

Change of Address

Abbot, Sir Peter, KCB, Hop Gardens, Newells Lane, Lower Beading, HORSHAM, Sussex RH13 6LN.

Finney A, Mr, Valiant, London Rd, FAIRFORD, Glos GL7 4OS.

Palmer S, Canon, 13 Alvington Rd, Carisbrooke, NEWPORT, IOW PO30 5AR.

Resigned (with effect from 1 Dec 96)

Fitzpatrick, P K, POMA RN

Lowndes R J, Capt RN

Moser - Seramur, Mr

Roberts D C K, Lt Cdr RN

Tuck A S, Lt RN

Walgate R, Capt MN

Deceased

The Hon Secretary reports with regret the following deaths:

Dunn B H, Cdr RN

Macnamee I, Mr

Lewis C B, Dr, OBE

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

New Associate

Bradley P E, Mrs, PO Box 90F GT, Cayman Islands, BWI

Campe M W E, Wechold 124, 27318 Hilgermissen, Germany

Jowett C R, Mr, 30 Parawai Crescent, PONSONBY, Auckland, NZ

Lister S, Mr, 31 Lisle St, LOUGHBOROUGH, Leicestershire LE11 1AW (not included in latest Membership List)

Change of Address

Bailey R S, Dr, Stavnholtvej 205, 3460 Birkerød, Denmark.

Hales S, Mr, 17 Weatherby Way, DORTCHESTER, Dorset DT1 2ED.

Royal Naval Birdwatching Society



REGISTERED CHARITY No. 206719

BULLETIN No. 135

SEPTEMBER 1996

THE FIFTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will take place at 2.00 p.m. (1400) on Friday, 6th December in the New Map Room of the Royal Geographical Society in Exhibition Road. The nearest underground stations are South Kensington and Knightsbridge. Unfortunately our Patron, HRH Prince Philip is unable to attend. The principle guest will be Dr Robin Pellew, Director of the WWF.

All members, their friends and relatives are welcome, but if you have not already informed the Secretary please let him know as soon as possible. There will be a small charge of around £4.50 for tea.

APPOINTMENT OF NEW HONORARY TREASURER

Lt Cdr Gary Lewis RN will be taking over the duties of Treasurer from Hon Sec with effect from the 50th AGM. Members paying by standing order need take no action, but members and associates paying on an annual basis should send their 1997 dues to:

Hon. Treasurer RNBWS
40 Pondfield Rd
SALTASH
Cornwall PL12 4UA

SPECIALLY REDUCED OFFERS TO RNBWS MEMBERS

British Birds. Despite its title this has reports from most of Europe and is aimed to interest both amateur and professional. Apart from papers on identification, ecology, behaviour and conservation there are now monthly reports on migrants, breeding birds and rarities plus numerous other features. At £33.60 a year (£32.60 direct debit) it is good value.

Bird Watchers Yearbook. This is offered at £11.00 (normal price £12.50). It includes articles, news of books and papers published during the year, a list of reserves and observatories and a directory of County, National and International bodies. It also has sunset and Tide Tables. I always get a copy.

RNBWS TIES AND LOGOS

Navy blue ties with a multiple white Sea Swallow motif are available from

Hon. Sec. at £6.00 each including postage. Shield shaped logos suitable for wind cheaters etc. are also available at 50p each plus 20p postage.

PRIZE FOR THE BEST ARTICLE FOR *SEA SWALLOW* BY A NEW CONTRIBUTOR

It is intended to offer a prize each year of £20 for the best article submitted to the Editor during the year by a member whose work has not previously been published in *Sea Swallow*. The conditions of the award are as follows:

- Articles must be about seabirds at sea, seabird colonies, or landbirds at sea.
- Articles should be between 1,500 and 2,000 words long, typed double-spaced on A4 paper, and accompanied by appropriate maps and illustrations. It would be helpful, though not essential, if the text could also be supplied on 3.5" diskette, specifying the word-processing software used. ASCII back-up is also desirable, in case of incompatibility.
- Entries must reach the Editor by 31 May.

