

SCOTTISH BIRDS

*THE JOURNAL OF THE
SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB*



VOLUME 15
1988-89

Editor
N. PICOZZI

Editorial Panel
M.P. HARRIS, M.A. OGILVIE, S. WANLESS

ISSN 0036-9144

Scottish Birds

The Journal of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club

Scottish Birds, the official journal of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, publishes original material relating to ornithology in Scotland. Papers and notes should be sent to The Editor, *Scottish Birds*, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.

One issue of *Scottish Birds* is published each year, in December. *Scottish Birds* is issued free to members of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, who also receive the quarterly newsletter *Scottish Bird News* and the annual *Scottish Bird Report*.

The Scottish Ornithologists' Club was formed in 1936 to encourage all aspects of ornithology in Scotland. It has local branches which meet in Aberdeen, Ayr, the Borders, Dumfries, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, New Galloway, Orkney, St Andrews, Stirling, Stranraer and Thurso, each with its own programme of field meetings and winter lectures. The Waterston Library at the Club's headquarters at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT is one of the most comprehensive ornithological libraries in Scotland, and is available for reference during office hours (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). A comprehensive stock of Scottish local bird reports is held at the headquarters and may be purchased by mail order.

SCOTTISH BIRDS

Contents of Volume 15 1988 – 89

Number 1 (June 1988)

	Page
The recolonisation of the Isle of May by Common and Arctic Terns. By S. Wanless	1
The distribution and status of Arctic and Great Skuas in Shetland 1985–86. By P.J. Ewins, P.M. Ellis, D.B. Bird and A. Prior	9
The seabirds of St Kilda, 1987. By Mark L. Tasker, Peter R. Moore and Richard A. Schofield	21
Greenland White-fronted Geese in Caithness. By S. Laybourne and A.D. Fox ...	30
Mute Swans in Ayrshire. By Iain H. Leach	36
The distribution and abundance of the Barn Owl <i>Tyto alba</i> in south-west Scotland. By I.R. Taylor, A. Dowell, T. Irving, I.K. Langford and G. Shaw	40
Short Notes	
Sexing and distinguishing juvenile Dotterel in summer. By Adam Watson ...	44
Pintail breeding on Colonsay. By J. & P.M. Clarke	44
Black-headed Gulls as predators of breeding Sand Martins. By Gareth Jones	45
Two cases of a yearling and an adult male Merlin attending the same nest site. By G.W. Rebecca, B.L. Cosnette and A. Duncan	45
Sparrowhawk specialising on Swifts. By Judy M. Cooper	46
Items of Scottish interest. By W.G. Harper.	47

Number 2 (December 1988)

Numbers of Wintering Pink-footed and Greylag Geese in north-east Scotland 1950–1986. By M.V. Bell, J. Dunbar and J. Parkin	49
The status of breeding Wigeon in Ettrick Forest. By D.L. Thomson and T.W. Dougall	61
Goosanders and Red-breasted Mergansers in the Moray Firth. By S.J. Aspinall and R.H. Dennis	65
Waders on the coast of Shetland in winter: numbers and habitat preferences. By R.W. Summers, P.M. Ellis and J.P. Johnston	71
The status and distribution of the Great Skua in the Western Isles. By Frank W. Rennie	80
The breeding birds of North Ronaldsay, Orkney. By M.G. Pennington	83
Short Notes	
Early records of Pochard breeding in Fife. By R.Y. McGowan	90
Red Grouse homing for 35 kilometres. By Peter J. Hudson, John Renton and Graeme Dalby	90
Decline of shore waders at Loch Morlich. By A. Watson, D. Nethersole-Thompson, K. Duncan, H. Galbraith, S. Rae, R. Smith and C. Thomas	91
Obituary – Robert Carrick. By G.M. Dunnet	93
Items of Scottish interest. By W.G. Harper.	94

Number 3 (June 1989)

