Tiger *Arctia caja* that was trapped at Lower Stoneybrek on 26th and 27th July, the second Fair Isle record.

The most interesting though was a population explosion of the Twin-spot Plume Moth *Stenoptilia bipunctidactyla*. It is a very recent colonist to the isle and only became noticeable on the isle in 2012. In 2013, the population exploded and there were large numbers in rough grassland habitats in much of the in-bye area, particularly around the School, Da Water, Boini Mire and Stackhoull. It is a known feature of colonisations that population growth, at first tentative, can grow at a steep rate once species are established. This is often attributed to the absence of predators, parasites, diseases or competition in new localities.

Several migrant species noted around the island included the Silver-Y, which was typically present in both spring (occasional records of up to 20 from 19th May to 23rd June) and autumn (small numbers in August and 26th September, 12th and 13th October). Diamond-back Moths were present from 19th May to 6th June, in large numbers initially and a Magpie Moth was at Quoy on 8th June. In the autumn, notable records included a Humming-bird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* photographed at Wirvie on 5th August, a Herald *Scoliopteryx libatrix* at Barkland on 4th September and a Large Wainscott *Rhizedra lutosa* attracted to the Obs windows on 8th October.

The least studied of Fair Isle's lepidoptera are the so-called 'micro-moths'. These often need to be examined by an expert, and a small selection from 2013 has been sent away for that purpose. In addition, a small sample of the case-bearing moth *Coleophora discordella* was collected and sent to Derek Parkinson as part of his UK-wide study into the parasitisation of larvae. The result was interesting. Whereas samples from other parts of Britain showed a parasite load, the Fair Isle sample of 18 had none; a fascinating commentary on the isolation factor of Fair Isle.

Other insects

Shetland Bee *Bombus muscorum agricola*

Recorded from 9th May to 13th September, with an unidentified bumblebee species seen on 16th April.

Other non-avian highlights in 2013

Nick Riddiford

Flora and Vegetation

Oysterplants

February is not normally a month associated with the Oysterplant *Mertensia maritima*. However, the biggest storm for many years created havoc around South Light. Huge rocks were thrown up, part of the lighthouse perimeter wall destroyed and the entire Muckle Uri Geo shingle beach completely restructured, leaving much of the area buried in medium to large angular stones. Opinions were offered that the Oysterplant population would be lost but the optimists won and, sure enough, some plants managed to appear.

This led to a 2013 aggregate count at and around Muckle Uri Geo of 157. In 2012, the count was over 2360.

In normal circumstances a decrease of 85% in one year would cause alarm but considering the extreme events of February 2013 it is comforting to know that a substantial number of plants survived, including some well established, flowering individuals. Inside the enclosure, the majority of 'small' plants had already established good rosettes which should flower in 2014.

The big surprise was the increase in plants at neighbouring Små Geo. It was the highest recorded there, suggesting that seed dispersal as well as recovery by established plants from root stocks had occurred. Plants were scattered throughout the upper part of the geo in substrate which was re-graded by the storm into substantial patches of small rounded pebbles whereas previously the main surface material was larger angular rocks - the opposite to what has occurred on Muckle Uri Geo beach. The core of the current Muckle Uri Geo population is concentrated in a relatively small area in the north-central part of the enclosure. However, other plants are distributed more widely to the west and east within the enclosure, which bodes well for renewed population growth.

Oysterplant seeds are dispersed by sea. The extreme event may eventually prove to have made new input into the Muckle Uri Geo colony. This is certainly the case for one small plant found on North Haven beach in August. This is the first record away from the main population. As soon as it was found, FIBO staff built it a chicken wire cage to protect against sheep grazing. FIBO and its ranger service were also responsible for maintaining, and in 2013, re-establishing the protective fence at Muckle Uri Geo.

Orchids

The number of flowering Northern Marsh Orchids *Dactylorhiza purpurella* in Schoolton meadow in 2013 was 1323, down from 2012 but still the second highest count in 20 years of monitoring. This is part of a general trend. The species is present in large numbers throughout the in-by, in every damp patch free from grazing animals. In 1973, the total island population was seven! The population growth largely reflects changes in land management to benefit the orchids.

Plants on the move

Fair Isle's Floating Club-rush *Scirpus fluitans* population was formerly restricted to a small section of burn just above the Vaadal. But it has begun to migrate upstream. In the last few years it has colonised first the burn running through Sukka Mire and subsequently the side drains. It has now expanded into the small burn at Brunt Brae and the main drain at Mire o Vatnagaard. As there are gaps of unsuitable habitat between sites, the expansion is a puzzle. Sheep often have material entangled within the wool and they may be the unwitting distributors of seeds or plants to higher ground.

New species

Fair Isle is extremely well studied botanically and new colonisation is infrequent. Nevertheless, two species were recorded for the first time in 2013. These were: a strong population of Soft Rush *Juncus effusus* in the Chalet pond, indicating that the rush had been overlooked for a number of years; and a vigorous plant of Perennial Wall-rocket *Diplotaxis tenuifolia* in an untended patch of garden at Upper Leogh. Perennial Wall-rocket is extremely rare in northern Scotland. There is just one previous Shetland record and that was 50 years ago. It is always a puzzle explaining the arrival of plants reliant on substantial (as opposed to dust-light) seed. Arrival with garden produce or wild bird seed is always possible but in the case of the *Diplotaxis* this seems unlikely. Migrant birds may also spread seed, either attached to their plumage or passing undigested through the alimentary tract. Time will tell whether the *Diplotaxis* can be added to the trend of species moving north in response to climate change.

