

St John's Valley, and one sat for a short time on a fence-wire. The call-notes heard seemed lower and harsher than those of typical Sedge Warblers.

Robin. A number of Robins seen in the early spring attracted attention both by their plumage and their habits. As compared with known 'residents' they were paler and greyer above, with the orange of the throat very dim and the belly whiter. None of these pale birds was heard to sing. They were much shyer and more skulking than the residents and were found in places not normally frequented by Robins, such as the Quarter Wall.

Kittiwake. One seen on June 10th had normal adult plumage, but the bill was unusually yellow and the legs a bright orange-red (comparable to those of a Puffin). The left leg and foot were uniformly of this colour, as were the tarsus and toes of the right leg, but the webs of the right foot were blackish. The bird was one of five resting on rocks near a nesting colony but was not seen at a nest, nor was it seen subsequently though the spot was visited daily.

Razorbill. One standing alone on Gannets' Rock on May 10th was still in winter plumage.

Guillemot. Jenny's Cove, June 5th : One still in winter plumage. Another with tarsus and feet (including webs) yellowish, and distal half of both mandibles yellow. Gannets' Rock, August 10th ; the only auk present was a Guillemot in winter plumage.

BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY ENQUIRIES

The Society was able to assist in three of the Trust Enquiries this year : on the Migration of Swifts, Bridled Guillemot counts, and the Fulmar investigation.

WORK ON MIGRATION IN 1949

During the season a lot of time was spent in looking for birds in all parts of the island, but the systematic study of migration was confined to the months of August, September and October. Though in March and April searching for birds was probably our chief occupation other tasks prevented the carrying out of consistent observations, while in May, June and July work on the nesting sea-birds forced the search for migrants into a subsidiary position.

The autumn work was based on two main methods of approach, the use of the garden trap for catching birds for study in the hand, and a daily count on a fixed route (the 'Cruise').

The garden trap was in use from August 12th to October 24th and during this period 183 birds of 24 species were taken in it. Captured birds were ringed, measured, and their plumage and soft parts examined before their release. No suitable balance being available, it was not possible to weigh the birds.

The 'Cruise', devised and first used in the autumn of 1948, is a walk of a little under four miles along a rather tortuous course, roughly a circuit of the southern half of the island with especial emphasis on the south-east slopes (which provide most of the cover on the island). This walk is undertaken each morning. Its principal objects are to ensure regular inspection of a considerable part of the island and to provide numerical records which may be used comparatively with greater confidence than figures based on random searching. The count is not a census for it is not possible to restrict it to a strip of fixed width. Instead, all birds within 'identifiable distance' are counted, this distance varying widely with the species from a hundred yards or so for crows to twenty yards for warblers. Such crudity imposes obvious limitations on the significance of the figures obtained, but nevertheless the method provides useful information.

While the 'Cruise' has produced a considerable share of the 'rarities' recorded this year, this is by no means its most valuable employment. The problems on which it is most helpful are first, recording the fluctuations of the abundant migrants such as chaffinches, sky larks, leaf warblers and swallows and second, providing evidence of the smaller scale movements of such birds as flycatchers, robins and wrens. The detection of these smaller movements is in some cases simple (e.g. flycatchers, which do not breed and are conspicuous and readily identifiable) but for some species this is not so. The case of the hedge sparrow is exemplary. Here is a bird breeding in small numbers (imprecisely known) and not conspicuous in the cover of the east side unless it chooses to be so. Before it will be possible to describe its passage movements accurately it will be necessary to determine the size of the breeding population, the number of young reared, and whether or not these adults and young are resident, or wholly or partially migrant.

With results from only two autumns yet available, and with these comparable only over a period of seven weeks, it is certainly too soon to look for much in the way of concrete results from the 'Cruise', but already it has helped to deal with some difficult cases, such as the movements of Linnets, and bring out some hitherto unrecognized features of the autumn passage, such as the extent of the passage of pied flycatchers.