

Fair Isle Bird Observatory

BULLETIN



Edited by
PETER E. DAVIS

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DECEMBER 1959.

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28. A Yellow-breasted Bunting at Fair Isle

Early on the afternoon of September 9th 1958, Bernard Nau and I found an immature Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola* feeding on the heads of a crop of oats at Gaila. It was a most distinctive bird, with pale lemon-yellow underparts, lightly striated; streaky brown upper parts; the characteristic head-pattern with pale buff superciliaries, a clear buff central crown-stripe, and pale moustachials; and bold white outers to the dark tail.

Though not particularly confiding, it remained in the crop while we set up a mist-net, and was quickly captured. In the laboratory it was compared with the skin of an adult female (12 vii. 1872), from which it differed in the considerably narrower chestnut edgings to the dark brown feathers of the crown, duller brown rump with broader dark streaks at the feather-centres, lack of brown wash on the upper breast, and clear narrow dark streaks on the breast and flanks. The upper mandible was brown, the lower tipped same, but mainly pinkish-brown; the legs darker pinkish-brown; the iris dark olive-brown.

The measurements were: wing 76 mm., bill 12, tarsus 22, tail 60. The weight was 23.2 gm. at 1445 G.M.T.

The record is the fifth for Fair Isle and the thirteenth for the British Isles.

P. D.

29. A Second Gray-cheeked Thrush

As already reported in a note to *British Birds*, Peter Hope Jones trapped another Gray-cheeked Thrush *Hylocichla minima* in the Vaadal trap on October 29th 1958. Like the specimen of October 5th 1953 (*antea* 2: 3-8) it was a first-winter bird, identified from the dark grey loreal region and ear coverts, and the indistinct pale eye-rim. It weighed 27.8 gm., three grammes more than the 1953 bird, and was probably not freshly-arrived at the time of capture. The record is the second for Fair Isle and Britain.

P. D.

30. A Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Fair Isle

The first authenticated Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* from Fair Isle, and the second in Scotland, was found by Marston Peet as it fed on the short turf near the summit of the South Gavel of Bunes on September 18th 1958. It was subsequently watched at close quarters by Peter Hope Jones, myself, and several other observers. It was a small wader, about the size of a Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos* but more slender-necked, and perhaps rather shorter in the bill. The upper parts were marked like those

of a Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*, with prominent buff borders to the dark feathers. The under parts were warm buff, deeper on the breast than on the belly, and there were indistinct dark stipples, mainly at the sides of the breast. The head was golden-buff at the sides, darker and streaky on the crown, but with a paler forehead. The most striking character was the rich golden-yellow of the legs. In flight there was no clear wing-bar and no prominent tail-marks; the under-wing was white.

The bird fed by probing the turf, and adopted a curious crouching stance while doing this. When a Merlin *Falco columbarius* passed over, the wader prostrated itself like a snipe. When we approached nearer than about twenty yards the head was raised high to watch us, and this was followed by a rapid and erratic run; a performance usually repeated several times until the bird was about fifty yards distant. It seemed reluctant to fly, and went only a short distance when hard-pressed; but eventually it tired of the disturbance and went high away to the north. It was not seen again.

A strong south-east wind was blowing at Fair Isle on September 18th, but a very large depression centred near Iceland was giving strong westerly winds right across the North Atlantic, and conditions were ideal for an involuntary crossing the previous two days.

P. D.

31. White's Thrush at Fair Isle

When James A. Stout was on the hill after Woodcock on November 6th 1958, he came across a bird in the eroded peat-banks of Wirvie Brecks, which he took at first for a Golden Plover *Charadrius apricarius*; but on a closer approach, he realised it was a White's Thrush *Turdus dauma*, a species he has collected at least once, and seen on two or three other occasions in earlier years. He was able to come within about fifteen yards of the bird, and saw well the peculiar crescentic markings above and below; and when it flew away the under-wing pattern of central white streak on dark wing was also observed. Peter Jones and I searched the area later, but were unable to relocate this bird.

P. D.

32. A Petchora Pipit Trapped

Fair Isle's unique position with regard to the Petchora Pipit *Anthus gustavi*—the twenty or so authenticated records from the isle are the only ones in western Europe—has long been the subject of speculation among bird-watchers. The answer must surely be, that the bird occurs, but is not identified, elsewhere in the region; and a few notes on our ex-

perience with a Petchora on September 30th 1958 may help the tally-hunter.

I flushed this bird when walking through a turnip-rig at Kennaby in the late morning. It flew away very swiftly and directly, and plummeted vertically into another strip of turnips in the adjacent field. Flushed again, with difficulty, it repeated this performance and returned to the original crop. No call was given. My impression was of a very cleanly-marked and streamlined pipit, though I could not make out the details of the plumage. The resemblance was rather to a Red-throated *A. cervinus* or Tree Pipit *A. trivialis* than to a Meadow *A. pratensis*, and there was none of the erratic flight of the last species.

By careful stalking I was fortunate enough to push the bird out of the turnips on to the lowest wire of a fence, where I had excellent views, from ten yards, for several seconds. The prominent (and diagnostic) features were two parallel white streaks running the length of the mantle, and two clear white wing-bars formed by the tips of the median and greater coverts. The golden-buff breast and paler flanks were clearly streaked. The bill seemed heavier and longer than in the other small European pipits; the legs were pale flesh-pink. The spotted rump could not be seen.

Peter Hope Jones, Ronald Nedderman and I returned later with a mist-net, and set it through the crop. A close search of both rigs yielded nothing, but a second exploration disturbed the bird close to the "wrong" side of the net (a stiff breeze was blowing). Nedderman (a Yorkshireman) fielded brilliantly on the pipit's first bounce. It was borne away in triumph, first to the owner of the turnips, James Wilson, an acknowledged expert on the species; and then to the laboratory.

The measurements taken were: wing 83.5 mm., bill 15, tarsus 24.5, tail 56, and hind claw 10.5, and the weight was 25.7 gm. at 1530 G.M.T. In the hand, the spotting of the rump was very apparent—large dark-brown centres to all feathers; and the other diagnostic feature, buffish, not white outer tail-feathers, was also noted. This last character did not seem of much value in the field.

P. D.

33. List of Autumn Migrants, 1958

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Colymbus immer*. One November 3rd to 7th, and 22nd.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Colymbus stellatus*. One August 15th, September 27th. Unidentified divers seen on Sept. 3rd and 17th.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*. One October 22nd.

