

Sharrock, Dr., c/o British Birds, The Banks, Mountfield, Nr Robertsbridge, E.
Sussex, TN32 5JY
Lost Touch.
Dept of Conservation, Wellington, NZ, McLean I, Sprunt A.

Royal Naval Birdwatching Society



REGISTERED CHARITY No. 206719

BULLETIN No. 146

MAY 2002

The 55th AGM was held in the 8th Floor Conference Room, Castlewood House, London, on Friday 7 December, commencing at 1400. Captain M K Barritt, RN was in the chair, Vice Chairman (Captain Sir Thomas Barlow RN) and 9 other members and guests were present.

THE MINUTES

Item 1: Apologies. Apologies for absence were received from Col P Smith RM, Cdr H J A Brooke, Lt Cdr G Lewis, Lt D Gates and WO P Carr RM.

Item 2: Minutes of 54th AGM. The minutes of the 54th AGM, which had been circulated in Bulletin 144, were put to the meeting. Approval and adoption were proposed by Cdr John Plummer, seconded by Lt Cdr John O'Connell Davidson, and carried unanimously.

Item 3: Matters arising.

Item 3. RNBWS on RN Intranet/Internet. The Chairman reported that DNPTS have now taken the initiative to set up RN Intranet and Internet sites for RN Sports Associations, and have called for initial information. This has been supplied. John O'Connell Davidson reported that a typical price for the management of a standard Web Site was £600 to set up and £300 per annum to manage. It was noted that the DNPTS discouraged the use of these sites. It was agreed to continue with the DNPTS initiative. The Chairman welcomed members' advice on the sort of data that we might wish to show on our sites. It was agreed that the Marsden Square and Nicholson Grids continued to be useful methods of general position reporting which could be included.

Item 4. Liaison with Cruise Companies. Frank Ward reported that he had made contact with P&O and they were happy to distribute record sheets. This would be done in the New Year. **Note:** A copy of the latest record sheet is enclosed with this Bulletin for information.

Item 13. AOB.

a. Cdr Plummer's assumption of responsibility for co-ordinating the MOD(N) Bird Count was noted with thanks.

b. It was agreed that Cdr's Plummer and Ward would try and visit MOD Conservation in 2002.

c. Cdr Plummer reported that he had written to the MN Liaison Officer at DRYAD but had not received a response.

Item 4: Chairman's Report. Captain Barritt recalled his message at the previous AGM on the impact of downsizing and operational tempo, and commented that, in the light of world events, members would not expect him to report much change. The Editor of *Sea Swallow*, the Exped/Fieldwork Member **and** his deputy were all on operations along with many other serving members at this time. On the bright side, *SS50* provided evidence that they were finding some time for bird observations. A great need remained for volunteers to provide the vital spark for RNBWS activities. He was pleased to report, however, that, as a result of offers of help last year, it had proved possible to start the process of relieving Colonel Peter Smith of his task as Honorary Secretary. The Chairman also paid tribute to the role of the Honorary Adviser, Dr Bill Bourne, who had been handling the Seabird Analysis for a substantial period and has asked for a break. Captain Neil Cheshire had kindly agreed to take another turn with this task.

Item 5: Financial Statement. The Financial Statement for the year 2000 was offered for approval and adoption; proposed by Cdr Ward and seconded by Stan Howe. It was noted that an explanation had been supplied to the Charity Commissioners for the 13-month period covered by the Statement. Future Financial Statements will cover the calendar year, 1 Jan to 31 Dec. The Treasurer provided an un-audited statement for the year ending 31 Dec 01 showing the cash balance to be £7,754.41. He noted that Expenditure was greater than Income and that, unless the membership subscription, which had been held steady for a number of years, was increased, it would be necessary to review the cost of publications. Publication costs were reviewed later in the meeting (see Agenda Item 11 below). Meanwhile, it was agreed that Gift Aid Forms would be sent out and non-covenanting members encouraged to participate in the scheme.

Post-meeting Note: The Audited Financial Statement for 2001 is enclosed with this Bulletin.

Item 6: Membership Statement. The Hon Treasurer, who is also the Membership Secretary, provided the following figures.

Bradley EM, Lt Cdr RN, Abacus, 10 Stanton Drive, LUDLOW, Shropshire, SY8 2PH

Bray S, Mr. 25 Cope's Garden, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3SN

Howells MJ, Lt RN. Officers Wardroom, Fort Blockhouse, Gosport

Morton NPB, Esq., BSc MA, The Old Vicarage, Blackford, Nr Wedmore, Somerset, BA28 4NN.

Walker P, Mr, JSSU Oakley, Room D 0204 GCHQ, Priors Road, Cheltenham, Glos, GL52 5SM.

Lost touch:

Baker CE, Flynn J, Parks GA, Benson A, Hurst S, Stockwell A, Briggs D, Kuiken, BH, Why T, Butler MD, Lock R, Wragg G, Down EH, Northcott MR,

Resigned:

Hudson, MJ, Porter, JE.

Deceased:

Fowler A, Captain, MN

Hall AK, Lt Cdr RN. A founder member of the society and an active member in his younger days. He continued to provide valuable support to the society at AGMs until the journey became too much for him, but he still maintained his interest in birds right up to his death.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

Change of Address:

Scottish Ornithological Society, Harbour Suite, Dunedin House, Newhailes Rd, Musselburgh, EH21 6SJ.

