

the Sea Swallow



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BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY

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THE ROYAL NAVAL BIRD WATCHING SOCIETY
(Affiliated to the British Trust for Ornithology)

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1950

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To the Editors of "Nature," in which "Sheld-Ducks" by Mr. R. A. H. Coombs first appeared (31st December, 1949).

To the Dalesman Publishing Company, by whose courtesy the illustration accompanying Mr. W. R. Mitchell's article appears.

To Mr. James Fisher for his articles on the Uppsala Congress, which first appeared in "The Manchester Guardian."

FOREWORD

The tide of interest in bird knowledge and bird protection is still rising in the country, and the bad old days of murdering anything strange that appeared seem to be getting further away.

The R.N. Bird Watching Society can help, and undoubtedly does help in this direction, but it needs more members. Let all members try and enlist one more this year.

They won't regret it ; a slight knowledge of bird life from the Bridge or Boat Deck is a never-ending interest to those who are lucky enough to get abroad and have the bird book of the country or the ocean with them.

William Tennant,

The Eades,
Upton-on-Severn,
Worcestershire.
24th June, 1950

EDITORIAL

Many interesting reports were received during the year, and letters and enquiries from members all over the globe ; reports from little visited parts are particularly welcome. It will be useful to hear from any who make interesting contact with local ornithologists in the parts they visit.

It is hoped that members will make a special point of trying to meet the bird watchers of the countries they visit, and also the Curators of Natural History museums ; by doing this they will find out the best places to see birds, and so avoid wasting a lot of time, which is normally too short anyway, and also they will be put straight into the picture of any local bird problems and the principal interests.

The matter of a special R.N.B.W.S. Investigation has not yet matured, but it is hoped to bring out details of a Gannet census shortly.

The state of the Society on 15th July, 1950, was :—

Honorary Members	...	...	6
Council and Advisory Members	...	...	15
Life Members	...	...	79
Annual Members	...	...	200
			<hr/>
Total	...	...	300

We thus keep up our membership, but only just ; there have only been five new members since the last Annual Meeting, and against that, some have dropped out.

On going to Press, the Hon. Secretary learns that he has been appointed to Washington, where it will not be possible for him to carry out the Secretary's duties. The Chairman, Captain R. M. T. Taylor, R.N., has kindly consented to act as Secretary temporarily ; but would like to hear from a volunteer who would like to take over.

NEAL RANKIN
ARTHUR GILPIN
ERIC DUFFEY
BERNARD JEANS
NOEL BEAL
J. W. EVANS

} *Editorial Committee*

MARINE ORNITHOLOGY

The British Trust for Ornithology held a Meeting on the subject of Marine Ornithology, in London, on 5th November, 1949. Four papers were read and each was followed by a discussion. They are reproduced here by kind permission of the authors and of the British Trust for Ornithology.

1. Factors affecting Bird Distribution and Numbers.

Introducing the subject, Professor V. C. Wynne Edwards said that he was going to deal with the factors affecting the numbers and distribution of sea-birds. Sea-birds as a group were not easy to define sharply; for example, gulls, both coastal and marine, are usually classed as sea-birds, whereas in other parts of the world there were populations entirely confined to great freshwater lakes; this applied also to certain terns, cormorants and skimmers. It would be more real to make a distinction between species of terrestrial distribution, which were divided into races associated with geographical areas like land-birds, and the wholly marine types, which were probably adapted to a higher intake of salt water, even to dispense with fresh water altogether and hence were clearly differentiated physiologically. Such birds were the penguins, all the Procellariiformes, the tropic birds, brown pelicans, skuas and kittiwakes, some terns, auks and possibly also the grebes and divers. It was not certain yet whether they were able to replenish their body-water from the sea, or substituted entirely "metabolic" water produced within the body.

The feeding habits of sea-birds showed well-marked differences; some species were confined to shallow water, others, such as the gannets and auks, were found within the Continental Shelf, while the birds of the open ocean fed on planktonic crustacea rather than on fish, which were scarce in deep water. Various groupings could be made according to feeding habits: one division was into *Inshore* birds, which came ashore to preen and rest, *Offshore* birds, with ranges covering the Continental Shelf, and *Pelagic* birds of the open ocean. This rough grouping was susceptible to much modification and qualification.

Another classification, by the method of feeding, divided sea-birds into *Swimming Surface Feeders*, which included most of the plankton-eating pelagic types, *Flying Surface Feeders*, e.g. the skimmers, *Plungers*, e.g. the gannets, and *Divers*, e.g. auks and cormorants.

Sea-birds exhibited fairly marked climatic or latitudinal zonation, which varied with the seasons; examples were the winter quarters of the Pomarine Skua and the phalaropes, and the effect of the Humboldt Current, which took penguins almost to the Equator. Reduced salinity also affected distribution; Common Guillemot, Razorbill and Black Guillemot showed in that order a successively higher tolerance of low salinity, while Brunich's Guillemot could live in fresh water for a long time, and was the only auk able to do so. Murphy, in his classic work "The Oceanic Birds of South America," had defined these climatic zones for the South Atlantic, but it had not yet been done for the North Atlantic.

There seemed to be a clear correlation of the plankton density with the distribution of oceanic birds in the North Atlantic, but what determined the size of the population? Food seemed to be abundant, but it must also be available, and available fast enough when found. The propensity of sea-birds to follow ships and whales and to congregate in currents and tide-rips suggested that *natural* food was not normally easy to find. Though the reservoir seemed illimitable, and there was therefore no need for competition, the varying abundance and availability of food from place to place could nevertheless control the density and distribution of pelagic birds.

The sharply defined seasonal range limits of certain species seemed to have an important application to general population dynamics. The marine habitat, in spite of appearances, was relatively a safe environment and it must be noted that all sea-birds, except the ducks, laid few eggs. Further there was a correlation of clutch-size with zonation: the *Inshore* group laid normally about three eggs (e.g. gulls and cormorants); the *Off-shore* group about two eggs (e.g. kittiwakes and skuas), or one egg (e.g. gannets and auks); while the great majority of the *Pelagic* group laid only one egg (e.g. albatrosses, petrels and tropic birds). Moreover there was proof of intermittent breeding in the latter group resulting in a high proportion of non-breeders, and sometimes a long adolescent period also. All this pointed to restriction of clutch-size to a low adult mortality, which in the Fulmar was believed to be not more than ten per cent. per annum, giving an expectation of life of more than seven years at the time the young bird went to sea.

If this was true, then it was not food supply which directly controlled the sea-bird population—a point borne out by the evident great increase of the Fulmar's winter density in the North Atlantic; and as a result of years of observation the speaker rejected the possibility of either inter-specific or intra-specific competition for food; everything pointed to the pelagic birds

being so secure in their environment that the mortality rate was lower than in any other community of birds.

2. Marine Transects and Census Methods

Lieutenant E. A. G. Duffey, R.N.V.R., said that a detailed study of a single species in the North Atlantic had never yet been made, but that in such a study the Transect method would play a large part and he wanted to examine the evidence that it was likely to give.

In the first place the strip of ocean it covered, and hence the sample given, was extremely small—at the most a quarter of a mile on either side of the ship whereas on land the observer could normally count on a full range of vision of 360 degrees, the observer at sea was lucky if he had an angle of 200 degrees. Stern or Bows, or the Boat Deck of a small ship, were obviously the best points of vantage, but shelter was very often an important consideration and nearly always meant reduced vision.