Fungi

There is a distinct northern flavour to Fair Isle's fungi, many being species largely or entirely confined in the UK to northern Scotland. One of the most interesting, because it has a Holarctic distribution, is the boreal blewits *Lepista multifforme*. Its presence was confirmed by Professor Roy Watling (Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh) in the 1990s and was known from two sites, both in the Fair Isle Special Area of Conservation heath habitat. Two new sites were found in October for this high-Arctic species of fungus, including the first for the in-by at Hjukni Geo.

Invertebrates

Knowledge of Fair Isle's lesser known groups continues to expand. There is a high level of interest amongst the community, not least the children, and many of the interesting finds are theirs.

Marine species new to Fair Isle in 2013, mainly found by the children, were the sea-spider *Pycnogonum littorale*, the nudibranch *Lamellaria perspicua* and the marine worm *Marphysa sanguinea*. Terrestrial additions included the sawfly *Dolerus aeneus*, the caddis *Tinodes waeneri* and the flies *Argyra perplexa*, *Tomocerus longicornis* and *Ilione albiseta*.

Residency, colonisation & invasive species

The majority of finds relate to residents not previously studied. The *Ilione albiseta* was particularly notable as it is the first snail-eating fly, Sciomyzidae, for Fair Isle and the northernmost UK record. There were several in one locality, indicating an established population. Another important record, a fly tentatively identified as *Meoneura lamellata* belongs to the Carniidae and that is a new family for the Northern Isles. These northernmost records may have climate change significance.

The sawfly was intercepted as it hitched a lift on the island plane, a novel way to arrive, but demonstrates that the 42 km between Fair Isle and other land is not a complete obstacle to new arrivals. Another novel arrival was the Southern Ladybird *Cleobora mellyi*, a species resident in the Melbourne area which was found recently dead amongst llama wool from that part of Australia sent to Shirva for spinning purposes.

A more worrying arrival from Australasia was the New Zealand Flatworm *Arthurdendyus triangulatus*, two of which were discovered at Setter in February. None other was reported during the year, so it may have been an isolated event related to horticultural produce sent in from Shetland where the species is known to be present. The event demonstrates the importance of vigilance in bringing produce to the isle.

Despite Fair Isle's vulnerability to colonisers, it does remain mercifully free of certain less than welcome biota (from a human standpoint): no wasps, no mosquitoes and no horse flies while external parasites to bother the animals are infrequent.

Until 2013 there were just two records of the Garden Snail *Cornu aspersum*. Fair Isle gardeners may be dismayed to learn that a strong colony of full-grown garden snails is now established amongst a pile of stones behind the house at Burkle. All these snails will have arrived with imported produce, or attached to packaging. There are very few terrestrial snails on Fair Isle because there are no base-rich rocks. These snails appear to be surviving by deriving calcium from the odd scattered breeze block and mortar from a nearby low walled enclosure.

Climate change - species moving north

The Buff-tailed Bumblebee *Bombus terrestris* invasion of 2012 failed to materialize into colonization. None was reported in 2013. There was, however, several of a rather fine ichneumon on wild angelica flower heads which several islanders noted as not seen previously, although FIBO warden David Parnaby produced a photo from the year before. The species has been determined tentatively as *Diphyus* (= *Amblyteles*) *palliatorius*. Is it a recent arrival or has it been here overlooked all the

time? The odds are that it is a recent immigrant as the insect is so colourful and large it would surely have been noticed if around in earlier years. It will be interesting to see whether its population expands.

Annual Research Report

Summary: RSPB STAR seabird tracking project

Rob Hughes

2013 was the RSPB's fourth year of GPS tracking the breeding seabirds on Fair Isle. This was the first year of tracking under the new name of STAR (Seabird Tracking and Research) following three previous years under the Future of the Atlantic Marine Environment Project (FAME). The project aims to find out where UK seabirds are foraging in order to help inform the Marine Protected Area (MPA) designation process. STAR carries on the work which was started under the FAME project, tracking more birds at more sites in the UK and Ireland and including more species. The study uses miniature GPS tags, temporarily attached to the birds' dorsal feathers, to track birds to their foraging areas. The tags provide extremely high resolution data, which are used to provide information on the location of persistent seabird foraging aggregations.

This year I was accompanied by Tegan Newman (RSPB Internship Volunteer) tracking eight Razorbills, a Guillemot and six Fulmars. We also retrieved two time/depth recorders from Razorbills. Tracking this year was much more difficult than in previous years due to the poor breeding season for most species. The weather also hindered tracking, with two weeks of persistent fog in May. Although fewer tags were retrieved, the data will be invaluable for providing information in where birds foraging in an extra poor breeding season, compared to a slightly healthier season, such as 2012. The Razorbills continued their general trend in heading south to forage in the Fraserburgh area. In contrast to the auk tracking numbers, we tracked more Fulmars than in all of our previous years put together.

Tracking work undertaken by the RSPB's STAR project will continue in 2014. I will be returning along with Marianna Chimienti, a PhD student from Aberdeen University. Her PhD in collaboration with the RSPB and Marine Scotland aims to



Figure 1. Track of a chick rearing Fulmar from Homisdale, Fair Isle.

characterise the foraging behaviour of different species of diving seabirds in order to understand the potential impact that the development of tidal renewable devices might have on their foraging activities. This year we will also use accelerometers in combination with GPS on Razorbills aiming to observe in details their movements underwater while foraging and searching for the prey.