Lost Touch:

Brown CJ, Harpum J, Littlewood R, Caimpe MWE, Helbig, Theide W, Gale E, Jouanin C, Walker P,

Hallett DEW, Kerr DB, Halse SA, Lafont, JP.

Resigned:

Wahl T,

LIBRARY MEMBERS

Resigned:

HMS HERON.

Change of Address:

Bremond-Hoslet, Mons., Societe d'Etudes Ornithologiques de France Bibliotheque, 55 Rue Buffon. F75005 Paris.

Pacific Birds, Jon Fisher, Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, 439 Calle San

Pablo, CAMARILLO, California, CA, USA 90312-8506.

Seabirds	Date	Sheet	Area
Mrs J Pentreath	May/Jun 01	4	Channel / Celtic Sea
Capt M K Barritt RN	Jun 01	1	Irish Sea
Capt M K Barritt RN	Aug 01	1	N. Atlantic
K, M & P Cartwright	Aug 01	1	E. Channel / Biscay
Stephen Hales	Oct 01	16	Biscay
CWEM(R) S Copsey	May-Oct 01	46	S. Atlantic
Lt Cdr G D Lewis	Oct 01-Mar 02	50	W Africa / S Atlantic
Landbirds.			
Mrs J Pentreath	May 01	1	E Channel
K, M & P Cartwright	Aug 01	2	Biscay
Stephen Hales	Oct 01	6	Biscay
CWEM(R) S Copsey	May-Oct 01	5	Various
Lt Cdr G D Lewis	Oct 01- Mar 02	5	W Africa / S Atlantic

MOD BIRD COUNT 2002. The dates for 2002 are 27 May- 2 June.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDEN PARTIES. From time to time the Society is offered places for one or two couples, usually at rather short notice. British members who have never been to any Royal garden party and are interested in attending are asked to let Hon Sec know this year for next summers allocation. If there are more applicants than places names will be put in a hat.

AMENDMENT No. 6 TO LIST OF MEMBERS 1999

MEMBERS.

New Members:

Ballance DK, Dr. Flat 2, Dunboyne, Bratten Lane, MINEHEAD, Somerset, TA24 8SQ

Lofranco, Mr, C/O Kim Khai, 10 Hawthorn Close, Boscoppa, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 3UT.

Oke I, Mr. address as above

Change of Address:

Astley Jones FE, Mr. 86 Liskeard Road, Callington, Cornwall, PL 17 7EZ

Membership	2000	2001
Ex officio	4	4
Honorary	6	6
Ordinary	183	167
Associate	50	39
Library	48	54
Total	299	270

Monies owed	2000	2001
Ordinary	1	2
Associate	4	14
Library	6	23
Total	£86	£310

The reduction in membership figures reflected a review of up to date subscribers rather than a large number of leavers. However, it was agreed that a renewed publicity campaign in the Navy News and RN Temporary Memorandum was required.

Item 7: Executive Committee and Honorary Appointments. Under the Terms of the Charities Acts 1960 and 1985 the Executive Committee, the UK members of which are the Trustees of RNBWS, offered themselves for re-election as detailed in the table below. The Chairman paid tribute to Captain Sir Thomas Barlow, who had asked to stand down as Vice Chairman RN. Approval to identify a successor was given, noting that the appointment, which carries trustee status is not honorific.

Chairman	Capt M K Barritt RN
Vice Chairman (RN)	Vacant
Vice Chairman (MN)	Capt N Cheshire MN
Deputy Chairman	No longer required
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

The Executive Committee offered themselves for re-election. This was proposed by Brian Witts, seconded by Michael Casement, and carried unanimously. It was agreed that the post of Deputy Chairman, which was created when the Chairman was appointed to the United States, was no longer needed. The Chairman was happy to report that Cdr Frank Ward is in a position to assume the duties of Hon Sec. He sought the meeting's endorsement of this appointment during the coming year. This was proposed by David Griffiths, seconded by John Plummer, and carried unanimously.

Item 8: Honorary Auditor. The Honorary Treasurer reported that Cdr Winter was happy to continue with these duties. The meeting registered its appreciation of his work.

Item 9: Local Representatives' Reports. The following verbal reports were given:

Portsmouth: Brian Witts reported the harbour Conservation Committee's continued concern with the impact of bait-digging and the building of marinas, and the pressure on feeding areas for waders and seabirds. English Nature, RSPB etc. visited the area on average 4 times a year. He had assisted the conservation effort with the placing of 100 nest boxes at Tipner and Horsea. Poor breeding results had been noted for Kestrels and swallows and Passerines were being lost to predation by Magpies and crows. However it was pleasing to note that, following grass-cutting, skylarks had returned to Tipner. With the increased pressure on Naval Personnel it was becoming difficult to get volunteers for working parties.

Plymouth: John O'Connell Davidson reported that the Naval Base conservation programme was progressing well. 280 species of plant had been identified in the area. Herring Gulls were breeding on the rooftops including 8 pairs on the Nuclear Building

The MOD Bird Count had been disrupted by the Foot and Mouth epidemic. John Plummer outlined the current work being undertaken and tabled the 2000 report for those interested.

Item 10: Expedition Member's Report. Lt Dan Gates, currently standing in for WO Peter Carr as Expedition Member, was at sea in one of our submarines. His written report stated that no members have been in contact seeking advice or proposing activities. He has maintained contact with AOS and RAFOS, details of whose programmes are contained in the Bulletin.