Three classes of birds were observed on transects: first, the *migrants* and *vagrants*, such as skuas, terns, phalaropes and some gulls. These were often difficult to see, though some might follow the ship for a time. A baffling example of this class was the Arctic Tern, which might come or go from any point of the compass, irrespective of season; this was probably because it flew on wide zig-zags over the ocean.

The second class were the *residents in restricted areas*, such as Little Auk, Leach's Petrel and Puffin, which from the observer's point of view, constituted a more or less static population and did not normally follow ships. When such birds were scarce, a count through a half-hour, repeated at various intervals throughout the day, was probably sufficient; to account for the ship's speed the number per unit of distance should be reckoned. When birds were very numerous, the total present should be counted at spaced periods throughout the day. Flying birds, which formed a large percentage, of those counted, posed a problem in this class, for certain species such as Puffins and Little Auks, found it difficult to take off in very stormy weather, or when there was a heavy swell in a flat calm, and hence the number of birds seen in the air was reduced when these conditions obtained, though this did not affect shearwaters and petrels so much.

Inflated totals might be given by local concentration of some species, for instance, the Great Shearwater, near to food supplies but really on the edge of the main area of distribution.

The third class were the *followers of ships*, which were not so easy to count as they looked. For instance, Kittiwakes could be seen on most days of a North Atlantic crossing and could be counted, but what meaning had such counts? Did the bigger

ship attract a larger following than the little ship? These, and many other factors tended to upset the accuracy of transect counts. A further example was the occasional diurnal rhythm recorded for the Fulmar (usually in the Summer), when it had a morning and an afternoon peak—how could counts of this species be related to its actual density?

In discussion following this paper, B. B. Roberts said that the speed of the ship was of great importance and that about nine knots was ideal. D. Snow said that at 18 knots the majority of birds were seen within 60 degrees of the bow. T. E. Barlow suggested about 18 feet as a good height of eye for observations. N. A. G. Beal spoke of the desirability of assessing densities of birds at sea, but stressed the difficulty.

3. The Distribution of the Fulmar

James Fisher showed a map of the breeding distribution of the Fulmar throughout the world. The species had been known in Iceland since at least 1000 A.D., and increase had been reported since 1809; this had been mainly in the form of a spread to new colonies and there was some evidence for a recent decrease in such traditional strongholds as the Westmann Islands. In Faeroe the Fulmar arrived as a breeding species between 1816 and 1839; in spite of regular human predation on the young, there had been a great and steady increase for many years. Only one colony was known in Norway, where breeding was first proved in 1924.

The breeding Fulmars of Britain, Faeroe, Norway and Iceland were light, so were those on Jan Mayen, while a mixture of dark and light birds were bred on Bear Island. Although dark Fulmars must have bred in Spitzbergen before 1855, there was no proof of the existence of a colony before then; now over 30 colonies were known, owing probably to an increase of explorers rather than of Fulmars. Nine colonies of dark birds had been recorded from Franz Josef Land, but there was only proof of one colony in Novaya Zemlya.

There were four colonies of dark or mixed birds in East Greenland, and groups of colonies—some at least of light birds—on the west and north west coasts; records here went back to the Eighteenth Century. Four colonies in Arctic Canada were casually mentioned in non-scientific accounts between 1894 and 1900, and there was no certain information on the colour phase of these birds; in 1878 there were two dark colonies in Baffin Land. Breeding had been alleged on other islands in this region.

In the North Pacific there were colonies on islands from the Kuriles to St. Mathew and Hall Islands which showed transition from "all dark to "all light" birds. Breeding in the Aleutians proper was only proved in 1940, but had been suspected for years.

On a number of other islands there were unconfirmed reports of colonies.

He showed a map of the Atlantic Ocean with lines drawn at a distance of 600 nautical miles from the nearest known Fulmar colony. These lines indicated what might be the maximum operational range of a breeding Fulmar, presuming that it could be away from the nest four days and travel at an average speed (including time spent feeding) of $12\frac{1}{2}$ knots. Outside this radius lay most of the western part of the North Atlantic and it was suggested that Fulmars seen here in May and June were either non-breeders, or birds that had lost their eggs, for replacement laying was unproved in the species.

Finally the speaker gave his opinion on the remarkable spread of the Fulmar in Iceland, Feroe and Britain in the past 130 years; he believed it was due to a change in the available food supply. In the days of Greenland whaling, Fulmars came in large numbers to eat blubber and offal at "flensing" time; trawlers had now succeeded the whalers and to-day thousands of Fulmars might be seen round one trawler at gutting time; it was not difficult to associate this new and abundant food supply with the spread of the bird.

4. Describing Geographical Areas of Ocean

E. M. Nicholson made a case for describing geographical areas in the ocean in a similar way to land areas in the case of land-birds. Since latitude and longitude were always difficult to carry in the head, he proposed a system of named areas (each based on ten degree quadrilaterals of latitude and longitude); these are shown on the accompanying map. It is on Mollweide's Projection and proposed names for a series of standard Regions of the North Atlantic from the Equator to Lat. 80 deg. N., each region being ten degrees of longitude broad and ten degrees of latitude deep, which gives an area at the latitude of southern England of roughly 300,000 square miles, or about the size of France and Great Britain combined. Each name has been chosen to indicate as clearly as possible the part of the ocean referred to without duplicating geographical terms which have divergent meanings. Where land occurs in any of the named ten-degree quadrilaterals it should be understood to be excluded from the Region, which should be considered as consisting exclusively of tidal water. Landlocked seas such as the Baltic and Mediterranean, and certain odd fragments of sea in or near coastal waters have been omitted. As an example, the shipping route from Southampton to New York runs across the regions Biscay and Channel, Western Approaches, North Atlantic Divide, Midway, Outer Bank, Newfoundland Bank and Nova Scotia Banks. Each of these regions

had its own characteristic spring, summer, autumn and winter bird populations, just as Britain has, and we are beginning to know enough about each to describe the normal distribution and movements of birds within it.

For more exact purposes each of the ten-degree quadrilaterals named as Regions can readily be sub-divided into a hundred degree-quadrilaterals each one degree of longitude broad and one degree of latitude deep, conveniently defined by stating, after the name of the Region, the number of the latitude parallel forming the base and the longitude meridian forming the west side. Thus St. Kilda lies in British Seas 57.09. The area of these degree quadrilaterals at the latitude of southern England is about 3,000 square miles, or roughly the combined size of Kent and Sussex. Where more precise references are needed degrees and minutes can be used in the normal way.

The map showing these areas is published on pages 20 and 21.

SOME PACIFIC GULLS

BY ADMIRAL SIR W. G. TENNANT

The gulls of the North Eastern Pacific are perhaps the most interesting part of the bird world—in many cases their differences are slight, which makes recognition difficult, and their territories overlap, but one is constantly meeting new varieties.

Starting from the south, the Laughing Gull appears in the Canal Zone, one of the many black headed gulls in the summer, which are so much harder to identify in the winter. This bird is larger than most of his kind and has a darker mantle, and is generally to be found in the tropics.

Going north, we met the Western Gull, that leaden grey-backed bird with the same bill and feet as the Herring Gull, and only readily identified by its darker back. About the same time appeared the Californian Gull, another bird which is so nearly alike to the Herring, except that he is a few inches smaller and the feet are greenish-yellow, and feet are none too easy to pick out when a bird sails by at a distance. In these latitudes one is almost made homesick by sighting the Herring Gull itself.