Data from FAME and STAR are publicly available and can be accessed by emailing RSPB's conservation data management unit cdmu@rspb.org.uk, who also hold an up-to-date list of the tracking data available.

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

DNA-based identification of migrants: what's the big idea?

Martin Collinson

When the identity of the 'Tyne Petrel' of 1991 was confirmed, on the basis of DNA analysis, as a Swinhoe's Petrel (Dawson, 1992; Cubitt, 1995), the science of forensic genetic studies of wildlife was in its infancy. Scientists generally needed blood or muscle samples, sequencing DNA was a laborious job, and when you got your DNA sequence there was very little existing sequence to compare it to. How times have changed.

Unless you have been living on Mars, it will have become obvious in recent years that an increasing number of identifications of migrants are being achieved, or at least confirmed, through DNA analysis. DNA is, of course, our genetic blueprint - the instructions for life that make us what we are. Different species have different DNA sequences, such that for example, humans and our nearest living relatives, chimps, are on average about 2% different at the level of DNA. As a result of thousands of scientists sequencing DNA from birds around the world, it has become obvious that many subspecies within the same species may also be diagnosable at the level of DNA, and some 'new' species have been recognised on this basis, for example Iberian Chiffchaff and Eastern Bonelli's Warbler (Helbig *et al.*, 1996). Subspecies are usually genetically closer to each other than different species, but this is not a hard and fast rule.

Technology has moved on since 1991 and it is now possible to get usable DNA from tiny bits of tissue, a single feather, or even a sample of faeces that can nail the identification of a migrant bird, and may even identify which part of its range it came from. For example, when a bird loses a feather, most of that feather is 'dead' keratin with no DNA, but a few skin cells or maybe even a tiny spot of blood normally stick to its base and, providing the shed feather stays dry, the DNA in those cells will remain intact for 30 years or more. So any feathers lost incidentally in the net or during routine handling of the bird can be salvaged for a DNA analysis. To do this, in the lab the base of the feather is cut off and using the same types of enzymes that you will find in biological washing powder, the feather-tip is digested to form a DNA soup. There are approximately 25000 genes in a bird, so how do we know which ones to sequence? Most of the time, the decision is made for us because most studies that use DNA to identify birds or resolve their taxonomy use the same small number of genes. In the majority of cases, these are a small selection of genes from the cell's 'batteries', the mitochondria, rather than the majority of the DNA that resides in cell nuclei. Mitochondrial DNA exists in thousands of copies in each cell (rather than the two copies of nuclear DNA), and different species and subspecies generally show a higher level of sequence difference in mitochondrial DNA than nuclear DNA - it is

often therefore a more robust basis for identification. Mitochondrial genes often used include *cytb*, ND2 and the cytochrome c oxidase gene, COI. The relevant gene is isolated from the DNA soup using a lab technique called the PCR reaction, using published techniques that have been optimised for the most popular genes for all birds. Once the gene has been purified, it can be sent off for sequencing, and in contrast to the situation 20 years ago, this now costs less than £10, making *ad hoc* identification of several, or tens, of individuals feasible for a small lab. COI sequencing is referred to as 'barcoding' the bird and there is a dedicated online community - the 'Barcode of Life' project - that facilitates the identification of species from their COI sequence (<http://www.barcodeoflife.org/>). Thousands of scientists over the last 20–25 years have sequenced genes from tens of thousands of birds in the course of taxonomic work and uploaded those sequences, with full details of the birds, to a central database where they are publicly accessible (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nucleotide>). This means that if you have a bird of uncertain identification, or for which the identification needs to be confirmed, even a short stretch of successful DNA sequence can be checked against every bird sequence that has ever been published and an identification proposed, often to subspecies level. Lots of birds give themselves up on mitochondrial DNA, and it is through this that for example the large number of recent identifications of migrant Siberian (*blythi*) and Central Asian (*halimodendri*) Lesser Whitethroats, Siberian Chiffchaffs, Eastern and Western Subalpine Warblers, Yellow Wagtails etc. from Fair Isle and elsewhere have been achieved (Collinson *et al.*, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2014).

Mitochondrial DNA is only inherited down the maternal line, i.e. we get our DNA from our mum, and there is normally no contribution from dad. For identification purposes, this normally does not matter. However, there are some species for which there is a real possibility of hybridisation. Collared Flycatcher (and other black-and-white *Ficedulas* - (Collinson *et al.*, 2012)) are the classic example, but recently we have had to deal with other problems such as Treecreeper x Short-toed Treecreeper hybrids, orange-billed terns and Isabelline/Turkestan Shrikes. In those cases, other genes from the nucleus of the birds' cells need to be sequenced. This is not normally a problem, but because there are only two copies of each nuclear gene per cell rather than the thousands of copies of mitochondrial genes, this gives us much less material to be working with. It is therefore not always possible to isolate enough nuclear DNA for sequencing.

From the point of view of a birder or ringer, the potential therefore exists to resolve or confirm the identification of migrant birds if a suitable sample can be retained. Luckily, birds drop the odd feather in the net, during handling or in the bag that can be saved. Any feathers obtained in such a way do not need any special storage - a clean envelope, somewhere relatively cool, out of strong light, will keep the DNA intact for a long time, and feathers can be sent through the normal mail with no loss of quality. If a bird does not drop a feather, a faecal sample can be used - but these are very much a second best. Poo is full of cells that have sloughed off from the bird's intestinal wall, but it is also full of digestive enzymes that degrade DNA rapidly. To

save a faecal sample, it is important to air-dry it as soon as possible. Even then, the DNA will have started to degrade and we normally have to change our protocols custom to the job to isolate fragments of DNA - in our experience, we have about a 50% success rate working from faecal samples, compared to a 98% success rate working with feathers (or blood). Also bear in mind that a faecal sample is also full of the DNA of whatever the bird has been eating, which can make things quite messy (think for example of a Northern Harrier that has been eating Meadow Pipits!).