MANX SHEARWATER *Procellaria puffinus*. One off Buness Aug-

- ust 6th, one on crossing September 12th.
- SOOTY SHEARWATER *Procellaria grisea*. A few seen on the crossings in late August and September.
- CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*. A few records in July and August, but passage obvious only in September and early October. The best days were Sept. 3rd (15), 16th (20), 25th (25), and Oct. 12th (10).
- HERON *Ardea cinerea*. Usually present from June 22nd to end of year. Not more than three daily in June-July and November-December; no more than seven in August and October, but up to sixteen present September 10th to 17th, and ten 26th.
- MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*. Odd birds late June, and one July 25th. Eight August 21st, and some often present for rest of year; maxima: eleven Sept. 11th, and twelve Nov. 19th.
- TEAL. *Anas crecca*. First appeared August 20th, and seen on most days to end September, less regularly later. The largest scores were fourteen Sept. 11th, nine Oct. 20th.
- WIGEON *Anas penelope*. One July 11st and 2nd, August 18th to 22nd. Frequent in September, but no more than ten (19th), and in the first half of October (forty, 2nd). Only two records in late October and three in November.
- SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*. Two August 15th, one 19th and 21st.
- POCHARD *Aythya ferina*. One September 5th.
- GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*. One or two most days November 20th to December 9th.
- LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. One October 19th-20th, two November 9th, and to four at intervals, later.
- VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*. A drake present September 16th to October 2nd.
- COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*. Two dead birds on the shore, October 11th, another 17th.
- RED-BREADED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*. Singles June 30th, July 12th, and on five days September 17th-26th. Four Sept. 28th, two Oct. 17th, three 26th, one Nov. 9th, four 10th.
- SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*. One August 22nd and November 20th-27th.
- GREY LAG GOOSE *Anser anser*. A party of five arrived November 2nd, two of which were shot on the 3rd, two more on the 6th, and the fifth on the 9th. Another (wilier) bird present from November 29th to at least December 8th.
- PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*. Seven October 14th, ten 29th; fifteen December 11th. Other "grey geese," most probably this species, were: one October 10th, thirty-

- two 20th, eleven 23rd, eight November 1st, two 10th, one 12th, 17th, two December 10th.
- BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*. Twelve seen flying south past the "Good Shepherd," N. of Fair Isle, on September 23rd. Eight on the island October 1st, and one 9th-10th.
- WHOOPEE SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus*. An adult off North Haven August 3rd-6th. An unusually heavy passage, mainly to southward, on most mornings October 10th-26th: six 10th, twelve 11th, four 12th, ten 13th, nine 16th, eleven 17th, five 18th, at least twenty 20th, eight 21st, two 24th, seven 25th, two 26th. Parties of four November 1st and five 3rd ended this passage; but four appeared with cold weather December 9th, and what was probably one of these stayed until early March 1959 in the marshy ground at Pund.
- BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*. One July 12th, possibly the same bird as had been present May 31st-June 19th. One Sept. 22nd-26th and October 8th.
- SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*. Two Sept. 22nd, one 23rd. One November 5th, 7th, 8th, and 23rd.
- HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*. A "ring-tail," probably this species, September 23rd-26th.
- PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*. Two October 28th, and one to November 5th, were probably incomers, as there was only a single record in the previous four weeks.
- MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*. Apart from two records in late June, there were none before August 27th. Later, up to three usually present until mid-November (five Sept. 13th and 20th), and one Nov. 29th-Dec. 1st, Dec. 9th and 11th. A bird trapped on Sept. 12th was ascribed to the Continental form *F. c. aesalon*, another on October 7th to the Icelandic *F. c. subaeson*; a third on Oct. 13th was not determinable.
- KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*. First seen August 9th, and one or two most days until Oct. 17th. Obvious new arrivals were four Sept. 2nd, four 13th, three 18th, three 26th increasing to four 30th.
- WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*. Very scarce. One October 30th, Nov. 3rd, 13th, 15th, 28th, December 6th and 9th. One may have wintered.
- CORNCRAKE** *Crex crex*. No summer or autumn records.
- MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*. One October 11th.
- OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*. Small flocks apparently on passage August 12th and 23rd. Local birds and/or migrants mostly departed late August and early September; small numbers to Oct. 11th.
- LAPWING** *Vanellus vanellus*. Local breeders had gone by early August. Some passage in mid-August (thirteen 9th, seventeen 14th) and a few usually present from late August to December. Arrivals noted: fourteen Sept. 26th, increasing

to twenty on 30th; parties of twenty-five Oct. 7th, twenty-five Nov. 18th, fifty Nov. 19th.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*. Passage began July 13th, but no more than ten (22nd) till mid-August. Main arrivals were fifteen August 16th, twenty 19th, seventeen 29th, eighteen Sept. 1st, twenty-five 4th, and fifteen 9th. Last seen Sept. 26th, except for single birds Oct. 1st, 5th, and one late bird 15th to 26th and (perhaps same) November 2nd to 25th.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Charadrius apricarius*. First seen July 6th, and up to three occasionally to mid-August. An influx of forty August 14th, and others of thirty-five Sept. 1st and twenty-five 9th were the main movements, but smaller numbers to October 17th. Singles Oct. 28th and 31st, Nov. 20th-23rd, and Dec. 10th.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. Present from July 17th on. Main arrivals were forty July 21st, forty-six August 5th, sixty Sept. 6th and fifty 13th. Thereafter it was difficult to be certain of incomers, but probably some arrived in mid-October (sixty-three 13th) and between seventy and eighty were seen after November 2nd, fewer by December.

SNIFE *Capella gallinago*. No movement observed before August 20th, and often difficult to detect later. Definite arrivals (ten to twenty seen) August 21st, 23rd, October 20th, November 6th, December 6th and 10th; probable smaller movements Sept. 2nd, 8th, 24th, Oct. 3rd, Nov. 17th.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*. First seen Sept. 3rd, and singles fairly frequent Sept. 19th to October 19th, two 16th. One Dec. 1st.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*. Two seen October 18th, one 19th, three Nov. 1st. First sizeable arrival Nov. 2nd (a Sunday!) nearly all gone next day. A further influx Nov. 4th (24 shot by islanders), and a big fall 5th (over 200 shot). Few until a moderate arrival 19th (boat-day) and 20th (32 shot). A last minor fall Nov. 24th; only odd birds for rest of year.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*. Present from late June onwards, but early arrivals very small, no more than fifteen July 1st and twelve 21st. August was better, with twenty-five 7th and fifty 21st. Fewer than ten later, except September 2nd and 4th (ten) and October 2nd (twelve). Up to four in November and up to eight (9th) in December.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. Three July 6th and up to five 25th and 28th) later in the month. One to three on most days of August, about ten 23rd. Six Sept. 2nd, stragglers to 20th.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*. An adult July 29th to Aug. 5th; a young bird (trapped) Sept. 13th to 15th.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. One on most days August 1st to 24th, two 2nd-4th, three 5th, two 14th, 22nd, 23rd.