Moray Basin wader populations. By R.L. Swann and G.P. Mudge	97
Wintering wildfowl and waders at Aberdeen, 1975 – 1986. By M.V. Bell	106
The distribution and status of the Chough in Scotland in 1986. By P. Monaghan, E. Bignal, S. Bignal, N. Easterbee and C.R. McKay	114
The food of some young seabirds on Fair Isle in 1986 – 1988. By M.P. Harris and N.J. Riddiford	119
Hunting behaviour and attack success of a female Sparrowhawk between October 1987 and April 1988. By J.D. Wilson and A.G. Weir	126
Short Notes	
Restricted winter range of a Merlin in west Galloway. By R.C. Dickson	131
Siskins breeding in birch. By G.G. & I.M. Bates	132
Gannets breeding on mainland Scotland. By J. Matthews and S. North	132
Red-necked Grebe breeding in Scotland. Anon.	133
Goosanders feeding on carrion. By Stuart Rae and Keith Duncan	134
The summer flocking of juvenile Starlings. By C.J. Henty	135
Male-biassed sex ratio in Pied Wagtails wintering in Highland Region. By Iain R.K. Mackay and Robin M. Sellers	136
Obituary – Desmond Nethersole-Thompson. By Adam Watson	138
Items of Scottish interest. By W.G. Harper.	142

Number 4 (December 1989)

Sawbill ducks at fish farms in Argyll, western Scotland. By D.N. Carss	145
Damage to fish by seabirds in the Moray Firth. By J.R.G. Hislop and W.S. MacDonald	151
Kittiwake attendance patterns during chick rearing on the Isle of May. By S. Wanless and M.P. Harris	156
Feral Greylag Geese and other breeding wildfowl in south-west Scotland. By P.J. Shimmings, M. Owen and J.L. Burn	162
The breeding birds of some built-up areas in south-east Scotland. By S.R.D. da Prato	170
Short Notes	
Foraging birds favouring burnt ground in harvested fields. By A. Watson ..	178
Successful autumn nesting of Raven. By R. & B. Mearns	179
Diet of Snowy Owl on Cairn Gorm plateau in 1980 and 1987. By M. Marquiss, R. Smith and H. Galbraith	180
Starlings excavating nest holes in sand dunes. By R.W. Summers	181
Early return of Oystercatchers to north-east Scotland in spring 1989. By N. Picozzi and D.C. Catt	182
Cliff-nesting Merlins in north-west Sutherland. By P.S., M.L.P. & D.B.A. Thompson	183
Inland Fulmars on St Kilda. By W.E. Waters	184
Summer flocks of juvenile Starlings. By W.B. Yapp	184

Contents

Obituary – James Watt Macdonald. By D.N. Weir	185
Items of Scottish interest. By W.G. Harper.	186
Errata	188
Advice to contributors	188

Supplements

Scottish Bird Report 1987. Edited by Angus Hogg

Species List	7
Rarity description ..	50
Local recorders	54

Scottish Bird Report 1988. Edited by Angus Hogg, assisted by Malcolm J. Ware

Species List	7
Local recorders	50

INDEX TO VOLUME 15

Compiled by W.G. Harper

Species mentioned in general articles and in the species list of *Scottish Bird Reports* are not indexed. The *Scottish Bird Reports* for 1987 and 1988 are treated as supplements to Volume 15 and are included in the Index. They are paged individually.

