

# Fair Isle Bird Observatory

## BULLETIN



*Edited by*

**ROY H. DENNIS**

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Vol. 5 No. 6 (New Series)

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(Issued free to "Friends of Fair Isle")

# *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust*

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GEORGE WATERSTON,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, 7.

# FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY BULLETIN

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Vol. 5 No. 6 (New Series)

DECEMBER 1966

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## C O N T E N T S

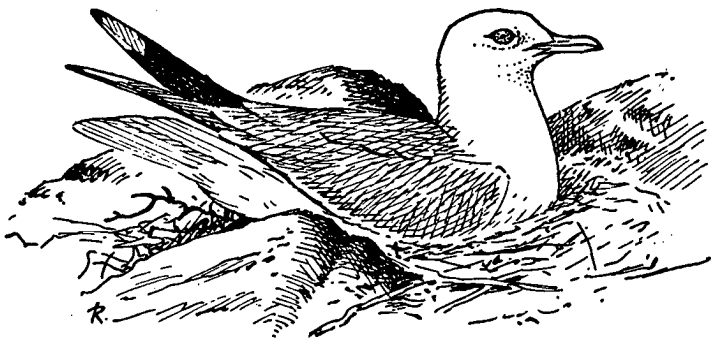
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## Editorial

**VOL. 5 No. 6** deals mainly with the work carried out at the Observatory in the spring and summer of 1966. The spring was an exciting time for rare birds and we recorded two new species for the island: White-throated Sparrow and Bee-eater. We enjoyed a very good summer, and ringed record totals of several species of sea-birds. Special projects in the summer included the first complete census of the breeding birds of the island, including all the sea-birds, except some of the Fulmars and Puffins, and the Storm Petrels. Studies were continued on the Storm Petrels at night, the Black Guillemots (see para. 60) and the retrapping of auks, etc.

The autumn has been very exciting; our rarest birds have been Booted Warbler, Petchora Pipit (both trapped), and Pallas's Leaf Warbler, the latter being our third new species for Fair Isle this year. Ringing has been very hectic, with lots of birds in the traps and busy times at night, catching birds at the lighthouses and dazzle-netting waders, etc. Our ringing scores have already reached 5400 birds of 125 species.

I am very grateful to Richard Richardson, of Cley and a regular spring visitor to the Observatory, for allowing me to include such excellent vignettes of a few of the topical birds in this bulletin.



Common Gull

## 54. A White-throated Sparrow at Fair Isle

## A NEW BIRD FOR THE ISLAND

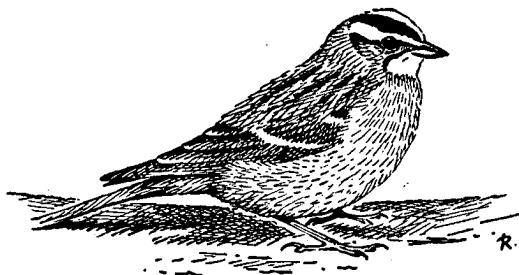
ROY H. DENNIS

Gordon Barnes caught a bunting-like bird in the Double Dyke trap at 0505 hours G.M.T. on 13th May 1966. He was struck by the unusual head markings as he held it in his hand. The head was blackish-brown with a white median crown stripe and broad eyestripe, which was distinctly yellow in front of the eye and white behind it. He brought it back to the Observatory where I identified it as a White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*.

The upperparts were brown marked with black and buff; the tail and rump were drab uniform brown and the wings were brown with two whitish wing-bars. The throat was white, with two thin black moustaches joining to form a necklace. The ear-coverts, lores and breast were Dunnock-grey and the belly was white. The bunting-like bill was greyish-horn, the legs flesh-coloured and the iris brown.

I ringed, weighed and measured it and photographed it in colour. It was seen in the hand by Mrs M. T. Dennis, J. N. Dymond and J. Carrington. On release it flew to the old fish store near the Observatory and spent the whole day skulking under piles of wood and old machinery. In shape and size it was like a large Reed Bunting, but its feeding habits and behaviour were Dunnock-like. During the day it was seen by P. Holt, E. J. Wiseman and many of the islanders, but it was not seen on subsequent days.

This is the first record of this North American species at Fair Isle and is only the second for Scotland and the fourth for Britain. A full plumage description was taken and submitted to the Rarities Committee.



White-throated Sparrow

55.

## A Bee-eater at Fair Isle

## A NEW BIRD FOR THE ISLAND

ROY H. DENNIS

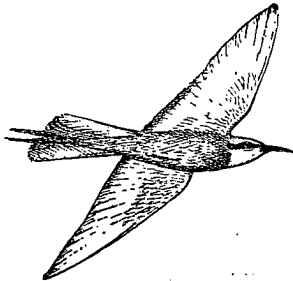
At 0930 hours G.M.T. on 13th June, 1966 we were walking towards Busta Geo, when I saw a bird fly up from a fence by the Minister's Well. The sun was shining directly into our eyes, but we could see that the bird was larger than a Starling, with long pointed wings, tail and head, and the flight was erratic.

I identified it as a Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* and this was confirmed when it landed on a fence at Springfield. Before we were able to get close, it flew off and landed on a fence post about eighty yards away, where we were able to get a good view of it. It perched in an upright position and we could see the long and slightly decurved bill and the long tail; in flight the longer centre tail feathers were noted.

The under-parts were bright greeny-blue separated from a bright yellow throat by a dark line. The upper-parts were mainly chestnut, shading to golden yellow on the scapulars and lower back. The forehead was paler and around the eye was dark. The wings were blue-green with chestnut on the coverts and the tail was greenish. The bill was black, but eye and leg colours were not noted, but appeared dark.

After a few moments, it flew off and circled over Meones, calling continuously with a liquid, but quite loud, call note—"truk." The wing action was fast, a slightly undulating flight, interspersed with short glides. It appeared to be catching insects. It finally flew off over the sea to the south at about 0945 hours, and was also watched by J. N. Dymond and Anders Tegelin.

This is the first record for Fair Isle and it is interesting that three were seen in Orkney about this time. There are three records for Shetland, the last in 1951.



Bee-eater

## 56. Rare Birds in Spring 1966

RED-NECKED GREBE. One arrived in North Haven on 18th April and stayed until 21st June, by which time it was in full summer plumage. 8th record for Fair Isle.

GOOSANDER. A drake flew over Vaadal on 26th April.

BUZZARD. One over Byerwell and Swey on 14th and 15th April and one over Eas Brecks on 24th May.

HONEY BUZZARD. One flew past Sheep Rock on 21st May, and then soared away high to the east. 4th record for Fair Isle.

OSPREY. One over Vaadal and Ward Hill on 25th April, one flying south over Bunes on 26th April (probably the same bird) and one flying south over the Reeves on 28th May.

QUAIL. I heard one singing in the marsh, north of the Kirk, on 11th June.

ALPINE SWIFT. Gordon Barnes saw one flying south-west over the Post Office on 25th April. 2nd record for Fair Isle.

SHORT-TOED LARK. An adult, of the western race *brachydactyla*, on newly sowed oats at North Busta on 14th and 15th May.

WOODLARK. One flying over the Gully on 15th April.

BLACK-BELLIED DIPPER. A ringed bird present from 19th November 1965 until 15th April 1966, and another ringed on 13th March.

BLACK REDSTART. Single females on 30th April, 19th-24th and 26th May, and single males on 3rd-6th, 13th and 27th May, 13th and 21st June.

BLUETHROAT. Single males on 9th, 20th and 27th May, 9th and 12th June and single females on 19th, 20th and 24th May.

GREAT REED WARBLER. One caught in the gully trap at 1825 hours G.M.T. on 26th May. It was in asymmetrical tail moult. Early the following morning, it was singing at Quoy. 2nd record for Fair Isle and 4th for Scotland.

ICTERINE WARBLER. Singles at Mid Geo on 29th May and Quoy on 13th June.

SUBALPINE WARBLER. A ♂, of the nominate race, was caught at Springfield on 19th May.

WOOD WARBLER. One on 19th May at Springfield.

RED-THROATED PIPIT. One seen by Gordon Barnes, Peter Holt and Eddie Wiseman on 13th May at Pund.

WAXWING. Singles on 27th March, 3rd and 5th May.

LESSER GREY SHRIKE. One caught in Double Dyke trap on 29th May and another seen at the Haa on 19th June by Nick Dymond.

BULLFINCH. A ♀, of the northern race, in the Vaadal plantation on 13th April.

SCARLET GROSBEAK. A ♀ at Leogh and Utra on 22nd-26th May.

ORTOLAN BUNTING. Single males on 16th May, 13th, 21st and 24th June.

LAPLAND BUNTING. Single males in full summer plumage on 27th April and 6th May, and single females on 5th April, 4th-5th, 10th-11th and 16th May.

R. H. D.

## 57. Spring Migration in 1966

ROY H. DENNIS

The Oystercatchers, Lapwings and Ringed Plovers arrived at the end of February as usual and a few Blackbirds passed through on 24th February. March was extremely quiet with no definite movements noted. The usual small numbers of Stonechats passed through in the first two weeks, an unusual number of Ravens, 32 in one flock, arrived on 18th and a Waxwing passed over on 27th.

The first week of April was just as uninspiring, but fortunately the wind veered to south-east on 6th and small numbers of Wheatears and Goldcrest arrived in the afternoon and more Woodcocks were reported. The following day we found many new arrivals: Kestrels, Redwings, Song Thrushes, Chiffchaffs, Goldcrests, Dunnocks and Bramblings, but not in big numbers. 6 Mistle Thrushes were new on 8th. The wind stayed in the east and small arrivals of continental migrants were noted each day, with a spattering of species like Great Grey Shrikes and Grey Wagtails. More birds arrived on 13th, when, with an east wind and slight snow showers, we saw more Wheatears, 35 Blackbirds, 30 Ring Ouzels, 120 Song Thrushes and 20 Robins. A Buzzard and 4 Greylags were new on 14th and a Woodlark on 15th.

Snow during the next few days put off most migrants and although the wind returned to the south-east we saw little until 18th, when we noted Red-necked Grebe, Greenshank, 6 Carrion Crows, 3 Jackdaws, 35 Fieldfares, 10 Mistle Thrushes, and more Meadow Pipits. Most of these birds had decreased on 19th. New arrivals on 21st were 4 Wood Pigeons and 4 Linnets, and continued south-east winds, on 22nd, brought in more Robins, Water Rail, Yellowhammer and 10 Chaffinches. 23rd April was a fine warm day with light southerly wind and we saw our first Yellow Wagtails, a Sand Martin and a Long-eared Owl. We caught a Grasshopper Warbler on 25th, and Gordon Barnes saw an Alpine Swift



fly over the isle; later in the day a fine Osprey soared over Ward Hill and we saw more Curlews, Wood Pigeons, and Wheatears, a Stock Dove, and 2 Swallows while searching for the swift. Most species decreased overnight and a south-east gale on 27th gave us Water Rail, Collared Dove, Grasshopper Warbler, Blackcap and Whitethroat. The south to south-west winds during the last few days of the month brought us no new visitors.