- COMMON SANDPIPER *Tringa hypoleucos*. Often present, July 29th to Sept. 22nd, largest numbers being six August 19th increasing to eight by 22nd, six 29th, seven Sept. 2nd.
- REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*. A few late June and some always present from July 5th on. In July and August seldom less than ten, and up to 40-50 July 21st, 24th, Aug. 5th, 21st, 25th, 29th. From September rarely less than twenty, and as many as eighty Sept. 2nd, fifty 19th, sixty Oct. 5th and 9th, and 50-70 for rest of month. Best scores in November were sixty-four 3rd and sixty 16th and 17th.
- GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*. Recorded between July 31st and Sept. 25th; seen most days late August and early Sept. Mostly single birds but three Aug. 21st and two or three Sept. 3rd-9th.
- KNOT *Calidris canutus*. Frequent between July 24th and Sept. 6th; maxima eight Aug. 10th, sixty Sept. 5th and forty 6th. None later.
- PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*. One August 27th, and up to twenty (6th) between Sept. 1st and 22nd. A few usually present Oct. 5th onwards, reaching fifteen Oct. 27th, and between twenty and thirty Nov. 9th to 16th.
- LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*. Four Sept. 2nd, and one (with broken leg) most days to 15th.
- DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*. A few often present July 8th to October 16th; main arrivals nine Aug. 5th, ten 15th, fourteen 17th, twenty 21st, and eight-nine Sept. 4th-6th. Up to three appeared Nov. 19th-22nd.
- SANDERLING *Crocethia alba*. Very scarce. One or two August 12th-18th, 25th, 29th-Sept. 3rd (three 2nd). One Sept. 23rd-24th, and Nov. 11th.
- BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*. One September 18th, a first record for the isle.
- RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*. Two August 21st-22nd, 25th; one 26th, 29th, two 30th. Present Sept. 1st to 15th: five increasing to eleven by 5th, fifteen by 9th, decreasing to three by 15th. One Sept. 19th.
- GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*. One in South Harbour November 13th. First record since November 1925, and only fifth for the island.
- GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*. Territories deserted by mid-September. Stragglers and/or passage birds to October 15th.
- ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*. Local birds gone by Sept. 14th, but one offshore Oct. 11th.
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*. Probably some passage late September, and influxes of 400-500 birds Nov. 16th, 25th, and Dec. 13th.
- LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*. About 210 birds on Meoness July 15th (big fishing fleet offshore). Local birds

- away by late August, last straggler seen Sept. 23rd. Two Sept. 3rd appeared to be of dark-mantled form *L. f. fuscus*.
- HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*. Probable increase July 15th, and arrivals of over 2000 birds Nov. 25th and Dec. 13th.
- COMMON GULL *Larus canus*. Present almost without interval, all summer. Best scores in July: twenty-four 3rd and thirty-two 14th. In August, 160 on 10th increased to 210 next day, but later arrivals were largest ever recorded: one thousand 16th and 19th, eight hundred 21st and 23rd. Later peaks were 150 August 29th, 500 Sept. 2nd-3rd, 100 17th, 127 19th, 320 Oct. 3rd, 140 6th, 100 14th, 127 19th, and 94 Nov. 5th. Less than ten daily in rest of November and only single birds December.
- GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*. Single immatures August 2nd, October 16th, 19th, 30th, two November 18th, one December 4th.
- BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*. A few late June records, and frequent from July 3rd. Twenty to thirty July 15th, 23rd, 25th, 30th, and August 2nd. Never reached double figures after August 10th, and records very intermittent in September and October (nine Oct. 16th). Only one in November, on 17th.
- COMMON and ARCTIC TERNS *Sterna hirundo* and *macrura*. Up to sixty established at Skadan and feeding inshore from July 15th to early August, some irregularly to 23rd. Both species present but Arctic in majority. Up to four Arctics recorded on ten days between Sept. 1st and Oct. 7th. A Common found dead Sept. 17th.
- SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*. Present July 15th to 24th; seven 18th the most.
- LITTLE AUK *Plautus alle*. First seen on the crossing ("thousands" south of Sumburgh) by James A. Stout on November 12th, and some on most subsequent passages. Ten seen from Bunness Nov. 18th.
- STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*. One present Sept. 29th to Oct. 10th.
- WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*. (One June 24th). One August 24th-26th; one most days October 6th-23rd with three between 13th and 21st. One November 4th-11th, four 20th.
- TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*. One August 17th, two 27th-Sept. 2nd, three Sept. 5th-9th, two 10th, one 11th. A late bird Oct. 6th.
- CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*. (One June 25th). Two juveniles August 2nd, one 3rd.
- BARN OWL *Tyto alba*. One, thought to be of Pale-breasted form *T. a. alba*, seen at close range by G. Stout of Field, November 25th.

- LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*. (One June 26th). One November 25th.
- SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. One Sept. 23rd, and an owl probably this species reported 27th-29th; one October 13th, two November 6th, one 20th and 23rd.
- SWIFT *Apus apus*. A few July records, with five on the 16th. One August 8th, and then the heaviest movements on record: 150 21st, 120 24th, 120 26th, down to twenty by 29th. Four Sept. 3rd, two 15th, three 16th, one 17th-20th, two 24th, and one October 5th.
- PIED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*. Two of the typical form September 3rd; one until 30th, seen with a second on 22nd.
- WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*. One August 22nd; one Sept. 2nd, at least four by 4th, and one until 10th.
- WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*. One Sept. 20th (J. Wilson), and one November 22nd-26th.
- SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*. Small increases Sept. 15th, 25th, and a few passing in early October. Very few left by early November, but new arrivals Nov. 20th-21st (c. 25) and a few more by 26th. Again only odd birds in early December, but a few more 10th.
- SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*. Six records in late July and four in August; the most seen were four on July 31st and August 29th. One Sept. 4th, two October 6th.
- HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*. One July 4th-5th and 29th, August 1st, two August 2nd, one 21st; one Sept. 5th, four 15th, one 16th, 23rd-24th, with two others 25th. One October 9th and 29th-30th.
- SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*. Singles July 29th, August 10th, 20th; three Sept. 15th, two 22nd; one Oct. 6th.
- HOODED CROW *Corvus corone cornix*. Perhaps some increase about Sept. 17th.
- JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*. One resident Sept. 24th to Oct. 11th, with a second Sept. 25th-26th and perhaps Oct. 2nd.
- FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*. An early adult August 29th-30th. One Sept. 3rd, two 4th, and one 8th-13th. Reappeared Sept. 29th, but very scarce in October, the highest numbers being ten 2nd, fifteen 29th. Several big arrivals in November: 1000 2nd and 5th; 200 19th and 600 20th; 500 23rd. A last small movement, about thirty Dec. 13th-15th.
- SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*. One June 22nd, 25th, July 1st and 16th-18th. In September, up to three (14th and 20th) on most days after the 4th, and up to five (5th-6th) in first half October. One or two frequently between October 28th and November 28th.
- REDWING *Turdus iliacus*. First seen September 26th and 30th. daily in October and November, and most days early Dec-

ember. Large arrivals were all of the Continental form *T. i. iliacus*: 100-150 Oct. 4th-5th, 1000 13th-14th, 200-250 26th and 29th (including some birds of the Icelandic form *T. i. coburni*), 700 Nov. 2nd, 600 5th, 30-50 19th and 23rd. Icelandic birds were trapped between Oct. 11th and Nov. 5th, but in small numbers; the biggest "pure" *coburni* movement was c.75 on Oct. 21st, but there were a good many among *iliacus* in the two late-October falls.

