

Royal Naval Birdwatching Society



REGISTERED CHARITY No. 206719

BULLETIN No. 144

MAY 2001

The 54th AGM was held in the Richmond Bar, MoD Main Building, Whitehall, on Friday 8 December, commencing at 1400. Captain M K Barritt, RN was in the chair, and the President (Vice Admiral Sir David Dobson), Vice Chairman (Captain Sir Thomas Barlow RN) and 9 other members and guests, including the Secretary of AOS, were present. The Chairman apologised for the late change of venue which was due to a late notice high level requirement for the Cinema.

THE MINUTES

Item 1. Apologies. Apologies for absence were received from Col P Smith RM, Lt Cdr G Lewis, Lt Cdr B Witts, WO1 P Carr RM, and Dr W Bourne. The Chairman then asked for a minutes silence in memory of Winton Maclure who died in June.

Item 2. The Minutes of the 53rd AGM. The Minutes of the 53rd AGM, which had been circulated in Bulletin No. 142, were put to the meeting. Approval and adoption were proposed by Captain Graham Pepper, seconded by Dame Marion Kettlewell, and carried unanimously.

Item 3. Matters Arising.

Item 3. RNBWS on RN Intranet / Internet. No news had been received from Chris Patrick.

Item 5. Financial Statement. An amendment to BR4006 containing a Winding-up Clause had been submitted.

Item 4. Chairman's Report. Captain Barritt reported that down-sizing and operational tempo continue to affect the conduct of the administration of the RNBWS. All serving members of the Exec Committee are in appointments in the front line or which involve extensive absences and travel. The Hon Secretary continues to deal with long-term illness in his close family. The Chairman expressed thanks to Andy Louch for his help to Hon Secretary with despatch of latest mailing.

Against this background he noted the importance of the results of the Members' Questionnaire. 91 replies had been received, indicating the following views:

Question	YES	NO
Would you be in favour of a Joint Service Society	57	15
Joint areas of admin, but separate identity	50	14
Cease publication of <i>SS</i> and include material in JS Pub	37	37
RNBWS material in JS Pub under <i>SS</i> banner	66	12
Continue to publish <i>SS</i> , but contribute reports of mainland-based fieldwork to JS Pub	45	27
Do you wish to see more land-based activities	39	27
Main interest our traditional sea-based role	60	28

They indicate realism about benefits of joint administration in an age of shrinking numbers of Servicemen. A majority of respondents saw benefits of a Joint Society – **not that this has been proposed by any of the three Societies**. The Executive Committee will continue to pursue pragmatic co-operation with the AOS and RAFOS during regular joint meetings.

More significantly, perhaps, two-thirds of respondents belong to RNBWS because of the core role of observing and reporting at sea. More respondents wished to continue publication of *SS* than to contribute to a Joint Service Publication, but the concept of including RNBWS material in the JS Publication under the *SS* banner did receive significant support. The Chairman stated that he would wish to see a determined effort to maintain *SS*. However, this will need more contributors than our stalwarts, and **above all**, more observations of satisfactory quality from sea. Responses from Associates and Libraries indicate that it is the RNBWS regional analyses that are most valued. The Chairman made mention of the very significant article by Stan Howe in *SS49* using the Database to analyse data in the Gulf of Suez.

The following issues arose in open discussion:

Stan Howe made a personal plea for the continuance of *Sea Swallow* and the need to encourage contributions and observations. He saw the establishment of the computerised database as a very important step and suggested further work on particular areas. He also encouraged Library members to report on their considered importance of the Database.

Continued collaboration with other service societies should be maintained.

Traditional sea role and liaison with the Merchant Navy should be maintained.

Graham Pepper suggested liaising with Cruise Companies to record details. A Joint

M K Barritt	2 sheets	N. Atlantic (Portuguese coast).
D K Balance	30 sheets	Antwerp-Mediterranean Ports, September/October 2000.
N Milius	19 sheets	Australian Antarctic, November/December 2000.
P A Woods	1 sheet	South Atlantic July 2000.
Landbirds.		
D K Balance	5 sheets	Antwerp-Mediterranean Ports September/October 2000

AMENDMENT No. 4 TO LIST OF MEMBERS 1999 MEMBERS.

Change of Address:

Hon. Treasurer. Lt Cdr Griffiths is now back in UK and his address for subscriptions etc is: 80 Ottersfield Road, YIEWSLEY, West Drayton Middlesex. UB7 8PF
Bourne, Dr, WRP, MA MB BCH MBOU, Ardpath, Station Road, DUFFTOWN, Keith, AB55 4AX.

Burns, A, Esq., 3 Teal Close, Catherington, HORNDEAN, Hants, PO8 9YF.

Gates, D A, Esq., BSc Hons, Flat 2, 26 Spiers Wharf, Port Douglas, GLASGOW G4 9TB.

Griffiths, D, Mr., 80 Ottersfield Road, Yiewsley, WEST DRAYTON, Middlesex UB7 8PF.