DNA analysis can also be used to delve back into the archives and resolve identification of old museum specimens, especially in light of changing taxonomy. Museum specimens can yield DNA from toepads - many curators are understandably nervous about requests to cut bits off their specimens, but with appropriate permissions this can be done and has been useful for confirming the occurrence of rare taxa in Scotland and elsewhere - for example Britain's first Siberian Stonechat, Eastern, Western and Moltoni's Subalpine Warblers, and Eastern Yellow Wagtail, all from Fair Isle, Isle of May and St Kilda (Collinson *et al.*, 2012, 2013a, 2014).

Finally, it should be reiterated that DNA analyses, while an attractive option, and sometimes conclusive for identification, are not a magic bullet that replaces normal birding. In spite of all the thousands of gene sequences uploaded to the central database, many bird species have not been exhaustively sampled - in contrast for example to Siberian and European Stonechats, and Subalpine Warblers, for which there are several tens of database sequences from across the ranges of the species and for which it is possible to 100% confirm the identity of a migrant, other species such as Common and Siberian Chiffchaffs, and Eurasian/Caspian Reed Warblers, are much more sparsely represented and it is not always possible to definitively identify just where an individual bird has come from. In other cases, different subspecies, or even different species, of some birds are sometimes not safely diagnosable genetically. We have found from bitter experience for example that there is nothing we can do with any of the redpolls that are caught annually, unfortunately. The take home message is that DNA evidence has to be assessed critically just like anything else. Just as you would not use a tiny biometric difference in isolation to 100% identify a bird in the hand, nor would we use a tiny genetic difference to 100% identify a bird in the lab. Field and in-hand criteria remain just as important as they ever were, and it is still reassuring to know that most of the migrant birds from UK that have been sent to us for sequencing, have been sent because the ringers concerned identified them as being potentially interesting. Furthermore, more often than not, the ringers have been right.

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Investigations into diseases states and the causes of bird deaths on Fair Isle; report for 2013

Jason C. Waive B.Vet.Med., MRCVS

Since 1996, FIBO staff and visitors have been saving avian casualties found on Fair Isle for post-mortem examination to assist in a long-term project studying disease states and the causes of death in birds. The following is a report into the findings of these autopsies on the 33 birds submitted from this area for the year 2013.

This was a year that was marked by a late conclusion to winter, resulting in unsuccessful or late attempts at breeding by many birds. There was also considerable hardship for many species especially those at the top of the food chain. Departure of winter migrants and arrival of breeding migrants also appeared to be delayed. These factors were clearly reflected in the results of the national survey this year and also in this report.

There were 33 birds collected and sent in 2013. The 22 species represented belonged to 17 families from six orders (Procellariiformes, Pelecaniformes, Anseriformes, Gruiformes, Charadriiformes and Passeriformes):

Procellariiformes:	Procellariidae:	one species:	Fulmar
Pelecaniformes:	Sulidae:	one species:	Gannet
Phalacrocoracidae:		one species:	Shag
Anseriformes:	Anatidae:	one species:	Long-tailed Duck
Gruiformes:	Rallidae:	one species:	Water Rail
Charadriiformes:	Scolopacidae:	two species:	Woodcock Jack Snipe
Stercorariidae:		one species:	Great Skua
Laridae:		one species:	Great Black-backed Gull
Alcidae:		one species:	Guillemot
Passeriformes:	Hirundinidae:	one species:	Swallow
Motacillidae:		one species:	Rock Pipit
Prunellidae:		one species:	Dunnock
Turdidae:		four species:	Robin Redstart Black Redstart
Sylviidae:		two species:	Song Thrush Blackcap Garden Warbler
Corvidae:		one species:	Rook
Fringillidae:		one species:	Common Crossbill
Emberizidae:		one species:	Snow Bunting

No species were represented in large numbers with the most common examined being Great Skua with four specimens and Blackcap with three.

The age distribution was unusual with 16 of 33 birds being adult. Normally there is a heavy bias towards immature birds with a two or three to one ratio.

Of the 33 birds examined post-mortem, 16 were adult, five were second-year, eight were classed as immature, and two were first-winter and two were first-year. This gives a one young bird death: one adult bird death ratio.

The majority of casualties have again occurred during migration periods but this time with a bias towards the spring especially May, perhaps reflecting the late winter. There were two in March, four in April and seven in May with three in September and four in October. January and February each recorded one. Eleven birds had no data.

Collision injuries and starvation were again the two most common causes of death with nine showing typical collision injuries and nine with primary starvation. Of most concern amongst the latter were three Great Skuas, one an adult.

Among the more unusual cases was a Robin with aspergillosis (a fungal infection affecting the airway system), a Garden Warbler with a liver infection, a Rook with septicaemia (a severe bacterial infection where the bacteria multiply in the blood and therefore can affect a wide range of organs), and a Shag with an overwhelming parasitic burden. A Fulmar had eaten a particularly woody six-inch length of vegetation, which had caused the proventriculus (the true stomach) to fold over on itself causing an obstruction. The young bird had starved and it wasn't clear whether the obstruction had made it impossible for the bird to eat or whether it had eaten the item out of hunger.