Item 11: Sea Swallow – Editor's Report. In the absence at sea of the Editor, the Chairman drew attention to the Editorial in *SS50* which high-lighted an encouraging number of contributions, but a real need for observations. He reiterated that the

with Caspian Terns in San Diego Bay which have been preying on the young of Least Tern, *S. antillarum* and Western Snowy Plover, *C. alexandrinus*, both of which are protected species. In Hawaii USFWS is using radar to try and locate colonies of endangered Newell's Shearwater, *P. newelli* and two new sites have been located. At Kilauea Point NWR Newell's Shearwater raised young in artificial burrows, the result of a long term cross-fostering experiment in which Newell's eggs were placed in Wedge-tailed Shearwater, *P. pacificus* nests, p.96-7. Also on page 97 is a note that numerous oiled Laysan Albatross, *D. immutabilis* have been cleaned on Midway Atoll. The New Zealand museum has been relocating and re-housing its world class collection of seabirds. Much of its information is now on data base and hopefully will appear on a website in due course, p.98. During a cruise by the National Geographic and Atmospheric Administration's TOWNSHEND CROMWELL a solar powered sound generation system was left at Jarvis Island with the hope of luring Phoenix Petrels, *P. alba* and getting them to found a colony. A survey of Ta'u, US Samoa National Park where Tahiti Petrels are known to breed and where Herald Petrels were found in 1988, found that Norway rats were present on the summit, p.98.

BACK NUMBERS OF SEA SWALLOW.

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

LANDLUBBERS CORNER.

A new MOD Conservation approach called "Rural Elements of the Estate Management" has been designed to ensure sustainability, management of Environmental Risks and legal compliance are all met on MOD and Defence Estates. Pilot schemes are being started at RNAS Yeovilton and DLO Dean Hill amongst others. Although only 6 establishments were able to take part in the 2001 Bird Count due to Foot and Mouth precautions no less than 143 species were recorded including several new species for MOD(N). These included Leach's Storm-petrel and a Rough-legged Buzzard from RN Bombardment Range, Cape Wrath, a Little Ringed Plover at Forest Moor and a Bonaparte's Gull and Spoonbill from CTCRM Lymptone. Congratulations to all concerned.

REPORTS RECEIVED. The following Seabird and landbird reports have been received since Bulletin 145:

species of seabird breed. Pelagic trips from Sydney reported a Grey-headed Albatross, *D. chryssostoma* 8 Jul 00, a Herald Petrel, *P. arminjoniana* 10 Sep with White-chinned Petrel, *P. aequinoctialis* and Sooty Tern, *S. fuscata* on 11 Nov. Trips from Woollongong produced Soft-plumaged Petrel, Arctic Prion, and Slender-billed Prion, *P. belcheri* 26 Aug, a Northern Royal Albatross, *D. sanfordi* 29 Oct with Tahiti Petrel, *P. rostrata*, Long-tailed Skua, *S. longicaudus* and Sooty Tern on 27 Jan 01. Arctic Terns were seen on 7 Aug 01. The final page gives the case summary for a Tristram's Storm-petrel, *O. tristrami* seen off Sydney 9 Oct 00 and accepted as the first Australian record.

PACIFIC SEABIRDS, Vol. 28. No. 2. The long running battle over Caspian Terns, *S. caspia* and Cormorants versus fishing interests on the Columbian River estuary continues. The District Court has ordered the authorities concerned to produce a full environmental impact statement before they take any further action. On the other hand the US Wildlife and Fisheries Service (USFWS) has failed so far to produce a study in support of the acquisition of East Sand Island as a reserve for the Terns, p.68. On page 69 concern is expressed at the possible effects of the use of Christmas Island as a Satellite Launch Site, detailed plans are not available. In another item PSG urge the National Maritime Fisheries Service to look at mitigating the seabird by-catch by trawlers. Attempts to eliminate rats on Anacapa Island have been postponed due to fears of a lawsuit brought by Friends for Animals, p.71. In the Gulf of Alaska, p. 77, a survey has shown a number of Fulmars breeding on the same sites on Chowiet Island as they used 25 years ago. Much effort has gone into surveys and there is a project to compile historic data on the pelagic distribution of seabirds in the North Pacific, p.78. The apparent decline of Kittlitz's Murrelet *B. brevirostris* has led to a petition to USFWS to list the species as endangered and has led to more studies. Two more oil spills occurred in Prince William Sound due to local shipping striking icebergs or rocks in daylight, p.79. In Clayquot Sound, Canada a team dip-netted Marbled Murrelets, *B. marmoratus*, fitted transmitters and located 12 nests, p.83. Transects offshore were carried out to help assess the size and shape of a potential Marine Protected Area centred on Triangle Island, p.84. Work is continuing on the genetic structure of Band-rumped Storm-petrel, *O. castro* populations worldwide, p.85. Studies of Brown Boobies, *S. leucogaster* and Red-footed Boobies, *S. sula* in the Pacific and the Caribbean suggest that the Isthmus of Panama is an effective barrier, p.86. On the Farallon Islands, North California there is concern that non-native mice may attract Owls to over-winter. When the mouse population crashes the owls turn to small seabirds such as Casin's Auklet, *P. aleuticus* and Ashy Storm-petrels, *O. homochroa*, p. 91. Also on this page is news that the re-colonisation of Devil's Slide Rock by Common Murres, *U. aalge* continues to be successful and has reached 110 breeding pairs, and a note that Alcatraz Island has been colonised by Brandt's Cormorant, *P. penicillatus* which was previously considered a pelagic species. Long term research at Vandenberg Air Force Base has raised the possibility of the presence of an Ashy Storm-petrel colony. P.94. The same page reports trouble

purpose of the Journal is to **encourage** observation and reporting by seafaring amateurs. In this context, whilst acknowledging that every assistance should be given to the Editor in proof-reading and checking, he believed that it was important not to deter contributors from coming forward. Having reviewed past issues, his own view was that recent volumes of the journal compared well with any in RNBWS' history. The 50th issue was a real land-mark, which had been marked by the inclusion of the colour photographs.