RING OUSEL *Turdus torquatus*. One October 20th.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*. Odd records in September may refer either to locals or immigrants. Migrants were present all October, but in pitiful numbers—no more than eight (26th) recorded in a day. November compensated for this, with peak arrivals of 300 2nd, 1000 5th, 100-150 19th-20th, 200 23rd; and a few more birds passed between December 13th and 15th.

WHITE'S THRUSH *Turdus dauma*. One seen at very close quarters by James Stout of Midway, at Wirvie Brecks, on November 6th.

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH *Hylocichla minima*. A first-winter bird trapped October 29th, the second for Fair Isle and Britain.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*. The first noticeable arrivals occurred on August 14th, and probably 17th and 22nd; these were probably of Shetland stock. Light north-westerlies on the 26th brought the only significant fall of Icelandic birds ("*schioleri*"); most of the 24 captures were rather large, and heavier than the local stock. A fall of similar size in east winds on September 4th was part of the early September "rush" of European birds.

On September 10th, again with N.W. wind, we caught 21 birds including several "*schioleri*" and one or two good Greenlanders, *leucorrhoea*; adult birds were present for the first time in some numbers. From this time on, very few captures were referable to the typical form, and most were Greenland birds. The trickle of migrants was fairly steady, with slight peaks on Sept. 14th, 20th, and 23rd, and several other days, notably the 17th, when the stock was partially changed overnight, though the numbers present remained much the same. Captures on the 17th were particularly light in weight for their size.

Numbers were very low by late Sept., and in October there was only one small arrival, of European birds, on the 5th. The continuous run of records ended on Oct. 17th, but there were a few large birds on several days to the 30th; and one big, bright male on November 13th—only two days short of the latest record in our books.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*. Singles August 12th, 15th-16th; two 19th, increasing steadily to c. twenty-five 24th and 25th, and after a decrease to c. twenty 28th and 29th. A further

increase to c. twenty-five on Sept. 2nd, and to c. forty next day. By the 11th only odd birds remained, but there were eight 14th, a few till 21st. Later records were two Sept 25th, one Oct. 3rd-7th, one 12th.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. Unusually scarce all autumn. Two August 20th, three 21st, one 25th. A few arriving Sept. 1st to 5th (c. eight) and odd birds to 10th; one 13th. Two Sept. 19th, one 20th, 24th, 27th, 30th, and then up to three (Oct. 3rd-6th) daily until Oct. 11th.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*. One October 30th.

BLUETHROAT *Cyanosylvia svecica*. One Sept. 2nd and c. five by 4th, some daily till 10th (seven different birds trapped in this period). One Sept. 13th, two 15th, one 16th, 20th, 27th. One October 3rd and 4th, three 5th, one or two till 8th. Singles Oct. 17th and 20th. All males trapped were of the Red-spotted (typical) form.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*. (One June 25th to July 17th). One October 4th, 10th, 11th, and 13th, two 19th. Two November 5th, one 6th, one 18th, two 19th, one 27th and 28th. One or two present December 1st to 11th, perhaps later.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. One Sept. 5th-10th, with a probable second 9th. An *Acrocephalus* probably this species, 16th.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. One August 16th.

AQUATIC WARBLER *Acrocephalus paludicola*. One Sept. 6th to 10th and (probably same bird) 15th.

ICTERINE WARBLER *Hippolais icterina*. One August 23rd-25th, Sept. 4th; "probables" reported Sept. 5th and 12th.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*. First appeared September 3rd, and probably a dozen different birds in rest of month; singly except for three 10th and two 19th. In October, two 1st increased to eight by 3rd; one 4th, ten 5th, fewer most days to 14th; one 17th, and three different singles 24th, 25th, and 28th. A male November 6th and different females 20th and 23rd.

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*. Singles August 9th, 16th, 23rd-24th, 27th-28th, and a new one 29th. One Sept. 1st-2nd and different birds 3rd and 4th.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*. First seen August 13th, and some on most days to October 9th. Main arrivals were: five Aug. 20th increasing to at least ten 21st-22nd; ten or more Sept. 1st increasing to twenty 4th; and four Sept. 23rd. Only singles after this date. Late birds were one Oct. 23rd and 26th, one November 7th, and a "probable" seen briefly by James Stout on November 22nd.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*. Three July 4th and 6th. One August 17th, one daily to 26th, one 29th. In September, one

2nd, at least six 3rd, fewer till 11th; and one 24th.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*. Only in September; up to five (4th) daily between 1st and 13th, one 21st, 23rd-24th.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*. Daily from August 16th to September 18th, no definite records later. Main falls were eleven August 19th increasing to c. twenty by 21st; c. twenty 23rd becoming c. thirty 24th and 25th; twenty or more Sept. 1st increasing to sixty or more 4th, gradual decrease thereafter. The early Sept. arrivals included birds attributed to the northern form *Ph. t. acredula*. One with an entirely lemon-yellow head was present Sept. 4th-7th.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. First definite record, one trapped Sept. 21st; a very green-and-yellow bird attributable to the typical form. Odd phylloscopids almost certainly this species, Sept. 23rd-24th, 26th, Oct. 5th. One of indeterminate race caught Oct. 7th; one considered to be the Scandinavian *Ph. c. abietinus* (trapped) 17th-18th; one 20th, two 23rd, one till 28th were seen very closely in the field and were thought to be of one of the more eastern forms. Another *abietinus* caught Nov. 5th was the last seen.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. Two August 19th, one 21st, two 23rd, one 24th, two 25th.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One caught October 10th stayed till 12th.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*. Very few. One October 1st-2nd, 5th, 6th, 14th, 27th and 28th, November 7th.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*. One August 20th, two 23rd, one 25th. One September 2nd, three or four daily to 6th, two 7th, one 8th. Singles Sept. 19th, 24th, 30th, October 3rd-5th.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. One August 20th, two 21st, seven 23rd, c. ten 24th, fewer to 28th. Four September 1st increasing to c. twelve 3rd, odd birds till 10th. One 23rd, three 24th.

RED-BREADED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa parva*. One September 2nd-3rd (our earliest ever), another 4th, not less than five 5th; one 9th; two 17th. One November 7th, our latest record for the isle.