Once again I would like to thank the staff and friends of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory for their help and co-operation with this project and would ask any visitors to report casualties to the warden or other observatory staff.

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.

John Harrison Memorial Fund

The JHMF provides financial assistance in the form of grants to anyone between the ages of 16 and 25 to enable them to visit Fair Isle and take part in the daily work schedule of the Observatory. It 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. 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 £12 per night, which covers full board and lodgings. 'JHMFs' 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 (see Steffan's write up below).

Ornithological Volunteers

For £15 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 £32.50 per night (full board) for staying at the Obs as a visitor throughout the year (other than the 'peak period' of late September to early October).



Olive-backed Pipit by W. Miles

My Fair Isle, a review by a JHMF volunteer

Steffan Walton

From the moment I first picked up a pair of binoculars I somehow knew Fair Isle was a pilgrimage I had to make. For years after, I'd read about Fair Isle's unique history but, being based far inland in towns and cities all my life, the remoteness of Fair Isle was a daunting prospect. With a little courage I applied for the John Harrison Memorial Fund, a grant that gifts the youth of Britain a chance to spend some quality time at the Bird Observatory. Little did I realise that I would actually be granted my wish. It had finally happened; I was going to the most remote inhabited island in Great Britain. I aimed to use my time on the island as productively as possible to increase my knowledge, to gain valuable field expertise, ringing experience, and to test myself in this alien world.

Now let us talk about getting to Fair Isle. I imagine most people mention this but this is a feat that should not be underestimated. It haunted my organisational skills for many a month. It started off at 4.00am with a stupidly early flight to Aberdeen from Luton Airport. I thought the flight itself would allow me to catch-up on some much needed sleep, alas the flight was crammed with what seemed to be a whole nursery of small crying children. After an overnight ferry I found myself in Lerwick, Shetland. This is when I truly learnt the unpredictable nature of Fair Isle. A phone call from the Fair Isle Bird Observatory confirmed that the ferry to the island was cancelled due to the dire weather, leaving me stranded in mainland Shetland. But there was one option left; the possibility of an impromptu flight from Tingwall. After a manic taxi drive, and much deliberation, I had bartered myself on the next flight over to Fair Isle. With a twist though. Due to weight restrictions I was asked to leave my baggage on the mainland for another day, fly via Foula (yet another isolated Shetland isle), and to sit next to the pilot to balance the weight of the plane! After many hectic days of travelling the country, this exhausted explorer was finally stranded miles in the ocean at Fair Isle Bird Observatory.

From the moment I arrived I immersed myself in every job available to me. Little did I know I would spend the first week inside paint-scraping and re-painting banisters. What exactly had I got myself into? From then onwards the jobs ranged far and wide. One day I could be surveying the Black Guillemot population, sowing seeds in the garden, and manning the bar. The next I could be on a cliff monitoring the Peregrine nest, fixing the bird traps, and scouring the archive room for those elusive 60's records of House Finch. These jobs allowed me a brilliant behind-the-scenes insight of observatory work and I'd like to thank the rest of the team for letting me into their world.

Of course people know of Fair Isle for its iconic status as Britain's foremost bird magnet, the Mecca of bird vagrancy. And my two months on the island were no

exception, with a mesmerising run of Thrush Nightingale, Melodious Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Ortolan Bunting, and what seemed like Bluethroats and Red-backed Shrikes around each corner. Not to mention the skua squadrons, the ever-present Fulmar mass, and the delicate Fair Isle Wren greeting us each day. Pride of place for me though goes to the intricate Wryneck that surprised us in the morning traps. Words could not describe the hypnotising and bizarre display the bird performed in my hand. Not in my dreams did I ever think I'd be holding one of these this year, yet these occurrences are the norm on Fair Isle.

The birds of Fair Isle were fantastic, but when I look back at all the experiences from the island there will always be one day that stands out. The 14th of May. The day Killer Whales entered my life. Its late morning and I answer a phone call from the warden but am greeted by the wailing white noise of Fair Isle's windswept cliffs. Over the clatter I hear three audible words, "Orca....North Light". Did I hear this right? Something takes over and I burst into the observatory lounge to interrupt all conversations and break the news. Within two minutes the well-oiled FIBO machine had everyone on the minibus en route to the Killer Whales. What followed was a manic cat-and-mouse along the coast until finally the pod swam right past us on Bunes. A truly breathtaking occurrence that will stay with me throughout my life.

After two months of great wildlife, great food, and great people it was time for me to leave this little bit of magic behind. Leaving was tough, I'd become so accustomed to island life that it dawned on me I couldn't stop and have conversations with every person I meet anymore. I finally boarded the legendary Good Shepherd IV on a journey back to (relative) civilisation. The Good Shepherd was an experience of sorts (especially after the last night farewell drinks), a tumultuous and turbulent three hours of endless rocking, sea spray, and very green passengers. But even still, I managed to briefly release my grip on the boat to give a final salute to the island disappearing on the horizon.

Things haven't been the quite the same since Fair Isle. I've returned to the day job but with newfound experience, and an uncontainable longing for remote islands. I have continued my interest in bird ringing and volunteering at local nature reserves. A lot of my spare time is spent looking for similar roles elsewhere, with the Pacific Islands high on my wishlist. I'd like to use my experience gained at Fair Isle Bird Observatory in conjunction with my previous scientific knowledge in a future research career, hopefully aiding current conservation issues. Above all, what I'll take from Fair Isle is being part of a community comparable with nowhere else in Britain. The islanders are friendly whilst the guests and staff mingle together as family. I'd never been to a place where the children are actively encouraged to talk to strangers!