The Chairman then turned to the issue of the future of *Sea Swallow* and *Osprey*. As high-lighted in the Financial Report, continued provision of both journals to members would steadily drain away RNBWS funds unless full cost recovery was included in membership subscriptions. RNBWS had paid £250 for 250 copies of the first issue of *Osprey* and the cost of postage for those copies supplied to members had been an additional £140. The true cost to RNBWS of future contribution to *Osprey* would therefore be of the order of £300 per annum. The meeting was asked to approve retrospectively, the expenditure of £390 towards production and distribution of the first volume of *Osprey*, an exercise which had enabled members to assess the style and intrinsic interest of the tri-service journal. This was proposed by Capt Sir Thomas Barlow, and seconded by John Plummer. The Chairman then asked for comment on the way-ahead, noting that none had been received in writing from the membership.

After extensive discussion, the meeting agreed that RNBWS had neither the editorial nor the financial resources to sustain both *Sea Swallow* and a contribution to *Osprey*, and that priority must go to the former with its established status and core role of encouraging sea observations. The Chairman was tasked to write to his counterparts in AOS and RAFOS to explain this decision. He should stress that RNBWS recognised *Osprey* as the repository of tri-service records of mainland-based activity. RNBWS members would be encouraged to contribute suitable material and to purchase *Osprey* on an individual basis if they wished. **Post-meeting Note:** Action complete.

Item 12: Data-base Working Group Report. Stan Howe reported that the PC Database was up to date to SS50. He would now look towards data-basing unpublished records but these would be kept separate. The WG had not materialised. A copy of the database would be passed to Cdr Ward. The Committee agreed to the purchase of another copy of Bird Recorder 32 so that he could help Stan Howe as required. The latter was keen to pass over responsibility during 2002. He considered it important that the master Data Base was properly controlled and suggested that it should reside at either the Edward Grey Institute at Oxford or the BOU at Tring. **Post-meeting Note:** Volunteers to assist with data-basing should contact Cdr Ward.

Item 13: Any Other Business.

- It was noted that Tony Soper has included a very brief note related to RNBWS in the draft of a new book “British Isles – coastal wildlife for seafarers”.
- Cdr Plummer commented that articles in Bird Watching Magazine had again mentioned the RNBWS.
- Bill Bourne gifted the Society a copy of ORCA No 1: A report of the Whales, Dolphins and Seabirds of the Bay of Biscay and English Channel; sponsored by P&O.

Item 14: Presentations.

- Best Article for Sea Swallow. No articles were eligible for the award this year.
- AOS Trophy. HMS SCOTT received the award as an acknowledgement of volume and increased quality of reports reaching UKHO.

Item 15: Date of next meeting. Friday 6 December 2002 has been earmarked, with venue to be confirmed. **Post-meeting Note:** Members are asked to indicate whether they would be more likely to attend an AGM if it took place in January onboard HQS WELLINGTON on the Thames – an attractive venue, but one which would attract a cost to RNBWS.

Item 16: Presentation by Dr Ben Maughan. The Chairman introduced Dr Ben Maughan from the UKHO, recalling the Hydrographer of the Navy’s traditional role of encouraging observations of natural phenomena, and noting the usefulness of *The Mariner’s Handbook* in this area. Dr Maughan illustrated the range and power of the computer data-bases which are maintained in the UKHO Maritime Environmental Data Centre, and the type of data received and the sources. He empathised with RNBWS’s experience of the challenges of encouraging data collection. His talk prompted much discussion and it was agreed that a meeting at UKHO of organisations which are maintaining environmental data-bases would be invaluable.



M K Barritt
Capt RN
Chairman

Pacific Seabirds!). Two papers on p.143 report a major increase by Gould’s Petrel, *P. leucoptera* on Cabbage Island, N.S.W. following the eradication of rabbits, and that efforts to establish a new colony on nearby Boondelbah Island appear to be making progress. The remainder is taken up with comments and papers on long-line mortality, sadly this can be summed up as much needs to be done, national plans are still being developed in some cases but many have still not been addressed at all.

SANDGROUSE Vol. 23(2) has an article on the increasing sightings of Great Black-headed Gulls, *L. ichthyaetus* on the eastern side of Cyprus associated with East winds. It is thought to be due to a westward expansion and an increased breeding population in the Balkans, p.112-118. Members may remember the first records of this species from Italy recently. In unconfirmed records Bridled Terns, *S. anaethetus* and Lesser Crested Terns, *S. bengalensis* were found breeding on manmade islands north of Manama, Bahrain. In Israel two possible Saunder’s Terns, *S. saundersi* were seen amongst Little Terns, *S. albifrons* at Eilat 13 May. A Red-footed Booby, *S. dactyla* was photographed at Khaluf, Oman on 8 Mar. In UAR there were 2 sightings of Kittiwake, *R. tridactyla* at Fujairah 6 Mar, and at Khor Kalba 27 Mar, there were also Little Gulls, *L. minutus* at Das Island 1-4 Mar, a Brown-headed Gull, *L. brunnicephalus* at Fujairah 6 Mar and at Shargah 26-28 Mar. Lesser Noddy, *A. tenuirostris* and Common Noddy, *A. stolidus* may also have been present.