Entries will be judged by a panel consisting of the Editor and 2 other members of the Executive Committee, who will only make the award if they are satisfied that an article of sufficiently high standard has been submitted.

SEA SWALLOW

Seabird Checklist (revised). The original List published in *Sea Swallow* 42 has been updated to take account of comments received and to correct earlier misprints. It is published as an insert (free to members), with this issue. It bears a cover price of 50p (to defray production costs) and additional copies are available, from Michael Casement, (@ 75p to cover postage). It would be helpful, if members could refer to this when submitting contributions, and disseminate copies widely to potential authors.

Golden Jubilee edition *Sea Swallow* 45. This will be issued free to all members, but the cover price has been increased to £8.00 (US\$ 16), to help defray the additional production costs. Extra copies will be available at the AGM for all those wishing to purchase additional copies - as Christmas presents for potential new members? Please help in this way if you can.

***Sea Swallow* back numbers**. A stock of backnumbers, and *Seabird Checklists*, will also be available for purchase, at favourable discounts.

BRITTANY SYMPOSIUM

The first Norman ornithological symposium will be held at Caen 5 - 6 April 1997 on Birds of the Channel. It will be in 3 parts, Seabirds (at sea and inbreeding), Shorebirds and Conservation Problems. Papers may be presented in English. Details and application forms from the Hon. Sec.

made direct with him at:

Aparato # 1, San Rafael de Hevedia, 3015 Costa Rica. Tel / Fax 267 7197

OBITUARIES

Dr C B Lewis OBE - Honorary member. Dr 'Bernard' Lewis was the founder of the Jamaica Natural History Museum and Director of the Institute from 1950 - 73 during which time he expanded many aspects. He was interested in almost every facet though much of his efforts went into collecting Fauna and Flora for the Museum. He was a keen member of Jamaica's Gosse Bird Club. In 1966 he suffered a severe stroke from which he never fully recovered.

Ian Macnamee. Ian first approached the society with a scheme offering reduced cross channel ferry fares for birders in return for passage reports. Although he got enough support to write a paper it was not as much as he had hoped for. His early death at 56 cost the society an enthusiastic sea watcher.

RECORDS RECEIVED

Since the publication of Bulletin 134 the following Seabird and Landbird Reports have been received, together with numerous letters. These are gratefully acknowledged, and will be summarised in the next annual report, *Sea Swallow* 46.

Seabirds.

L/H (Comms) A H Todd RFA, and CPO (Comms) G H Walton RFA, RFA FORT GRANGE, 16 Apr - 7 Jun 96 (N. Atlantic - deployment to USA) (4); 7 - 20 Jun 96, (Atlantic - Scottish waters) (4).

Kevin Morgan, detailed notes and RNBWS record forms from four cruises with "Marine Expeditions" to Antarctica as Ship's Naturalist aboard MV PROFESSOR MULTINOVSKY. 17 - 30 Nov 95, Ushuaia - Falklands & Antarctica - Ushuaia (9); 30 Nov - 13 Dec 95, Ushuaia - South Georgia & Antarctica - Ushuaia (8); 13 - 21 Dec 95, Ushuaia - Antarctica - Ushuaia (4); 21 - 29 Dec 95 Ushuaia - Antarctica - Ushuaia (2).

Landbirds.

L/H (Comms) A H Todd RFA, and CPO (Comms) G H Walton RFA, RFA FORT GRANGE, 16 Apr - 7 Jun 96 (N. Atlantic - deployment to USA and return) (2); 7 - 20 Jun 96 (Atlantic - Scottish waters) (1).

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES 1996

New Members

Burns A, Lt RN, HMS EXETER.

c/o Ross J H, Mr, Autumn Hse, Manor Lodge Rd, ROWLANDS CASTLE, Hants PO9 6BA.

Stockwell A, LWEM(O), 18 Child Lane, Robertown, LIVERSEDGE, West Yorks W15 7LZ (HMS EDINBURGH).