Continue a little further north and the Glaucous-winged Gull arrives and sails past the ship. I found him to be very common in the Vancouver area, also he was easy to identify for he has no black on his back or wings, which are pale grey, and somewhat darker grey at the tips of the primaries, but in other respects he is very similar to the Herring Gull. Another reminder of northern England and Scotland is the British Common Gull which appears in the British Columbia area, he is referred to by Alexander in his "Birds of the Ocean" as the Mew, and by the United States as the Short-billed Gull. This bird I found in some numbers off Vancouver, and though very similar to the Herring Gull, he is easy to identify if you can get a sight of his greenish yellow bill and feet.

Here we also saw the Ring-billed Gull, very like the Common and only identified when near enough to see, by the black band on his bill-tip, the feet being similar to those of the Common or Mew Gull.

Other gulls seen were Franklins up the Columbia River at Portland, Oregon, and Bonapartes, a gull which was common off Vancouver—very like our Black-headed Gull with a black-red bill and flesh coloured feet. I sighted one Kittywake at sea with its unmistakable dark band across the wings. I am afraid we were not far enough north or late enough in the year to get a view of the Glaucous, the Ivory or Sabines gulls which would otherwise have completed the list.

SHEARWATERS ON FILFOLA ISLAND.

BY CAPTAIN H. A. TRAILL, R.N.

We went to Filfola Island in June, 1949, to see if the Shearwaters were nesting there, and found them in far greater numbers than we had expected. Lieutenant Commander (S) Allenby had visited the place during day-time in the previous year, and had found a young bird and signs of nesting. During early July, '49, Commander Sholto Douglas and I had a short day-time visit, and saw about ten adult birds, some with eggs and some with young, among the rock crevasses, and there were many signs of other crevasses having been occupied. We determined on a night visit in order to get some idea of the strength of the colony.

Accordingly one evening at the end of July, Douglas, Lieut. Blair and myself, with food and drink which would have lasted a week, ground sheets, rugs, rope and, which proved most useful, a mattock (the local general purpose agricultural implement, which serves as hoe, spade and pick), made our way across Malta.

The journey off, in one of the orange and blue fishing boats from Wied Zurriek offered no difficulty, and on the way, in flat calm, we saw a number of Shearwaters; in one instance a group of four adult birds was apparently giving friendly swimming and diving lessons to an immature bird; curious, because the old birds leave the young on the nest at an early age to fend for themselves and normally have nothing to do with them.

Some fifty Herring Gulls, including probably some Yellow-legged gulls, watched our approach from the cliffs and silently departed as we drew near, not to return during our stay.

Our boatmen, who were obviously concerned about our sanity, dumped the gear on a flat topped rock and left us with a firm promise that they would return in the morning. They seemed anxious to get away before dark, but kept their promise.

However the sun was still up, and it was hot and fairly difficult work lugging the stores up a crevasse on the south side of the island, which affords the only access to the flat top; as soon as we had chosen a camp site we set out to explore. The place is littered with old shell and bomb fragments, fuzes and unexploded

shells and bombs, the relics of many bombardment practices; a fact which has been reported in letters to the local Press with warnings to keep away,—some compensation to the birds for the havoc wrought among them by night bombardment.

While daylight lasted, we found twenty-two occupied nests and signs of many more, and before dark we spread a ground sheet from a rocky ledge to make a flat topped tent to keep off the dew. It was dark when we sat down under cover to eat our supper, by the light of torches because we hadn't thought to bring a hurricane lamp.

The first sign of life started just an hour after sunset when the absolute stillness was broken by the weird call of a Shearwater out of the pitch darkness. By lying down we could see him against the lighter sky and it was obvious that our camp site was his chosen landing place. He flew round in a figure of eight, completing each circle with a glide approach which took him within a few feet of us before he pulled up and went round again. He nearly hit Douglas, who stood up, and finally pitched with a thud about ten yards away. Soon many others were flying round and their cries became continuous and were answered by fearful sounds from nesting birds shrieking underground.

The air was full of birds and noise all round the island cliffs and all over the top. We estimated that the number of Shearwaters present must have been over a thousand, and possibly twice as many. The sound was terrific, with the thud and flop of birds landing easily heard.

Walking round with torches, we found birds sitting singly and in groups in the open, and singly and in pairs and even threes in the rock crevasses. Photography with flash light equipment would have been easy, but we hadn't thought of it.

The noise went on continuously for over an hour, with hundreds of birds shrieking at once, both above and below ground, and though later it died down considerably, it never actually ceased all night. I can only describe it as the wailing of a lost soul with a final gurgling as if his throat had been cut—"Ooo er er erOoo er er...Oou...ur ur ur." The "Ooo" made with intake of breath, and the "er er er" with outgoing, the last short and jerky in the throat,—about the same as a Herring Gull's scream.

Numbers of fishing boats had formed a half circle round the island about a mile off, and their great arc lamps formed a background against which birds were silhouetted, and we became aware of a small fluttering bird flying round the camp site. It pitched

a few yards away and proved to be a Stormy Petrel whose nest contained a young chick. Squeals underneath Douglas led us to another who was sitting on an egg about a foot below ground.

About midnight we settled down to sleep, not easy to attain with the Shearwaters within five yards emitting their terrible screams in almost continuous succession. We did sleep but all three had nightmares during the night, and felt rather uncomfortable when we realised that the 150 feet sheer cliff was only ten yards away.

We woke, just as the sky began to turn grey, to a series of bumps and thuds on the tent top, and found that the departing friends of the night were launching themselves from their ledge and bouncing on the canvas roof as they made their get-away—silent at last,—and with daylight there was nothing to be seen.

At sunrise we breakfasted and left, glad to find the boatman waiting at the flat rock. It was too cold to bathe.

Sequel. Some weeks later a Boy Scout brought me a strange bird, obviously sick and dazed. It was a Shearwater and it died soon afterwards. Douglas sent the skin home for identification and the Mediterranean Shearwater *Puffinus kuhli kuhli*, was confirmed.

SHELD-DUCKS: MIGRATION IN SUMMER.

BY R. A. H. COOMBES

(International Wildfowl Research Institute,
Zoological Museum, Tring, Herts).

The status of the common sheld-duck, *Tadorna tadorna* (L.), in Great Britain and Ireland has long been described in the ornithological literature as being similar to that of other British breeding ducks, namely, a resident species, the numbers of which are increased by immigrants from the continent of Europe in Winter and by passage migrants in Spring and Autumn. This description, however, gives a very inadequate and misleading impression of the complete life-history, as will be seen from the following findings, the result of many years study of sheld-ducks in this field.

(1) The British population of the sheld-duck performs one highly concentrated migration in the year; this migration takes place neither in Spring nor Autumn, but shortly after Mid-summer, and it has begun, developed and almost ended in four weeks—the month of July.

(2) The return is more in the nature of a gradual drift back to the breeding grounds than true migration. It is spread over a period of at least six months, the waves of returning birds varying somewhat from year to year, but showing peak periods in Autumn and again in late Winter or early Spring. It is these returning British and Irish birds that have been mistaken for winter visitors and passage migrants coming from breeding grounds in other countries.

(3) Every year there are in the breeding areas comparatively large populations of sheld-ducks which are paired and appear to be in adult plumage, but which do not breed.

(4) The exodus in July consists of the entire population of these non-breeding pairs and almost the entire population of the adult breeding pairs.

(5) The young birds of the year, most of them still in down, are thus deserted by their parents. The broods of downy young usually join to form larger groups. One or sometimes two adults remain with each flotilla of flightless young for a period after the rest of parents have migrated.

(6) Although the sheld-duck is essentially a marine duck, the migrants do not follow the coasts, but fly overland across Great Britain from west to east by several routes.