Rankin, N E, CB CBE, RAdm, Anchor House, Ware Road, NORTH BERWICK, E. Lothian EH394BN.

Why, T, Mr., 89 Barns Road, Trickett's Cross, FEMDOWN, Dorset BH22 8XG. York, CPO to read Mr.

Lost touch.

Briggs, D. Morton, NPB. Bums, AP. Turner, H. Daley, RG. Will, RR.

Jeffcock, D. Wragg, G. Howell Davis, D. Young, MS.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

New Members:

Nevitt, D, Mr., Plas Eithin, Llys Helig Drive, LLANDUDNO, LL30 2XB'
North, S, Ms, 0V Marine, Meteorological Office Scott House, Eastern Rd, BRACKNELL, RG12 2PU.

Change of Address

Donaghy, N, Mr., 84 Coity Road, BRIDGEND, CF31 1LT.

Walters, M, Mr., Via Ligorio, Pirro 23, 80129 NAPOLI, Italy

departing in a northeast direction, which suggests this might be a routine short cut to the northern breeding colonies. Another item, not from the count, is that Golden Plover and Lapwing have been observed roosting on factory roofs in the Midlands, Manchester area, presumably to avoid predators. It would be interesting to know if this behaviour spreads to any of our establishments.

MOD BIRD COUNT 2001.

No date has been received but it is assumed that this will take place after foot and mouth restrictions are lifted.

COLOUR FLAGGED ANTARCTIC TERNS.

A thousand Antarctic Terns have been ringed on Bird Island. Six hundred of them also have a conspicuous yellow flag on their left tarsus. Sightings and negative reports from the Southern Ocean should be sent to Dr Norbert Klages, PO Box 13147, HUMEWOOD 6013, South Africa.

EXPEDITIONS AND FIELD MEETINGS.

Weekend and Field Meetings are open to RNBWS members, but expeditions are normally limited to serving RN and RM personnel.

Army Ornithological Society.

June 2001. East Anglia w/e. Contact - Mr. C R Powell, Turnstones, 43 Abbey Rd, LEISTON, Suffolk IP 16 4RL.

September 2001. Portland. Contact, Major THJ Nash, HO Cbt Engr School, Gibraltar Bks, BLACKWATER, GUI 7 9LP

Autumn/Winter 2001. Tring. Contact. Major BJ Hughes, The Old Shop, Main St, SHIPTON BELLINGER, Hants, SP9 7UE.

Expeditions.

February/March 2002. Belize. Contact. Major T T Hallchurch MBE, 5 Mill Lane, HORTON CUM STUDLEY, Oxon OX9 1DH

RAF Ornithological Society.

Field Meetings.

October 5-7 2001. Portland

November 4 2001. Chew Valley Lake

Expeditions.

Mid June 2001. Varangerfjord.

Mid-late September 2001. Flannan Islands

If you are interested in any RAFOS activity send your name, rank, address, telephone number and if appropriate E-mail address to Flt. Lt. M Hayes, EF Production Manager, DARA, St Athan, BARRY, Glamorgan CF62 4WA.

REPORTS RECEIVED.

The following Seabird and Landbird reports have been received since Bulletin 143. Seabirds.

Action was agreed by him and Frank Ward to take this forward. In a similar vein Stan Howe agreed to liaise with Civilian Survey Vessels for the collection of data. John O’Connell Davidson suggest that as Tony Soper was a member of his local bird-watching group he might approach him to write an article for the next edition of SS, and this was agreed.

Stan Howe raised the matter of false information concerning the future of RNBWS being reported in *Sanctuary* and *British Birds*. The Chairman apologised for the errors, which were entered without his knowledge.

John Plummer mentioned that an interesting article had appeared in *Bird Watching* covering radar bird watching which made very favourable comment of the RNBWS and *Sea Swallow*. The Chairman noted the significant pioneering work in this area by Michael Casement.

Item 5. Financial Statement. The Hon Treasurer reported that the Society funds were in good shape. The 1999 Financial Statement was offered for approval and adoption; proposed by J O’Connell-Davidson and seconded by Stan Howe.

Item 6. Membership Statement. The Chairman drew attention to the following table:

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Ex officio	4	4
Honorary	7	6
Ordinary	200	183
Associate	43	50
Library	45	48
Total	<u>299</u>	<u>291</u>

In addition to the Library Members, RNBWS exchanges *Sea Swallow* for the publications of 26 other Societies.

The reduced numbers reflect a review of the membership list.

Item 7. Executive Committee and Honorary Appointments. Under the terms of the Charities Acts 1960 and 1985 the Executive Committee, the UK-based members of which are Trustees of the Society, offered themselves for re-election. This was proposed by Capt Graham Pepper and seconded by Lt Cdr John O’Connell Davidson. These are:

The Chairman re-iterated the high workload of the Committee and asked for volunteers to help with exped work and to collate the MoD Bird Count.

