

The wind was back to east/south east by Tuesday and thick banks of rolling mist from the mainland were soon creeping across the higher parts of the Island, reducing visibility rapidly and dramatically. We were at the north end and watched small parties of Meadow pipits, totalling at least one hundred and fifty, coming in off the sea. A Ring ousel attracted our attention with its harsh call. Birds were obviously being grounded by the mist and six Whinchats were found by the Quarter Wall. A Garden warbler was caught in the Quarter Wall Heligoland—a most efficient trap—and just as it was released another warbler appeared, low, through a gap in the wall and perched on a barbed wire fence. It was obviously a Hippolais and better views as it was coaxed towards the trap suggested Icterine. This was confirmed when it was safely in the hand.

No account of a visit to Lundy would be complete without mention of the many Ravens that amazed and amused us by their continual aerobatics—particularly appreciated during the quieter periods on the ledges.

## SOME FIELD SOCIETY ACTIVITIES ON LUNDY 1979

R. W. BRITTON

The unfortunate subsidence of the Beach Road in December 1978 meant that the proposed Easter Working Party and the spring Course had to be cancelled. However other fruitful activities were carried out successfully.

First the "Gull watch" in spring. This is your Society's continuing programme to control the numbers of Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls on Lundy—I emphasise control and not elimination. As most people are aware the great population explosion of *Larus argentatus* occurred in the 1950's and early 1960's. It was certainly one contributory factor in the remarkable decrease in the auk population. For some nine years now the writer has been trying to limit the hatching success of the gulls by the most humane method. His task these past two seasons has been easier by the able presence of John High who has given great support at the end of a rope. His help has been a great time-saver. It has meant that in spite of increasing age and rather limited mobility many of the big West side and North End colonies were visited. I would report to you that the gull numbers are much reduced in these areas and, consequently, the auk populations are not continuing to decrease. In the case of Razorbills there is reason to think their numbers have actually increased. I would particularly like to thank Colonel Gilliat for his help and support in this direction.

Despite only modest support in previous years our Committee decided to proceed with our course in the Barn in 1979. This proved to be a sound decision since we were fully booked for our two weeks in September. It was pleasant indeed to welcome old friends who had been on our courses before. These included Peter Bellers, Tony Blackmore, Sheila Darling, John High, David Leigh, and Terry Shannon. Our hospitality was also extended to "first-timers" particularly Jim Somerfield whose mobility on crutches and adventurous spirit gave the writer even more grey hairs.

The occurrence of birds during our stay was rich indeed. To start with there was a beautiful Bar-tailed Godwit feeding for several days in the valley N.W. of the Cattle Shelter; it proved to be quite interested in photography. The Quarter Wall area near the main path and the trap was productive throughout the fortnight. Here we saw Melodious Warbler, Willow Warbler, Whinchat, Spotted and Pied Flycatcher, Woodchat and Red-backed Shrike, and Kestrel.

Migrating waders certainly gave us variety if not large numbers. These included:—Curlew, Whimbrel, Green Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank, Snipe, Little Stint, Turnstone, Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Dotterel, and Dunlin.

There was a peak period in the Swallow/Martin migration when it was very impressive to see large numbers of these birds passing low over the top of the island and along the East Sidelands. Many were seen feeding and bathing on

Pondbury and the old hotel reservoir. Other migrants passing through at this time include:—Redstart, Wheatear (including Greenland), Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Chiffchaff, Whitethroat, Goldcrest, Tree Pipit, Meadow Pipit, Skylark, Pied, Grey, and Yellow Wagtails, Scarlet Rosefinch, Wryneck, Hobby and Turtle Dove.

A Water Rail had returned to Millcombe where they often spend the winter.

Of the sea-birds there were many Fulmar still about the cliffs. Gannets were seen on most days feeding along the West coast and particularly in the tide races off Black Rock and Hen and Chickens.

The weather could only be described as "variable" and our visit really was full of interest. Lundy always shows something different every time one visits its hallowed shores. I would like to think that our "courses"—a forbidding term for such ornithological delights—will continue to be well supported. They do offer very real value and it is certainly one of the best ways to visit Lundy; that is if you can stand amusing company and the brilliant catering of Gill to whom we give our most sincere thanks.

### DOMESTIC AND FERAL STOCK 1979

<b>Goats</b>	Only seven seen in December.
<b>Soay</b>	At least thirty counted.
<b>Deer</b>	Five are the most counted as a group, although singles are seen, the most observed at one time twenty-two in late May.
<b>Rabbits</b>	Still numerous, though we hope the trappers have given them a fright in the enclosed fields.
<b>Cattle</b>	One bull, 22 cows, five heifers, eighteen calves.
<b>Sheep</b>	Ten rams, 350 ewes. Despite the dreadful winter the lambs produced last year equalled the previous season, 100 lambs remain unsold.
<b>Ponies</b>	One stallion, ten mares, eight foals.

JOHN OGILVIE

### THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF PONDSBURY

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#### INTRODUCTION

The freshwater ponds and streams of Lundy have been well documented by Langham (1968), but apart from some work on selected plant and animal groups (Morgan 1947, Fraser-Bastow 1949, Galliford 1953, Brendell 1975, Lane 1977) there has been no comprehensive investigation of their flora and fauna. A preliminary survey of Pondbury and the two Quarterwall ponds (George 1978) indicated that the ponds supported different invertebrate populations both in terms of species and numbers of organisms.

In August 1979 the authors were given the opportunity (by Grants from the World Wildlife Fund and the Lundy Field Society) to carry out a comparative investigation of the main Lundy ponds. Organisms collected in this field survey are still being identified and only the results from Pondbury are being presented here. Details of the complete survey will be given in the next Lundy Field Society Report and elsewhere.