(7) These migration routes across England are adhered to each year with great precision, as are also the places of assembly and departure.

Initial studies have been made of the process of the migration and the behaviour of the migrants. Photographs of the migrating flocks in flight have been obtained.

These findings were reached as a result of direct observations carried out at intervals over a period of years prior to 1940. I resumed observations in 1946; but it was not until 1949 that I had the opportunity to devote part of every day to this field work throughout the whole period of migration. My area of observation was Morecambe Bay on the north west coast of England, and although the bay is more than two hundred square miles in extent, all the sheld-ducks were observed to leave by two routes, each about a mile wide.

Several of the phenomena observed in this species and formerly thought to be examples of inexplicable behaviour now become clear.

(a) The disappearance of sheld-ducks from their usual haunts in July and August, noted by observers for more than half a century, is now explained.

(b) The gathering together of broods of flightless young into flotillas and fleets in the charge of one or sometimes two adults is due to the parents having departed on migration.

(c) Communal gatherings or "parliaments" composed of adult pairs have long been known to occur during the period of incubation in May and June. I have no doubt that they are composed of the non-breeding part of the population and not of breeding pairs as formerly believed.

(d) The occurrence of sheld-ducks on inland waters, particularly in July, acquires new significance in view of the discovery of regularly used trans-England migration routes.

I am indebted to Dr. C. G. B. Ten Kate, who, when I was showing him the migration in 1947, directed my attention to a paper published in Holland during the War by J. Hoogerheide and W. Kraak. Analysis of the ringing data from seven European countries and study of the literature had led them to put forward the theories that sheld-ducks in north-west Europe probably migrate in July, and concentrate in the south-east corner of the North Sea to moult, and that return to their countries of origin during Autumn and Winter could be inferred. The accuracy of the authors' three theories is beyond question. By field observation, I had already found the first and third to be the case in north west England, and had suspected that the migration was related to moult by analogy with ducks of some other species

which migrate from Siberia to the Volga Delta before moulting their flight feathers. But before publishing anything I wanted to ascertain the destination of the migrants.

It was stated by Goethe that flocks of sheld-ducks in a flightless condition were to be found in August in the Heligoland Bight particularly in the area round the Island of Mellum. The presence of these flocks was confirmed in 1949 through the assistance of the Air Ministry, and the Air Officer Commanding in Chief of the Royal Air Force in Germany, by observations made from the air by crews of R.A.F. aircraft flying in the region of Mellum.

Sheld-ducks in Western Europe are confined to the narrow strip of tidal mud-flats surrounding parts of the coast, because this habitat provides their food supply.

But it would seem that while the entire juvenile population is confined to this strip in a flightless condition during July, the adult and second-year population is concentrated into one comparatively small area of the North Sea coast, also in a flightless or semi-flightless condition, during August.

If future investigations show that the Summer migration and its timing and destination here recorded are of universal application to the sheld-duck populations of north-west European countries, then the need for international agreement on fully adequate measures of conservation is of the highest importance for the continued prosperity of this species.

Investigation in other countries will be assisted by the National Sections of the International Committee for Bird Preservation. The British Section, through the Wildfowl Inquiry Committee, with its joint organisation for observing wildfowl, will investigate the migration of sheld-ducks with the view of locating other places of arrival and departure and regular routes of migration across the British Isles.

A detailed account of the Summer migration of the sheld-duck as observed by me in Morecambe Bay over a period of years will be published in "The Ibis" in 1950, and will include particulars of the assembly of the migrants, the times of departure, the number of ducks in each flock, the line of flight, weather conditions, the departure-behaviour of the migrants, etc.

(Reprinted from "Nature," Vol. 164, Dec. 31st, 1949).



Cliff Dwellers

G.W.

WINGS OVER A NORTHERN COASTLINE.

BY WILLIAM R. MITCHELL.

During the Summer of 1945, I wandered over the expansive moorlands near my Yorkshire home and noted the behaviour and habits of Black-headed Gulls nesting on a remote tarn, Curlews and Golden Plover. The only sounds to compete with the occasional calls of the birds were the wind strumming the tawny herbage, the occasional whistle of a railway engine from a distant dale, the tinkling of a small stream treading a rocky staircase from the hills.

I did not imagine then, that during the late summer of 1947, I would roam over the coarse grasses capping the cliff tops of the north sutor of Cromarty Firth, almost deafened by bird calls evolved to combat the roaring of the sea, with a distant view inland of H.M.S. Fieldfare, standing in country which knew even more than my home district the frosty voices of the winter visitors from Scandinavia after which it was named.

Nor did I imagine that in the summer of 1948 I would watch the harmonious flightings of Fulmars from the lofty but, strangely, almost deserted cliffs of Malin Head, in Northern Ireland, and

tread gingerly to the edge of the lanky cliffs in another part of Donegal, densely populated by Razorbills and Guillemots, where dozens of cormorants could be seen on the rocky stacks off-shore hanging their wings out to dry and where an irregular coastline was populated by other fascinating birds of the sea.

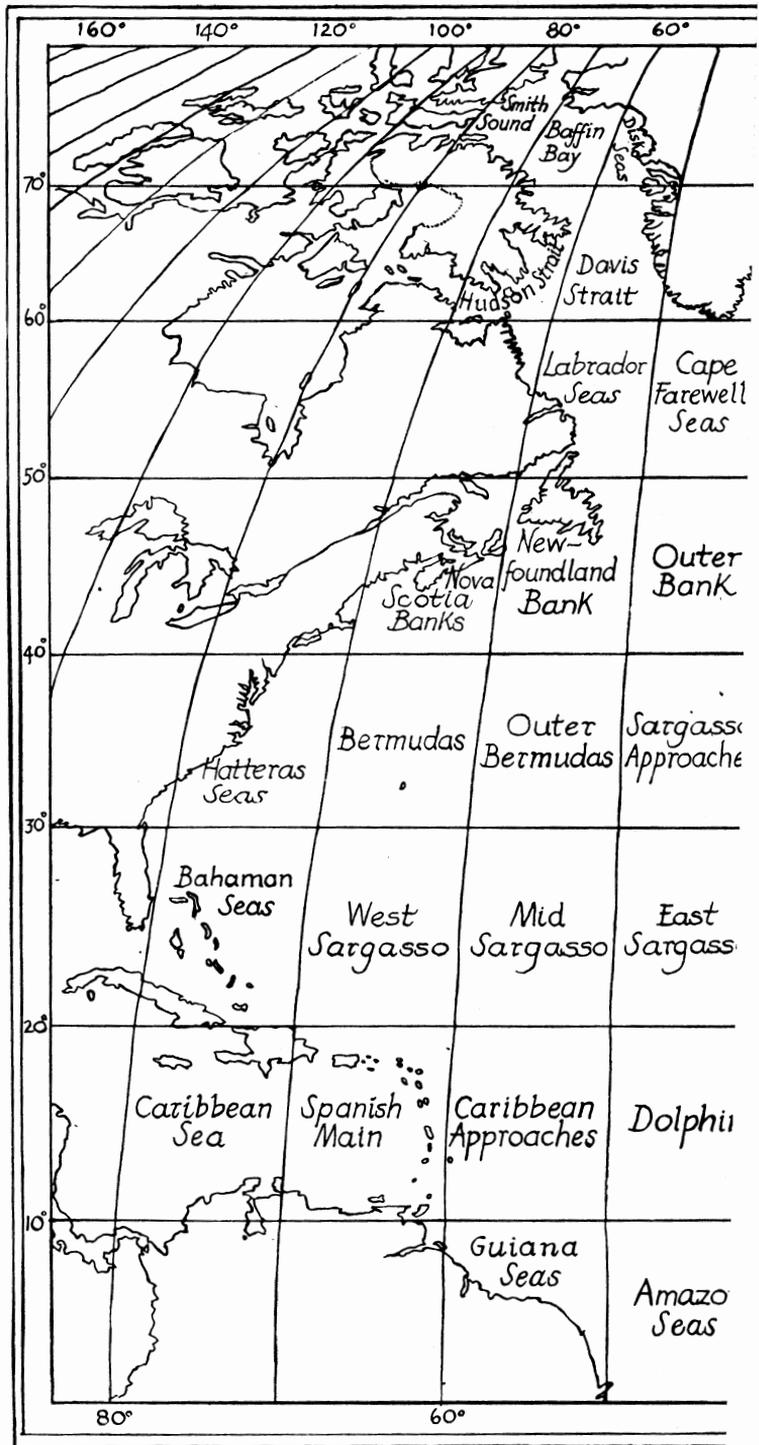
To naval men the name Invergordon has a more familiar ring than most of the other place names in an area which knows the autumnal visitations of the Home Fleet. Cromarty is a diverse area which consequently has a diverse population of birds. Fulmars reached the sutors at the sea end of the firth about 1924, and it has been established by Mr. James Fisher and others who have made a study of this remarkable ocean bird that it nests there, but when I visited the spot on June 14th I was not able to locate any eggs.