The first day of May produced a few more Whimbrels, Swallows and White Wagtails, and single Moorhen and Lesser Whitethroat. A really hot day on 2nd, and we saw more Wheatears (some Greenlanders), Collared Doves, Corn-crake and Yellowhammer. The Wheatears decreased next day, but there were more Whimbrels and a ♂ Black Redstart. The wind had returned to the south-east on 5th and we found more migrants again; 5 Cormorants, ♀ Sparrowhawk, 3 Jack Snipes, 25 Whimbrels, 20 Black-headed Gulls, 22 Wood Pigeons and a Waxwing. The wind remained in that direction during the next few days and we noted a steady trickle of migrants passing through. There were less on 11th, but 13th started very well with a White-throated Sparrow caught in the Double Dyke and finished up well with a Red-throated Pipit at Pund. Both birds had gone on 14th, but a Short-toed Lark was new; there was little else. 2 Rooks, 13 Carrion Crows and 3 Willow Warblers arrived on 16th and a Red-backed Shrike on 17th.

A Red-headed Bunting arrived on 18th, and there was an increase in House Martins to 20, and Swallows to 40, also 4 Swifts, Cuckoo, 3 Sedge Warblers and 2 Spotted Flycatchers. We found another Red-headed Bunting, a Bluethroat, a ♂ Subalpine Warbler and a Wood Warbler but fewer hirundines on 19th. A Honey Buzzard passed over on 21st and a ♀ Scarlet Grosbeak arrived on 22nd. The wind was north-east fresh becoming gale force on 23rd, and it was obvious that a lot of small continental migrants had arrived; we saw many Whitethroats, Sedge Warblers and Spotted Flycatchers; more than we usually record, and there was also a large arrival of Silver-Y moths. Some of these migrants were still present on 24th and we also saw a Buzzard and a Bluethroat. Many of the small passerines were very wet and unhappy on 25th and we noted Black-tailed Godwit, Pied Flycatcher and Reed Bunting as new arrivals.

House Martins increased on 26th, and we saw 3 Wood Sandpipers and caught a Great Reed Warbler. I saw and heard a ♂ Bluethroat singing on 27th, a fine sunny day, but the best bird was a Black Kite seen by our departing visitors and Gordon Barnes at Sumburgh. An Osprey flew south over the Reevas on 28th, and a Lesser Grey Shrike was caught on

29th; Icterine Warbler, Sanderling and 8 Collared Doves also arrived that day. There were no arrivals of note on 30th and 31st.

Westerly winds during first few days of June produced no migrants of note, but south-easterlies, with rain clearing, in the afternoon on 5th, gave us 50 House Martins, 15 Swallows, Ring Ouzel, Bluethroat and Sedge Warbler. A Wood Sandpiper and 8 Red-breasted Mergansers arrived on 6th and more House Martins, Whinchat, Redstart and Grey Wagtail on 7th. A Red-spotted Bluethroat and our first Crossbill of the summer arrived on 12th and preceded a superb Bee-eater which arrived on light south-east wind on 13th. Red-backed Shrike, Black Redstart, Icterine Warbler, Ortolan Bunting and 4 Crossbills were also seen during the day. Little was noted during the next few days, but another Lesser Grey Shrike, Spotted Redshank, Pintail and 2 Shovelers arrived with an easterly gale on 19th. There were more Lapwings, Common and Black-headed Gulls and 4 Crossbills on 20th and a ♂ Ortolan Bunting on 21st.

14 Crossbills and a northern Willow Warbler arrived on 23rd, and 37 Crossbills, 3 Swifts and an Ortolan Bunting were noted on 24th. Returning Curlews were passing south on 26th; a Great Northern Diver on 27th; 2 Blackcaps, a Fieldfare and 4 Dunlins on 28th; 2 Jackdaws on 29th and 30 plus Crossbills on 30th June ended the spring migration and started the autumn's.

As can be seen there were no large scale rushes of migrants during the spring, but rather a steady trickle passing through on most days from April until end of June. There was a preponderance of easterly and south-easterly winds and these provided some very interesting rare birds; but it can be seen that after a few days the south-easterlies became stale and brought no new birds. The most interesting arrivals occurred when the wind changed to south-east after a period of adverse weather conditions. No particular species was in great evidence, but in June it was obvious that a sizeable Crossbill irruption had started.

## 58. Migrants singing at Fair Isle in Spring, 1966

An interesting aspect of the spring migration in 1966 was the singing of delayed bird migrants at Fair Isle. After arriving in bad weather conditions, birds of various species, which do not nest on the island, rested for several days and some of them sang and displayed.

Spring 1966 was fine but rather wet; insect life was abundant and plant growth was exceptional for Fair Isle. The

following species were noted in song but none of them stayed to breed on the island.

**CURLEW.** At least one singing over the Tarryfield and Byerwell, 7th, 8th and 11th May and 6th June.

**REDSHANK.** One singing and display-fighting over Hesti Geo on 28th April and another doing likewise over the meadow behind Leestat on 26th May.

**WOOD SANDPIPER.** 3 birds were frequenting the pools on Chatham's Land on 26th May and one of them sang and display-flighted several times. A solitary bird did likewise at Stackhool on 6th June.

**DUNLIN.** One, in summer plumage, trilling at Easter Lothar Water on 17th May.

**COLLARED DOVE.** Singles singing at Schoolton and North Haven on 4th May; the Schoolton/Quoy bird(s) continued to sing until 9th May, and one was heard there on 2nd June.

**SWALLOW.** One pair flying in and out of the garage at the Observatory on 7th June, the male was in song. Another was singing at Shirva on 10th June.

**RING OUZEL.** Singles singing at Eas Brecks on 21st April, Byerwell on 1st May, Vaadal on 2nd May, Burrashield, Wester Lothar and North Light on 28th May and Ward Hill on 31st May.

**SONG THRUSH.** Single continental birds singing at Setter on 23rd April, Kirk on 4th May and Skadan on 4th-6th May.

**BLACKBIRD.** Singles singing at Shirva on 23rd April, Observatory on 24th April and Haa on 4th May.

**ROBIN.** Several singing at Setter and North Haven on 23rd and 24th April, one singing in Vaadal plantation on 30th May and one still in song at North Haven on 4th May. All referable to the continental race.

**REDSTART.** A male gave a short snatch of song from the gully catching box on 24th May.

**BLUETHROAT.** One in song at Quoy on 27th May, was displaying and chasing away pipits and sparrows. Another was singing from a patch of old turnips at Leogh on 12th June. Both red-spotted males.

**GREAT REED WARBLER.** One singing at Quoy, in early morning, on 27th May (caught and ringed on 26th): the previous Fair Isle record, June 1964, was also noted singing.

**SEDGE WARBLER.** One singing in the Vaadal plantation from 13th to 15th June.

**WHITETHROAT.** One song-fighting and singing at Leogh on

25th May and one singing in Observatory garden on 28th May.

**BLACKCAP.** One singing in Observatory garden on 27th May.

**SUBALPINE WARBLER.** Just before we trapped the male on 19th May, it skulked in a heap of wire netting and gave a short snatch of song, rather Whitethroat-like.

**WILLOW WARBLER.** Singles were singing at Observatory on 9th May, Haa on 16th May and Taft on 10th June. A bird of the northern race was singing at Schoolton cabbage patch on 29th June.

**CHIFFCHAFF.** Singles heard at Observatory 2nd May and Whillieghit 10th May.

**GOLDCREST.** One was singing in the Vaadal plantation on 1st May.

**WHITE WAGTAIL.** A fine male in song at the Observatory from 30th April, most days of May, to 13th June.

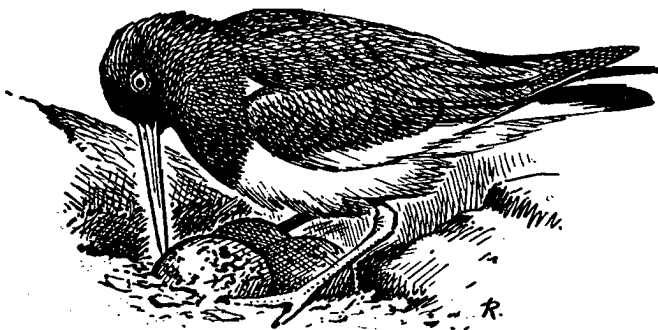
**PIED FLYCATCHER.** One in song at Observatory on 31st May.

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.** One in song at Observatory on 29th May.

**CHAFFINCH.** Song heard at Midway on 23rd April and a ringed male in song at various places from Haa on 29th May to Gully trap on 5th June.

Most of these birds were solitary and sometimes the song was incomplete and not accompanied by display. The following species were seen in pairs and singing: Curlew, Collared Dove, Swallow, Robin and White Wagtail. One pair of Robins attempted copulation at North Haven, but none stayed to breed.

R. H. D.



Oystercatcher

## 59. Notes on the Breeding Birds, 1966

1966 was a fine summer and most birds enjoyed a good breeding season. A complete census was made of all the passerines and all of the non-passerines and sea-birds, except Puffin and Fulmar. A partial count was made of the Fulmar population and estimates and counts were made of the Puffins. This census and the 1966 Common Bird Census are being written up for publication. A pair of Common Gulls nested on the isle but failed to hatch their eggs; this is the first time that this species has bred at Fair Isle.

**FULMAR.** Breeding numbers were again slightly higher than the previous year. Copulation was first noted on 12th April, the pre-egg-laying dispersal was from 6th to 16th May and the first eggs were seen on 17th May. The first chicks were seen at Hesswalls on 5th July and most chicks hatched about 8th-12th July. Free flying young were first seen on 22nd August. Rather few young on some cliffs and some evidence of puffinosis disease noted.

**SHAG.** Nest building noted in March and pair with one egg at Blue Geo on 1st April. First chicks seen at Lericum on 11th May and free flying young from 7th June. One bird was still incubating at Johnny's Peats on 13th August. Three nests with chicks were found inside the Sheep Rock tunnels on 13th July.