Chairman	Capt M K Barritt RN
Vice Chairman (RN)	Capt Sir Thomas Barlow RN
Vice Chairman (MN)	Capt N Cheshire MN
Deputy Chairman	Cdr F S Ward RN
Hon Secretary	Col P J Smith RM
Hon Treasurer	Lt Cdr D A Griffiths RN
Editor <i>Sea Swallow</i>	Lt Cdr G D Lewis RN
Expedition and Fieldwork Member	WO1 P Carr RM

Item 8. Honorary Auditor. Thanks were recorded to Cdr Winter, who had carried out the 1999 audit. The Hon Treasurer hoped that Mike Winter would be willing to continue to audit the accounts. If not facilities were available through HMS TEMERAIRE.

Item 9. Local Representatives' Reports. No area reports had been received. The Deputy Chairman reported that unfortunately the article for *Sanctuary* had not been accepted and that this was not known until after publication. Better liaison would be sought in future. The Hon Secretary had reported that this was a good year for the MoD Bird Count with the largest number for some years of Establishments taking part. Help in your local area is always welcome.

Item 10. Expedition Member's Report. Our Exped Member, currently in Kosovo with the UK's UN contingent, reports that he has had no requests for assistance with planning of activities. RAFOS information has been promulgated through the Bulletin. The Chairman has written to a member who has indicated an interest in exped work to see if he can assist in this area, deputising for WO Carr during his current busy RSM task.

Item 11. Sea Swallow Editor's Report. The Deputy Chairman read the following Editor's Report:
 'SS49 was published on 1 Oct 00 and all members should now have received their copy with the recent mailing. Once again, there was difficulty in putting together a viable edition and Land bird reports were particularly scarce. In order for the publication to be worth the publication costs, there will need to be more records from both land and sea and an improvement in the number of articles submitted for publication; I cannot rely on Bill Bourne to provide me with fillers to ensure I achieve the minimum numbers of pages.

summit" meeting at San Francisco found problems with secondary poisoning of birds, with public concern as well as numerous acts and laws, p.64. PSG are asking for East Sand Island, Columbia River to be acquired as a national wildlife refuge. Amongst other reasons it has the largest breeding colonies on the west coast for Double Crested Cormorant Western/ Glaucous-winged Gulls, *L.occidentalis/ glaucescens* and Caspian Terns. Although the Caspian Terns have only just been moved there from up-river there is already mounting pressure to remove them and the other large colony further down the coast, p.65. California's Fish and Game Department has restricted gill net fishing in shallow parts of Monterey and Morro bays to protect Murres, *U.aalge* and Sea Otters p 65. Oregon Beached Birds Survey found mostly Murres and Northern Fulmar but there were 2 peaks for Rhinoceros Auklets, *C.monocerata*, which coincided with oil spills, losses of Common Loon, *G.immer* were high so were Fork-tailed Storm-petrels, *O.furcata*, p.66. A violent summer storm in N. Alaska reshaped the coast and caused heavy casualties to Common Eider, *S.mollissima* and Black Guillemot *C.grille*, p.68. Trials were carried out on supplementary feeding of Kittiwake and Pelagic Cormorant, *S.pelagicus* and others on subcutaneous implantation of VHF and Satellite transmitters in captive Murres. Also in Alaska the Non-game Migratory Bird staff produced a brochure on "Seabirds and You". This gives tips on how to be good stewards round seabird colonies and is targeted at mariners and fishermen; presentations are also being made to elementary schools. Much work has been carried out on molecular studies of seabirds indicating if there is interbreeding between colonies of the same species, p.79. A Marbled Murrelet, *B.marmoratus* was found breeding 112 km inland, the farthest yet, p.80. Winter aerial surveys in Puget Sound are being continued because of concern about decreasing diving ducks and other marine species, p.80. An exciting discovery on Jarvis Island in the Pacific Remote Islands Wildlife Refuge was the presence of White-throated Storm-petrels, *N.fuliginosa*, p.88. On the same page, a search for Long-billed Murrelets off Japan was unsuccessful and there are fears that they no longer occur in Japan. That concludes a few samples from the wide range of activities carried out by the Pacific Seabird Group.

BACK NUMBERS OF SEA SWALLOW.

Hon Sec is always grateful for any back numbers of Sea Swallow, which members no longer need. We do get requests for back numbers and our stock is limited.

LANDLUBBERS CORNER.

Last years MOD Bird Count 29 areas were involved, the best support for many years. Highlights include a Yellow-legged Gull at Devonport, Woodlarks at HMS DRYAD and Bearded Tits at HMS SULTAN. Outside the count a Smew was seen at Lympstone, a Bittern at HMS DRYAD and a Dartford Warbler at Predannack not to mention Snow Bunting seen at near-by Culdrose. A very interesting sighting was of 5 Gannets that landed near Fleetlands in Fareham Creek, unusually far inland. Curiously enough another 2 were seen this year but this time they were seen

failure to report rather than absence. Pages 75-79 discuss the foraging activities of 2 Galapagos Penguins, *S.mendiculus*, from two islands. Their strategies were quite different, possibly due to prey distribution. However the small sample size and the known design weakness of time depth recorders make detailed analysis difficult. Both birds fed relatively close inshore. The lifespan of African Penguins, *S.demersus* is examined on pages 81-82, birds have been recorded as living 26-27 years. Lastly there are the minutes of the Bird Biology Sub committee (16-18 July '98) of the Scientific Committee of the Antarctic Research Working Group, p.85-92.