- Aberdeen: wintering wildfowl and waders 106
Advice to contributors: 96, 188
ANON. Red-necked Grebe breeding in Scotland 133
Argyll: Sawbills at fish farms 145
ASPINALL, S.J. & DENNIS, R.H. Goosanders and Red-breasted Mergansers in the Moray Firth 65
Ayrshire: Mute Swans 36
- BATES, G.G. & BATES, I.M. Siskins breeding in birch 132
BATES, I.M. *see* BATES, G.G.
BELL, M.V. Wintering wildfowl and waders at Aberdeen, 1975–1986 106
BELL, M.V., DUNBAR, J. & PARKIN, J. Numbers of wintering Pink-footed and Greylag Geese in north-east Scotland 1950–1986 49
BIGNAL, E. *see* MONAGHAN, P.
BIGNAL, S. *see* MONAGHAN, P.
BIRD, D.B. *see* EWINS P.J.
BURN, J.L. *see* SHIMMING, P.J.
- Cairn Gorm: Snowy Owl 180
Caithness: Greenland White-fronted Geese 30
CARRICK, Robert: obituary 93
CARSS, D.N. Sawbill ducks at fish farms in Argyll, western Scotland 145
CATT, D.C. *see* PICOZZI, N.
Chough: status in Scotland 114
CLARKE, J. & CLARKE, P.M. Pintail breeding on Colonsay 44
CLARKE, P.M. *see* CLARKE, J.
COOPER, J.M. Sparrowhawk specialising on Swifts 46
COSNETTE, B.L. *see* REBECCA, G.W.
- Da PRATO, S.R.D. The breeding birds of some built-up areas in south-east Scotland 170
- DALBY, G. *see* HUDSON, P.J.
DENNIS, R.H. *see* ASPINALL, S.J.
DICKSON, R.C. Restricted winter range of a Merlin in west Galloway 131
Dotterel: juvenile 44
DOUGALL, T.W. *see* THOMSON, D.L.
DOWELL, A. *see* TAYLOR, I.R.
Duck, Pintail: Colonsay 44
Duck, Pochard: in Fife 90
Duck, Wigeon: in Ettrick Forest 61
DUNBAR, J. *see* BELL, M.V.
DUNCAN, A. *see* REBECCA, G.W.
DUNCAN, K. *see* RAE, S.
DUNCAN, K. *see* WATSON, A.
DUNNET, G.M. Obituary of Robert Carrick 93
- EASTERBEE, N. *see* MONAGHAN, P.
ELLIS, P.M. *see* EWINS, P.J.
ELLIS, P.M. *see* SUMMERS, R.W.
Errata 188
EWINS, P.J., ELLIS, P.M., BIRD, D.B. & PRIOR, A. The distribution and status of Arctic and Great Skuas in Shetland 1985–86 9
- Fair Isle: food of young seabirds 119
Fife: Pochard 90
FOX, A.D. *see* LAYBOURNE, S.
Fulmar: inland nesting on St Kilda 184
- GALBRAITH, H. *see* MARQUISS, M.
GALBRAITH, H. *see* WATSON, A.
Galloway: winter range of Merlin 131
Gannets: breeding on mainland 132
Geese, Feral Greylag and Canada: in south-west Scotland 162
Geese, Greenland White-fronted: in Caithness 30
Geese: wintering in north-east Scotland 49
Goosander: feeding on carrion 134
Goosander: Moray Firth 65
-

- Grebe, Red-necked: breeding in Scotland 133
- Grouse, Red: homing 90
- Gulls, Black-headed: predators of Sand Martins 45
- HARPER, W.G. Publications of Scottish ornithological interest 47, 94, 142, 186
- HARRIS, M.P. & RIDDIFORD, N.J. The food of some young seabirds on Fair Isle in 1986–1988 119
- HARRIS, M.P. *see* WANLESS, S.
- HENTY, C.J. The summer flocking of juvenile Starlings 135
- Highland Region: wintering Pied Wagtails 136
- HISLOP, J.R.G. & MACDONALD, W.S. Damage to fish by seabirds in the Moray Firth 151
- HOGG, Angus (Ed). Scottish Bird Report 1987
- HOGG, Angus (Ed). Scottish Bird Report 1988
- HUDSON, P.J., RENTON, J. & DALBY, G. Red Grouse homing for 35 kilometres 90
- IRVING, T. *see* TAYLOR, I.R.
- Isle of May: Terns 1
- Isle of May: Kittiwakes 156
- JOHNSTON, J.P. *see* SUMMERS, R.W.
- JONES, G. Black-headed Gulls as predators of breeding Sand Martins 45
- Kittiwake: attendance patterns 156
- LANGFORD, I.K. *see* TAYLOR, I.R.
- LAYBOURNE, S. & FOX, A.D. Greenland White-fronted Geese in Caithness 30
- LEACH, I.H. Mute Swans in Ayrshire 36
- Local Bird Reports: 47, 95, 144, 187; SBR 1987, 1988
- Local Recorders: SBR 1987: 54; SBR 1988: 50
- MacDONALD, J.W. Obituary 185
- MacDONALD, W.S. *see* HISLOP, J.R.G.
- McGOWAN, R.Y. Early records of Pochard breeding in Fife 90
- McKAY, C.R. *see* MONAGHAN, P.
- MacKAY, I.R.K. & SELLERS, R.M. Male-biased sex ratio in Pied Wagtails wintering in Highland Region 136
- MARQUISS, M., SMITH, R. & GALBRAITH, H. Diet of Snowy Owl on Cairn Gorm plateau in 1980 and 1987 180
- Martins, Sand: preyed upon by Black-headed Gulls 45
- MATTHEWS, J. & NORTH, S. Gannets breeding on mainland Scotland 132
- MEARNS, B. *see* MEARNS, R.
- MEARNS, R. & MEARNS, B. Successful autumn nesting of Raven 179
- Mergansers, Red-breasted: in Moray Firth 65
- Merlin: cliff-nesting in Sutherland 183
- Merlin: nesting behaviour 45
- Merlin: winter range 131
- MONAGHAN, P., BIGNAL, E., BIGNAL, S., EASTERBEE, N. & McKAY, C.R. The distribution and status of the Chough in Scotland in 1986 114
- MOORE, P.R. *see* TASKER, M.L.
- Moray Firth: damage to fish 151
- Moray Firth: sawbills 65
- Moray Firth: wader populations 97
- MUDGE, G.P. *see* SWANN, R.L.
- NETHERSOLE – THOMPSON, D. *see* WATSON, A.
- NETHERSOLE – THOMPSON, Desmond: Obituary 138
- NORTH, S. *see* MATTHEWS, J.
- Obituary: of Robert Carrick 93
- Obituary: of Desmond Nethersole-Thompson 138
- Obituary: of J.W. Macdonald 185
- Orkney: breeding birds 83
- Outer Hebrides: Great Skua 80
- Outer Hebrides: St Kilda Fulmars 184
- Outer Hebrides: St Kilda seabirds 21
- OWEN, M. *see* SHIMMINGS, P.J.
- Owl, Barn: in southwest Scotland 40
- Owl, Snowy: diet on Cairn Gorm 180
- Oystercatcher: early return 182