AUSTRALASIAN SEABIRD Bulletin No. 38, 2002, has a recent review of New Zealand seabirds looking at past and current species, p.3-5. The article lumps the forms of Wandering Albatross, *D. exulans*, *antipodensis* and *gibsoni* together on the grounds that plumage and measurements show considerable overlap, similarly White Capped, *T. cauta* and Shy, *T. strada* are distinguished by their wing lengths the measurements of which overlap. Only a few species are thought to have been lost but many species have been reduced to breeding on smaller islands. A study of Black-browed, *D. melanophris* and Yellow-nosed, *D. chlororhynchos* off Woollongong, NSW, suggests that Black-browed prefer inshore waters and the Yellow-nosed the deeper and slightly warmer waters offshore. No reason for this was apparent, p.6-8. Page 10 has a short article on the Chatham Island Petrel, *P. magentae* that is now known to have at least 12 nesting pairs. Dr Bourne comments on the classification of albatrosses on pages 10-12, arguing that while some of the latest “Species” may be identifiable as adults on the nest there is a high proportion of immature birds at sea which are easily confused with other age groups of other species. Birds would be better allocated to recognisable categories i.e. *Diomedea*; a practical approach is recommended. Pages 13-14 report the species found on Restoration Rock, Cape York Peninsula. The most numerous species was Bridled Tern, *S. anaethetus*. Page 15 summarises autopsies of birds caught on long-lines off New Zealand. In many cases body fat was low suggesting poor natural food supplies, in others fisheries offal was present, which suggests that reducing discards may reduce the boat’s attraction. Pages 16-18 lists the corpses of birds found on Herald’s Cay, Coral Sea, where 11

obvious advantage in terms of breeding success and variations are probably due to a combination of environmental factors.

AVES ICHNUSAE Vol. 3. has a report of a hybrid Black-headed / Mediterranean Gull seen south of Siracusa, Sicily in Mar 99. Interesting sightings include the first Caspian Gull, *L. a. cachinnans*, seen in the Santa Gila Lagoon, Sardinia and a Razorbill, *A. torda*, in the Gulf of Asinara, both in Dec '99. Gannets, *S. bassana* are becoming more numerous around Sardinia, but Cormorants, *P. carbo* continue to decline. Slender-billed Gulls, *L. genei* and Caspian Terns, *S. caspia* bred in the Gulf of Caligiari in 1999.

SEE VOGEL, September 2001, reports work on the Schlei-fjord where there are breeding Common and Arctic Terns, Common Gull, Black-headed and Great Black-backed Gulls, p.71-9. Pages 93-4 examine the results of beached bird surveys carried out on the Elbe between 1980 and 1996. During this period MARPOL regulations appear to have little effect on plastic pollution. The December 2001 issue records the first breeding of the Lesser Black-backed Gull, *L. fuscus* on the East coast of Schleswig-Holstein, p. 103. Pages 104-5 cover the breeding of coastal species in Mecklenburg-Vorpommerns 1999 and 2000.

MARINE ORNITHOLOGY, Vol. 28, No.2 starts with a census of breeding birds on Inaccessible Island, the most complete so far. Of the 16 breeding species of seabird Great Shearwater, *P. gravis* and Sub-antarctic Skua, *C. antarctica* have both significantly increased over the last twenty years while Yellow-nosed Mollymawks, *D. chlororhynchos* and Antarctic Terns, *S. vittata* have decreased. Although other species appear to have increased this is probably due to a better coverage of the island. Particular concern is felt for the 2 species most affected by long-lining, the Yellow-nosed Mollymawk and the Spectacled Shearwater, *P. conspicillata*. The latter amounted to 3,800-4,600 nests that are unlikely to sustain the estimated long-line loss of 500-1000 birds a year, p.93-100. Publications and theses on Antarctic and Sub Antarctic birds that were published in 1996 are listed on pages 10 1-4 and those for 1997 on pages 115-118. A study of the at-sea habitat of Kittlitz's Murrelet, *B. brevirostris* suggests that they prefer near-shore glacial affected and glacial stream affected waters, p.105-14. Pages 119-20 report a new colony of Emperor Penguins, *A. fosteri* on Snow Hill Island in the Weddell Sea. Rooftop nesting has now been confirmed for Hautlaub's Gull, *L. hautlubii* and for Swift Terns, *S. bergii* at 2 sites in Western Cape Province, South Africa, p.123-4. Abstracts of the Second International Conference on the Biology and Conservation of Albatross and other Petrels appear on pages 125-152. Many of these refer to long-lining or seabird movements. Olfaction appears to be a major factor, both in returning to the nesting burrow, p.127 and in selecting areas for feeding, p.139. Ta'u Island, American Samoa, is believed to be free of mammal predators and the upper slopes of Mount Lata may well provide a unique breeding site for Petrel and Shearwater species, p.141 (but see the last item in

NEWS FROM OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Army Ornithological Club Bulletin 2/2000 has descriptions of visits to South Africa and the Gambia; there is no seabird content.

The RAFOS Newsletter NO. 72 has articles on Gambia, the Greek island of Lesvos and Ascension. On the latter the RSPB have been asked to manage a project that includes the fencing of livestock to help reduce the spread of invasive plants, and action against the feral cats. It is hoped that funds will be made available later to tackle the cats!