**EIDER.** Ashore from 7th May and first clutch found on 21st May. The first duckling was on the sea on 15th June. 36 nests were found on the Green Holm on 23rd June; 77% were still incubating. An increase in the breeding population. Chick survival was poor. One chick, about one-third grown, was seen at Stroms Heelor on 19th September.

**PEREGRINE.** At the onset of the season, pairs were present at Sheep Rock and Lerness. No nests were found and neither pair reared young.

**CORNCRAKE.** Birds were calling at Busta, Kennaby and Setter but only the Busta bird stayed. At least two chicks were seen there on 13th July, when the rye-grass was cut.

**OYSTERCATCHER.** Two seen on 11th February and main arrivals from 21st February. Most were present by mid-March and had taken up territories and started to display and copulate between 16th and 24th April. New scrapes were seen on 25th April and fresh eggs were found at Roskilie and North Restensgeo on 1st May. The chicks from these two nests were the first ones to fly, on 2nd July. The first flocks departed on 28th July.

**LAPWING.** First seen on 15th and noted regularly from 19th February. Four pairs nested between Tarryfield and Airstrip. A nest at Airstrip hatched on 24th May and a nest found with 4 eggs on 30th April, at Tarryfield, hatched on 25th May. The chicks moved to Pund but only a few were reared.

**RINGED PLOVER.** Breeding birds returned on 24th February and three pairs nested on Bunes. A pair at Slogar had c/4 on 14th May and hatched on 31st May; another pair at Kumlins had c/4 on 26th May and hatched on 13th June. Flying chicks were seen on 3rd July. A nest, with c/4, was found at Skervalie on 10th July and hatched on 26th/27th July; probably a second clutch.

**SNIFE.** Two, probably three, birds were heard singing between Sukka Mire and Gilsetter all spring. A nest with c/4 was found near the Vaadal trap on 16th June but was flooded on 20th June.

**GREAT SKUA.** First seen on 2nd April, first on land on 18th and main arrival from 21st to 25th April. Sukka Mire south was the first nest, with c/2 on 20th May and chicks on 16th June. First flying young seen on 17th July. About 15 pairs attempted to nest. Largest gathering on the Airstrip was 60 on 6th June. Emigration from 13th/14th and 28th August. Birds regularly seen until 30th October.

**ARCTIC SKUA.** First seen on 24th and mainly from 28th April. Most pairs on territories from 10th May and eggs probably laid by 17th May, but first nest only found on 26th. Young seen on 18th June and flying on 16th July. A pair nested on Malcolm's Head for the first time and laid one egg, but they did not rear young. An increase noted in population. Emigration from 13th to 15th August, and most gone by 11th September, but stragglers until 30th September.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.** 39 nests on the Sheep Rock and small numbers scattered round coast. 59 chicks ringed on Sheep Rock on 6th July.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL.** 37 pairs bred; at Goorn (22), South Gavel (12), Burrian (2) and Kame o'Fair-Heelor. First eggs seen on 26th May and chicks on 20th June.

**HERRING GULL.** Breeding population as 1965, although less on Sheep Rock. Eggs seen on 19th May, chicks on 16th June and free flying young on 24th July.

**COMMON GULL.** A nest with 2 eggs was found in the middle of the North Park of Hjon on 18th June. The nest made

of dry grass. One bird was not territory-minded and spent its time on the newly-ploughed Johnny Arcus's Park, leaving the incubating bird to defend the nest. This shy bird was occasionally seen near the nest until 25th, but from the 26th to 28th the other bird incubated by itself, then deserted the eggs.

**KITTIWAKE.** First seen ashore on 8th February, earlier than usual; regularly ashore from 1st March and continuously at nesting ledges from 4th April. Nest-building noted on 8th May and eggs noted on 27th May. Newly hatched chicks were seen at Eye of Connis and Johnny's Peats on 16th June and free flying young were seen from 25th July. Breeding numbers and number of colonies both increased; a small colony was started at Swadin on Bunes. Last seen ashore on 27th August, but large numbers offshore all autumn.

**RAZORBILL.** First seen ashore on 14th March and continuously from 8th April. First eggs at Easter Lothar on 8th and Maver's Geo on 10th May. First chick, about 2 days old, at Easter Lothar on 9th June. A good season and last seen ashore on 8th August.

**GUILLEMOT.** First seen ashore on 15th November 1965 and regularly from 12th January, and continuously from 2nd April. First eggs on 26th May and first chicks from 21st June. On night of 3rd/4th July, we heard adults calling the chicks into the sea, below the Ley of Millens Houllan. Emigration mainly from 20th July and last seen ashore on 8th August.

**BLACK GUILLEMOT.** First seen ashore on 15th April and first eggs on 7th June. A good breeding season with no flooding. First chick on sea on 1st August.

**PUFFIN.** First one was seen on 3rd April, and 10 were ashore at Johnny's Peats on 4th April. Small numbers ashore most mornings and evenings until large influx on 25th. First eggs, at Skripton, on 2nd May and first chicks at Easter Lothar on 9th June. Ca. 5000 burrows were counted on Brett's Stack; the biggest single colony on the island. Emigration from 19th/20th July and last seen ashore on 17th August.

**ROCK DOVE.** Numbers still low; 6-8 pairs.

**SKYLARK.** First arrivals on 29th January and song from 4th February. Main arrivals from 26th February. First nest found on 14th May, c/3, and a nest containing 4 half-grown young on 25th May at the Haa.

**RAVEN.** Three pairs nested successfully. South Ramnigeo

nest had two chicks (ringed) which flew about 31st May; a single chick nearly ready to fly at Sheena-Wheetha on 13th June and a pair at South Gunnawark. Another (young?) pair attempted to nest at Furse, but didn't have any success.

**HOODED CROW.** At least 12 nest-sites were known. Nest building observed at Mavers Geo on 3rd and Swadin on 4th April. Swadin nest completed by 17th and probably eggs by 20th; 2 chicks and one egg chipping out of c/4 on 18th May. A pair at Slogar had c/2 on 3rd June and 2 chicks and one chipping on 28th June. Rather few young seen on isle.

**WREN.** Only 42 males found during Wren count on 28th May, but weather at this time was poor for a dawn census. About another 7 sites were found later. Pairs were nest building in Gully on 30th April and Maver's Geo on 2nd May. The latter nest was robbed by Crows on 8th May. First young on 28th June.

**WHEATEAR.** The first arrived on 5th April and the main arrivals were on 13th and 22nd-25th April. Song from 24th April and nest building commenced 1st May. Young hatched from 12th June and flying young from 25th June. A good season.

**MEADOW PIPIT.** First heard singing on 19th April and nest building commenced 10th May. Two nests with completed clutches found on 16th May and one of them hatched about 27th. Rather a lot of nests robbed by Hooded Crows. First young flying on 20th June, and many from 2nd July.

**ROCK PIPIT.** A good breeding season. Song from 6th April and nest building from 26th. First nest, with c/4, found at North Haven beach on 19th May; completed clutch on 20th, hatched on 2nd June and flew about 20th. Another nest, between Common Room and Coronation Hall, completed a clutch of 5 eggs on 30th May and hatched on 14th June.

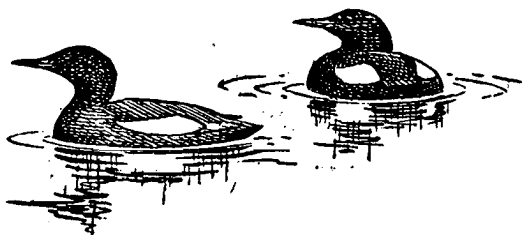
**STARLING.** Breeding numbers low. First noted nest building on 15th April, but most pairs rather late. Young were first heard calling from nests on 19th May, but mainly from 24th, and first flying young on 11th June. Young still being fed in nests on 1st August.

**TWITE.** Still small numbers breeding. Nest building from 4th May and young seen at Ward Hill on 3rd July. Several broods of young seen during July and August.

**HOUSE SPARROW.** One singing at Lower Station on Ward Hill on 12th August, but did not nest there. Nest building



commenced on 20th April and nest with c/4 seen at Quoy on 2nd May. Young heard calling from nests on 19th May and fledged young at Midway on 26th May. Still nest building and feeding young at Quoy on 30th July.



Black Guillemots (or Tysties)

## 60. Notes on the Breeding Biology of the Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

ROY H. DENNIS

### Part 1. EGG DATA.

During the last three summers, particular attention has been paid to the Black Guillemot at Fair Isle. This study has proved most interesting and is being continued. The following notes refer to nest-site preference, clutch-sizes, colours, weights and measurements of eggs, and egg-weight losses during incubation, in 1966.

The Black Guillemots, or Tysties as we prefer to call them on Fair Isle, mainly nest on the eastern side of Fair Isle and they lay their eggs under large boulders, in caves or in holes in the cliffs. The sea-bed shelves very steeply from the base of the cliffs on the west side of the island, whereas on the east side it is more gradual and there are larger areas of shallow water where Tysties can dive for food. This is the reason that most of them nest on the eastern side.

Most nests are difficult to find because they are in rather inaccessible places, some of them only approachable by boat, and others only at low tide. They are generally more solitary than the other auks; nesting in pockets of one to four pairs, although there are a few larger groups. Busta Geo is the largest concentration on Fair Isle and in 1966, fifteen nests were known in this geo and there may have been one or two more. The next biggest group was at South Mila Hesslands where I found six nests.

Seventy-three nests were examined, at close hand, at Fair Isle in 1966. Fifty (68.5%) were among boulders or in small caves just above high water level and twenty-three (31.5%) were in holes in the cliffs and well out of reach of high seas. This is an interesting difference in nest-site preference, especially as the least used one, (the hole in cliff type) is generally speaking the safer, because the eggs or chicks are then out of reach of the summer storms. One drawback of this type of site is that it tends to support solitary pairs rather than groups of birds.

Tysties lay one or two eggs, unlike the other auks. The eggs are usually white, tinged green or buff, variably spotted and/or blotched with blackish- or reddish-brown and purplish-grey markings.

**Table I. Clutch Size**

No. of clutches containing 2 eggs	26	59.1%
No. of clutches containing 1 egg	18	40.9%
Total No. of clutches examined	44	

**Table II. Ground or base colour of eggs**

Colour of egg.	No. of eggs.	
Green or greenish-white	40	60.6%
White or dirty-white	24	36.4%
Buff or creamy	2	3.0%

The base or ground colour of 66 eggs was described in 1966, see Table II. In two-egg clutches the ground colour was generally similar in each egg. In seven pairs of whitish eggs and sixteen pairs of greenish eggs the ground colour was similar in the two eggs of each clutch, but in another six pairs of eggs, one egg was whitish and the other greenish.