SANDGROUSE Vol. 22(2) quotes RAFOS confirmation of both Cory's and Mediterranean Shearwaters passing west along the North Cyprus coast 15 September - 13 October. p. 125. Around the Region, p. 156 reports a Sooty Shearwater, *P.griseus* off Jaffa on 7 January. Records of Pomarine Skuas off Cyprus 5 and 7 October 1999 have been downgraded to *Skua Sp.* A Brown Skua at Al Aqqah, UAE, will be the third record for this area if accepted. A record 111 Great Black-headed Gulls, *L.ichthyaetus* were seen off Kuwait 3 February and 51 White-eyed Gulls, *L.leucophthalmus* were seen off Aquaba 23 February.

AUSTRALASIAN SEABIRD Bulletin No. 37 is full of interest. The New Zealand Action Plan for Seabird Conservation has been completed, p.1, more details to follow! Pages 2-12 provide guidelines for seabird surveys from ships and gives standard reporting forms for mapping off Australia. On pages 13-14 John Warham warns of the problems caused by the recent changes in Albatross taxonomy which have been adopted in some quarters (see also RNBWS Bulletin No. 143, p.8) Page 14-18 covers a fist of birds seen in SE Australian waters from R.V.FRANKLIN 24 Jan-4 Feb 1997. Page 202 has an application for the Southern Giant Petrel, *M.giganteus* to be listed under Australia's Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, and a similar one for the Northern Form, *M.halli* is on p. 23-25. Pages 26-34 give a draft of the Agreement on the conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (of the Southern Hemisphere). Lastly on p.36 is the discovery of a large colony of Heard's Cormorant, *P.nivalis* found nesting in a corner of a colony of Macaroni Penguins, *E.chrysolophus*. At the time of printing it was not certain if this was an amalgamation of one or more of the 3 known smaller colonies, or represented an additional 1000 pairs. Either way it is a significant increase in the known population of this species.

PACIFIC SEABIRDS Vol. 27 No 2. Hawaii has banned long line fishing by US boats in some areas to preserve stocks of game fish until the industry is properly regulated. While this could have a beneficial effect on birds it does not apply to foreign boats and US owned boats have moved to Northern California adding to the pressure there. At the Hawaii Conference on the conservation of Procellariids, p.63, it was announced that a new colony of Dark-rumped Petrels, *P.phaeophygia*, had been found on a sea stack off Kaho'lawe. Short-tailed Albatross are increasing on Toroshima but Tristram's Storm petrel, *O.tristrami* and Black-footed Albatross, *D.nigrripes* were suffering from the rats. Action against the rats was suggested. A "Rat

In particular, there is an urgent need for new unpublished photographs of seabirds. I usually have enough landbird photographs to illustrate Michael Casement's analysis, but good quality seabirds at sea are essential to maintain the balance. I will do my best to help, but my S Atlantic deployment will not be until after the publication of *SS50*.

I am now at sea serving as the Squadron Supply Officer to Captain F6 in HMS MONTROSE. As such, my spare time is very limited and I can no longer plan ahead with the confidence I had whilst in Bath. Publication of *SS50* will need to be brought forward to the end of Aug 01 as the ship deploys in September for 7 months. Please make sure you take this into consideration when forwarding contributions. Deadline for *SS50* will be the end of May as usual but late contributions will have to be put back until *SS51* this year.

OSPREY

The first edition of *OSPREY* has been put back until late Spring 2001. The Army representative is serving in Africa and the RAF rep has a high profile and extremely busy job in the DLO. The cost to publish a predominantly colour A4 magazine may yet prove prohibitive and we can only make a token contribution so as not to jeopardise *SS*. We have agreed a contribution of £200, but have yet to be asked for it. I currently have no articles that could be placed in *OSPREY*.

SS on E Mail

This suggestion is feasible, but I may have to find another publisher. Forces & Corporate use Apple Mac technology and they could E Mail to addresses for us — at a Price! It would also lower the print run which on the economies of scale increase the cost per item. I do not have the time to do this whilst at sea, but am more than willing to allow another member to assist.'

Comments from the floor:

It was noted that there are a number of Internet sites which provide bird photographs in the Public Domain.

The errors in *SS49* were noted, and the Chairman agreed to discuss action with the Editor. It was thought that many of the mistakes were because the articles, although provided in MS Word Format, were retyped because the printers used Apple Mac. Since Word documents can be converted this process was not understood.

It was noted that the quality of observations in *SS* had deteriorated of late. J O'Connell-Davidson agreed to discuss with the Editor the feasibility of putting *SS* into Adobe Acrobat Reader Format for those who required it.