Did I have a good time? Well I think it's safe to say I'll be the first person on board The Good Shepherd whenever those banisters need painting again...

Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust Financial Report and Accounts for 2013

Mike Wood

The 2013 season was a brilliant year from the perspective of the Observatory as a business. New records were set for the number of guest-nights (3,147) and guest house income (£181,262) which covers accommodation, meals, shop and the bar. The relevant figures for the years since 2002 (excluding the 'rebuild' years) are below.

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2011	2012	2013
2321	2272	2567	2739	2610	3047	2977	2972	2905	3147
£91,943	81,064	94,343	101,388	99,328	119,400	111,897	146,977	164,011	181,262

Our target is to stabilise the number of revenue-earning guest-nights at c. 3000 per year, so the last three years are encouraging steps towards that target. Many guests have commented favourably on the quiet, warm and comfortable accommodation, excellent food, well-stocked bar, unique and friendly ambience of the Observatory and I recommend anyone who has yet to experience the new building to definitely visit Fair Isle in the near future.

With two flights each day, except Sundays, to and from Shetland mainland 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 also continued to receive valuable grant income from the JNCC and Scottish National Heritage for Seabird Monitoring work and the provision of a Fair Isle Ranger Service respectively. This income is important for the continued financial health of FIBOT and we are working hard to ensure that we continue to fulfil the requirements of these two organisations.

Please do read about the John Harrison Memorial Fund and encourage any young birdwatchers you know to consider applying for one of the JHMF grants.

My personal thanks go to David, Susannah and our other staff for their hard work and skill in making the Observatory such a brilliant place to stay. Ultimately it is not the comfort of the new building that determines whether or not a guest has an enjoyable stay at the Observatory, it is the friendliness and helpfulness of the staff that is a key factor in visitor satisfaction. This is an essential ingredient in our success.

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 FIBOT's draft accounts for the year ended 31st October 2013 appears on the following pages. The full statutory accounts can be inspected at the Bird Observatory on Fair Isle.

Table 1. Income and Expenditure Report for the year ended 31st October 2013

Sales Income	2013 (£)	2012 (£)
Accommodation & Meals	150,151	137,173
Shop Sales	11,203	9,612
Bar Sales	19,908	17,226
	181,262	164,011
Cost of Sales		
Purchases	64,975	55,358
Wages & Salaries	47,351	44,005
	112,326	99,363
Trading Profit	68,936	64,648
Other Income		
Interest Received	7,910	3,297
Deferred Grant Income released	112,000	112,000
Subscriptions	5,313	5,465
Donations	3,010	11,110
Grants Received	24,503	37,234
Other Income	0	0
	152,736	169,106
Gross Profit	221,672	233,754
Other Expenses		
Administration	9,468	13,195
Establishment	64,583	78,082
Sales & Marketing	7,982	7,024
Financial & Legal	5,932	6,746
Depreciation	125,533	124,844
	213,498	229,891
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	8,174	3,863

Balance Sheet as at 31st October 2013

Fixed Assets	31/10/13 (£)	31/10/12 (£)
Tangible assets	3,810,212	3,868,441
Investments	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,810,212	3,868,441
 Current Assets		
Stocks	16,513	17,890
Debtors	33,254	18,277
Cash at bank and in hand	40,714	34,039
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	90,481	70,206
 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(20,860)	(18,363)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)	69,621	51,843
 Total Assets less Current Liabilities	3,879,833	3,920,284
 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(0)	(0)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,879,833	3,920,284
 Representing:		
Accumulated Surplus	3,879,833	3,920,284
Appeal Reserve	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,879,833	3,920,284

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 2013. All decisions follow those of the BBRC and BOURC (although note that the totals include all 2013 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 Category D (uncertain origin) and E (presumed escapes), along with one extinct species and one species not identified to species level, included at the end of the list for completeness.

With the addition of Swinhoe's Petrel and Red-eyed Vireo, the Fair Isle list stands at 381 at the end of 2013.

Status Categories

Vagrant V

Rare R

*

Scarce S

Regular Migrant RM

Frequent Migrant FM

Common Migrant CM

No. of records

ten records or less in the past 20 years

11–40 records in the past 20 years

number of individuals is more than the number of records averaging 10 records or less per annum

averaging 11–40 records per annum

averaging 41–500 records per annum

averaging more than 500 records per annum

Breeding Categories

Small Numbers BS

Moderate Numbers MS

Large Numbers LS

No. of records

on average less than 100 pairs per annum

on average 101–1000 pairs per annum

on average more than 1000 pairs per annum

Mute Swan V (9)

Bewick's Swan V (6*)

Whooper Swan FM

Bean Goose R (38*)

Pink-footed Goose FM

White-fronted Goose S

Greylag Goose CM

Canada Goose R

Barnacle Goose FM

Brent Goose R

Shelduck S

Mandarin Duck V (1)

Wigeon FM

American Wigeon V (1)

Gadwall R (39*)

Teal FM

Green-winged Teal V (2)

Mallard FM BS

Black Duck V (1)

Pintail S

Garganey V (12)

Shoveler S

Pochard R

Ring-necked Duck V (1)

Tufted Duck RM

Scaup S

Lesser Scaup V (1)

Eider FM BS

King Eider V (17)

Steller's Eider V (1)

Harlequin Duck V (2)

Long-tailed Duck FM

Common Scoter S

Surf Scoter V (2)

Velvet Scoter S

Goldeneye RM

Smew V (7)