The amount of blotching and spotting on the eggs was very variable, but generally heavier on the larger end. In most clutches of two eggs, the eggs were slightly different. In sixty-five eggs, the amount of blotching and/or spotting was noted, and in 29 eggs it was described as heavy and in 36 eggs as light.

Seventy-nine eggs were measured at the nests, as soon as possible after laying, with a micrometer, reading to 0.1 mm. The two measurements noted were the length and breadth of the egg. The Handbook of British Birds gives an average of 100 British eggs as 58.07 x 39.54 mm. Maxima—62.4 x 39.7 and 60.4 x 41.6 mm. Minima—54.3 x 37.5 and 55.3 x 33.9 mm. Table III gives the measurements of 79 eggs taken at Fair Isle in 1966.

**Table III. Size of eggs**

	No. of eggs.	Mean.	Range.	Standard Dev.
Length (mm.)	79	57.5	52.4-64.7	2.30
Breadth (mm.)	79	39.2	36.3-42.7	1.16

This shows that eggs measured at Fair Isle are slightly smaller in both dimensions, but the range is greater than those recorded in the Handbook.

A breakdown into the measurements of one-egg and two-egg clutches reveals that the mean length of two egg clutches is 57.0 mm., with a range from 52.4 to 64.7 mm and, of one-egg clutches is 58.4 mm., with a range from 55.0 to 63.8 mm. Similarly, the mean breadth of two-egg clutches is 39.2 mm., with a range from 36.3 to 42.7 mm., and of one-egg clutches is 39.4 mm., with a range from 37.3 to 41.0 mm. This shows that, generally, single eggs are slightly longer and broader than eggs in two-egg clutches.

Table IV shows the differences between the lengths and breadths of known first and second eggs in two-egg clutches.

**Table. IV. Measurements of first and second eggs in m.m.**

Breadth of egg		Length of egg	
1st egg	2nd egg	1st egg	2nd egg
39.2	38.1	64.7	63.6
38.1	37.0	58.5	57.9
40.8	39.5	55.0	56.1
40.8	39.0	55.6	56.1
38.8	37.8	56.2	55.2
40.5	40.0	55.8	56.2

In these six cases the first egg had the greater breadth about one mm., but the length of the first egg was variable, being longer in three cases and shorter in the other three. In another twenty-one cases, where the first and second eggs were judged by dirtyness of shell, etc., the first egg was broader in thirteen cases and longer in eleven cases, with one pair of eggs equal in length.

Eggs were weighed, as soon as possible after laying, with a pesola balance, reading to 0.5 gram. An attempt was made to weigh eggs and then chicks at regular intervals, during the breeding season. Seventy-eight eggs were weighed for the first time, just after the laying date and these weights are shown in Tables V and VI.

**Table V. Weight of eggs**

No. of eggs	Mean wt.	Range	Standard Dev.
78	47.0 gms.	38.0-56.5	3.81

**Table VI. Difference in weights of first and second eggs**

1st egg	2nd egg	Difference
53.5	50	3.5 gms.
48	49.5	1.5 gms.
48.5	47.5	1 gm.
48	43.5	4.5 gms.
48	48	0 gms.

It can be seen from Table VI that the first egg is heavier in three cases, once lighter than and once equal to the second egg in two-egg clutches. In another twenty-two cases, where the first and second eggs were judged by appearance, the first egg was heavier in eleven cases, lighter in eight and equal to the second egg in the remaining three. The average difference between the eggs in two-egg clutches was 2.5 gms.

It appears that incubation starts any time between the laying of the first and second egg, a delay of about two days. There is a steady decrease in egg-weight once incubation has started and Table VII shows the decreases in egg-weights between laying and hatching. The final weights have been calculated from a graph.

**Table VII. Decrease in egg-weight between laying and hatching**

Egg-weights	Decrease	% decrease
53.5-46.5	7.0 gms.	13%
50.5-44.0	6.5 gms.	13%
49.5-44.0	5.5 gms.	11%
49.0-43.0	6.0 gms.	12%
49.0-43.5	5.5 gms.	11%
48.0-43.0	5.0 gms.	10%
47.5-39.0	8.5 gms.	18%
46.0-37.0	9.0 gms.	20%

## 61. A Record Day's Ringing at Fair Isle

The 6th July 1966 started for Richard Lorand and I as we sat beside our mist-nests on the halfway ridge in Troila Geo. We were assessing the geo's potentiality as a mist-netting and ringing site for Storm Petrels. It was a fine night, with no wind or clouds, which was probably why we only caught three Storm Petrels, (one of them a control from Foula). We took the nets down at 2 a.m. and when we reached the top of the geo, the moon was high over the Sheep Rock and the sun was just reddening the north east skies above Shetland.

When I rose at 8 a.m. the sea was flat calm, so after breakfast we went by boat to the Sheep Rock. I put down a deep-water anchor and moored the boat, while Nick Dymond, John Davies and Richard landed on the rocks. The four of us climbed up the chain which hangs on the north east cliff of the Rock. This is the chain that the islanders installed so that they could get to their sheep which graze on the grassy slopes of the Sheep Rock.

On reaching the top of the cliff, we found that the young gulls were at an ideal stage for ringing. We made a tour of the slopes and finished up on the eastern point where most

of the Great Black-backed Gulls nest. During the morning we ringed 59 Great Black-backed Gulls and 58 Herring Gulls. A few broods of gulls had flown, but most of the chicks were about half-grown; we saw three late clutches of eggs. Puffins were very plentiful on the cliff edge, but we didn't have time to stay and catch any. We got back to the Observatory for lunch at 1 p.m. with our day's ringing total standing at 119.

With the tide ebbing, we decided to visit the Guillemot Cave at Sauverstein. This entails the descent of the scree slope at Wester Lother and then waiting until the tide is low enough for one to scramble round the base of the cliff into Sauverstein. Our ringing group in the afternoon consisted of five people, the addition being John Douglas. On the beach of Wester Lother, Nick and Richard ringed Shags and the rest of us concentrated on Razorbills and Puffins. While waiting for the tide to drop we ringed 18 Shags, 3 young Razorbills and 3 young Puffins in the rocks and we caught, with our Faeroese fleyg, 12 Razorbills and 2 Puffins. The fleyg is a long-handled net used in the Faeroes, by the islanders, for the purpose of catching sea-birds for food.

At 5 p.m. Nick and I roped our way over the first rocky point at the east end of the Wester Lother beach and I went on and secured the end of the rope in the first cave at Sauverstein. This climb is performed in the splash zone of the rocks, so it is very slippery and one's main footholds are limpets stuck on the rocks.

The Guillemot Cave at Sauverstein is a most amazing spectacle. I discovered its potentiality as a Guillemot ringing site in 1959 and it has been visited regularly since then. The beach is similar to most of the others on the north coast of the island, being a great pile of huge boulders at the base of the cliffs, but at the back of the beach a narrow-entranced cave slopes, at about 40°, into the base of the cliff. It is about 50 ft. deep and at the bottom there is a pool of water. There are about three entrances and the largest, which is big enough to get into, is about five feet by three feet. Most of the Guillemots nest just inside the cave, and there are also Razorbills, Puffins and Shags breeding beside them.

The noise, smell and the slime from birds' droppings in the cave is indescribable, but the value of ringing Guillemots and examining retraps is so important that one soon forgets the difficult working conditions. Three people enter the cave, using torches, to ring and examine the birds, while the others sit at the entrance and write down the ringing details. 59 Guillemots were ringed; 25 of them being young birds. 35 more adults were retrapped, their rings were examined and on 7 of these birds the rings were removed and

replaced with new ones, because the old ones were badly corroded. 20 Razorbills and 24 Shags were ringed either in the cave or in the rocks outside. By this time the tide was rising, so we made a quick return across the rocks into Wester Lother.

The gully trap provided our only passerine of the day, when we caught a female Crossbill there at 9 p.m. and to finish off a great day, we caught one Storm Petrel on Bunes, just before midnight.

3 Storm Petrels, 42 Shags, 59 Great Black-backed Gulls, 58 Herring Gulls, 59 Guillemots, 34 Razorbills, 5 Puffins and a Crossbill were ringed during the day, making a total of 261. Another 42 birds were retrapped or controlled, giving a total of 303 birds handled during the day. The previous best ringing score for a day was 253 (mainly Blackbirds) on 31st March 1958.

R. H. D.

## 62. Local Recaptures at Fair Isle in 1964 and 1965

**STORM PETREL.** Adults ringed at Malcolm's Head on 4th and 8th August 1957 were retrapped and reringed at Malcolm's Head on 10th August 1965. An adult ringed at Malcolm's Head on 5th July 1964 was retrapped there on 10th August 1965.

**FULMAR.** A pullus ringed at Furse, 10th August 1961 was retrapped there on 8th August 1964. 7 retraps were noted in 1965. Adult ringed at nest on North Gavel was at the same site 21st May. Another adult fledged at Furse 5th May 1962 was retrapped there on 7th September. Two 1961 pulli were controlled in September: one at its natal cliff, Furse, and the other, from Landberg, caught at Bunes. Three 1962 pulli from Furse were controlled there in September.

**SHAG.** 1964—Adults ringed in 1962 and 1963 were found breeding in the same colonies. 4 three year olds were recorded, three of them breeding and the other dead. Two pulli ringed in 1962 were recorded; one breeding and the other dead. 1965—2 four year old, (one dead), 5 three year old (one dead) and 2 two year old birds were recaptured at their breeding colonies. Adults ringed in 1962, 1963 and 1964 (4) were recaptured at their nest sites.

Out of 19 birds recaptured alive at the nesting colonies in 1964 and 1965, 15 (8 adults) had remained loyal to their original site, while 4 birds ringed as pulli had swapped colonies as follows: Easter Lother to Lericum, North to

South Naaversgill, Lericum to South Ramnigeo and Lericum to Sauverstein.

OYSTERCATCHER. A chick ringed at Taftytoun, 26th June 1958 was dazzle-netted and reringed at Byerwell, 10th April 1965.

RINGED PLOVER. A chick ringed at Meoness, 23rd May 1961 was mist-netted, as adult ♀, on Bunes, 12th June 1965. An adult dazzle-netted on South Haven beach, 20th March 1964 and colour-ringed was recorded as adult ♂ incubating on Bunes, 18th May 1965.

REDSHANK. The ring of one dazzle-netted on Bunes, 19th October 1963 was found at Roskilie, 6th September 1965.