- Papers and reports of Scottish ornithological interest 47, 94, 142, 186
- PARKIN, J. *see* BELL, M.V.
- PENNINGTON, M.G. The breeding birds of North Ronaldsay, Orkney 83
- PICOZZI, N. & CATT, D.C. Early return of Oystercatchers to north-east Scotland in Spring 1989 182
- PRIOR, A. *see* EWINS, P.J.
- RAE, S. *see* WATSON, A.
- RAE, S. & DUNCAN, K. Goosanders feeding on carrion 134
- Rarity description: Blackpoll Warbler SBR 1987: 50
- Raven: successful autumn nesting 179
- REBECCA, G.W., COSNETTE, B.L. & DUNCAN, A. Two cases of a yearling and an adult male Merlin attending the same nest site 45
- RENNIE, F.W. The status and distribution of the Great Skua in the Western Isles 80
- RENTON, J. *see* HUDSON, P.J.
- RIDDIFORD, N.J. *see* HARRIS, M.P.
- Sawbills: at fish farms in Argyll 145
- Sawbills: Goosanders feeding on carrion 134
- Sawbills: Moray Firth 65
- SCHOFIELD, R.A. *see* TASKER, M.L.
- Scotland, southeast: breeding birds of built-up areas 170
- Scotland, southwest: Barn Owls 40
- Scotland, southwest: breeding wildfowl 162
- Scotland, southwest: winter Merlin 131
- Scotland, northeast: Geese 49
- Scotland, northeast: Oystercatchers 182
- Scottish Bird Records Committee: SBR 1987: 5; SBR 1988: 4
- SCOTTISH BIRD REPORT 1987: a supplement to this volume
- SCOTTISH BIRD REPORT 1988: a supplement to this volume
- Seabirds: damage to fish 151
- Seabirds: St Kilda 21
- SELLERS, R.M. *see* MACKAY, I.R.K.
- SHAW, G. *see* TAYLOR, I.R.
- Shetland: Skuas 9
- Shetland: waders in winter 71
- SHIMMINGS, P.J., OWEN, M. & BURN, J.L. Feral Greylag Geese and other breeding wildfowl in southwest Scotland 162
- Siskin: breeding in birch 132
- Skuas: in Shetland 9
- Skuas: in Western Isles 80
- SMITH, R. *see* MARQUISS, M.
- SMITH, R. *see* WATSON, A.
- Sparrowhawk: hunting behaviour 126
- Sparrowhawk: preying upon Swifts 46
- Starlings: excavating nest holes in sand dunes 181
- Starlings: summer flocking of juveniles 135, 184
- SUMMERS, R.W., ELLIS, P.M. & JOHNSTON, J.P. Waders on the coast of Shetland in winter: numbers and habitat preferences 71
- SUMMERS, R.W. Starlings excavating nest holes in sand dunes 181
- Sutherland: cliff-nesting Merlins 183
- Swan, Mute: in Ayrshire 36
- Swan, Mute: in southwest Scotland 162
- SWANN, R.L. & MUDGE, G.P. Moray Basin wader populations 97
- Swifts: preyed upon by Sparrowhawks 46
- TASKER, M.L., MOORE, P.R. & SCHOFIELD, R.A. The seabirds of St Kilda 1987 21
- TAYLOR, I.R., DOWELL, A., IRVING, T., LANGFORD, I.K. & SHAW, G. The distribution and abundance of the Barn Owl in southwest Scotland 40
- Terns: recolonise the Isle of May 1
- THOMAS, C. *see* WATSON, A.
- THOMPSON, D.B.A. *see* THOMPSON, P.S.
- THOMPSON, M.L.P. *see* THOMPSON, P.S.
- THOMPSON, P.S., THOMPSON, M.L.P. & THOMPSON, D.B.A. Cliff-nesting Merlins in north-west Sutherland 183
- THOMSON, D.L. & DOUGALL, T.W. The status of breeding Wigeon in Ettrick Forest 61
- Waders: Moray Basin 97
- Waders: wintering at Aberdeen 106
- Waders: wintering in Shetland 71
- Waders: decline at Loch Morlich 91
- Wagtails, Pied: male-biased sex ratio 136