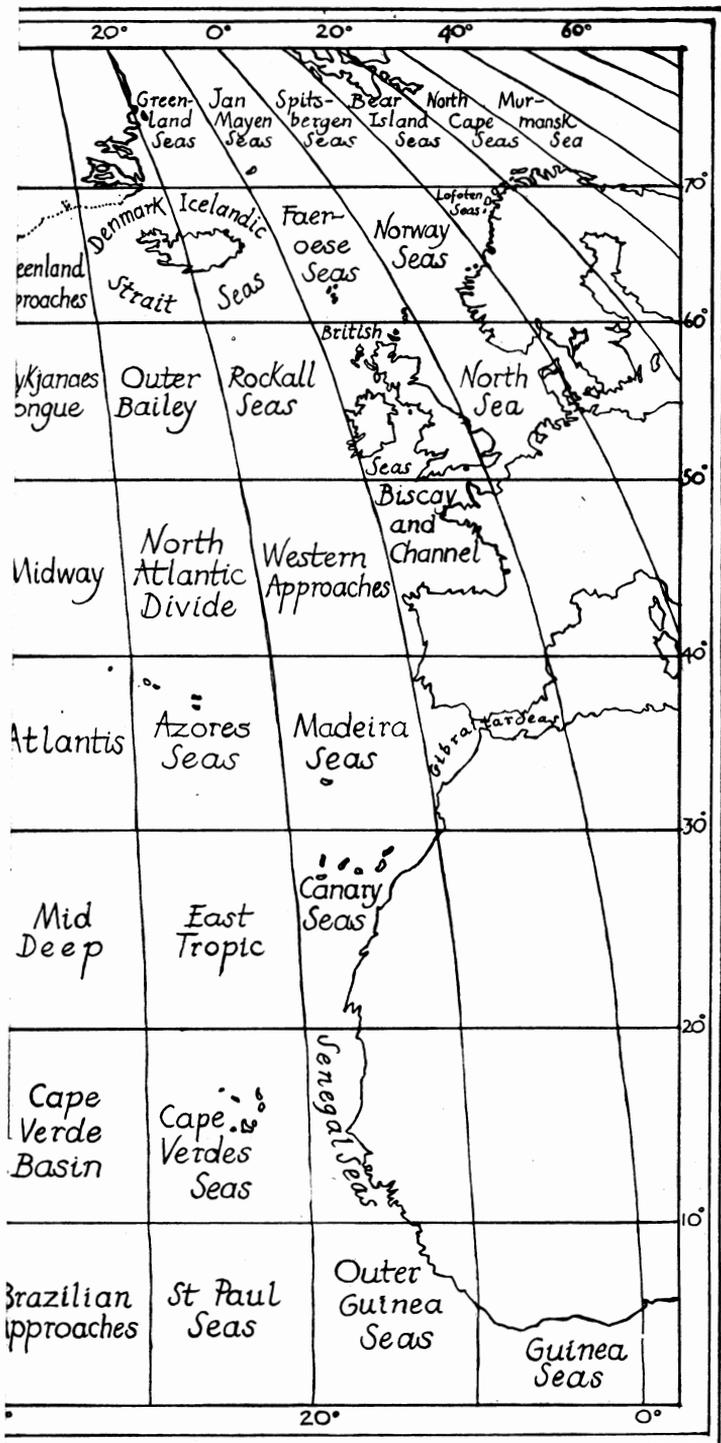
I observed six Fulmars settled on ledges roughly half way up and shortly afterwards saw four others in flight. The cliffs at this point were by no means sheer and were covered with tussocks of coarse grass. The birds on the ledges were silent. I was able to note that their tails were stiff and of a grey colouring, fringed distinctly with white. Their grey legs and webbed feet protruded on either side of the body.

The birds in the air displayed a supreme mastery of flight: their wings had not the sweeping gracefulness of the Herring Gulls which nested in their hundreds on steeper cliffs nearby, but they scarcely tremoured as the Fulmars swept over the sea near to the cliffs, apparently making use of the upward rushes of air.

As a Fulmar planed in to join one settled on a ledge, the birds uttered crooning noises which sometimes bordered on a croak. The bird alighted a foot or so below one of the birds and there followed an exchange of staccato notes, yet the beaks of the birds were wide open and did not seem to close a fraction during the outcry. The birds appeared to sway their heads. When the ceremony was over, the bird shuffled up closer to the other and a vocal silence followed. Other birds planed in later and the same ceremony was repeated. Another Fulmar, settled singly a little distance away, among scores of nesting Herring Gulls, swayed back its head when another alighted near it and the beaks of each bird nearly touched before more natural positions were assumed.

There were scores of Jackdaws about the cliffs, where they were probably nesting, and it was interesting to note the way they were dwarfed by the Herring Gulls when their stature among inland birds makes them very prominent.





It was the Commander of H.M.S. Fieldfare who gave me an introduction to a colony of Arctic Terns. For days I had noticed that some of the men in the messes had been returning from walks round the perimeter track, which flanks the sea, with small pear-shaped eggs which persistently eluded identification, but on June 6th, after a talk with the Commander, a keen bird watcher who had inserted a note in Daily Orders that he would be willing to discuss birds with anyone interested, I crossed the River Glass, near the camp, and entered a tract of marshland that ran to the tide-line.

While walking along the sea-way, in the company of Oyster Catchers and Ringed Plover, I saw a number of Arctic Terns rise into the air from the tip of land where, I later learned, they have nested for at least nine seasons. As I neared their nesting haunts the remainder took flight. I estimated the numbers of the birds at about 30.

Soon I was among the nests, wearing my cap, as a local gamekeeper had told me that the Terns occasionally dived down at him and, if his head was bared, gave him a sharp peck on the head in their annoyance. I was disappointed that many of the nests had been robbed. The ground was of shingle, with layers of thick dead seaweed indicating the size of the tides. The nests were depressions in the seaweed or in the shingle, the latter having a lining of weed, and were fairly conspicuous. Details were:—Nests containing one egg—five ; two eggs—four ; and three eggs—three.