Item 12. Report of the Working Group on the Use of PCs for Data Analysis.

Stan Howe reported on how much of a task this was and that the Working Group had really not formed. Only 10% of the total records available are used. FW agreed to help by trying to re-invigorate the WG with members who had shown an interest i.e. Messrs Copsey, Finn, Gates, Griffiths, Louch and O'Connell Davidson.

Item 13. Any other business. In addition to routine reports of events and

publications of general interest to members, the following items were covered:
J O'Connell-Davidson thought that Seabird 2000 count would make a valid article for SS.

Capt Sir Thomas Barlow suggested the distribution of back copies of *Sea Swallow* to some of the Birdwatching Tour Companies to encourage interest in Sea Bird reporting.

John Plummer commented that it would be useful making contact with the Merchant Naval Liaison Officer at HMS DRYAD – he will write.

John Plummer stated that he was happy to lend a hand with the distribution of SS. The Chairman noted that he had received a new listing of the RAFOS Committee, which was available to those who may be interested.

Item 14. Presentations. The Executive Committee had approved the following awards:

Best Journal Article for *Sea Swallow*. Stan Howe for his article *Gulf of Suez – SS observations*.

AOS Trophy. Once again NP1016.

Item 15. Date of the next meeting. Friday 7 December 2001 at 1400. Because of the turbulence of MoD Departments moving to accommodate refurbishment programmes it was suggested that the Union Jack Club may be used – this will be investigated. Capt Pepper suggested that if the meeting was moved to January then HQS WELLINGTON may be available – this too will be investigated.

Item 16. Presentation by Stan Howe – The RNBWS Database. A most excellent presentation, full of enthusiasm, was given by Stan Howe to bring those present up to date with the formation of the PC Database of records published in *Sea Swallow*. He took the audience through various live examples of how the Database may be used, and showed how easy it was to use it to assess Migration Routes and the illustrate the prevalence of species following Shipping Routes. He made it clear that there was much more work to be done, for which he would like some help. He believed the Database to be a useful tool for the Birdwatching community in general and suggested that the RNBWS should investigate how the data may be made available on a Web Site. The Chairman and all present expressed appreciation for Stan Howe's single-handed Herculean efforts to reach this encouraging stage in the project.



M K Barritt
Capt RN
Chairman

NEWS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Army Ornithological Club Bulletin 1/2000 page B(4c)5 of 6 in an article on the

in 1994 up to 1999.

CHIOGLOSSA, Vol 1, the magazine of Grupo Naturalista Habitat, is a new exchange. This edition has news of Yellow-legged Gulls, *L.cachinnans*, nesting on the rooftops of older buildings in Vigo, p47-53. Letters include a Yellow-legged Gull killing a migrating Meadow Pipit, *Anthus pratensis*, a Kittiwake, *R.tridactyla*, attacking a species of Storm-petrel and Pomarine Skua, *S.pomarinus* attacking a juvenile Great Skua, *C.skua*, p141-2.

SEE VOGEL, September 2000, has a report on breeding birds in the Schleswig-holstein reserves in 1998, p.71-73. Pages' 81-90 discuss the bird life of Las Palmas including the status of Cory's Shearwater, *C.diomedea*, Manx Shearwater, *P.puffinus*, Little Shearwater. *P.assimilis* and Bulwer's Petrel, *B.bulwerii*. Lastly p.91- give a history and description of Mellum Island in the Jade Estuary with the breeding records for 1997-99. The December 2000 issue has a review of beached birds in the German Bight October 1999-March 2001, p.103-107. Guillemot, Kittiwake and Razorbill mortality rates from oil are, on average, down on the last 3 years. Common Eider are also down but this may due to the massive losses in the ERIKA disaster last winter. The March 2001 issue has an article on birds of Las Palmas, Canary Islands which mentions the visit of a Ring-billed Gull, *L.delawarensis* in 1998, p. 16. If your German is up to it there is another on pages 18-24 on the decline of Arctic Terns, *S.paradisea* on the German Baltic Sea coast. During a year's study the supply of food for the young seemed to be excellent, though of course this may not always be so. Amongst a number of reasons offered the most likely seems to be the increased risk of summer flooding.

MARINE ORNITHOLOGY, Vol. 28, No. 1(2000) starts with a paper on the effectiveness of infrared scopes for counting occupied Sooty Shearwater, *P.griseus*, burrows and concludes that there can be up to 30% error, pi-6. The second article reviews the existing information on the diet of the Southern Skua, *C.Antarctica* and it's foraging practices, p7-19. There are many unknowns for example Brown Skuas, *C.lonnbergi*, on Chatham Island rarely prey on some species and take Black-bellied Storm-petrels, *F.tropica*, in preference to the more numerous Wilson's, *O.oceanicus*. It seems likely that kleptoparasitism mainly occurs at sea outside the breeding season. Further articles examine the populations of Cierva Point Antarctic Peninsula, p. 21-7 and 29-35, breeding birds capable of flight on the Fildes Peninsula, King George Island, p.37-40, populations on Nelson Island, South Shetlands, p.41-46, on Half-moon Island, South Shetlands, p.59-62, and on Rothera, Adelaide Island, Antarctic Peninsula, p. 63-67. It is interesting that breeding at Cierva Point SSSI appears to be recovering now that the construction of Primavera Station is complete and that 2 White-chinned Petrels, *P.aequinoctialis*, were seen here in 1995, unusually far south, p. 24. Few significant trends could be established with so many variables but Kelp Gulls, *L.dominicans*, appear to be decreasing in some areas. Page 69-74 examine the results of the Giant Petrel, *M.giganteus*, international banding programme which suggests that the majority of first year birds move into Australian and New Zealand waters, the absence of reports from South America may be due to