HEDGE SPARROW *Prunella modularis*. One September 26th-27th; one December 13th.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*. Rather small falls August 24th, 26th-27th, September 2nd-3rd and 12th. Numbers then fell away gradually, apart from a small arrival October 12th, and by late October few remained. A few more arrived November 3rd and 23rd, but usually fewer than five seen daily in November. Odd birds till at least December 10th.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*. One August 11th and 13th, one

- or two 22nd to 26th, one 30th. Two Sept. 1st increasing to c. twelve 3rd and 4th, fewer till 8th. One Sept. 15th, 23rd, two 24th, one 25th and 30th. Seen daily October 1st-6th, five 5th the most.
- PETCHORA PIPIT *Anthus gustavi*. One caught September 30th, another seen by James Stout October 5th.
- RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. One September 30th to October 4th, one Oct. 14th.
- ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta petrosus*. A probable increase August 10th, otherwise no discernible arrival.
- WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*. One July 28th. Seen most days from August 2nd on, but did not achieve double figures until 21st (about twelve). Thirty arrived 24th and another build-up from 26th-29th produced c. twenty-five. In September, c. fifteen on 1st had increased to c. forty by 5th, and there was a further fall of c. twenty 12th-14th. Never more than five seen after Sept. 19th, only single birds by second half October; last seen 31st.
- BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava flava*. Singles of this race August 24th, September 25th, October 6th. Other *flava* wagtails September 13th and 23rd.
- WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*. One November 18th-19th and 24th, one December 11th.
- RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius cristatus collurio*. Different birds, all immatures, August 21st, 23rd, 27th. Two most days September 1st-8th, one 9th and 10th.
- STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*. Marked increase over local population September 12th and November 5th.
- ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Sturnus roseus*. An adult (probably male) July 29th to August 10th; two immatures September 12th.
- SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*. Ten October 1st, fifteen 5th, and up to five most days to 16th.
- TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*. Increases over local birds September 12th and 15th, a few more 22nd. Numbers falling away late Sept. to early November; fewer than fifty present by late October, less than twenty by Nov. 5th. Last seen 21st, except one December 8th.
- REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*. Birds of indeterminate race, most probably the Greenland *C. f. rostrata*, seen only in flight: one Sept. 20th, three or four Oct. 10th and 11th, one 29th. Four birds appeared November 4th, and one seen 5th, caught 6th, proved to be a Mealy, *C. f. flammea*. Singles apparently this form seen 13th, 18th, and 20th-22nd.
- SCARLET GROSBEAK *Carpodacus erythrinus*. An immature Sept. 15th.
- CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*. First seen June 27th and twelve

by 29th, fewer to July 5th. Two July 8th, eighteen 11th, one 18th and 28th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*. One July 28th had possibly been living in the north of the isle since one was previously seen there on June 24th and 30th. One seen Sept. 8th and 9th. Present most days from Sept. 30th to November 20th, but only odd birds except in early October: eight 5th, 120 6th-7th, and forty to sixty 14th-15th. The best score in November was only six, 7th.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*. One most days October 2nd-8th, one 15th and 26th, two 30th. In November, three 2nd, eight third, and up to thirteen (7th) until 10th. One November 26th to December 2nd.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*. One November 26th, two 27th.

RED-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza bruniceps*. A male August 28th.

YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING *Emberiza aureola*. A first-winter bird caught Sept. 9th, probably seen 10th. The fifth record for Fair Isle.

ORTOLAN *Emberiza hortulana*. A juvenile August 21st to 24th. One Sept. 3rd and 4th, three 5th, one or two till 10th; one 15th and 16th.

RUSTIC BUNTING *Emberiza rustica*. A first-winter bird, caught Sept. 23rd remained until October 9th.

LITTLE BUNTING *Emberiza pusilla*. An immature caught Sept. 23rd, seen 24th. One October 3rd and 6th.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*. Two Sept. 7th; one October 4th and 5th, three 6th, and up to three daily to 12th. Singles Oct. 15th, 17th, 18th, 26th, 30th, and November 27th.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*. A poor season, as in 1957. First seen Sept. 9th, but no more than two until 24th (five) and 25th (seven). In October, no more than four (18th), last seen 26th.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*. First two seen Sept. 8th, a few daily to 18th, with c. twenty 13th. Always present from 23rd onwards. Main arrivals: c. 100 Sept. 26th and Oct. 5th, c. 500 13th, c. 300 31st, over 200 Nov. 3rd and 7th, increasing to 600 8th; c. 500 10th, c. 400 16th-17th, 300-400 22nd-23rd, 200-300 29th-30th, and over 100 December 6th.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*. See para. 34.

34. The Tree Sparrow Arrivals in 1958

In the spring of 1958, as already reported in *Bull.* 4: 47-48, there was an unusual arrival of Tree Sparrows *Passer montanus* at Fair Isle. A single bird on April 4th was followed by at least thirteen on May 14th and 15th, and fifteen on the

16th. A dozen were present until May 20th, then one or two until the 29th, when six were counted. Five were seen in early June, and at least two of these (perhaps four) remained throughout the summer, though no evidence of breeding was obtained. Four were seen together from August 15th, and on the 23rd there were thirteen; smaller numbers remained until September 5th, when there was probably a new influx, and at least eleven were present. This party gradually decreased, until by early October there were only seven, and by late October only five, and the last two disappeared after November 12th. Cats were undoubtedly responsible for most of the casualties.

This incursion of Tree Sparrows has no precedent in the recorded history of the species at Fair Isle, and it is especially interesting in view of the past status of the bird on small offshore islands. At Fair Isle, the species was a "fairly common resident," breeding in the cliffs at the Reevas, when Eagle Clarke first visited Fair Isle in 1905. The only precise record of the numbers in those days is a note of a flock of forty seen in February 1911. The Tree Sparrow seems to have bred here until about 1924, but none was seen by visiting ornithologists in 1925, and there are records of only single birds in April 1926, May and August 1927. L. S. V. Venables saw three adults and one or two juveniles on August 31st 1936, and was told by George Stout of Field that two or three pairs had nested in that summer; also that odd pairs had nested on one or two occasions in the early 1930s.

From 1936 we have no records of Tree Sparrows on the isle, until two were seen on May 4th 1955. The next occurrences were in May 1957, three on the 22nd and two on the 26th, and there was one on September 5th in the same year.

The original colony at Fair Isle was probably founded during an expansion of the Tree Sparrow's range in the second half of the nineteenth century. At this period, the range in Scotland and Ireland was extended considerably, and colonies were founded on many islands in the Inner and Outer Hebrides, in Unst and Noss and possibly elsewhere in Shetland, on the Isle of May in the Forth, on Inishtrahull off N.W. Ireland, and even in the Faeroes. Immigration to these islands seems to have ceased about the turn of the century (though Lundy, in the Bristol Channel, was colonized briefly between 1928 and 1931), and the isolated groups were gradually extinguished by local calamities or by the effects of inbreeding. The Unst colony expired after 1905, the Faeroe ones by about 1906, several Hebridean colonies after 1910, the Isle of May one in 1922, Fair Isle 1924, and St Kilda, Noss, and Inishtrahull had gone by the early 1930s.

In 1957 and 1958 we may have been witnessing, on a small

scale, the same sort of outsurge of Tree Sparrows as led to the island colonies of the past. Apart from the recent Fair Isle records, parties of up to seven birds were seen at St Kilda in May 1957, and up to eleven there in May and early June 1958. In Shetland, five appeared in Dunrossness on May 27th 1958, and two were seen in Foula in the same month.