While I was inspecting the nests, the birds wheeled in the air, their cries being drawn and similar in some ways to the sound of a wicket gate being moved. As I left, one of the birds dived at a Rook and I heard a snapping sound which might have been caused by the mandibles.

One of the highlights of my ten months stay in Northern Scotland was a meeting with a gamekeeper. The gamekeeper, a youthful man with more than traditional interest in bird-life, leaned against the doorpost of his home in the hills and told me of the birds nesting in the district he had known all his life. The air (my log book tells me) was fresh but mild, with scarcely a breath of wind, although the ground had been dampened by incessant rain during the early part of the day. The clouds hung low over the hills, occasionally permitting shafts of bright sunshine to pattern the heather and coarse grasses on the ground.

He needed very little encouragement to talk about birds and told me of two pairs of Golden Eagles nesting in the vicinity. One of the nests he had visited recently, and in it was one eaglet—he thought it was a hen bird. He knew of very few instances

where two young birds reached maturity from one nest; one was usually out of the egg a day or so before the other and was consequently a stronger bird and best able to look after itself when it came to the question of food.

The two sites he had known to be used by Golden Eagles for 18 to 20 years. The increased penalties imposed on people destroying Eagles had enabled them to nest undisturbed. At that time there was an almost complete absence of the blue mountain hare, and the "local" Eagles "swept" stretches of the hills together so that a hare should not escape them, scaring the Grouse and other birds so much that it was some days before they returned to their old haunts.

The Buzzard was not an uncommon bird in the district, although nests were not often to be found and the birds seemed to nest further inland. He had seen ten Buzzards sailing over a nearby hill earlier in the month. Buzzards were not protected in the district, but they were not destroyed to any great extent, he said. And on my way to meet him I had seen three on a farm gibbet!

His greatest enemy was the Peregrine Falcon, and this was because of its liking for Grouse, resulting from the not too abundant occupation of Pigeons. He knew of two nesting sites in the district, one of them having been in use for twenty years, but happily for him there were no birds nesting there nowadays.

The Curlew and Lapwing, the latter especially, were becoming scarcer, but the Capercaillie was not now uncommon in the woods about his home, probably because large stretches of fir or the lower slopes near the firth had been felled.

Ptarmigan nested on the higher hills in the district, he knew of the nests of two pairs of Greenshank in the wilder parts, and although Golden Plover seemed to be getting a little scarcer he had found a number of nests.

Grouse prospects were not too good, but there appeared to have been a gradual come-back of the birds since 1945. They had started to decrease numerically about 1937-8 and no one could say apparently what had really happened.

Buzzards were certainly common in Cromarty area. On March 16th, 1947, I passed a number of circular ricks a few hundred yards from a large house, screened by tree and hedge. Perched on the top of the pointed thatching of a rick was a buzzard. Its presence put me back in memory to the sight of eight carcasses of rabbits, badly mangled, I had seen near a well-run warren a mile back.

BIRD LIFE IN SWEDEN.

THE UPPSALA CONGRESS—BY JAMES FISHER.

As I write, three charming Swedish women are busy arranging, in at least six different languages, the hotels and transport and meals and tickets and excursions and appointments for the best part of the 369 members of the 10th International Ornithological Congress. Every train to Uppsala brings more people to the sign of the two ravens, held aloft by students of this ancient University, and prominently displayed outside the club house and dining hall of the congress.

To-day the congress began with the Presidential address from Dr. Alexander Wetmore, of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, who heads a large United States Delegation. The members come from thirty countries; from all those in Europe west of the Iron Curtain save Portugal, and including Iceland and Greece; from Hungary and Poland; from Egypt, Pakistan, Australia, New Zealand, Argentina, Dutch Guiana, Venezuela, The United States and Canada.

The Swedes have given the warmest welcome to us all; they have devised many agreeable tours and sights for us to see, from the forests round the old town of Lund, in the South, to the high Arctic fells of Abisko and Lake Tornetrask, in Lapland. If the present weather holds, thirty dozen sunburned ornithologists will return to their homes happily sated with new ornithological experiences, new friends, new knowledge, and good Swedish food.

At many stations and harbours in Southern Sweden a good week before the official start of the congress, ornithologists were setting down their bags and glancing round for that infallible sign of a fellow enthusiast. Slung field-glasses and an incapacity to sit still near any likely cover. On one train journey across Southern Sweden, a dozen people from five countries had found each other within an hour, and on reaching XIIIth Century merchant town of Visby, on the Island of Gotland, the party had doubled. That afternoon, in the neat botanic garden under the towered wall of Visby, twenty-six pairs of glasses lifted simultaneously and qualified a handsome black-and-white bird, singing a not very distinguished song from a leafy tree, for the honour of being the most intensively watched collared Flycatcher in Western Europe.

These Congress Excursions always provide opportunities for additions to personal experiences. "How is your life—Tally?" ask my American friend. I could tell him that it had gone up

by four species in three days—Collared Flycatcher, Tawny Pipit, Caspian Tern, and Roller. His had not increased, for he was widely travelled; but he was assiduously collecting new notes on identification marks and on song. Gotland is a splendid bird island. In five days our party had found ninety-four species. To an English Bird Watcher some of the high spots were of course the novelties. The abundance of species that are becoming rare with us, such as Red-backed Shrike and Wryneck; the breeding of species that with us are desultory (in some cases almost legendary) nesters, Tawny Pipit, Blue-headed Wagtail, Icterine Warbler, Fieldfare, Black-tailed Godwit, and Ruff. We found the nests, or nesting places, of some birds that do not nest in Britain at all, such as the Velvet Scotar, and of some that with us are irregular or almost fabulous wanderers, seen only by a handful of watchers in our islands, such as the Little Gull, Great Black Woodpecker (the "Handbook" rejects all British records), Collared Flycatcher, and Caspian Tern. Some of our familiar birds were conspicuously absent or surprisingly rare; we saw no Rooks, Marsh, Willow, or Long-tailed Tits, no Goldcrests, Chiffchaff, Whinchats, or wrens. Robins were scarce wood-haunters.

On the steep limestone cliffs of the Karlo Islands, west of Gotland, nested colonies and groups of the local races of Guillemot, Razorbill, and Black Guillemot. This is as far as these Atlantic species have penetrated into the Baltic (except for the Razorbill, which reaches the Gulf of Bothnia), and they are much prized and protected by the Swedes. The larger island, Stora Karlo, indeed, is a declared sanctuary, with an efficient administration. No sheep graze the limestone pavements of its tree-scattered interior and no visitors pick flowers in its meadows, which were burning with the yellow flames of Orchis Sambucina and the mauve of the Orchis Masculata. Here and there flowered Orchis Militaris, to make a British naturalist's mouth water.

On one limestone promontory of Gotland mainland there was a sudden flurry among the flutter of squeaking house-martins that were nesting on the cliff and circling and doubling in the air near their nests.

A dark bird with a flash of russet tore through the loose pack, missed, slanted up, curved with winnowing wings over a pinewood behind the cliffs, and came round again. After the first pause of surprise came the human voices: "Boomvalk" in Dutch in my ear; "Hobby" in my own voice; "Larkfalk" from a Swede. The crowd of watchers, cameras wildly swinging, dashed across just in time to see the Hobby accelerate on its second circuit to an astonishing speed, and then plunge in a steep stoop, quickly flattening out to overtake and seize a Martin, which it at once took to a pine-top to eat.