Red-breasted Merganser FM

Goosander S

- Quail S
- Red-throated Diver RM
- Black-throated Diver V (7)
- Great Northern Diver S
- White-billed Diver V (4)
- Fulmar CM BL
- Cory's Shearwater V (3)
- Great Shearwater V (16)
- Sooty Shearwater RM
- Manx Shearwater S
- Storm Petrel FM BS
- Leach's Petrel RM
- Swinhoe's Petrel V (2)
- Gannet CM BL
- Cormorant FM
- Shag CM BL
- Little Bittern V (1)
- Night-heron V (2)
- Grey Heron FM
- Purple Heron V (3)
- White Stork V (4)
- Little Grebe R (c40)
- Great Crested Grebe V (14)
- Red-necked Grebe V (22)
- Slavonian Grebe S
- Honey-buzzard R (54*)
- Black Kite V (1)
- Red Kite V (8)
- White-tailed Eagle V (14)
- Marsh Harrier R (46)
- Hen Harrier S
- Pallid Harrier V (3)
- Montagu's Harrier V (3)
- Goshawk V (5)
- Sparrowhawk RM
- Buzzard S
- Rough-legged Buzzard V (41)
- Golden Eagle V (1)
- Osprey S
- Lesser Kestrel V (1)
- Kestrel RM
- American Kestrel V (1)
- Red-footed Falcon V (5)
- Merlin RM
- Hobby R (56)
- Gyr Falcon V (13)
- Peregrine RM
- Water Rail RM
- Spotted Crake R (48)
- Little Crake V (1)
- Baillon's Crake V (2)
- Corncrake S
- Moorhen S
- Coot R (89)
- Crane R (24)
- Sandhill Crane V (1)
- Little Bustard V (1)
- Great Bustard V (1)
- Stone-curlew V (8)
- Avocet V (1)
- Oystercatcher FM BS
- American Golden Plover V (11)
- Pacific Golden Plover V (2)
- Golden Plover CM
- Grey Plover S
- Lapwing FM BS
- Little Ringed Plover V (3)
- Ringed Plover FM BS
- Kentish Plover V (1)
- Caspian Plover V (1)
- Dotterel S
- Upland Sandpiper V (2)
- Hudsonian Whimbrel V (2)
- Whimbrel FM
- Curlew FM BS
- Black-tailed Godwit S
- Bar-tailed Godwit RM
- Turnstone CM
- Knot FM
- Ruff RM
- Curlew Sandpiper S
- Red-necked Stint V (1)
- Temminck's Stint V (18)
- Sanderling FM
- Dunlin FM
- Purple Sandpiper FM
- Baird's Sandpiper V (4)
- Little Stint RM
- White-rumped Sandpiper V (5)
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper V (14*)
- Pectoral Sandpiper R (32)
- Semipalmated Sandpiper V (3)
- Red-necked Phalarope V (21)
- Grey Phalarope R (47)
- Terek Sandpiper V (1)
- Common Sandpiper FM
- Spotted Sandpiper V (1)
- Green Sandpiper RM
- Solitary Sandpiper V (1)
- Spotted Redshank S
- Greenshank RM
- Lesser Yellowlegs V (3)
- Wood Sandpiper S
- Redshank CM
- Jack Snipe FM
- Long-billed Dowitcher V (2)
- Woodcock FM
- Snipe CM BS
- Great Snipe R (45)
- Collared Pratincole V (1)
- Black-winged Pratincole V (1)
- Pomarine Skua R (68+)
- Arctic Skua FM BS
- Long-tailed Skua R
- Great Skua FM BM
- Puffin CM BL
- Black Guillemot FM BL
- Razorbill FM BL
- Little Auk FM
- Guillemot CM BL
- Brünnich's Guillemot V (1)
- Gull-billed Tern V (1)
- Caspian Tern V (2)
- Black Tern V (2)
- White-winged Black Tern V (3)
- Sandwich Tern S
- Common Tern RM
- Roseate Tern V (3)
- Arctic Tern FM BM
- Ivory Gull V (2)
- Sabine's Gull V (6)
- Kittiwake CM BM
- Black-headed Gull FM
- Little Gull R (31)
- Laughing Gull V (1)
- Mediterranean Gull V (1)
- Common Gull FM BS
- Ring-billed Gull V (4)
- Lesser Black-backed Gull FM BS
- Herring Gull CM BS
- Iceland Gull S
- Glaucous Gull RM
- Great Black-backed Gull CM BS
- Pallas's Sandgrouse V (1)