P. D.

35. Autumn Notes from Haroldswick, Unst, in 1958

MAGNUS SINCLAIR

HERON. One August 23rd and Sept. 3rd, two Sept. 17th and 22nd. In October, two 4th and three 18th, at least three 28th-29th.

GREY GEESE. A dozen on October 14th and seven 23rd.

WHOOPER SWAN. Sixteen passing south on October 8th, and three west on 15th. Mrs J. W. Henderson noted four on 29th and W. Sinclair saw six on the sea next day. One November 2nd.

KESTREL. One August 4th and 8th, three on 15th. Singly September 2nd-3rd, 8th, and 24th-25th, with two on 18th and 22nd. One October 6th and 13th.

WATER RAIL. One November 1st.

GOLDEN PLOVER. A flock of fifty on August 5th and 130 next day. Increase to 400 on 12th and 600 on 11th. Three hundred 24th. Between four and five hundred Sept. 3rd-5th, and over 600 on 8th. Decreased to two figures by 13th, but 100 on 17th and 200 on 20th. Peaks in October were 300 on 2nd-5th and 500 on 10th; 200 to 300 in the last week of the month. The maximum in the first week of November was 500 on 4th.

WHIMBREL. Five flying south on August 7th and two on 12th. Singles on 22nd and 28th. One Sept. 2nd and 8th and two on 9th were the last.

COMMON SANDPIPER. One on August 22nd, with another bird which was either GREEN or WOOD SANDPIPER.

REDSHANK. A flock of twenty-five Sept. 5th.

DUNLIN. Eight on Sept. 4th and one 7th.

RUFF. One August 8th; three Sept. 3rd, four 8th, three 10th, one 12th, and two 13th. Mrs Henderson saw five Sept. 18th, and there were two 22nd-23rd. One Sept. 30th remained until October 10th, with four 6th; two Oct. 13th-17th were the last seen.

ARCTIC SKUA. The latest record was a pale bird on Sept. 26th.

GREAT SKUA. Present in Haroldswick Bay, chasing Gannets, until second week of October; the largest number being a

dozen on the 4th. Seven were still at the Saxavord breeding grounds on October 11th. The last bird was seen October 15th.

GLAUCOUS GULL. A first-winter bird October 23rd.

ARCTIC TERN. Most of the local breeders had left by the end of August, but one seen as late as October 15th, in strong westerlies.

CUCKOO. A juvenile with white nape-feathers was seen by the Mathiesons at Budabreck, Burrafirth, on Sept. 7th; it remained for about two weeks.

SWALLOW. The only autumn record was one October 6th.

HOUSE MARTIN. Four present on August 25th.

REDWING. First arrived September 30th, and more next day; about 20 on October 4th, small parties 5th and 6th, over a dozen 8th. No more till two 13th and several small parties 14th, when many were calling on the move at dusk. The species was more numerous on the 15th. Heard calling at dusk on the 20th, 23rd-25th, and 28th, six seen 30th. An increase November 2nd, flock of forty seen; more on the move on 6th, and a dozen seen next day.

FIELDFARE. One October 30th and four November 7th.

BLACKBIRD. A few October 21st and 22nd. Large numbers on November 2nd, and flocks seen moving south at dusk. Another increase on 6th included many females. Numerous on 7th and twenty on 8th. More of both sexes on 9th.

WHEATEAR. Increases noted on August 12th and 29th. Seen most days in September, with an increase on 30th. Present in first week October, but decreased on 8th. The last records were singles Oct. 13th and 15th.

REDSTART. A female September 26th, another October 1st-2nd.

BLACKCAP. A female October 14th.

WILLOW WARBLER. One August 23rd, and more arrived in the first week of September.

CHIFFCHAFF. Single leaf warblers October 14th and 27th were probably this species.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER. One on September 10th.

WHITE WAGTAIL. First seen August 15th, and most days to end of month; three of 27th, six on 30th and a probable party of eight later the same day. In September, four on 1st and singles until the last record on 23rd.

CHAFFINCH. Several on October 5th, more 10th and 11th.

SNOW BUNTING. A small flock October 4th, and about a score on Saxavord on 11th. Some around on 21st, and increased towards end of month, with a score on 28th and over fifty 30th. A flock of 100 November 3rd, and small parties until over 300 arrived on the 7th.

(Mr Sinclair's observations ceased on November 9th).

36. Autumn Migrants at Mid Yell, Shetland, 1958

CHARLES INKSTER reports the following migrants: a CROSSBILL on July 4th, and three SISKINS on the 5th; three PIED WOODPECKERS on August 24th, and a juvenile CUCKOO, all of which stayed until the 31st (i.e., three days before the first woodpecker at Fair Isle). On September 5th ROBERT TULLOCH saw a ROLLER at close quarters, and on the 6th there were several WILLOW WARBLERS, SPOTTED and PIED FLYCATCHERS in the area; on the 8th, two KESTRELS, and on the 9th a BLACKCAP. Five GREY LAG GEESE passed over on September 14th. A REDSTART was present from September 30th to October 8th; on the 7th there were many REDWINGS, five REDPOLLS, and a BRAMBLING, with a number of CHAFFINCHES next day. Six WHOOPER SWANS arrived on October 10th, and another BLACKCAP was seen on the 14th.

37. Autumn Migrants at Foula, 1958

Compiled from notes made by D. R. Wilson (July 28th to August 7th), R. F. Dickens and Brathay Exploration Group (July 31st to August 12th), and A. E. Land and B.E.G. (August 26th to September 8th).

HERON. In the second period of observations, one or two present to Sept. 4th; fifteen flying south August 27th.

MALLARD. Three single records in first period; up to five birds present in the second.

TEAL. Three July 2th, one August 5th. Six or more present in second period.

WIGEON. One September 7th.

SCAUP. A drake on Mill Loch Sept. 4th to 8th.

QUAIL. One August 3rd; said to have summered on the island.

MERLIN. One August 27th.

KESTREL. Single September 3rd, 4th, 6th, and 7th; perhaps two on 4th.

GOLDEN PLOVER. One July 30th, 31st, August 3rd and 5th, two on 4th, 11th. Up to twenty-five daily in the second watch.

CURLEW. Ten July 30th the most in the first period; twenty Sept. 2nd the best score later.

WHIMBREL. Seen most days; maxima eight August 2nd, five 10th, and three in the second period.

GREEN SANDPIPER. Two August 28th to Sept. 2nd, one later.

WOOD SANDPIPER. One August 30th to end of stay.

COMMON SANDPIPER. Up to three from August 27th.

REDSHANK. Up to nine (August 5th) in the earlier period; about six late August, c. thirty early September.

SPOTTED REDSHANK. One August 27th onwards.

GREENSHANK. One August 28th and 29th; another September 3rd onwards.

KNOT. One August 29th, 30th, and September 3rd.