WORLD BIRDWATCH Vol.23 No. 3 reports that there was no sign of the Crested Terns, *S. bernsteini* in 2001 on the Motsu Islands, Taiwan where they bred the previous year, p.4. Another note on this page reports the appearance of 1000 Relict Gulls, *L. relictus* in Shaanxi Province, China, probably because of a decrease in water levels of some lakes in bordering Inner Mongolia. On page 5 there is a brief description of a new species of petrel from a specimen collected at sea. The Vanuatu Petrel, *P. occulta* is closely related to the White-necked Petrel, *P. cervicalis* but it is smaller with a longer tail and different coloured primaries. It is presumed to breed in the Bank Islands and has reached NE Australia. Amongst the small items in No. 4 is a report of a massive decline in the numbers of Brunnich's Guillemot, *U. lomvia* in Iceland probably due to over hunting, and a quote from a US Wildlife and Fisheries report that most of the seabird populations hit by the EXXON VALDEZ oil spill in Alaska have still to show signs of recovery 10 years later. Both items are on page 4. Vol.24 No. I, Page 3 has a report from New Zealand that one boat fishing for Ling caught more than 300 seabirds long-lining in a single trip, most of these were White-chinned Petrels, *P. aequinoctialis*. The Forest and Bird Protection Society, New Zealand estimate that the ling, tuna and hold fisheries catch around 10,000 Albatross and Shearwater annually in New Zealand waters. Page 5 notes that one Wandering, *D. exulans* and one Grey-headed, *T. chrysostoma*, Albatross from South Africa's Marion Island are to be fitted with transmitters to follow their non-breeding season movements. It is suggested that the frequent breeding failures of Roseate Terns, *S. dougallii* may lead to less tick infestation in subsequent years and result in significantly higher fledgling success. Global warming in Antarctica has resulted in early spring thaws and marked decreases in sea-ice along the Peninsula. Adélie Penguins, *P. adeliae*, which feed by diving through cracks in the sea-ice, are only found where the sea-ice lasts well into the spring thaw. As a result there has been a marked decrease in the number of nesting Adélies but an increase in sea-ice tolerant species such as Chinstrap, *P. antarctica* and Gentoo, *P. papua*, Penguins, p.6. Lastly on page 7 is a quote from the New Zealand Herald that thousands of Adélie Penguins have been cut off from their main breeding colonies in the Ross Sea by 2 massive icebergs and unprecedented levels of ice.

FULMAR, No. 96, Autumn 2001 reports 647 Fulmar, *F. glacialis* passed MAERSK CURLEW on 17 July. Sooty Shearwater, *P. griseus* were seen 27 Aug (1) and 3 Sep (5) both off BUCHAN A. In late July Manx Shearwaters, *P. puffinus* were numerous in Morecombe Bay, but only 3 were seen in the North Sea. Storm-petrels, *H. pelagicus* were seen off BUCHAN A on 15 Jul. 31 Aug and 1 Sep. Most Pomarine Skuas, *S. pomarinus* were seen from S/V GEOGRAPH at 63N 05 E and 18 Long-tailed, *S. longicaudus* were seen 18 May. A Glaucous Gull, *L. hyperboreus* seen at SCHIEHALLION on 26 June was unusual. An estimated 8000 Kittiwake, *L. tridactyla* were on the sea by MAERSK ENHANCER on 29 Aug. A Black Guillemot, *C. grille* and 4 Little Auk, *A. alle* were at BUCHAN A on 14 Jul, the first was unusually far off shore: No 97 notes that 8 Sooty Shearwater were seen at S/V GEOGRAPH in late Sep and early Oct and that only a few Manx Shearwaters were seen in Morecombe Bay in November. At BUCHAN A a total of 58 Great Skua *S. skua* were seen with a maximum of 10 on 4 Sep. A late Sandwich Tern, *S. sandvicensis* passed S/V GEOGRAPH 6 Oct and an unusual 20 Black Guillemot were at MAERSK CURLEW 15 Oct. The first successful record of offshore breeding by a Herring Gull *L. argentatus* occurred on a Morecombe Bay oilrig in 2001.

SCOTTISH BIRD NEWS No. 63 reports that 2001 was a poor breeding season with total failures of Arctic Terns, *S. paradisaea* and Kittiwakes probably due to the scarcity of sand eels after mid-June. Arctic Skua, *S. parasiticus*, Puffins, *F. arctica* and Red-throated Divers, *G. stellata* raised a few young. Great Skua, Shag, *P. aristotelis* and Guillemots, *Uria aalge* fared rather better as there were plenty of Mackerel and Herring, page 9. A Black-browed Albatross, *D. melanophris* seen NNE of Fraserburgh on 13 July is thought to be the same bird later reported off Kent, Norway, Sweden and Holland. There were 11 reports of Cory's Shearwater, *C. diomedea* mostly off the Outer Hebrides, 22 reports of Sooty Shearwater again mostly from the Outer Hebrides while 7 Balearic Shearwaters, *P. p. mauretanicus* were seen from 22 July off the Outer Hebrides and off Ayrshire. Twenty-five Pomarine Skuas seen from 7 Jul made a good early autumn start. Over 100 European Storm-petrels were trapped at Fife Ness in July and large numbers were seen feeding off Kinnaird Head, Aberdeenshire on 30 Jul, while on 7 Jul a record 37 were seen passing Macrahanish Observatory. Up to 6 Leach's Storm-petrels, *O. leucorhoa* were reported off Kinnaird Head 16 Jul-6 Aug. A Sabine's Gull, *L. sabini* was seen at Tarbet Ness. 3 Ring-billed Gulls, *L. delawarensis*, 3 Michahellis Yellow-legged Gulls and 15 Mediterranean Gulls, *L. melanocephalus* were also seen Jul – Aug.