- Rock Dove FM BS
- Stock Dove S
- Woodpigeon FM
- Collared Dove FM
- Turtle Dove S
- Rufous Turtle Dove V (1)
- Cuckoo RM
- Barn Owl V (5)
- Scops Owl V (2)
- Snowy Owl V (24)
- Long-eared Owl RM
- Short-eared Owl RM
- Nightjar V (28)
- Swift FM
- Pallid Swift V (1)
- Alpine Swift V (7)
- Little Swift V (1)
- Kingfisher V (1)
- Bee-eater V (8)
- Roller V (1)
- Hoopoe R (40)
- Wryneck RM
- Great Spotted Woodpecker S
- Red-eyed Vireo V (1)
- Golden Oriole R (45)
- Brown Shrike V (1)
- Isabelline Shrike V (4)
- Red-backed Shrike RM
- Lesser Grey Shrike V (21)
- Great Grey Shrike S
- Southern Grey Shrike V (2)
- Woodchat Shrike V (29)
- Magpie V (1)
- Jackdaw S
- Rook RM
- Carrion Crow FM
- Hooded Crow RM BS
- Raven RM BS
- Goldcrest FM
- Firecrest V (6)
- Blue Tit V (9*)
- Great Tit R (c55)
- Coal Tit V (7)
- Calandra Lark V (4)
- Bimaculated Lark V (1)
- Short-toed Lark S
- Crested Lark V (1)
- Woodlark R (56)
- Skylark CM BS
- Shore Lark R
- Sand Martin RM
- Swallow CM
- House Martin FM
- Red-rumped Swallow V (9)
- Greenish Warbler R (44)
- Arctic Warbler R (88)
- Pallas's Warbler R (40)
- Yellow-browed Warbler RM
- Hume's Warbler V (3)
- Radde's Warbler V (6)
- Dusky Warbler V (15)
- Western Bonelli's Warbler V (3)
- Wood Warbler RM
- Chiffchaff FM
- Willow Warbler CM
- Blackcap CM
- Garden Warbler FM
- Barred Warbler RM
- Lesser Whitethroat FM
- Whitethroat FM
- Dartford Warbler V (1)
- Subalpine Warbler R (85)
- Sardinian Warbler V (2)
- Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler R (23)
- Lanceolated Warbler R (88)
- Grasshopper Warbler RM
- River Warbler V (17)
- Savi's Warbler V (7)
- Thick-billed Warbler V (2)
- Booted Warbler V (13)
- Sykes's Warbler V (3)
- Eastern Olivaceous Warbler V (3)
- Icterine Warbler S
- Melodious Warbler V (18)
- Aquatic Warbler V (37)
- Sedge Warbler FM
- Paddyfield Warbler V (22)
- Blyth's Reed Warbler R (35)
- Marsh Warbler S
- Reed Warbler RM
- Great Reed Warbler V (14)
- Waxwing S
- Treecreeper V (8)
- Wren BS
- Starling FM BM
- Rose-coloured Starling R (40)
- Dipper R (37)
- White's Thrush V (12)
- Hermit Thrush V (2)
- Swainson's Thrush V (2)
- Grey-cheeked Thrush V (4)
- Siberian Thrush V (1)
- Ring Ouzel FM
- Blackbird CM
- Eyebrowed Thrush V (2)
- Dusky Thrush V (1)
- Black-throated Thrush V (13)
- Fieldfare CM
- Song Thrush CM
- Redwing CM
- Mistle Thrush RM
- Brown Flycatcher V (2)
- Spotted Flycatcher FM
- Robin CM
- Rufous-tailed Robin V (1)
- Thrush Nightingale R (61)
- Nightingale R (50)
- Bluethroat RM
- Siberian Rubythroat V (5)
- Red-flanked Bluetail V (9)
- Red-breasted Flycatcher S
- Collared Flycatcher V (5)
- Pied Flycatcher FM
- Black Redstart RM
- Redstart FM
- Rock Thrush V (1)
- Whinchat FM
- Siberian Stonechat R (41)
- Stonechat S
- Isabelline Wheatear V (1)
- Wheatear CM BS
- Pied Wheatear V (1)
- Black-eared Wheatear V (5)
- Desert Wheatear V (5)
- Duncock FM
- Alpine Accentor V (2)
- House Sparrow BS
- Tree Sparrow R
- Yellow Wagtail RM
- Citrine Wagtail R (74)
- Grey Wagtail S
- Pied Wagtail FM BS
- Richard's Pipit S
- Blyth's Pipit V (4)

- Tawny Pipit V (17)
 - Olive-backed Pipit R (91)
 - Tree Pipit FM
 - Pechora Pipit R (43)
 - Meadow Pipit CM BS
 - Red-throated Pipit R (80)
 - Rock Pipit FM BS
 - Buff-bellied Pipit V (4)
 - Chaffinch FM
 - Brambling FM
 - Greenfinch RM
 - Serin V (3)
 - Citril Finch V (1)
 - Goldfinch R
 - Siskin FM
 - Linnet RM
 - Twite FM BS
 - Lesser Redpoll S
 - Common Redpoll FM
 - Arctic Redpoll R (89)
 - Two-barred Crossbill R (58)
 - Common Crossbill RM
 - Parrot Crossbill V (68)
 - Common Rosefinch RM
 - Bullfinch RM
 - Hawfinch S
 - Snow Bunting CM
 - Lapland Bunting FM
 - Savannah Sparrow V (2)
 - Song Sparrow V (3)
 - White-crowned Sparrow V (1)
 - White-throated Sparrow V (5)
 - Black-faced Bunting V (1)
 - Pine Bunting V (9)
 - Yellowhammer RM
 - Ortolan Bunting S
 - Cretzschmar's Bunting V (2)
 - Yellow-browed Bunting V (1)
 - Rustic Bunting S (130)
 - Chestnut-eared Bunting V (1)
 - Little Bunting S
 - Yellow-breasted Bunting R (103)
 - Reed Bunting FM
 - Pallas's Reed Bunting V (2)
 - Black-headed Bunting V (25)
 - Corn Bunting R
 - Bobolink V (1)
 - Brown-headed Cowbird V (1)
 - Baltimore Oriole V (1)
 - Tennessee Warbler V (2)
 - Magnolia Warbler V (1)
 - Blackburnian Warbler V (1)
 - Blackpoll Warbler V (2)
 - 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
- Unidentified to species:**
- Albatross sp.

Crossbill, Setter, October. © D. Parnaby





South Lighthouse, 5th February © *D. Parnaby*.
The remains of the wall are visible on the grass to the right of the lighthouse.