Iceland 21 August. A Royal Tern *S.maxima* was seen at Scilly in July, an Elegant Tern, *S.elegans* was reported at Pointe d'Arcay, Vendee 14 August and a Bridled Tern, *S.anaethetus* was seen at Ile aux moutons, Finisterre 2 August. **Vol 22 No 5.** A remark on page 258 refers to the difficulty of safely identifying autumn adults of the Baltic Gull from 'intermedius' type birds in the field. There is a long article on the dark morph variation of a juvenile Long-tailed Skua, *S.longicaudus*, hitherto unknown. It could easily be confused in the field with the dark Arctic Skua. Whether dark juveniles remain dark as adults is unknown. Unconfirmed records include a Fea's Petrel seen off the Old Head of Kinsale Eire 23 September. A Markham's Storm-petrel, *O.markhami* was seen off Western California and if accepted will be the first for North America. A dead juvenile Double Crested Cormorant, *H.auritus* was found at Ouessant, Finisterre 8 October the first for France. Spain's second Magnificent Frigatebird, *F.magnificens* was seen off Malaga 22 October. A Laughing Gull, *L.atricilla* was reported off Tilbury, Essex 8 October and on the 9th another at Kent Estuary, Cumbria. A Franklin's Gull, *L.pipixcan* was reported at Montrose, Scotland 11 September and a Ross's Gull, *R.rosea* was sighted with Little Gulls, *L.minutus* off Le Clipon, Dunkerque 26 November. **Vol. 23 No.1** has a fine cover picture of a Spectacled Petrel, *P.conspicillata*. There are useful articles on the Amsterdam Albatross, *D.amsterdamensis*, p. 7-12 and the Falkland Islands where the Rockhopper Penguin, *E.chrysocome* has shown a serious decline over the last 60 years p. 12-14. Unconfirmed reports include a Double Crested Cormorant, *H.auritus* at Sao Miguel, Azores. If accepted, a Ring-billed Gull, *L.delawarensis* at Val di Brenta, Chioggia 18-23 December will be the first record for Italy.

DUTCH SEABIRD GROUP Newsbrief 2(2) pictures a Black-browed Albatross off Corbiere Point, Jersey in June 2000. p. 5. An article in Dutch on the same page discusses the losses from the wreck of the ERIKA in 1999 and another on page 6 mentions the first record of a Fulmar breeding at Bulbjerg, NW Jutland, Denmark in 1998.

ALAUDA Vol. 68 No. 3 has an interesting review of sightings of Skuas in the Western Mediterranean, p238-243. They are thought to be under-reported. No. 4 has no sea bird information.

ANNUARI ORNITOLÓGIC de las BALEARS 1999, looks at the nesting of Audouin's Gull, *L.audouinii* in 98 and 99. There were major changes in individual colonies and several had to be estimated so the overall figures of 1220 and 1359 pairs respectively are probably similar, although they would appear to be down on 1997 (1645 pairs). Mention is made of the disastrous attack by foxes on a colony of 2000 which caused the birds to desert, p 19-25 (Spanish only).

LA GARCILLA No. 108 (Spanish only) deals mainly with Spanish conservation issues. Page 34 refers to Action Plans for the Balearic Shearwater, *P.mauretanicus* and for Shag. The latter has been found breeding at Guipuzcoa after an absence of 30 years, p.24.

ARDEOLA, Vol. 47(2) pages 255-8 gives the details of a small breeding colony of Slender-billed Gulls, *L.genei* at L'Albufera de Valencia, Spain from its establishment

Tanji Reserve in Gambia refers to Kelp gulls, *L.dominicans* nesting on Bijol Island, only the second record for W. Africa. There are interesting articles on the Galapagos, and on Vancouver to Alaska via the inside Passage

The RAFOS Special Millennium Edition reviews 15 years of RAFOS expeditions and has several members reminiscences.