In the north island of Gotland, Faro, the land is mostly poor, with dunes, raised shingle beaches, and an open pine-spruce forest with very little undergrowth. Here we found the astonishing Roller; a bird bigger than I had expected. At rest on a pine tree it often disappeared, for the brown of its wings merged with the bole, and the turquoise of its head and breast was like a sight of the blue sky through the branches. The general behaviour of our pair of Rollers was, however, very conspicuous; in the air they flew strongly, dived steeply like agile magpies, and "rolled"; an erratic, mad flight, as if they were trying to shake a rider off their back. Their cries resembled the noise of the wooden rattles with which football fans encourage their teams.

To your correspondent, who had never before seen one, the Roller was memorable, but the Caspian Tern was (if it is a stronger word) unforgettable. We first encountered it round the corner of a shingle promontory. Two pairs had nests near the edge of the tideless sea; one nest had two well-fledged young. In their anger the parents resembled nothing more than little Red-billed Gannets. They were like no tern I had ever seen; cigar-shaped, with powerful pointed wings, whose undersides had black ends, and with a raucous peremptory, barking "gurrah" like an essence of Ailsa Craig, Grassholm St. Kilda, the Bass Rock, or any other Gannet haunt of the north Atlantic.

At Kiruna, in Northern Sweden, where a mountain of magnetic iron ore supports a great industry, we saw our first Lapps from the window of our comfortable electric train. The 24-hour journey from Uppsala, where the tenth Ornithological Congress had just ended, to the northernmost part of Sweden accessible by public transport was painless, though the scenery on the way, composed entirely of birch, pine spruce, bog, and lake, had developed some resemblance to continuous stage backcloth. The Lapps were very attractive, in the orange, blue, and yellow of their tribe, the men with great red woollen tassels on their peaked caps; beyond them stretched their homeland—the first snow-mountains we had seen. Abisko is about 150 miles north of the Arctic circle; at Mid-summer's midnight, as we ourselves saw, the Sun touched, but was not eclipsed by, the mountains on the north side of the lake. The birds sang at their best between about one and four o'clock in the morning.

By the great lake, and some lesser shallow lakes, and in the woods, and on the open fells among the flowers and lichens and snow patches, our party found 76 species of birds (at least) in a hectic week of long walks and explorations. Few parts of the world so far into the Arctic could show such a list; but North-west Swedish Lappland is specially endowed with a fairly constant and high Summer temperature and with abundant plant cover.

Some of the birds we found appear to be newish colonists of the North, benefiting from the recent climatic amelioration, whose effect on birds was so exhaustively discussed at the Congress. Not long after we arrived, Dr. Erwin Stresemann, President of the German Ornithologists' Union and a past Congress President, found a singing Song-thrush; and more were found later of these newcomers to Abisko. Near one railway station, another newcomer—the chaffinch—was singing in the birch woods, however, its place was taken by the handsome Brambling, mournfully calling a harsh "seek" from its territory. The Bramblings never sang their true song, which many of us had hoped to hear; it is an affair of earlier Spring, which, even in this rather late season, was over by Midsummer Day.

In these Lapland birch woods, which stretch for miles, interspersed with open moorland spaces and bogs and streams, the dominant sound is the song of the Willow-warbler; no patch of birch or willow was without it. Another ubiquitous voice was that of the Redwing, almost as catholic as the Willow-warbler in its taste for cover; there seemed to be clans of Redwings, some with song ascending (like the filling of a glass), others with song descending; all with rather a sad note, like a hesitant Thrush, quite unlike the rich sound I had once heard from a Redwing in Scotland. Near our comfortable tourist station a Pied Flycatcher and a Redstart sang most regularly in the small-morning hours; Tree Pipits (possibly recent newcomers), Hedge Sparrows, and Garden Warblers were also heard, which seemed incongruous so far north. But of all the songs the most delightful was one which I had never before heard—the song of the little Blue-throated Nightingale. These Blue-throats were birds of the scrub and woodland ride and wood edge; they were often occupying territories some distance up the mountain among patches of snow, away from the woods. Of the many musical sounds which the cock Blue-throat warmly warbles from hummock, rock, or bush, or from flight, the most curious is a delicious twanging, like the plucking of a doll's violin.

We left our birch woods and the moors above them, which we explored for miles, with many other memories and comparisons. From a steep rock-scarp above a canyon came the plaintive treble whistle of our own familiar ring-ouzel, but also the chuckling song of the Fieldfare. These Fieldfares were very varied in their taste for nest sites; one was feeding young on the top of a wooden snow-screen by the railway, another on a power-pylon, another on a wood pile, another on the window ledge of a house. White Wagtails haunted the houses; in the bog bred Yellow Wagtails, or rather Black-headed Wagtails, for in Lapland the race of *Motacilla Flava* is the distinctive *Thunbergi*, with dark contrasting head.

Other bog birds were Sedge-warblers, Meadow Pipits, Reed Bunting, Whimbrel, Snipe Red-necked Phalaropes, Ruffs and Reeves, Wood Sandpipers, and Redshank; we found the nests of all these. Other Waders were in evidence—by a fast river, common Sandpipers; on the moor, the handsome northern Golden Plover, feeding by a tarn, dusky Redshank and Temminck's Stint. We found the nest of Temminck's Stint, and watched a pair holding a territory at the edge of a still frozen upland loch, among patches of fast-melting snow; the male was trilling in flight circles, supported on whirring wings lifted to a V-position, so that he appeared to be eternally parachuting during his song.

Not far away a pair of Arctic or Tundra Ringed Plovers was also holding a territory; and on a nearby fell-top whose mossy carpet resembled (but was not identical with) that of our Scottish Cairngorms and incubating male Dotterel allowed six photographers of five different nationalities to approach in turn to within portrait distance: so tame is the loveliest of all waders, the quiet Plover of the lonely tops. Near the Dotterel a pair of Snow-buntings played around their rocky territory. On another part of the moor, also rocky, a beautiful Lapland Bunting male alternately chased and fed peaceably with a Meadow Pipit, while its hen incubated eggs in a well-woven nest in a willow patch near by; not far away, under a willow, a hen Ptarmigan sat on twelve eggs. Down hill at the wood edge the Ptarmigan gave way to the slightly larger Willow Grouse, which we flushed now and then. Cuckoos called across the valley; there were enough Meadow Pipits to support a population of these parasites.

Although it had been expected by many vertebrate biologists to be a "Lemming Year," 1950 was not so. The melting snow had disclosed many Winter runs, "Nests," and burrows of these rodents, but not one did we see. This was a disappointment—if the lemming cycle had been really strict we would have seen them everywhere, and their attendant predators. As it was, predatory animals were not much in evidence, though we saw foxes and found the nest of a pair of Rough-legged Buzzards. There were only two or three pairs of the beautiful long tailed Skua—that great eater of small rodents—upon the many square miles of moor that we traversed. There were no Snowy Owls, and only one Short-eared owl was seen. In an old crow's nest in a tree (this would have been an unusual site in Britain) a Merlin was feeding its young—probably on young birds. We saw no Sea Eagles or Ospreys, though these occasionally reach Torn Trask, but on an excursion over the border to Narvik, a pair of Golden Eagles was seen soaring over the deep valley in which lies Rombaks Fjord and the silent, rusty bottoms of the destroyed German destroyers.

NEWS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES.

The Institute of Jamaica.

The Curator was visited by Chief O. A. Tribe when H.M.S. Glasgow was at Kingston, and correspondence has been exchanged between the Curator and the Hon. Secretary. He is most keen to meet bird-watchers from H.M. Ships and to make local knowledge available to them.

Council for the Promotion of Field Studies.

The Council runs establishments at five places in the country; courses in many Natural History subjects are held during the year.