ARCTIC SKUA. A dark-phase adult ringed at Brae West, 10th June 1955 was found dead at Wirvie, 6th June 1964. Pulli ringed in 1960 and 1962 were found dead in 1964 and a 1960 pullus was found dead in 1965.

GREAT SKUA. A 1960 pullus was found dead in August 1964. A 1958 pullus from Brae of Restensgeo was retrapped on a nest at Brae East 29th June 1962 and was found dead in North Haven on 10th July 1965.

HERRING GULL. Ring number 344089 was placed on an adult at North Haven in May 1952; on 20th July 1957 this bird was caught at the Observatory and reringed AN7241 and on 3rd July 1964 it was again caught at the Observatory and reringed AJ 52694. It bred on the Landberg in 1964 and 1965. This made it at least 16 years old, and since 1957 it had broken the unringed leg, which is now bent but working perfectly.

KITTIWAKE. An adult ringed at Johnny's Peats, 23rd July 1960 was controlled there on 1st July 1964.

RAZORBILL. 1964—16 birds ringed as adults were retrapped; they had been ringed in 1960 (2), 1961 (2), 1962 (2), 1963 (7) and 1964 (3). None had changed colonies. 1965—10 birds ringed as adults were retrapped from the following years, 1958 (2), 1962 (1), 1963 (5) and 1964 (2). None had changed colonies.

GUILLEMOT. 1964—11 birds, ringed as adults, were retrapped at Guillemot Cave, Sauverstein from the following years, 1960 (2), 1961 (3), 1963 (5) and 1964 (1). 1965—42 birds were retrapped at Guillemot Cave, they had been ringed in 1959 (4), 1960 (3), 1961 (9), 1963 (10), 1964 (8) and 1965 (8). All had been ringed as adults, except AT 77207 which was ringed as a pullus on 12th July 1961 and retrapped on 5th July 1965.

BLACK GUILLEMOT. A pullus ringed AT 55251 at South Haven,

- 15th July 1958, from brood 2, was retrapped as adult ♀ incubating c/2 at South Haven, 9th June 1964. Adults ringed at nests in South Haven colony in 1963 and 1964 were retrapped there in 1965.
- PUFFIN.** In 1964, 4 birds ringed as adults in 1959, 1960 and 1963 (2) were retrapped: they had not changed colonies. A 1963 adult was retrapped in 1965.
- HOODED CROW.** A chick colour-ringed at Duttfield, 14th June 1964 was retrapped at Byerwell, 27th April 1965, and seen at Barkland 20th March and Setter 15th May 1965.
- WREN.** A first-year bird ringed at North Haven, 2nd September 1962 was retrapped there, as singing ♂, 15th May 1965.
- BLACKBIRD.** Two retraps of overwintering birds; a 1st-year ♂ had made a 4.6% weight increase between 11th November 1963 and 27th March 1964 and another 1st-year ♂ had made a 12.5% weight increase between 21st November 1964 and 14th March 1965.
- WHEATEAR.** In 1964, a 1961 juvenile was retrapped as adult ♀ on 30th June. 1965—7 reportable retraps, all except one had been ringed as pullus or juvenile in 1960, 1963 (2) and 1964 (3); the other was an adult ♀ ringed in 1962.
- MEADOW PIPIT.** 1964—a three year old bird retrapped in breeding season. 1965—5 retraps in the breeding season were an adult ringed in 1962 and juveniles ringed in 1961 and 1964 (3).
- ROCK PIPIT.** 1964—A juvenile ringed in Axell trap, 8th September, 1957 was mist-netted at the Observatory, 8th June. Juveniles ringed in 1961 and 1963 (2) were retrapped. 1965 15 birds retrapped between May and November had been ringed as juveniles in 1962, 1963 (3) and 1964 (11).
- STARLING.** 1964—8 birds retrapped during the year had been ringed as juveniles in 1961, 1962, and 1963 (6) and as adults in 1962 and 1959. The latter was ringed, adult ♂, on 14th September 1959 at the Haa and was found shot dead at Busta, 14th September 1964, exactly five years later.
- 1965—36 birds retrapped during the year had been ringed at juveniles in 1960 (3), 1961 (2), 1962 (2), 1963 (12) and 1964 (12), and as adults in 1963 (3) and 1964 (2).
- TWITE.** 1964—4 reportable retraps in the year had been ringed as full-grown in 1960 (2) and juveniles in 1961 and 1962. 1965—six 1964 juveniles were retrapped between April and October.



## 63. Recoveries, 1965

Sixty-three recoveries of ringed birds came in during 1965, and full details of these are given in the following list. The international code of symbols for the method of recovery is employed: v—caught or trapped and released with ring; †—shot or killed by man; x—found dead or dying; xA—found long dead; ()—caught alive and not released or released without ring; /?/—method of recovery unknown. Where the exact date of recovery is unknown, the date of the finder's report is given in brackets. Ringing details of each bird (ringed at Fair Isle unless otherwise stated) are given on the first line, and recovery details on the second.

## FULMAR

SS 22638 pull. 6.8.64

/?/ 27.5.65 at sea, NW off Tromsø, Norway, 72°15'N 16°10'E.

## SHAG

1013442 pull. 25.7.60

x 21.5.65 Sandness (Shetland), 55 miles N. Our first recovery of a fully adult bird away from the island during the breeding season.

1033526 pull. 18.6.64

x (18.1.65) West Isle, Out Skerries (Shetland), 75 miles N.

1033679 pull. 21.6.64

x 11.8.65 Staxigoe, Wick (Caithness), 90 miles SW.

1033702 pull. 21.6.64

x 5.6.65 Scatness, Sumburgh (Shetland), 30 miles N.

1033823 pull. 25.6.64

† 24.4.65 Scrabster (Caithness), 95 miles SW.

1033877 pull. 27.6.64

/?/ (10.8.65) Johnshaven, Inverbervie (Kincardine), 190 miles S.

1033894 pull. 27.6.64

x 14.6.65 between Rosemarkie and Ethie, Black Isle (Ross-shire), 160 miles SW.

1052469 pull. 24.6.65

() (20.10.65) 8 miles SE of Berwick-on-Tweed (Northumberland), 260 miles S.

1052830 pull. 13.7.65

x 4.9.65 North Ronaldsay (Orkney), 30 miles WSW.

1052843 pull. 21.7.65

x (27.11.65) Elie (Fife), 235 miles S.

## OYSTERCATCHER

385147 pull. 26.6.58

† 3.3.65 Heysham (Lancashire), 380 miles S.

## RINGED PLOVER

638677 1st Y 24.8.65

† 7.9.65 Merville-Franceville, near Cabourg (Calvados), France, 49°16'N 0°12'W.

Our first recovery of a Ringed Plover from France.

## BAR-TAILED GODWIT

EC 45229 1st Y 29.8.65

† 10.9.65 Ejersted, Saltum (Jutland), Denmark, 57°18'N 9°40'E. Only five Bar-tailed Godwits have been ringed on Fair Isle and this bird constitutes our second foreign recovery; the other was at Noril'sk (Siberia), (see Bull. 4: 231).

## ARCTIC SKUA

3075539 pull. 7.7.59

x 17.8.65 Skeffling, Patrington (Yorks), 410 miles S.

3075756 pull. 10.7.60

x (19.8.65) Sumburgh Head (Shetland), 27 miles NNE.

EC 28854 pull. 9.7.63

() 17.5.65 Found exhausted, died two days later, Barro de Santo Antonio, near Maceio (Alagoas), Brazil, 9°24'S 35°30'W. Two Arctic Skuas ringed at Fair Isle have been recovered south of the equator on the west coast of Africa, but this is the first British recovery from the west side of the South Atlantic.

## GREAT SKUA

414559 pull. 22.7.62 Saxavord (Unst).

† early.8.65 Muckle Skerry, Whalsay (Shetland) 30 miles N.

417301 pull. 12.7.64 Saxavord (Unst).

† end.12.64 Fuenterrabia (Guipuzcoa) Spain, 43°21'N 1°48'W.

## GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

418018 1st Y. 13.12.61

x 0.8.64 Ho Bught (Jutland) Denmark, 55°34'N 8°15'E.

419329 pull. 17.7.64

x 23.1.65 Sandsend, Whitby (Yorks), 345 miles S.

AJ 16241 1st Y. 11.11.60

† 25.6.65 Borkenes, Harstad (Troms) Norway, 68°47'N 16°11'E.

418018 and AJ 16241 were ringed at winter roosts.

## HERRING GULL

AJ 23161 pull. 4.7.64

x ca. 20.4.65 Hoogwoud (Noord Holland), Netherlands, 52°44'N 4°56'E.

AJ 37268 Ad. 13.12.61  
 /?/ 28.6.65 Skarsfjord, Ringvassøy (Troms) Norway, 69°58'  
 N 18°49'E.

AJ 45825 pull. 17.7.64  
 ( ) 19.8.65 Fraserburgh (Aberdeen), 125 miles S.

AJ 45881 pull. 5.7.65  
 v 24.8.65 at sea, 50 miles ESE of Aberdeen, ca. 185 miles S.

AJ 52648 pull. 22.7.63  
 x 4.7.65 Blaydon-on-Tyne (Durham), 315 miles S.

#### RAZORBILL

SS 05902 Ad. 24.6.64  
 x-oiled 20.3.65 Hauxley, Amble (Northumberland), 290  
 miles S.

#### GUILLEMOT

SS 22515 pull. 1.7.64  
 † 0.2.65 Reipa, Fore (Nordland) Norway, 66°54'N 13°39'E.

SS 22589 pull. 13.7.64  
 /?/ 27.3.65 Austnesfjorden, Lofoten (Nordland) Norway  
 68°15'N 14°42'E.

SS 36096 pull. 3.7.65  
 † 24.10.65 off Hundavag, Stavanger (Rogaland) Norway  
 58°59'N 5°43'E.

Between 1959 and 1965, 280 adult and 135 pulli Guillemots  
 have been ringed at Fair Isle, and 11 recoveries (all pulli)  
 have been reported from Norway. This must indicate that  
 the majority of the young birds winter in a different area  
 than the adults.

#### PUFFIN

AT 59419 Ad. 25.7.58  
 x 24.1.65 Eoligaray, Barra (Outer Hebrides), 270 miles SW.

AT 77342 pull. 15.7.61  
 † 7.3.65 Malpica de Bergantinos (Coruna) Spain, 43°19'N  
 8°49'W.

#### WOOD PIGEON

SS 05878 Ad. 29.4.64  
 † 8.9.65 Watten (Caithness), 95 miles SW.

#### REDWING

CX 33761 F.G. 11.10.64  
 † (16.2.65) Vila Real (Tras as Montes) Portugal, 41°17'N  
 7°45'W.