PURPLE SANDPIPER. Five August 2nd, one or two most days later. One September 2nd, seven 5th.

DUNLIN. One August 1st, 2nd, 6th, two 5th. One or two most days in later period, with six September 6th.

SANDERLING. Seen between August 27th and September 4th, c. sixteen 2nd the most.

RUFF. One August 28th and September 3rd.

COMMON GULL. Usually some present. Maxima c. 50 August 5th and c. 100 September 1st.

TURTLE DOVE. One September 2nd to 4th.

CUCKOO. An immature bird on September 6th.

SHORT-EARED OWL. One August 3rd.

SWIFT. Seen daily August 26th to 31st, c. thirty on 27th the most. Two on September 4th.

WRYNECK. One caught September 3rd, another found dead next day.

SWALLOW. One August 4th. Six September 4th, fewer till 7th.

HOUSE MARTIN. Four August 28th and 29th, two September 4th.

WHEATEAR. The only movement recorded was c. eighty August 29th to 31st. Many of these birds were large ones.

WHINCHAT. Up to five present after August 28th.

REDSTART. Three September 2nd, one or two to end of stay.

SEDGE WARBLER. One in full song, August 11th and 12th. One August 27th and September 1st.

GARDEN WARBLER. One August 28th, two from September 2nd.

WHITETHROAT. One August 11th. One September 2nd-5th.

LESSER WHITETHROAT. One September 1st to 4th.

WILLOW WARBLER. One phylloscopid probably this species August 10th. About six daily in late August, increasing to c. twenty after September 2nd.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER. One, perhaps two, between September 2nd and 6th.

PIED FLYCATCHER. One August 11th. One September 1st, five 2nd, four 3rd, two later.

HEDGE SPARROW. One August 27th.

WHITE WAGTAIL. One present throughout the first period, and up to ten daily in the second, with c. twenty August 31st.

YELLOW WAGTAIL. One of undetermined race, August 27th-28th.

CROSSBILL. One August 10th.

CHAFFINCH. One "resident" through both periods; a second Sept. 4th-5th.

38. Autumn Migration on the Shiants, 1958

MARTIN RICHARDS

The Shiant group of three small islands, all about a mile long and between half or a mile wide, lies in the Minch about 5 miles to the west of Lewis. The group was visited from 14th August to 10th September to make a full biological report which included daily migrant counts, a census of residents and ringing.

The islands rise to about 500 feet with near perpendicular basalt cliffs on almost all coasts. They are very bare and wind-swept and lack any sort of cover which probably accounts for the small number of passerine species seen. The islands are uninhabited.

It is hoped to publish a full account of the ornithological work done on the islands elsewhere.

Weather.

August. From 14th-26th a series of fronts crossed the islands giving rain or drizzle on many days. Winds were mainly westerly, light or moderate, with an element of north after 19th, though there were short periods of easterlies. The weather became a little more settled after rain on 27th and it remained fair with southerly winds until the end of the month.

September. After rain on the 1st the wind swung to the NE and remained in that quarter until the 10th; though generally light, gale gusts were recorded on a few days. Lack of cloud and the still large moon perhaps prevented any big drift in this period.

The following systematic list gives notes on passage migrants only but the departure dates of breeding sea-birds are included as they are considered to be directly relevant to migration.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*. 1 to the N on August 24th. No evidence of breeding despite extensive search.

MANX SHEARWATER *Procellaria puffinus*. 14 to E (in 40 mins.) on 26th and 2 to S on August 27th; 7 to E (in 1 hr.) on Sept. 7th. No evidence of breeding except 2 calling on night of Aug. 14th.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*. 1320 (+/-60) prs. bred. Main departure of adults and pulls. between Aug. 20th and Sept. 5th; very few pulls. and some prospecting ap. adults left on Sept. 10th. A dark phase bird seen on August 22nd.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Only record, an imm. to S on Aug. 27th.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*. Singly, Aug. 26th and Sept. 10th.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*. 1 off sea from S Aug. 31st and a single on Sept. 4th.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*. 2 to S off the islands on Aug. 17th were the only moving birds.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*. C. 5 on Aug. 15th.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. 3 on Aug. 14th and 17 on 23rd. Passage from Sept. 1st to 4th. (4: c. 40: 2+: 12+:) and 8th to 10th (5: 6+: 2+:).

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*. 1 to 10+ on all days but none on Aug. 18th and peaks of c. 40 on 16th, 20 on 20th, 13+ on 21st, c. 25 on 24th and c. 17 on 29th; 13 on Sept. 1st, 12+ on 3rd, and c. 15 on 8th. Visible movement from S on Aug. 20th, to NE-E on 22nd and 23rd; and to S on Sept. 1st.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. Singly on Sept. 1st, 5th and 10th.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*. 2+ on Aug. 15th, 1 on 17th, passage from 23rd to 26th (21: 1: 8+: 1+:) and singles on 29th and 30th. C. 10 on Sept. 2nd and singles on 4th, 5th, 6th and 8th.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*. Single on Aug. 15th.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*. Passage from Aug. 16th to 19th (4: 3: 2+: 3+:), including dark and intermediate phase birds and juvs.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*. Migrants first noticed on Aug. 19th and parties totalling 48 moving to the ENE and 15 remaining on the island on 20th. Migrants were present 7 days to the end of month, generally 8+ to 15 but 21 on 21st and 40 on 29th. Movement to SE on 31st. Movement continued until I left the island on Sept. 10th, generally 8 or under present but 20 to 25+ on 3rd, 5th, 8th and 9th.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*. Movements difficult to follow because of residents but probable increase on Sept. 2nd.

ALBA WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*. 1 to 4 on 6 days from Aug. 19th to the end of the month and a big movement on 20th when 43 birds came in from S-E in addition to 7 birds on the island. Generally 5 to 15 birds present from Sept. 1st to 10th but peaks of 22 to 25+ on 1st, 5th and 9th. The majority of the birds were juvs. and those racially identified were White (*M. a. alba*).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*. A party of 13 on Aug. 19th.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*. A party of 40 in addition to island birds on Aug. 23rd. 20 came in from E on 24th and 14 migrants were present on 31st. Migrants present on all days from Sept. 1st to 10th except 6th and 9th; 15 to 35 most days but 47 on 1st, 80 on 3rd and 53 on 4th.

39. Recoveries of Fair Isle Birds

PETER DAVIS

The following recoveries of birds ringed at Fair Isle have been reported since the appearance of the previous list in *Bull.* 4:19.

STORM PETREL. 620409, an adult bird trapped on Malcolm's Head on the night of July 18th 1958 was caught and released on the isle of Mousa, Shetland, on August 8th 1958.

FULMAR. A chick ringed on August 12th 1958, AT61765, was found on the shore at Sanday in Orkney on September 26th.