WORLD BIRDWATCH Vol.22 No.3 reports the discovery of a tiny colony of Chinese Crested Terns, *S.bemsteini* off Taiwan, the first record of breeding and also the first accepted sighting since 1937, p.5. Pages 6-7 summarize the immense effort involved in cleaning and protecting a quarter of the African Penguin, *S.demersus*, population after the wreck of the TREASURE iron ore carrier off the Robben Islands. The final toll is expected to be about 1%. No.4 reports that Campbell Island, New Zealand, is to be cleared of rats, which should help the Campbell Island Albatross, *D.impavida*, p.4. On page 5 a short note refers to the Wandering Albatross, *D.exulans* keeping to their ocean home ranges outside the breeding season. **Vol. 23 No.1.** page 3 has an article on the Chatham Island Petrel, *P.magentae* which has been located in a new breeding area with 3 active nests. Possibly as a result of increased predator trapping in the Chatham Islands. An item on page 4 refers to a fire on South Jason Island in the Falklands which damaged the environment and may have killed Prions and other small birds but which did not affect the Albatross and Penguin colonies. An item on p. 5 refers to the finding of a pair of breeding Short-tailed Albatross, *P.albatrus*, on Yome-jima in the Ogasawara Islands, the first known natural breeding expansion.

BIRD LIFE UPDATE March 2001. Page 5 reports the foundation of a Jamaican Seabird Group and, on page 7 the finalisation of the conservation agreement for Albatrosses and Petrels at Capetown, it remains to be seen how well the signatories implement this agreement.

The FULMAR, No. 92 covers the period April-September 2000. Unconfirmed reports include a Black Guillemot, *C.grille* and a Little Auk, *A.alle* seen together at BUCHAN A on 26 May. Fulmar, *F.glacialis*, peaking late June/July, a Sooty Shearwater, *P.griseus* 4 July and 4 on the 15, all BUCHAN A. A Pomarine Skua, *S.pomarinus* was seen at MAERSK CURLEW 19 July and 5 Arctics, *S.parasiticus* in July/August' Great Skua, *S.skua* were common. No. 93 reports one of the largest offshore movements of land birds in recent years during the third week of October. Some 9 Sooty Shearwater, *P.griseus* were seen in September with a maximum of 4 off BUCHAN A on the 22nd. Three Manx Shearwaters, *P.puffinus*, were at EAST BRAE 21/22 Sept. Few Cormorants, *P.carbo* and only 5 Arctic Skuas were seen in September with 2 Pomerines at BUCHAN A on 10 Oct.

SCOTTISH BIRD REPORT 1998. Most of the major sightings have already been reported except for an unknown all-dark Storm petrel seen at Scapa on 16 Nov. An interesting note states that the British Birds Record Committee no longer recognises Kumlien's Gull, *L.g.kumlieni* since being intermediate between the Iceland Gull, *L.glaucoides* and Thayer's Gull, *L.g.thayeri* it cannot be clearly defined.

SCOTTISH BIRD NEWS No. 59 reviews the 2000 breeding season, p. 8-9.

Seabirds had mixed success suffering badly from the gales in June, Isle of May Kittiwakes, *R.tridactyla* were very successful but those at North Sutor fared badly. A survey at Tiree showed that most species had increased since 1988. Recent reports include a Swinhoe's Storm petrel, *O.monorhis*, at Cove, Aberdeenshire, the first for Scotland. Sightings of Balearic Shearwater, *P.mauretanicus* off Ayrshire and Argyll continue to increase. A Gull-billed Tern, *G.nilotica* was at Loch Bee, South Uist, 14-16 July and a Sabine's Gull, *L.sabini* off Ardivachar Point 20 August. A Ross's Gull, *R.rosea*, was at Stronsay 25 June, 2 Yellow-legged Gulls were seen in Aberdeenshire and a total of 6 Mediterranean Gulls *L.melanocephalus* were seen around the coast. **Scottish Birds Vol. 21 No. 2** has an interesting account of a Storm-petrel, *H.pelagicus*, colony on Priest Island, p.78-84. Using taped playback methods some 4,400 occupied sites were recorded making it one of the largest colonies in Scotland. Limitations of the methods used are discussed.

SCOTTISH BIRD NEWS No. 60, December 2000, page 7 reports on the Symposium "Living on the Edge" which included a paper on sustainable harvesting of Sooty Terns, *S.fuscata*, in the Seychelles. Another was "Seabird Ranges and Oceanic Habitat- Remote Tracking in the service of Conservation", there was a presentation of Kittiwake and Guillemot in an area of the North Sea and a paper on foraging and food strategies of the Northern Gannet, *M.bassanus*. On page 12 is a request for bird and Cetacea records from the Bay of Biscay to be sent to D. Gray, 45 Western Park Road, Leicester, LE3 6HQ. Written descriptions are required for Fea's Petrel, *P.fea*, Levantine Shearwater, *P.yelkouan*, Wilson's and Madeiran Storm-petrels, *O.oceanicus* and *castro*. Long-tailed Skua, *S.longicaudus*, Bulwer's Petrel, *B.bulwerii*, Roseate Tern, *S.dougallii* and any Albatross. Recent reports include a Hooded Merganser, *M.cucullatus* at North Uist 21 October to 1 November. a Steller's Eider, *P.stelleri*, at Hopeman, Moray in November, Little Shearwater, *P.assimilis*, at Kintyre 7 September and several Balearic Shearwater, *P.mauretanicus* including the first records for Moray and for Fair Island and finally a Caspian Tern, *S.caspia*, at North Ronaldsay, which, if accepted, will be the first for Scotland.