- WANLESS, S. The recolonisation of the Isle of May by Common and Arctic Terns 1
- WANLESS, S. & HARRIS, M.P. Kittiwake attendance patterns during chick rearing on the Isle of May 156
- Warbler, Blackpoll: rarity description SBR 1987: 50
- WATERS, W.E. Inland Fulmars on St Kilda 184
- WATSON, A. Foraging birds favouring burnt ground in harvested fields 178
- WATSON, A. Obituary of Desmond Nethersole-Thompson 138
- WATSON, A. Sexing and distinguishing juvenile Dotterel in summer 44
- WATSON, A., NETHERSOLE-THOMPSON, D., DUNCAN, K., GALBRAITH, H., RAE, S., SMITH, R. & THOMAS, C. Decline of shore waders at Loch Morlich 91
- WEIR, A.G. *see* WILSON, J.D.
- WEIR, D.N. Obituary of James Watt Macdonald 185
- Western Isles: Great Skuas 80
- Western Isles: Inland Fulmars on St Kilda 184
- Western Isles: St Kilda seabirds 21
- Wildfowl: breeding in southwest Scotland 162
- Wildfowl: wintering at Aberdeen 106
- WILSON, J.D. & WEIR, A.G. Hunting behaviour and attack success of a female Sparrowhawk between October 1987 and April 1988 126
- YAPP, W.B. Summer flocks of juvenile Starlings 184
-

Advice to Contributors

Authors should bear in mind that only a small proportion of the *Scottish Birds* readership is science-trained, and should aim to present their material concisely, interestingly and clearly. Unfamiliar technical terms and symbols should be avoided wherever possible and if deemed essential should be explained. Supporting statistics should be kept to a minimum. All papers and short notes are accepted on the understanding that they have not been offered for publication elsewhere and that they will be subject to editing. Papers will be acknowledged on receipt and will be reviewed by at least two members of the editorial panel, and in some cases also by an independent referee, before being accepted. They will normally be published in order of acceptance of fully revised manuscripts. The editors will be happy to advise authors on the preparation of papers.

Reference should be made to recent issues of *Scottish Birds* for guidance on style of presentation, use of capitals, form of references, etc. Papers should be typed on one side of the paper only, double-spaced and with wide-margins; two copies are required and the author should also retain one. Headings should NOT be underlined, nor typed entirely in capitals. Scientific names

should follow the first text reference to each species and should follow Voous' 'List of Recent Holarctic Bird Species' as given in *The British Birds' List of Birds of the Western Palearctic* (1984).

Tables, maps and diagrams should be designed to fit either a single column or the full page width. Tables should be self-explanatory and headings should be kept as simple as possible, with footnotes used to provide extra details where necessary. Each table should be on a separate sheet. Maps and diagrams should be in Indian ink and drawn so as to permit reduction to half their original size. If necessary they may be submitted without lettering and accompanied by a photocopy showing the lettering required. Captions should be typed on a separate sheet. Relevant line-drawings (in ink) will be welcomed, as will photographs (preferably black & white glossy prints).

Authors are responsible for checking their own proofs and returning them promptly. Text changes (as distinct from correction of printer's errors) at the proof stage involve extra cost and will only be accommodated under exceptional circumstances.