CX 46652 1st Y. 12.9.65  
 v 14.9.65 Foula (Shetland), 45 miles NW. Note rapid control.

CX 46869 F.G. 2.10.65  
 † 13.11.65 Vila Verde, Sintra (Estremadura) Portugal,  
 38°50'N 9°22'W.

## BLACKBIRD

- CK 21097 1st Y. 23.4.62  
 x (26.11.64) Egersund (Rogaland) Norway, 58°27'N 6°01'E.  
 CK 21984 Ad. 12.11.62  
 x 21.4.65 Rugsund, Nordfjord (Sogn og Fjordane) Norway  
 61°53'N 5°20'E.  
 CX 16138 1st Y. 20.4.63  
 v 21.1.65 Carney, Drumcliff (Sligo) Ireland, 430 miles SW.  
 CX 16940 Ad. 1.11.63  
 v 12.8.65 Landvetter, near Goteborg, Sweden, 57°41'N  
 12°12'E.  
 CX 30068 1st Y. 8.11.63  
 x (28.2.65) Pennan, New Aberdour (Aberdeen), 130 miles S.  
 CX 30169 Ad. 25.3.64  
 † by cat, Astwood, Newport Pagnell (Bucks), 520 miles S.  
 CX 33883 1st Y. 22.10.64  
 x 1.1.65 Lumsden (Aberdeen), 160 miles S.  
 CX 33934 Ad. 29.10.64  
 † 15.3.65 Spind, Farsund (Vest Agder) Norway, 58°05'N  
 6°48'E  
 CX 46110 1st Y. 31.10.64  
 x (18.1.65) Newtyle (Angus), 250 miles S.  
 CX 46194 1st Y. 12.11.64  
 x ca. 20.12.64 near Helmsdale (Sutherland), 120 miles SW.  
 CX 46233 1st Y. 26.3.65  
 † 12.12.65 Gijon (Oviedo) Spain, 43°32'N 5°40'W.  
 CX 46300 1st Y. 26.3.65  
 † 0.4.65 Fedje, Hellisoy (Hordaland) Norway, 60°47'N 4°43'E.  
 V 76251 1st Y. 3.4.58  
 x 13.3.59 Rakvag, Otteroy (More og Romsdal) Norway,  
 62°43'N 6°44'E.

Two Blackbirds have been reported from France in previous years and one of these (725946, see Bull. 5:59) was our most southerly recovery of a Blackbird ringed at Fair Isle. CX 46233 surpasses this record by several hundred miles and is also our first recovery of this species in Spain.

## WHEATEAR

- BA 51429 1st Y. 11.8.64  
 x (10.5.65) Baltasound (Unst), 90 miles NNE.  
 BC 14079 Juv. 2.8.65  
 v 4.9.65 Heligoland, Germany, 54°11'N 7°55'E. Helg. 0305431  
 added.

## ROBIN

- N 32262 F.G. 12.3.65  
 v 15.2.65 Hesselager (Fyn) Denmark, 55°10'N 10°45'E.  
 N 96609 Ad. 5.5.65

v 18.5.65 Falsterbo, Sweden, 55°23'N 12°50'E. Stockholm 1232690 added.

Note that N 96609 was controlled at Falsterbo thirteen days after ringing; in a southerly direction.

#### ROCK PIPIT

618502 1st Y. 31.8.60

†-broken wing, 1.3.65 North Ronaldsay (Orkney), 30 miles WSW.

BA 51856 F.G. 13.8.65

Killed by car, 15.12.65 Tynemouth (Northumberland), 310 miles S.

618502 is our oldest recovery (5 years) for a Rock Pipit and BA 51856 is our first recovery of this species from England.

#### STARLING

725006 Juv. 27.6.60

v (8.4.65) Eday (Orkney), 45 miles WSW.

CK 21742 F.G. 4.11.62

x (2.4.65) Ytre-Vikna (Nord-trondelag) Norway, 64°54'N 10°54'E.

CK 21971 F.G. 12.11.62

x 2.5.65 Ravijoki, Virolahti (Kymi) Finland, 60°32'N 27°33'E.

CK 27561 Ad. 13.11.62

/?/ 21.5.65 Hesselby, Alunda (Uppsala) Sweden, 60°02'N 18°06'E.

CX 14720 Ad. 27.3.63

x (27.7.65) Stavning, Skjern (Jutland) Denmark, 55°58'N 8°23'E.

CX 30366 Juv. 6.7.64

x-on fishing boat, 1.4.65, 35 miles S of Mandal (Vest Agder) Norway, 57°35'N 7°30'E.

CX 95397 1st Y. 30.11.65

x 22.12.65 Cunningsburgh (Shetland), 40 miles NNE.

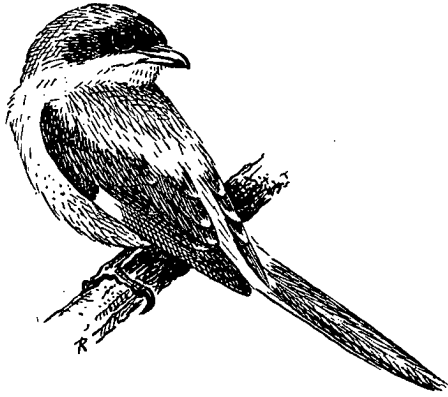
CK 21742, CK 21971 and CK 27561 were trapped during a period of heavy migration, which occurred between 4th and 18th November 1962 and peaked on 6th with 600+ Starlings on the island. This population was obviously of a north-eastern origin on 60° latitude: CK 21972 is our second Finnish recovery and only two other Starlings ringed at Fair Isle have been recovered further east.

## 64. Foreign Recovery at Fair Isle, 1965

#### BLACKBIRD

Statens viltundersokelser 73393 Pull. 5.6.64 Vestre Rom (Vestfold) Norway, 59°17'N 10°23'E.

v 23.10.65 ad, ♂ Mist-netted at Setter, Fair Isle.



Lesser Grey Shrike

## 65. Birds reported in Shetland, 1965

Edited by ROY H. DENNIS

1965 was an exciting year for rare birds in Shetland and four new species were recorded for the county, excluding Fair Isle and Foula; they were Little Ringed Plover, Woodchat Shrike, Firecrest and Coal Tit (3). Other noteworthy rarities were Bittern, only 3rd record this century; Little Bittern, 3rd record ever; 2 Ospreys, Golden Eagle, Hobby, Dowitcher, Little Gull, 2 Lesser Grey Shrikes, 2 Grasshopper Warblers, 2 Icterine Warblers, 2 Yellow-browed Warblers, 3 Red-breasted Flycatchers (including a spring ♂), Ortolan Bunting, Black-headed and Red-headed Buntings, Hawfinch and 2 Golden Orioles.

Bobby Tulloch, the Shetland representative of the R.S.P.B., reports a good breeding season for nearly all species except Peregrine, which failed to rear young in Shetland. As far as is known the Shetland specialities were unmolested by egg-collectors and we feel that this result is due to the establishment of a permanent R.S.P.B. representative in the county. A pair of Dunnocks attempted to nest at Halligarth, but failed to hatch the eggs. The nest containing 3 eggs was shown to me for identification.

Autumn irruptions were spectacular and particular attention must be drawn to the Great, Blue and Coal Tit numbers, the Waxwings and to a lesser extent, the Mealy and hybrid Mealy/Coue's Redpolls in October.

I am grateful to Magnus Sinclair, Unst, Bobby Tulloch,

Mid-Yell, and Dennis Coutts, Lerwick, for sending very full notes. Records were also received from A. Nicholson, A. M. Thomson, Stephen Saxby, Unst; Wilson Ogilvie, Fetlar; Johnny Simpson, Whalsay; Bill Porteous, Lerwick; Robert Duthie, Scalloway; G. D. Joy and M. Carins, Sumburgh.

The following species did not deserve specific mention: Fulmar, Storm Petrel, Gannet, Cormorant, Shag, Heron, Mallard, Teal, Wigeon, Tufted Duck, Eider, Scoter, Golden-eye, Red-breasted Merganser, Red Grouse, Pheasant, Moorhen, Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Turnstone, Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin, Redshank, Greenshank, Curlew, Woodcock, Snipe, Black-headed, Herring, Great Black-backed and Common Gulls, Kittiwake, Common and Arctic Terns, Razorbill, Guillemot, Tystie, Puffin, Rock Dove, Cuckoo, Swift, Meadow Pipit, Rock Pipit, Wren, Blackbird, Reed Bunting, Twite, House Sparrow, Starling, Hooded Crow and Raven.

**RED-THROATED DIVER.** First arrivals at breeding sites were at Walls 9th, Asta 10th, Mid-Yell 11th and Unst 17th March. Moderate breeding success.

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER.** 42 at Quendale 16th April and 30 there on 18th April. One in breeding plumage at Bixter 6th July. 2 adults and 2 immatures at Unst 23rd August.

**LITTLE GREBE.** Two wintered at Mid-Yell and one at Burra-voe from early October.

**SLAVONIAN GREBE.** 4 Catfirth 13th January and 8 there 15th January (DC). One at Spiggie loch 15th February (WP).

One in summer plumage at Burrafirth, Unst 13th June (RJT, GW, PJC). One at Bixter Voe 20th September.

**RED-NECKED GREBE.** 2 Sullom Voe 28th October (EJW).

**GREAT SHEARWATER.** One seen, from fishing boat, off Scalloway 13th April (R. Duthie).

**SOOTY SHEARWATER.** Reported by fishermen on many dates from 14th August (RJT).

**MANX SHEARWATER.** One seen off Burravoe, Yell 15th March and up to 150 gathering on the water off Fetlar at dusk during the summer (RJT).

**BITTERN.** One seen on isle of Papa, near Scalloway 16th May was later found dead and the remains were sent to RJT.

**LITTLE BITTERN.** A female seen at Loch of Scatness, south mainland, from 3rd to 10th June by many people, including GDJ (who found it on the 3rd), DC, RHD, RJT, WP.