Malham Tarn Field Centre (nr. Settle, Yorks).
Juniper Hall Field Centre (nr. Dorking, Surrey).
Flatford Mill Field Centre (nr. Colchester, Essex).
Dale Fort Field Centre (Milford Haven).
Skokholm Island Bird Observatory (Milford Haven).

East Dorset Field Ornithology Group.

Members who are stationed in Dorset are invited to get in touch with this Group, whose organiser is Dr. K. B. Rooke, M.A., of Cranborne, Dorset.

SHORT NOTES.

Bird Ringing Recoveries.

During January and March, 1950, three rings were recovered from Mediterranean Black-headed Gulls (*Larus melanocephalus*) in the Malta area by C.E.R.A. Wain. It was established from the Bird Ringing Committee that the birds had been ringed in the Odessa area the previous Summer.

Although we cannot yet start on our own ringing scheme, looking out for rings to recover, and making it known to local fishermen that you are interested, and that they can bring rings to you without fear of penalty, is a way in which all members can assist this important work. There is a very prevalent idea amongst

fishermen that the ring means that the bird belongs to someone, and the least trouble to them is to throw it away; this needs careful persuasion to overcome.

Specimens for Museums.

A specimen of the Mediterranean Shearwater (*Puffinus kuhli kuhli*) was accepted by the Natural History Museum from Captain H. A. Traill, R.N., and Commander J. S. Douglas, R.N. (see article "Shearwaters on Filfola Island").

A Remarkable Invasion.

The following account of the passage of H.M.S. Glasgow through a migrating route has been sent in by Chief O.A. C. W. Tribe.

"It all started early on a dull wet morning, when we were about eight hours from New York, steaming at 13 knots, on September 15th, 1949.

My first call was to some strange "birds" flying around the ship. Imagine my surprise to see several small bats so far from land, and so exhausted that they gladly took refuge in various parts of the ship. One was taken from a boiler room vent to be photographed, and I found out what sharp needle like teeth these small insect eaters have. These were followed by dozens of Pigeon Hawks (or Merlins as we know them) who were having a grand time picking off an occasional stray bat.

Later in the morning we appeared to run into countless numbers of confusing Fall Warblers, which I had great difficulty in identifying. They got everywhere around the upper deck and were easily approached. Two particularly saucy ones chose to fly through the ports on to the messdecks and certainly didn't appear uneasy in their strange temporary abode. With them came other birds easier for me to identify. I had a Flicker quite happy in my office eating ants and cockroaches, also a black and white Warbler which appeared to find insects as it flitted amongst the channel plating. The Flicker, a rather beautiful woodpecker, stayed until after we had docked.

Also seen was a large, presumed fruit eating species of bat, Song sparrows, Red breasted nuthatch, Broadwinged hawk, Yellow-billed cuckoo. Rufous throated humming bird, Brown thrasher, and two Hawk moths.

The following day in New York I observed that there were still a few Warblers flying around the ship.

C. W. TRIBE, CH.O.A.

A Jackdaw's Strange Nesting Place

For two successive years a Jackdaw has brought off a nest with young in the radar array of H.M.S. Derg, the Headquarters ship of the Solent R.N.V.R. Division, at Southampton.

Birds in the Arctic

Reports were received of birds seen during the expedition in February, 1949, in search of cold weather conditions, from H.M.S. Vengeance (Surg. Lieut. Dinn, Mid. Pearson, R.N.V.R., and O.S. Skidmore), and H.M.S. Artful.

Fulmars predominated, and were sighted on all days inside the Arctic circle, except when the ships were actually in ice; blue phase birds, naturally, formed the most part. Kittiwakes were sighted on about half the days, fairly widely spread for distribution. Very few reports of other birds were made; a few unidentified Shearwaters and Petrels, four Puffins (70 deg. 40 min. N., 11 deg. 50 min. W.), and one Guillemot (71 deg. 10 min. N. 8 deg. 25 min. W.). Black-headed gulls were believed not to be observed when the air temperature fell below 32 deg. F. The most northerly Gannet reported was in 62 deg. N., 0 deg. 51 min. W.

A Passage to New Zealand

An interesting report of the birds seen during a passage from England to New Zealand via The Cape has been received from Captain H. Lovegrove, R.N.

SEA REPORT SHEETS

These have been received from the following members :

Home Waters

Mid. T. C. Gullick—Channel Area and East Coast.
Boy R. Gibbs—E. Coast Scotland.
Sr.Cd. E.O. W. Glass—Rothesay, Bute and W. Coast Scotland.
O.S. Skidmore—Irish Sea, W. Coast England and Scotland.
L.Tel. P. Ewing—North Sea, E. Coast England.
Lt. Cdr. E. B. Davies—E. Coast England.
Cdr. T. E. Barlow—Channel Area.

Atlantic

Cdr. C. E. Hamond—U.K. to Trinidad.
Cdre. G. S. Tuck—Antigua to Portsmouth.
Lieut. H. N. Bailhache—Antigua to Portsmouth.
Cdr. T. E. Barlow—Portland to Gibraltar.

Mediterranean

C.E.R.A. N. Wain—Malta.
Captain H. A. Trail—Malta—Bird Log, January to June.

Red Sea

Lieut. T. L. Kirby.

Far East

Cdr.(L) E. H. Johnson—China Sea.
Lt.Cdr. E. G. May—China Sea.
Lt. D. R. Benson—China Sea.

INDIVIDUAL BIRD NOTES

Some of the above have contained notes on individual species as well, and in addition notes have been received from the following members :

R. W. Britton—R. Otter estuary.
Cdr.(S) C. E. Smith.
Lt.Cdr. E. G. May—three Swallows seen flying above summit of Mt. Fugi, Japan.
Lt. A. McLean—Heron 50 miles S. of Scilly Is.
Woodcock 60 miles W. of Irish Coast.
Lieut. J. S. Smith, R.M.—two Spoonbills wintering in Teign estuary.
Cadet P. J. Ardley—Greater Yellowshank in Essex ; also seen by other observers.
Sy.P.O. Nettleton
W. R. Mitchell
SB. C.P.O. Dunthorn
Captain H. A. Traill—Gannet and Great Skua in Malta area in January/February.

Reports were also sent in to the Society of a Hoopoe seen in Eire, and of a Woodchop shrike seen in Kent.

ROYAL NAVAL BIRD-WATCHING SOCIETY

Receipts and Expenditure Account for the Year ending 30th November, 1949

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		
BALANCE 1ST DECEMBER, 1948 :														
Cash at Bank	111	13	2											
Cash in Hand	2	14	0											
				114	7	2								
Entrance Fees and Annual Subscriptions of Ordinary Members	10	5	8											
Entrance Fees and Annual Subscriptions of Life Members	28	16	0											
				39	1	8								
Sale of Annual Reports					12	6								
				£154			1	4						
BALANCE BROUGHT DOWN :														
Cash at Bank	64	5	0											
Cash in Hand		14	10											
				64	19	10								
19, Fenchurch Street, London, E.C.3.														
5th December, 1949														
							Postage			8	1	8		
							Stationery			15	6			
							Annual Report			69	4	4		
							Poster			10	0	0		
							1949 Subscription to British Trust for Ornithology			1	0	0		
							BALANCE 30TH NOVEMBER, 1949 :							
							Cash at Bank	64	5	0				
							Cash in Hand		14	10				
											64	19	10	
										£154			1	4

I have examined the above Account with the books and records of the Society and certify that it is correct and in accordance therewith.

R. G. PEGLER,
Chartered Accountant, Hon. Auditor