SHAG. Two young birds of 1957 were reported from Shetland: 516951 was found at Whalsay on April 21st 1958, and 516908 long-dead near Scalloway on September 1st 1958. Three returns of 1958 chicks have also been made; two of these were marked in adjacent nests on the same day, June 21st. The first was 518614, caught by a German trawler on the Fladen Grounds (about 30 miles south of Fair Isle) on Sept. 4th 1958 and taken to the zoo at Cuxhaven; the second, 518617, was shot near the Holmengra Lighthouse, near Bergen, Norway, on September 7th 1958. Another chick, 520775, ringed on July 16 1958, was found at Sanday, Orkney, on November 6th.

CORNCRAKE. An adult bird, 281789, caught in the observatory garage on May 11th 1958, was found dead at St Margaret's Hope, South Ronaldsay, in Orkney on July 30th 1958.

OYSTERCATCHER. A chick ringed 385100 on July 6th 1957 was found dead at Parkgate, in the Wirral, Cheshire, on February 8th 1958; and another ringed 385153 on July 1st 1958 was found dead at Morecambe, Lancs., on November 27th.

RINGED PLOVER. There was a delayed report of X30035, a juvenile trapped on August 26th 1954, and killed at Santander, Spain, on May 27th 1956.

BONXIE. One of the Byerwall chicks of 1956, 409690, was found dead at Julianehab Fjord in south-west Greenland, on 28th July 1958.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL. A chick ringed AN1205 on July 11th 1958 was killed near Sanlucar de Barrameda, Cadiz, Spain, on December 11th.

PUFFIN. AT55149, ringed as chick on July 11th 1958, was found dying (oiled) on Christmas Day at Seaton Carew, Co. Durham.

REDWING. A rapid return came from R20198, a first-winter bird of the Continental form, which was trapped on November 1st 1958 and found injured near Tomintoul, Banffshire, on November 13th.

BLACKBIRD. One recovery of unusual interest was that of V 76033, a first-summer female caught on March 31st 1958, and recovered at Eschenbruch, near Hagen, in Nordrhein-Westfalen, West Germany, about July 11th 1958. There have been no other breeding-season returns outside Scandinavia; but this bird was involved in an exceptionally strong drift-movement from which it appears to have successfully reorientated itself. Another interesting return was R49371, which was caught on November 21st (a first-winter male) and had recrossed to Egersund in the extreme south-west of Norway by December 1st—our first instance of a Blackbird returning to Europe in the same autumn. The other five reports during 1958 followed the usual pattern. In the spring, S87940, an adult female caught on March 30th 1958 was found at Brae in Shetland eight days later, and V76318, an adult male trapped on April 9th 1958, was at Lygra (Hordaland), in Norway on April 24th. During the summer, S87025, ringed as adult female on October 28th 1956, was found at Angvik (More og Romsdal), Norway, on August 8th 1958; and in the autumn we had R20323, ringed as first-winter male on November 5th 1958 and reported from Errislannan, near Clifden, in Co. Galway on December 10th, and R49445, another young male, caught November 26th and recovered on December 22nd 1958 at Tomacharrich, near Fort William.

WHEATEAR. Two more recoveries came from the trapping areas in south-west France. Both were first-winter birds: F21332 was ringed on August 5th 1958 and recovered at Mimizan Plage (Landes) on Sept. 15th, and F21818 was ringed on Sept. 17th 1958 and killed at Lesparre (Gironde) on October 22nd.

MEADOW PIPIT. The three recoveries included two birds which were over four years of age. JB799 was marked as juvenile on August 23rd 1953, and found at Benalud de Sidonia (Cadiz) Spain, on January 10th 1958; B88396 was ringed as first-winter on September 2nd 1954, and killed at Bidart (Basses Pyrenees) France, on October 8th 1958; and C66815 a "full-grown" of September 8th 1957, was at Ondres (Landes) on February 25th 1958.

ROCK PIPIT. The first foreign recovery of this species was provided by A62615, ringed as a juvenile on July 3rd 1956 (and retrapped several times up to August 19th in that year), which was reported "long dead" at Den Helder (Noord-Holland) on March 10th 1958.

WHITE WAGTAIL. Our most distant recovery for any small passerine was C66225, a first-year White Wagtail caught on August 24th 1957, and killed at Boutilimit, Mauretania (near the border with Senegal) on an unspecified date in October 1958.

40. Local Recaptures at Fair Isle in 1958

PETER DAVIS

OYSTERCATCHER. A bird ringed as a chick on Bunes on June 24th 1951 was found injured on Meoness almost exactly seven years later, June 22nd 1958. It was thought to be one of a pair nesting there. This is the first evidence that local-born young may return to the island, where the species is a summer visitor.

TYSTIE. Single breeding adults of 1956 and 1957 were recaptured at the same sites in the 1958 season.

PUFFIN. Eight breeding adults of 1957 were recaptured at the same sites in the 1958 season.

WREN. The four recaptures during 1958 were single juveniles of 1955, 1956, and 1957, and a "full grown" of autumn 1957.

WHEATEAR. Seventeen birds ringed in earlier years were caught again: single adults of 1956 and 1957, and local-born young birds of 1954 (1), 1955 (1), 1956 (5) and 1957 (8).

MEADOW PIPIT. Thirteen recaptures: juveniles of 1954 (1), 1955 (2), 1956 (4), and 1957 (4); and single "full grown" birds of autumn 1956 and 1957.

STARLING. Sixty-one recaptures: adults of 1951 (1), 1953 (3), 1954 (3), 1955 (2), 1956 (12), and 1957 (4); autumn "full-grown" of 1949 (1), 1952 (2), 1953 (1), 1954 (2), 1956 (2), and 1957 (2); and young birds born in 1951 (2), 1952 (1), 1953 (2), 1954 (4), 1955 (5), 1956 (8) and 1957 (4).

TWITE. An adult of 1957, and juveniles of 1953 (1) and 1957 (3) were retaken. The five-year old bird is the oldest so far recorded on the isle. Few, if any, of the local Twites winter on the island.

HOUSE SPARROW. An adult ringed in May 1952 and recaptured August 1958 was our oldest to date. Other recaps were an adult of 1956, single juveniles of 1954, 1955, 1956, and 1957.

41. Two Ringed Visitors in 1958

No visitor to a Bird Observatory is more welcome than a migrant bearing someone else's ring, and Fair Isle was favoured twice in 1958. The first occasion was when H. G. Brownlow took a first-summer male Sparrowhawk in the Gully trap on May 7th, and found it was already marked 329143, a ring used at the Isle of May Bird Observatory on September 23rd 1957.

The second such recapture was an adult female Blackbird, caught in the Single Dyke on November 29th. This bird was

marked "Vogelwarte Helgoland 7310302" and had been ringed by the Heligoland trapping station only twelve days earlier, November 17th. It is virtually certain that it had been in Fair Isle for several days, as the last previous Blackbird falls had been on the 20th and 23rd, and numbers had diminished to only half-a-dozen by the 29th.

P. D.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

0 100yds. 440yds. 880yds. 1mile
 Roads = = = = Bird Trap ← TRAP Boundaries