Wragg G, Capt MN, Dept of Zoology, South Parks Rd, OXFORD OX1 3PS.

for most species were comparable for the previous 2 years.

Sandgrouse Vol. 18(1) has an article on bird watching at Zaranik on the north coast of Egypt, this provides a passage of Cory's Shearwater, *C. diomedea*, Balearic Shearwater, *P. yelkouan* and 3 species of Skua *Stercorariidae*, p.14 - 16. Notes on the coastal birds of Lybia, 1993 reports 4 small colonies of Yellow legged Gulls, *L. cachinnans*, 4 breeding species of Tern and a few breeding Shag, *P. aristotelis*, p.53 - 56.

Australian Seabirds Group Newsletter No 30 reviews unconfirmed seabird sightings off Australia and New Zealand 1994 - 95. These consist of sightings, in the case of Australia, from trips out of Brisbane, Bateman's Bay, Sydney, Woollongong New South Wales, Portland, Victoria and Robe, South Australia. One of the more interesting included Black Bellied Storm Petrel, *F. tropica* off Sydney. Most of the trips were made from Woollongong where sightings included Buller's Albatros, *D. bulleri*, Light - mantled Sooty Albatros, *P. palpebrata*, Black - winged Petrel, *P. nigripennis*, and Cook's Petrel, *P. cooki*. Blue Petrels, *H. caerulea* were seen off Robe. The New Zealand sightings are mainly from the fishing grounds north and east of North Island as far north as Norfolk Island. There are also 2 trips on MILBURN CARRIER II, Auckland - New Plymouth - Nelson - Westport - Auckland. Sighting include the following Petrels; Juan Fernandez, *P. externa*, Pycroft's, *P. pycrofti*, Kermadec, *P. neglecta*, Stejneger's, *P. longirostris*, Gould's, *P. leucoptera*, and Soft - plumaged, *P. mollis*. A Red - tailed Tropic Bird was seen at 22°18' S 166°57' E and a possible Madeiran Storm - Petrel at 32°29' S 166°48' E.

DYED ALBATROSS

A number of New Zealand Black - Browed, *D. melanophris* and Grey - Headed, *D. chrystostoma* have been dyed yellow - orange and pink - red respectively. Sightings to Sue Waugh, NIWA, PO Box 8602, CHRISTCHURCH, NZ.

RINGED GUILLEMOT

Common Guillemot, *A. aalge* cleaned and rehabilitated after the SEA EMPRESS oil spill off Milford Haven, SouthWales have been fitted with green rings with white letters. Any sighting will be extremely valuable and should be reported to the BTO, The Nunnery, THETFORD, Norfolk IP24 2PU.

RECENT ORNITHOLOGICAL LITERATURE

Dr W R P Bourne has kindly given the society a copy of Recent Ornithological Literature which is a summary of recent ornithological publications in Australasia, throughout the world. The copy is held in the library.

VISITORS TO COSTA RICA

The President of the Birding Club of Costa Rica (John Weinberg) has extended a welcome to ant RNBWS member visiting his country. Contact should be

NEWS FROM THE AREAS

Plymouth. Ken Partridge writes that HMS CAMBRIDGE Conservation Committee is active again and he hopes with their help to organise a third survey of the Mewstone Rock to see how effective the rat eradication programme has been. He is also involved in the Port of Plymouth Marine Committee as our representative. Exceptional numbers of Storm Petrels appeared off South Devon in May with 400 at Prawle Point, 200 at Berry Head, 150 at Hope's Nose and 150 in Plymouth Sound.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Congratulations to Cpl Kevin Brooks RM on passing his Senior Command Course, to Lt D J Evans on his promotion to Lt Cdr and to Cdr Peach RN on his selection to Captain in 1997.