ATLANTIC SEABIRDS, Vol.3, No. 2. begins with a comparison of Arctic and Common Tern, *S. hirundo* nest sites on Coquet Island. The Common Tern will accept slightly longer grass than the Arctic, though both like it short, p.49-58. Pages 59-74 reports a survey of colonies of seabirds in Senegal carried out in 1998. Added to other reports it is considered possible to give a reliable estimate for Gulls and Terns on the NW coast of Africa. In 1998 the majority were of 4 species, Grey-

reported from the Po Delta 4 Jul-20 Aug. A Forster's Tern, *S. fosteri* appeared at a Tern colony on Ile-aux-Moutons, Finistere 23 Jul, 3 Lesser Crested Terns, *S. bengalensis* were seen at Huelva, Spain and a Bridled Tern, *S. anaethetus* was at Sant-Jacut-de-la-Mer, France 9-31 Aug. Vol. 23. No.6. Unconfirmed reports include Black-browed Albatross, *D. melanophris* reported from North Dunkirk 6 Nov and in the Oslofiord 11 Nov. If accepted, a Soft-plumaged Petrel, *P. feae/madeira/mollis* seen off Cape Gris Nez will be the first for France. Others were seen off Flamborough Head 23 Sep and Hovs Hailer, Skane, Sweden 28 Oct. the first for Sweden. Again, if accepted, a Cory's Shearwater, *C. borealis* seen off Rost Nordland 26 Sept will be the northernmost record for Norway. Denmark's 3rd Great Black-headed Gull, *L. ichthyaetus* was at Koge Sydsjaelland 2-4 Oct. Laughing Gulls, *L. atricilla* were reported from Goulven, Finistere, off Beauvoir sur Mer, Vendee and off Barra, Outer Hebrides between 21 Aug and 12 Oct. Vol. 24. No. 1 has an interesting article reviewing the sightings of Pigmy Cormorants, *M. pygmeus* in Europe including one in Belgium Dec 2000-Jan 2001. It seems possible that one might turn up in UK before long, p.1-6. In unconfirmed reports, 2 Long-tailed Skua, *S. longicaudus* 11 and 16 Nov, and a Great Black-headed Gull 29 Dec have been seen off Malta. Mediterranean Gull, *L. melanocephalus* turned up at Ponta Delgada, Sao Miguel, Azores 11-12 Nov and a Bonaparte's, *L. philadelphia* at Terceira 5 Nov. There was another Bonaparte's at Millbrook, Cornwall 19 Dec-mid Jan. an interesting Ring-billed Gull made it's eighth winter visit to Bergen, Hordaland. It has also been recorded in the summer from Newfoundland. Common Gulls, *L. canus* were recorded from Malta 29 and 30 Dec. A first winter Kittiwake, *R. tridactyla* appeared at Karatas Harbour, South Turkey, 3 Jan. Ivory Gulls, *P. eburnea* were recorded in the Faeroes 9 and 11 Nov, in Shetland 12 Nov and in Scotland, Dunnet Head 22-26 Nov and at Montrose Basin, Angus 27 Dec-4 Jan.

ALAUDA Vol. 69 No. 3 has an interesting article on how to measure bird's ground speed using a video camera, p.387-395. No. 4 discusses the variation in physical dimensions of 3 populations of the European Storm-petrel, *H. pelagicus*. Birds from the Atlantic (Biarritz) and the 2 Mediterranean colonies (Cerbicale Islands, Corsica and the Riou Archipelago) were considered to be significantly different, p.475-82. For the first time Mediterranean Gulls. Lesser Black-backed, *L. fuscus* and Greater Black-backed Gull, *L. marinus* all bred successfully on the coast of Picardy, N. France in 2001, p.545-7.

ANNUARI ORNITOLOGIC de las BALEARS, 2000, Vol. 15 has a report of a Cory's Shearwater, *C. diomedea* that was ringed as a pullus in the Cabrera being recovered there 26 years later, p.35-6.

ARDEOLA, Vol. 48(2) has an article on natal philopatry in Cory's Shearwater, *C. diomedea* on Selvagem Grande. Significantly more males than females returned to their place of birth, but noticeably fewer than in Mediterranean colonies. There is no

work on ringing, tracking and monitoring are continuing. P.3-5. Pages 5-6 report studies of Ammonia emissions as part of the Global Nitrogen Enrichment Study. A team is due to start on the elimination of feral cats on Ascension Island in 2002 and a Frigate bird monitoring programme is being developed to cope with year round breeding, p.7-8. Page 9 describes the attempts made by Gannets, *S. bassana* to breed on boats at Bandol in the South of France. Although one egg hatched, the chick disappeared before fledging. Pages 10-11 enlarge on other reports of the 2001 seabird season. Many colonies of Shags, *P. aristotelis* in the area of Canna suffered unusually heavily from predation by Herring Gulls, *L. argentatus*, probably due to the reduction in fishing activity around Canna. Herring Gulls may have suffered widespread failure on the NW Scottish coast. On page 13 a note quoting the South Devon Seabird Trust gives survival rates for Guillemots that have been cleaned from oil and subsequently released as at least a year for 30% and 3 years for 14%. This shows an encouraging improvement in the cleaning technique. Newsletter 90 starts with satellite tracking of Gannets showing that birds from larger colonies have to fly further for food, possibly because repeated diving tends to disturb and scatter the shoals of fish. Satellite tracking of Rockhopper Penguins, *E. chrysocome* in the Falklands showed that birds might remain locally or travel as far as Argentina, p.2-3. A new study will attempt to assess the effect of changes in fishing discard rates on several species of seabird, p. 3. The Balearic Shearwater. *P.p. mauretanicus* is under pressure from feral cats at Formentera and Minorca as shown in a recent study, unfortunately the study did not include an update assessment of the breeding population, p.10. SEABIRD 2000 is now 95% complete in spite of last year's Foot and Mouth, but help is still needed in Yorkshire and for the recording of roof nesting gulls in Kent, SE Wales and South Devon, p.12-13.