**BARNACLE GOOSE.** One at Gutcher, Yell 15th-17th May (RJT).

**BRENT GOOSE.** 7 in Unst on 16th October (AMT).

**GREY LAG GOOSE.** 15 on 24th and 6 on 30th April, Unst (MS) and 2 there on 28th May (RJT).

**WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE.** One at Cullivoe 24th April (RJT).

**WHOOPER SWAN.** Small numbers in Unst in March, up to 18 from 8th to 15th; single in April and 2 on 1st May. Up to

- 50 at Easter Loch, Uyeasound in November.
- SHELDUCK.** A few pairs nested as usual. One at Symbister, Whalsay from 9th November to 9th December (JS).
- GADWALL.** A number were reported between 7th and 16th May: 1 Lerwick 7th (WP), 4 Bardister 10th (DC), 5 Clickhimin 16th (DC), and a few Hillwell and Clumlie lochs.
- PINTAIL.** A pair at Hillwell, 18th April (DC).
- SHOVELER.** 2 at Scatness 19th August, 2 at Hillwell 22nd August (DC), and 1 Spiggie 9th October.
- POCHARD.** 40-60 wintered on lochs near Lerwick and 8 on Kirk Loch, Yell 12th March.
- VELVET SCOTER.** 5 Mid-Yell Voe 10th March, 10 Basta Voe 12th March and 8 Dales Voe 24th October.
- LONG-TAILED DUCK.** Several pairs in breeding plumage on fresh water lochs up to 20th May. 2 at Belmont 20th September and 5 in Unst 16th October were first autumn arrivals.
- SMEW.** An adult male on Clickhimin 14th-28th March (DC, WP, RHD).
- GOOSANDER.** A pair on Spiggie Loch 14th-21st March (DC, WP).
- OSPREY.** One in Walls area for about a week from 5th May (DC) and one flying past Mid-Yell 12th June (RJT).
- SPARROWHAWK.** One Unst 28th April (MS) and a male at Seafield, Lerwick 22nd October (DC).
- BUZZARD.** One at Seafield, Lerwick 12th May (WP) and one buzzard spp. Unst 12th May.
- GOLDEN EAGLE.** One reported in Unst 8th-14th May (MS et al.).
- HEN HARRIER.** A female at Quendale 10th June (RJT) and 11th June (DC); a harrier spp. in Unst 5th May.
- PEREGRINE.** No pairs were known to rear young. One pair laid 3 eggs in the west mainland but no chicks were reared.
- HOBBY.** One at Burrafirth, west mainland, 16th June (DC).
- MERLIN.** More nests and reports of breeding pairs during the summer. Small numbers seen on passage.
- KESTREL.** Singles Unst 26th May and Yell 5th and 10th May. One Unst 18th July. Passage noted late August and September. One at Lerwick 6th October.
- WATER RAIL.** 2 at Burravoe 27th October.
- CORNCRAKE.** Heard calling two sites in Unst, Weisdale, Fetlar and many places on mainland.
- OYSTERCATCHER.** Arrival of residents from 1st March, mainly 10th-11th. An albino at Unst 26th May (D. Mouat).
- LITTLE RINGED PLOVER.** One at Whalsay 17th-19th September. First for Shetland.
- GREY PLOVER.** 2 at Virkie 14th September, 3 on 26th and 5 on 29th September (DC), 1 at Whalsay 16th September



- (JS) and 1 at Fetlar 19th September (RJT).
- LITTLE STINT.** 4 at Virkie 14th September (RJT and DC), 2 Whalsay 22nd August (JS), and 3 Virkie 17th September.
- KNOT.** One at Cullivoe 7th January, small parties at Virkie and Whalsay from 10th August.
- SANDERLING.** 4 at Hascosay 5th June (RJT). Up to 100 at Virkie from 20th to end of August.
- RUFF.** Unusually numerous in September: 10 at Seafield, Lerwick 5th (WP), 3 at Tingwall 6th (RJT), 12 in Unst 9th (MS), up to 30 at Whalsay from 15th to end of month (JS), 16 Hascosay 19th (RJT).
- DOWITCHER.** One Whalsay 20th October and 7th November (JS).
- GREEN SANDPIPER.** Singles at Cullivoe 4th May, Fetlar 11th May (RJT), Kergord 21st and 29th July (DC), Lerwick 28th August and Tingwall 5th September (DC, RJT).
- WOOD SANDPIPER.** One Unst 23rd May (MS), and 2 Tingwall 7th August (DC).
- COMMON SANDPIPER.** Singles Unst 7th May and 6th August (MS). One or two pairs nested. 2 at Virkie 9th October.
- BLACK-TAILED GODWIT.** 4 Unst 24th April (MS), 1 Whalsay 17th and 22nd September (JS), and 1 West Yell 27th September (RJT).
- BAR-TAILED GODWIT.** A small wintering party at Virkie both ends of year.
- WHIMBREL.** Breeding numbers maintained in Unst and Fetlar. Recent re-established colony in Yell showed slight increase and a few pairs now nest in Whalsay.
- RED-NECKED PHALAROPE.** A good season, with successful breeding in two new sites. Dispersal from breeding grounds between 25th and 30th July. One or two seen 20th-23rd August (RJT).
- GREAT SKUA.** First arrivals were in Scalloway 26th March, Hascosay 29th March and Unst 4th April. Last reports were at Walls, 7th October, Fetlar 10th October, Unst 13th October and Scalloway 15th December.
- ARCTIC SKUA.** First arrivals were at Yell 24th and Unst 28th April. Last seen at Whalsay 24th and Unst 27th September.
- LITTLE GULL.** One at Scalloway 20th February to 12th March (DC, RD and RJT).
- LESSER BACK-BACKED GULL.** 2 at Gutcher, Yell 30th March and 1 in Unst 23rd April were first arrivals. One of the Scandinavian race at Scatness 7th September (DC).
- GLAUCOUS GULL.** Small numbers in Lerwick and Scalloway harbours, up to 5 at Scalloway, January to March, and a few stragglers until mid-May. Singles in Unst 4th April and 8th May. One at Cullivoe 4th-7th August and one in Unst 25th-27th September. One in Unst on 24th November

- and 3 adults there on 25th November. Small numbers at Scalloway and Lerwick late November and December.
- ICELAND GULL. One at Scalloway January-March (DC, WP). Singles at Scalloway 11th October (DC) and 26th October (EJW).
- SANDWICH TERN. 2 at Quendale 18th April (DC) and 2 at Virkie 22nd June (RHD).
- LITTLE AUK. 250 to 300 between Out Skerries and Whalsay 2nd February (RJT).
- WOOD PIGEON. Single in Unst 4th-8th May (MS).
- COLLARED DOVE. One in Unst 1st June and one at Mid-Yell 25th June (RHD, RJT). 3 birds spent the winter in Lerwick and at least 3 pairs nested in the gardens there. 20 were present in Lerwick on 3rd August (DC).
- TURTLE DOVE. Singles in Unst 2nd June and 5th October (MS).
- SNOWY OWL. One in Fetlar from January to December, another there 25th to 28th February. Two in Whalsay from April to November. Singles seen in Unst 28th May; Sumburgh, end of May; Ronas Hill, occasionally April to December; Yell, April to May and 14th November, and Scatness 12th September (per RJT).
- LONG-EARED OWL. 5 wintered in Scalloway January-March, probably nested in that area again. 7 seen at Scalloway October-December. One in Lerwick 3rd-20th August (DC) and one in Unst 1st October (RJT).
- SHORT-EARED OWL. One near Mid-Yell on 6th June (RJT).
- SKYLARK. Song started in various areas from 6th to 10th March. Spring build-up of 100 in Yell 12th, 200 in Fetlar 19th and 70 in Unst 23rd March.
- SAND MARTIN. Singles recorded Unst 6th and 27th May (MS), Fetlar 29th May (WO), Scatness 6th and 10th June (DC, RJT). One at Lerwick 27th September (DC).
- SWALLOW. In Unst, 1 on 17th (RS) and 5 on 21st April (AN). Small numbers in May and June, 3 nests found in Unst, Yell and Sumburgh. Autumn passage until 10th October, max. 10 in Unst on 7th October.
- HOUSE MARTIN. Spring passage mainly last week of May, but 1 Unst 30th June. Autumn passage maxima in Unst, 60 on 27th and 20 on 29th September.
- TREE PIPIT. 20 on 7th, 6 on 8th and 4 on 9th May in Unst (MS).
- YELLOW WAGTAIL. 2, race not determined, Whalsay 22nd August (JS).
- WHITE WAGTAIL. Spring passage from 18th April to 21st June. A pair laid 4 eggs in a boat moored in Mid-Yell Voe and reared 2 young (RJT). Autumn passage in Unst from 10th August to 4th September.
- WOODCHAT SHRIKE. An immature at Gremista, Lerwick 2nd-5th October (DC).
- LESSER GREY SHRIKE. Single adults at Sellafirth, Yell from

- 23rd to 30th September (RJT) and at Whalsay from 17th to 24th October (JS).
- GREAT GREY SHRIKE.** Singles near East Yell 5th-12th May and Whalsay 5th and 22nd October (JS).
- WAXWING.** In Unst, 9 on 17th October, small numbers until 19th November, maximum 10 on 20th October. Large numbers elsewhere in Shetland, up to 30-40 in flocks, 17th October-27th November.
- DUNNOCK.** 1 on Unst 8th, 2 Fetlar 9th and 1 Unst 26th May (MS; WO; RJT). Small passage 3rd-6th October. A pair attempted to nest at Halligarth, Unst (SS); nest and eggs identified by RHD.
- GRASSHOPPER WARBLER.** One Seafield, Lerwick, in song, 15th May (WP, DC) and one Halligarth, Unst 26th May (DC, RJT).
- ICTERINE WARBLER.** Singles at Voxter, Mainland 26th June (RHD, RJT), and Otterswick, Yell 4th September (RJT).
- BARRED WARBLER.** Single immatures at Mid-Yell 4th September (RJT) and Seafield, Lerwick 5th September (WP).
- GARDEN WARBLER.** Small numbers reported from Unst, Yell, Whalsay and Mainland between 17th August and 14th October.
- BLACKCAP.** Single males at Fetlar, 9th June (WO) and Lerwick, 11th June (DC). One Lerwick 24th, 4 singles in Yell on 27th, 3 on Fetlar and 1 on Unst 29th September, a few until 14th October.
- WHITETHROAT.** Singles at Unst 26th, Yell 27th May and Fetlar 12th June (RJT). One at Lerwick 1st June (DC). Autumn singles at Whalsay 6th September and 6th October (JS).
- LESSER WHITETHROAT.** Singles at Mid-Yell, in song, 25th and Lerwick 29th May (DC, RJT). One at Fetlar 10th October (WO).
- WILLOW WARBLER.** Small numbers 5th-29th May and 16th August-18th September. One in song at Halligarth, Unst on 25th June (RHD, RJT).
- CHIFFCHAFF.** Small numbers 5th-29th May and 4th-16th October. One at Seafield 22nd June (RHD).
- YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER.** Singles at Unst (MS) and Lerwick (per DC) on 3rd October.
- GOLDCREST.** Small numbers 2nd-13th April and more numerous 26th September-26th October.
- FIRECREST.** Single at Seafield, Lerwick from 11th June until 3rd July, and 29th August-September (DC, RHD, WP, RJT et al.).
- PIED FLYCATCHER.** 2 at Mid-Yell 5th, 1 Unst 7th and 1 Fetlar 8th May. Small number 4th September to 3rd October; max. 12 in Unst 3rd October (AN).
- RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER.** A male at Whalsay 24th and 25th June and 2 at Seafield, Lerwick 26th and 27th September

