

RECOVERIES OF RINGED BIRDS, 1972

Species	Ring No.	Age and Date	Date and Place of Recovery
Shag	105.2105	Pull. 22.6.72	(4.12.72) New Quay, Cardigan
Shag	105.2118	Pull. 29.6.72	7.9.72 Porthcurno, Land's End, Cornwall
Mallard	GM 67.065	Pull. 8.9.72	4.11.72 Penrice, Glamorgan
Kittiwake	EC 95.840	Pull. 28.6.72	(4.12.72) Safi, Morocco
(This is only the second recovery in Morocco of a British-ringed Kittiwake)			
Razorbill	SS 28.139	Adult 3.7.67	5.3.72 Perranporth, Cornwall

RINGED STRANGERS ON LUNDY, 1972

Species	Ring No.	Age, Date and Place of Ringing	Control Date
Willow Warbler	534.075	1Y 23.8.71 Beachy Head, Sussex	16.4.72 Lundy

RARITY DESCRIPTIONS

Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*). 19th to 22nd March, 1972.

At 18.30 hrs. on 19th March I flushed a large white bird that had been perched unnoticed on one of the track marker-rocks east of Pondsbury. The bird was generally white with fine flecks of darkish grey on its wings and mantle and light bars on its tail, and was so distinctive that I was able to identify it immediately as the Greenland race of Gyrfalcon, *F.r. candicans*. It flew leisurely with shallow wing-beats and short glides in a semi-circle round me and away to the north, disappearing some 300-400 yards away. It kept within ten feet or so of the ground, and was mobbed frantically by several Lapwings which were very much smaller than it.

An hour later, with A. W. and Mrs. E. J. Strick, I relocated the falcon on a rock pinnacle on the west cliffs. It soon took flight, disappearing below the cliff-line, but its progress was clearly revealed by a hoard of gulls which screamed and dived around above it. Bee-lining for the gulls we approached the cliff stealthily, and flushed the falcon. It was carrying a freshly-killed rabbit which it soon dropped. After circling round it alighted near the Cheeses and under cover of rocks we approached to about fifty yards, from where we watched it for about twenty minutes in fast-fading light, until it flew off.

The next day saw the island blanketed in fog, but on the 21st I found the falcon soaring back and forth over Brazen Ward. It was watched intermittently for at least five hours, during which time it covered much of the east side of the island and the plateau. Flying at heights of up to about 600 feet above the cliff-top, its progress was often very fast, but effortless. Occasionally it dipped on half-closed wings, twice doing this when chivvied by a Great Black-backed Gull. Several times, after it had gone missing for a while, I found it at rest on a rocky outcrop near John O'Groats' House. On the 21st at least seven islanders saw the falcon at various parts of the island from Castle Hill to Tibbett's Hill, and I had a brief view of it on the 22nd at the North End.

The following description is compiled from notes taken on the 19th and 21st:

Size: near Herring Gull, perhaps a shade larger, but with shorter wings.

Shape: typical falcon, with quite broad but pointed wings, and a straight tail, fanned when turning in flight.

Plumage: Crown, head (except behind eye), nape, neck, rump and whole of underparts white, with breast slightly dirty-looking or off-white.

Mantle and wings white with darkish grey flecks, most dense on scapulars, and appearing as fine bars on closed wings. From underneath, the outer primaries showed very narrow black tips.

Tail white with lightish brown bars.

Area immediately behind eye greyish.

Bare parts: Bill quite short and heavily hooked, darkish grey.

Eye dark or black.

Lower tarsus and feet palish grey, legs being feathered off-white and bushy nearly to feet.

Stance very bold, giving a strong, fierce appearance, and from in front the legs appeared almost bowed. Head quite flat, somewhat bulging brows, dark eye, and darkish area behind eye all combining to give a 'frowning' expression. Flying overhead in bright sunlight it appeared creamy rather than white.

This record has been accepted by the *British Birds* Rarities Committee, and is the 4th occurrence on Lundy of this distinctive race of Gyrfalcon, the last being in 1937.

J. N. DYMOND

Scarlet Rosefinch (*Carpodacus erythrinus*). 4th June, 1972.

At 08.15 hrs. on 4th June, while on the Terrace, an unusual call-note attracted my attention to a bird perched in a group of Swallows. From a distance of about thirty feet, with the sun behind and to the left of me, I studied the bird in detail for about two minutes, until it flew off, after which it was not seen again. From my previous experience of the species I was able to identify it as a female Scarlet Rosefinch. The following description was taken:

Size and general shape of Greenfinch, with a fairly short tail.

Plumage: Crown, nape and mantle greyish-brown, finely streaked darker.

Sides of head, ear-coverts and tail unmarked greyish-brown.

Rump grey.

Wings greyish-brown, with pale tips to greater and median coverts forming two pale wing-bars.

Underparts buffish, breast finely streaked brown and belly paler.

Bare parts: Bill greyish, heavy and conical-shaped, the upper mandible appearing to overlap the lower mandible at the sides.

Eye dark and beady, set well forward on head.

Legs and feet dark.

Call-note: loud Brambling-like 'zooet', uttered repeatedly.

Flight undulating.

This record has been accepted by the Rarities Committee, is the 4th occurrence on Lundy of this East European species, and the first in spring.

J. N. DYMOND

Two-barred Crossbill (*Loxia laucoptera*). 3rd August, 1972.

At 08.30 hrs. on 3rd August, while in Millcombe, I heard a call-note which was unknown to me. Somewhat similar in phrasing to a Greenfinch or Crossbill, with alternate rapid notes and more parted notes, the call was a nasal, guttural 'ghink' or 'khink'. I first saw the bird about 150 yards distant flying with two common Crossbills, both green birds, and it was itself a dark olive with a lighter green-yellow rump. On the wings were two white bars, a very wide one on the greater coverts and a narrower one on the median coverts. Apart from the wing-bars, it was very similar to the common Crossbills in size, shape and appearance. The three birds circled round into the trees on the north side of the valley and were hidden from view. Two birds circled south again, one being the bird with the white wing-bars. This time it settled in full view in a large conifer about fifty yards away, calling repeatedly for about five minutes.

The head was dark olive; its wings clearly showed both wing-bars at rest; its breast was a lighter shade of green-brown, streaked darker, as was the head and mantle. Its bill was fairly stout and the tips of the mandibles were crossed. The overall appearance was of a crossbill with very obvious white wing-bars and a different, slightly lower-pitched, call-note.

The bird was identified as a female or immature Two-barred Crossbill.

This record, the first for Lundy, has been accepted by the Rarities Committee.

I. P. BAINBRIDGE