DUTCH BIRDING, Vol. 23, No 5. This includes a well illustrated article on the Glaucous-winged Gull, *L. glaucescens* and its various hybrids, p.247-270 and just before you congratulate yourself that this is an American West coast bird there is an article on pages 271-4 describing one that turned up in Morocco in 1995! Slightly larger than the Yellow-legged Gulls, *L. cachinnans* that it accompanied the bill was heavier and slightly larger, the eye higher and smaller, and legs and primaries appeared shorter. A short article states that the eye of the Peruvian Booby, *S. variegata* is incorrectly described in most textbooks, appearing yellowish-grey on the nest, becoming brown and then red, p.288. Unconfirmed reports include a Fea's Petrel, *P. feae* seen off Scilly 12 Aug. Cory's Shearwater, *C. borealis* were reported off Sweden in July and August. Large numbers of Wilson's Storm-petrel, *O. oceanicus* were seen off Spain in July and August, 300 some 13km west of Sisargis Islands, Pontevedra and 55 15km west of Cabo Silleiro, Galicia. Red-billed Tropicbirds, *P. aethereus* were reported 32km SSW of Sicily, 7 June and one at Mundersley, Norfolk with one more off Guernsey 16 Sep. If accepted the latter would be the first records for the UK. On 7 Sep a Ring-billed Gull, *L. delawarensis* returned to Goes Zeeland for the fifth year. Italy's 3rd Sabine Gull, *L. sabini* was

headed Gull, *L. cirrocephalus*, Slender-billed Gull, *L. genei*, Caspian Tern, *S. caspia* and Royal Tern, *S. maxima*. Other species included Kelp Gull, *L. dominicanus*, Little Tern, *S. albifrons*, Common Tern and Gull-billed Tern, *G. nilotica*. Species which are thought to have bred in the past are Black-headed Gull, Laughing Gull, *L. atricilla*, Franklin's Gull, *L. pipixcan*, Sooty Tern, *S. fuscata* and Bridled Tern, *S. anaethetus*. Pages 75-84 examine the association of seabirds with floating kelp, especially the Grey-backed Storm-petrel, *G. nereis*. The possibility of inter-breeding between the Common Guillemot, *U. aalge* and Razorbill, *A. torda* is discussed on p.85-88 whilst p.89-93 go on to describe how a pair of Razorbills successfully reared a Common Guillemot after they had lost their egg and found a guillemot egg had rolled into their nest. Vol. 3 No. 3 has an article on breeding and egg size of North Norwegian Puffins, *F. arctica* and Razorbills over a period of 20 years. There is no indication of earlier egg laying which could have resulted from global warming, p.97-112. The distribution of Spectacled Petrels, *P. conspicillata* in the South Eastern Atlantic during Jan to Mar shows that they are mainly seen in areas of deep water whereas White-chinned Petrels, *P. aequinoctialis* preferred inshore waters. A similar relationship between the 2 species occurs off South Eastern Brazil (Nov-Mar). Spectacled Petrels have a strong tendency to join ships at sea. The absence of feeding suggests that either they feed at night or that they are waiting for the ships to start fishing! P.113-124. Lastly there is a study of the unusually low rate of breeding success achieved by Herring Gulls, *L. argentatus* on the north shore of the Gulf of St Laurence, possible reasons are examined but there is no clear answer. Vol 3 No. 4 gives selected papers from the 7th International Seabird Conference, March 2000. These include European Storm-petrels in Brittany, p.149-164; which illustrates the variation in laying dates, and problems involved in breeding census work. Pages 165-178 look at the reduction in body mass and basal metabolic weight in the latter stages of breeding by the Black-legged Kittiwake, *R. tridactyla* and wonders if this is to reduce maintenance or simply due to the stress of chick rearing. Pages 187-202 consider the distribution and breeding success of seabirds on Ascension. There appears to be a number of factors affecting seabird numbers and long term monitoring is vital especially in additional areas of the tropics. A study of flight altitudes of coastal birds shows that birds tend to fly low against headwinds and significantly higher with tailwinds. p.203-216.

Dutch Seabird Group News brief 3(2) reports Kittiwakes nesting on an offshore oilrig, the first breeding record for the Netherlands.

SEABIRD Group Newsletter 89 opens with a review of hunting in Greenland and its disastrous effect on birds fish and mammals alike; Brunnich's Guillemot, *U. lomvia*, Arctic Tern, *S. paradisaea*, Eider, *S. mollissima* and King Eider, *S. spectabilis* are all under threat of local extinction, p.1-2. The programme in the Seychelles to maintain a sustainable harvest from the Sooty Terns *S. fuscata* appears to be working and studies into the reestablishment of colonies on islands are proceeding, whilst