EXPEDITIONS

Two expeditions were successfully carried out this summer. On Lundy work was carried out on behalf of the Lundy Field Society as part of a long term monitoring programme. As well as census work, daily ringing was carried out in St Johns Valley and night excursions to monitor Manx Shearwater were also made. Unfortunately the weather was not ideal for unusual migrants. Sanda off the Mull of Kintyre was visited 3 - 7 June. The first day was lost because the weather was too rough and though the crossing was made on the second day the 2 craft frequently lost sight of each other in the trough of a wave. During the night a gale blew down a tent and the party were lucky to have permission to use a boathouse. Two teams of 3 walked an average of 10 miles a day over seaweed strewn boulders and precarious cliff paths. By the end of the expedition the whole of Sanda and near by Sheep Island had been surveyed and night sorties made for Manx Shearwater, *P.puffinus* and British Storm petrel, *H.pelagicus*. A full expedition report will be raised in due course. The journey across, watching all four of the remarkably tame breeding British Auks at close range, watching Peregrines hunting along the cliff tops or listening to the eerie calls of Manx Shearwaters circling over the boatshed at night all formed part of a truly memorable experience.

UPDATED LIST OF MEMBERS

An updated list of members is being issued with this bulletin.

NEWS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The **Army Ornithological Society Bulletin No 2/95** covers a range of visits to France, Guernsey, Norfolk and Spain to name a few. AOS will return to Ascension this year. RAFOS and RNBWS Expeds are listed.

World Birdwatch Vol 18 No 1 has a brief reference, p.15, to the Jubail Marine Wildlife Sanctuary, a group of Coral Islands together with a stretch of coast on the NE coast of Saudi Arabia. This is a major breeding area for Lesser Crested Tern, *S. bengalensis*, White Cheeked Tern, *S. anaethetus* and a smaller number of

Swift Terns, *S. bergii*. **Vol. 18 No 2** mentions 147 Saunders Gull, *L. saundersi* seen in the Red River Delta in Vietnam last Feb (p.3). There is an article on the problems involved in the wildlife management of Mediterranean Deltas, p.12 - 16. Bird Life International is pressing for a formal inquiry into the SEA EMPRESS pollution disaster at Milford Haven, S Wales.

Seabird Vol. 18 has articles on the biometrics of wrecked Kittiwake, *R. tridactyla*, p.5 - 9 and Guillemot, *U. aalge*, p.38 - 43. The reduction in the numbers of Corsican Shags, *P. aristotelis* is thought to be to reduced availability of food, p.10 -19. The number of Arctic Terns found in the north central North Sea in July suggests that this could be a staging area for failed breeders waiting to head south, p.20 -25. A study of Gannets, *S. bassana* *M. bassanus* in Norway shows a steady increase, inter colony movement is discussed, p.30 - 37. Movements of Gannets off Cape St Vincent, Portugal are summarised, p.44 - 48.

Seabird Group Newsletter 74 has an article on Waved Albatross, *D. irrorata* and the risk to this species if long line fishing is permitted in the Galapagos, p.2 - 5. It has been found that this species feeds close to the Galapagos during the breeding season. When shoals of fish are attacked by boobies and dolphins the albatross take advantage of the confusion to scavenge from other birds especially when boobies are attacked and downed by frigate birds. The 1995 seabird breeding season in Britain and Ireland is reviewed, p.6 - 7. Mink and high tides severely affected some colonies and those in the Southern Irish Sea had low success rates. There are signs of recovery from the BRAER oil spill. Shag and Kittiwake are recovering from recent wrecks whilst Gannet and Guillemot continue to increase. Roof top nesting by Gulls is also increasing.

Scottish Bird News No 42 gives an estimate of 20,000 seabirds affected by oil from SEA EMPRESS with Common Scoter, *M. nigra* probably suffering the most. In **Scottish Birds, Summer 96, Vol. 18 No 3** the results of the 1994 aerial survey of Gannet colonies on St Kilda are discussed and an estimated growth of 0.9% from 1984 is calculated. p.152 - 8.