- (WP, DC).
- SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.** Singles Fetlar 23rd May (WO), Yell 25th, and 2, 27th May (RJT). One Lerwick, 1st June, and singles there 29th September, 3rd and 10th October (DC).
- WHINCHAT.** Spring passage 7th-31st May, song heard at Yell, 27th (RJT). Autumn passage 27th August-26th September.
- WHEATEAR.** First arrivals, Yell 3rd and Unst 7th April. Last ones seen at Unst 5th, Whalsay 15th October and 11th November.
- BLACK REDSTART.** ♀ at Aywick 6th-13th May and ♂ at Whalsay 26th May (RJT, JS).
- REDSTART.** First arrivals at Unst 28th April (AMT), and Yell 5th May (RJT). Autumn passage 4th September-7th October, very many at Sumburgh 3rd October.
- ROBIN.** One at Seafeld, Lerwick 1st February (WP). Spring passage 2nd-20th May, many at Fetlar on 5th May (WO). Autumn passage 29th September-13th October.
- FIELDFARE.** Very few in January-March, but large passage 5th-12th May, flocks of 200-400 seen Yell, Unst, Fetlar and Whalsay. One Helendale, Lerwick 22nd August (DC). Autumn passage from 26th September, mainly 3rd-6th and 17th-30th October; max. 400+ at Unst, 17th (MS).
- RING OUZEL.** Singles Unst 29th April and 1st May (MS), Yell 3rd and 5th May (RJT), and Burrafirth 9th May (DC, RJT). 2 Lerwick and 1 Unst 27th September.
- REDWING.** Small spring passage; one singing at Haligarth 26th May. Autumn passage from 9th September, but mainly from 18th and 27th September. Maxima 150 on 3rd and 17th October in Unst.
- SONG THRUSH.** Small numbers in spring, but more than usual in autumn from 26th September-early October.
- MISTLE THRUSH.** One at Mid-Yell 5th May (RJT).
- COAL TIT.** 2 at Whalsay 29th September (JS) and 1 at Unst 1st October (RJT).
- BLUE TIT.** Singles in Unst and Whalsay on 27th September (MS, JS). 2 at Fetlar 28th (WO) and 29th (RJT), 6 Whalsay 29th September (JS), 1 Unst 1st October (RJT); 2 wintered at Fetlar (WO) and 1 at Whalsay (JS).
- GREAT TIT.** One or two Fetlar 28th September (WO), 1 Fetlar 29th, 1 Unst and 1 Yell 30th September (RJT, MS), 3 Unst 1st October and 1 until 26th October. One wintered in Yell and 2 at Hubie, Fetlar.
- CORN BUNTING.** Small parties wintered in Yell and 24 at Asta, Mainland 14th February (DC). None bred in Unst.
- ORTOLAN BUNTING.** One at Sumburgh 9th October (L. Tucker).
- BLACK-HEADED BUNTING.** A ♂ at Brough, Whalsay, 1st-5th June (JS, RJT).
- RED-HEADED BUNTING.** A ♂ at Asta, Mainland 29th May-2nd June (DC, WP, JS).

- LAPLAND BUNTING. One at Fetlar 3rd October (RJT).
- SNOW BUNTING. Wintering flocks up to 100 in Yell and 60 in Unst until 17th April. One in Unst 28th May (AN). First arrivals, 1 Unst 6th, 20 Whalsay 24th and 3 Yell 30th September. Usual wintering flocks.
- CHAFFINCH. Singles at Seafield 31st January (WP) and Unst, 14th April (MS). Small numbers late April-early May, and 26th September-October, up to 20-50. Small numbers wintered Mid-Yell, Fetlar and Lerwick.
- BRAMBLING. Small numbers late April-early May and up to 50 in flocks early October.
- LINNET. A pair at Lerwick 11th June (DC), a ♂ at Virkie 22nd June (RHD), a pair at Kergord 22nd June (RHD, RJT), 2 Sumburgh 9th October (LT).
- REDPOLL. A ♂ at Lerwick 24th May-1st June (DC). Autumn passage of *flammea* type birds from 27th September, mainly from 20th October. Max. 30-40 on Mainland, and 12 Unst.
- SISKIN. 20 Whalsay 26th, small party Aywick 26th, 2 Mid-Yell 27th and 2 Lerwick 27th September. Small numbers in October.
- BULLFINCH. Singles at Fetlar 13th October (WO) and Scalloway 5th December (RD).
- HAWFINCH. An exhausted ♂ picked up in Commercial Street, Lerwick 14th May (DC), fed for a week and then released at Seafield, where it was seen until 26th June.
- TREE SPARROW. 18 at Halligarth 26th May (DC, RJT) and 17 at Saxavord, Unst 1st June (MS). At least one at Kergord, probably breeding, 22nd June (RHD).
- GOLDEN ORIOLE. A ♂ at Whalsay 9th May (JS) and an immature ♂ at Scatness 6th June (DC).
- JACKDAW. Singles Unst 18th January, 2nd-11th and 24th February, Mid-Yell 31st January, Burravoe 26th-30th January and Fetlar 11th February (MS, RJT).
- ROOK. Singles Yell, Unst and Fetlar January-March, and 5 on 24th March, Unst (MS).
- CARRION CROW. Singles at Scalloway 23rd (DC) and Unst 26th May (RJT).

## 66.

## Notes on the Flora, 1966

MARINA T. DENNIS

1966 proved to be an exceptional year on Fair Isle for the abundance of plant growth. Most species flowered in profusion everywhere and among those we found pure white forms of the following: *Armeria maritima* (Thrift) three examples *Gentianella camvestris* (Field Gentian), *Lychnis flos-cuculi* (Ragged Robin), *Prunella vulgaris* (Self Heal), *Jasione*

*montana* (Sheepsbit) and *Scilla verna* (Squill).

Other plants found flowering this year and which have been rarely recorded include:

*Coeloglossum viride* (Frog Orchid). This orchid was first noticed growing sparsely on Bunes in 1963 and not again until 1966 when we found one or two plants in the same area. On investigation we discovered that it was common and flowering in the short turf between the Lighthouse store and the Grey Stane and as far as the edge of Slogar.

*Trientalis europaea* (Chickweed Wintergreen) had been recorded by Mrs Hannah Stout before 1948 and after that not until 1955 when a single flowering plant was found at Wirvie. This year it was abundant on Wirvie Brecks with numerous patches all over the breast of the hill above the south side of Wirvie. There were not very many in flower—about one in every hundred plants on 2nd July.

*Tussilago farfara* (Coltsfoot) was first recorded in the Observatory list in 1964 at Melville House and since then has spread extensively due to the lack of cultivation of the garden. The owner can remember a few plants each year when he dug the garden in the spring.

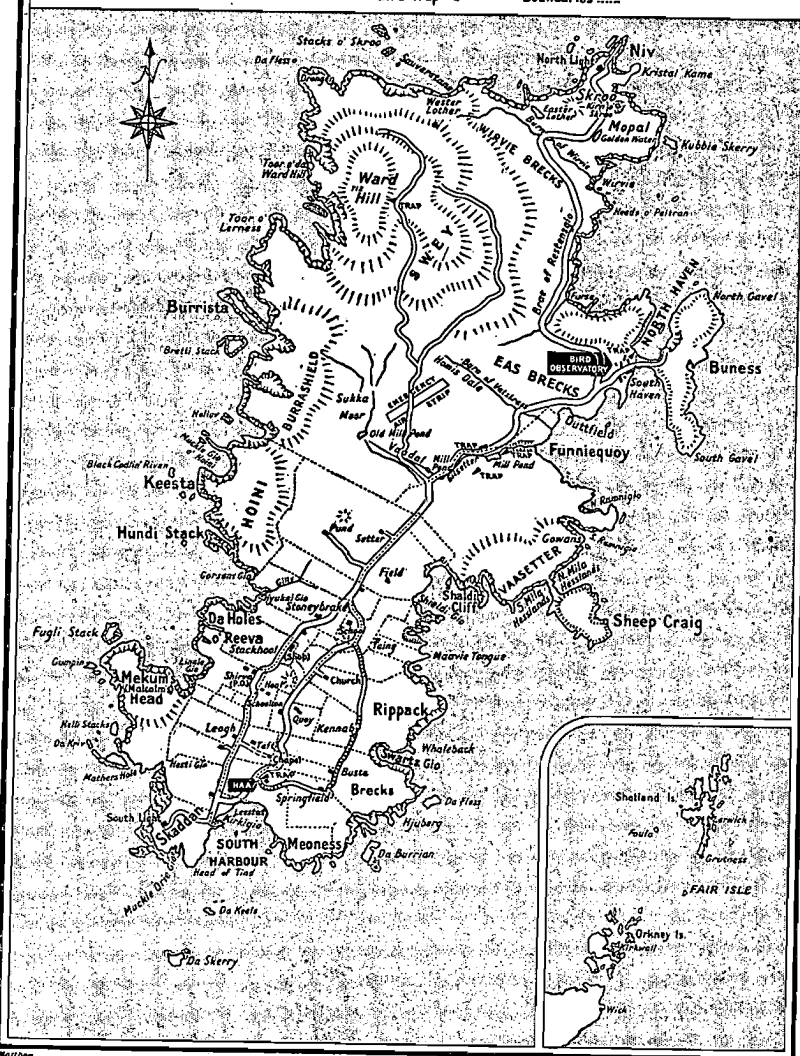
*Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort). This was the only new plant recorded this year. A single specimen was found, in July, growing among the Frog Orchids on Bunes.

Of the recent plants introduced to the island, *Ulex europaeus* (Gorse), planted on the north side of the Vaadal burn in 1963, flowered this April for the first time. *Hippophaë rhamnoides* (Sea Buckthorn) was introduced in 1964 in the Gully and Vaadal plantations and at the Observatory. It failed to thrive except in the Gully where disappointingly only one plant is now growing.

# FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

0 100yds. 440yds. 880yds. 1 mile

Roads  Bird Trap  Boundaries



DESIGNED BY  
WALTER THOMSON  
SELKIRK