ATLANTIC SEABIRDS, Vol.2, No. 1 starts with an article on the productivity of the Common Gull, *L.canus* on the West coast of Scotland which was about 1.6 where there was no predation to nil where Mink were present. Numbers were nearly halved between 1989 and 1997. It would appear that Common Gulls can live with predation from native species but not from Mink, p. 1-12, Pages 13-18 discuss the distribution of the Spectacled Petrel, *P.conspicillata*, off SW Africa in February when most birds were seen west of the coastal shelf. Studies of Herring Gull, *L.argentatus* chicks in the Gulf of St Laurence, p. 19-33, show some of the problems associated with assessing the diet of a very opportunistic feeder, though the bulk of the diet appeared to be Capelin. A study of Herring Gull predation on a colony of Leach's Storm petrel, *O.leucorhoa* on Great Island, Newfoundland, suggested that around 49,000(9%) were killed in the period between the hatching of the gulls' eggs and the arrival of the gulls' preferred prey, Capelin. Hopefully a reduction in the number of gulls and earlier arrival of the Capelin will reduce the losses, p. 35-44. Soft-plumaged Petrels,

P.mollis were recorded in the Drake Passage-between S. America and the Antarctic, 1000km further south than previous records, p. 45-6. Vol 2 No. 2 , p.49-56 discusses long line fishing off Tristan da Cunha. Demersal fishing with fall precautions resulted in only one Great Shearwater, *P.gravis* being killed in 3 sets. Pelagic fishing without the use of a bird scaring line resulted in the deaths of 4 Black-browed Albatross, *D.melanophris*, in 2 sets, birds were present on all 5 occasion. The real problem lies with unregulated fishing which Tristan can do little to control. The aerial display of the Little Gull, *L.minutus*, is examined and the interaction between adults and immatures discussed, p. 56-57. Pages 73-86 review the status of Fea's Petrel, *P.fea*, in the Cape Verde Islands, an incomplete census, but the most comprehensive so far, suggests that there are 500-1000 breeding pairs. The species is at risk from cats, rats and the occasional bird taken for the pot! There are short notes on seabirds drowned in discarded pieces of net off Jan Mayen Island, p. 87-91 and on a Common Guillemot, *U.aalge*, successfully rearing 2 chicks, its own and a stray, p. 92-4.

SEABIRD Group Newsletter 86 opens with comments on the progress of SEABIRDS 2000, playing back taped calls was found to be a safer way of assessment than mist netting. On page 5 it summarises the Symposium "Living on the Edge - Birds 2000" held in Newfoundland 14-19 August, which examined seabird distribution and foraging behaviour. Page 6-7 records another summer gale, the second successive year, which wreaked havoc with nesting Shags, *S.aristotelis* and Guillemots on Sumburgh Head though over 50% of the Kittiwakes survived. Black Guillemot, *C.grille* and even Divers on the exposed shores of lochans also suffered. Satellite observation of oil spills in UK waters is on trial and could act as a deterrent to illegal dumping, p7-8 Pages 8-9 cover the seabird census of Skomer. Razorbill, *A.torda*. Fulmar and Kittiwake showed a slight increase in numbers, although the breeding success rate of the first two species was only just over 0.3%.

DUTCH BIRDING, Vol. 22, No 4 has 2 unconfirmed reports of ringed Relict Gulls, *L.relictus* being recovered from Bulgaria and Turkey suggesting that the species may winter in the West as well as China, p 219-222. Unconfirmed reports include Black-browed Albatross seen 11 June near Corbiere Pt, Jersey and also near La Spezia, Italy 18 July. A Fea's Petrel, *P.fea* was seen NW of Aranmore Island, Donegal 18 August. Two Swinhoe's Storm petrel, *O.monorhis* were trapped in Rogaland, Norway, 27 July and 16 Aug. A Madeiran Storm petrel, *O.castro* was seen some 250 km west of Scilly 14 July. A Pale-faced Shearbill, *C.alba* seen near Simonstown, South Africa, in August was probably ship assisted. The Netherlands third Laughing Gull, *L.atricilla* was seen 23 July at Rutbeskerveld Overijssel, another was present at He de Re late Aug. Bonaparte's Gull, *L.Philadelphia* were seen at Ille de Re late August and at St Brevin, Loire-Atlantique. A Slender-billed Gull, *L.genei* appeared off Holme, Norfolk 10 August. On Sept 6 a Ring-billed Gull, *L.delawarensis* appeared near Goes, Zeeland for the fourth year running. Finland recorded its first Yellow-legged Gull *L.michahellis* at Tempere 14 July -9 August, and Iceland's third was ringed at Hvaleyrarlan 25 August. A Ross's Gull, *R.rosea* was seen at Akureyri,