Dutch Birding Vol. 18 No 2 has an article on Relict Gulls, *L. relictus* on Happy Island, China, p.59 - 63. A maximum of 865 birds was recorded in this area which is an important post breeding, moulting and possibly wintering area. A Soft-plumaged Petrel found on the shore of the Dead Sea in 1963 has been re-examined and classified as *P. mollis*. Unconfirmed records include a Laughing Gull, *L. atricilla* at Sunderland, Tyne and Wear Feb - Apr and another at Blannerville, Kerry mid April. Ross's Gull *R. rosea* was reported off Devon in March and off Cornwall later. The visiting Forster's Tern, *S. forsteri* at Galway appeared occasionally in March and April. A Bridled Tern, *S. anaethetus* was seen off Dungarvan, Waterford in company with Sandwich Terns, *S. sandvicensis*. Little Terns *S. albifrons* were seen at Boa Vista, Cape Verde. A possible Black-browed Albatross was seen off Schveningen on 25 March and a Ross's Gull was seen at Camperdown 20 February. **Vol. 18 No 3** has a general article on the use of mitochondrial DNA techniques for distinguishing species and sub-species and other molecular approaches to the

problem, p.133 - 6. There is a confirmed first record for Swinhoe's Storm-petrel, *O. monorhis* in Italy at Genova, Liguria. Unconfirmed reports include a Brown Booby, *S. leucogaster* at Bocca di Serchio, Toscana in May. A Great Cormorant, *P. carbo* has bred in Finland for the first time. At least 300 pairs of Mediterranean Gulls, *L. melanocephalus* bred in the SW Netherlands. Laughing Gulls, *L. atricilla* appeared at Ouad Sous, Morocco, Roma, Denmark and Kerry, Ireland. A Black Sea Yellow-legged Gull, *L. cachinnans* was recovered in the Netherlands in 1991, the first known record for this sub-species. The first recorded Kelp Gull, *L. dominicanus* for the USA was seen off Galveston, Texas, December - May. The Lesser Crested Tern, *L. bengalensis* returned to the Farne Islands for the 13th year, others have nested with Sandwich Terns, *S. sandvicensis* in the Ebro Estuary and near Albufera, Valencia.

SULA, 1996, Vol. 10, a special issue, reviews the seabird passage along the Dutch Coast in 1994. **Special Issue No 2** discusses the distribution of seabirds in the North Sea showing that much more work must be done before the reasons behind it are understood. **No 3** has some interesting short items including 6 Little Auks, *A. alle* seen in the Irish Sea in November 1994, p.100; Common Tern, *S. hirundo* which fished well away from the nest were seen dipping their prey in a pond before giving it to the young, p.102; up to 80,000 Sooty Shearwater, *P. griseus* were observed passing Punta Gabun, South Chile after a storm and lastly, at Ijmuiden, a Sabine's Gull, *L. sabini* was seen to catch a Wren, *T. troglodites* in flight and swallow it whole.

Alauda Vol 64 No 1 has a brief note referring to a 1994 study a major breeding site for Saunders's Gull, *L. saundersi* in Xiangsu province in China. New types of prey were identified. The site is officially a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve but is already at risk. No details are given, p.68. **Vol. 64 No 2** has a major article on breeding species of an important wetland reserve, Banc d'Arguin in Mauritania. Falling numbers appear to be related to over fishing offshore, p.81 - 126. There is an updated list of French birds, p.273 - 289.

La Garcilla No 95, 1996 has finally reached us but although there are several notes on Seabirds they have already been noted in other publications and reported.

See Vogel June 1996 has a thought provoking article on the effects of a 1 metre rise in the Elbe, p.21 - 6. Residual pollutant levels found in 4 species of Gulls (*Laridae*) from the German Bight and possible reasons for their variation are discussed, p.27 - 36. The difference in feeding preference of Common, *S. hirundo* and Arctic, *S. paradisea*, Terns breeding on neighbouring islands are examined and found to be significantly different possibly due to food shortages. The population of the second island is believed to have come from the first, p.40 - 44.

Ornithologische Mitteilungen, Jan 1996, discusses the breeding of Mediterranean Gulls, *L. melanocephalus* on the north west coast of Schleswig-Holstein (German only).

Oman Bird News No 19 contains the results of the 1996 waterfowl count. Once again there were large flocks of Socotra Cormorant, *P. nigrogularis* but totals