

Razorbill	AT 6240	N.	14/7/50	10/8/50	Newquay. Found dead
Guillemot	AD 6647	N.	11/7/49	28/9/49	Rosslare, Co. Wexford. Shot
Guillemot	AN 6651	N.	8/7/49	—/3/50	St Guenole, Finistere. Found dead
Guillemot	AT 6290	N.	26/7/50	23/9/50	Bude. Found dead
Guillemot	AT 6244	N.	17/7/50	23/9/50	Alderney. Found dead
Guillemot	AD 6720	N.	13/7/49	23/9/50	Alderney. Found dead
Guillemot	405670	N.	26/7/50	24/8/50	Penzance. Found dead

### SOME NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF LUNDY,

being extracts from the diaries of the Heaven family, 1870 to 1905.

By H. J. BOYD

(EDITORIAL NOTE.—As members who attended the Annual Meeting in 1950 know, we have been very fortunate in having been lent a series of diaries kept on Lundy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by members of the Heaven family, and it is a pleasure to record here the thanks of the Society to Mrs M. C. H. Heaven and Miss E. D. Heaven for so generously allowing us to make use of these records.

Hugh Boyd has made extensive studies of the diaries, which were kept, from January to March 1870 by Amelia Ann Heaven, during March of that same year by Maria Elizabeth Heaven, and thence onwards by Cecilia Harriet Heaven. Many interesting sidelights on the human life of the island formed the subject of an account read to the meeting last February. Now we are pleased to publish these extracts relative to the bird life of Lundy during the period. Space does not permit any detailed comparison with Chanter's account nor with later lists, but the interested reader will welcome the opportunity which this affords to make his own comparisons.)

During the present century there have been many ornithologically-minded visitors and residents on Lundy, a number of whom have published accounts of their observations, so that there is a good deal of information available on the status of birds on the island in recent years. By comparison the record of occurrences in the previous half-century is meagre, as may be seen from the historical account in L. R. W. Loyd's *Lundy* (1925), and derives principally from the list printed in J. R. Chanter's *Lundy Island* (1877). This list, in turn, is compiled largely from the observations of the Rev. H. G. Heaven, for many years the owner of the Island. The great deficiency of so terse an account is the absence of dated and detailed records of the occurrence and status of the birds mentioned. Thus the opportunity of examining diaries kept by members of Mr Heaven's family, living on the Island, was eagerly accepted because of the prospects offered of securing just such detailed data as have hitherto been lacking.

The available manuscripts cover the periods January 1870 to August 1875, November 1875 to November 1888, and January 1902 to October 1905. Since they are primarily family chronicles, records of birds form no very large part of the whole, but nevertheless Mr Heaven's lively interest in natural history has ensured that much more about birds is to be found in the diaries than might be expected. Some sixty species are mentioned in all. Often the references are brief, but occasionally they include some fascinating details. In the list which follows an attempt has been made to summarise the information gleaned from a by no means skilful perusal of the diaries. Wherever it has seemed appropriate transcriptions of the actual text have been given. Such entries are indicated by the use of quotation marks. The original orthography is used, the more because it contributes not a little to the interest of the records.

Thorough, critical and comparative appraisal of the material is not here attempted, and comment is limited to such entries as seem in need of additional explanation.

**Raven.** Fifteen records, mostly referring either to their depredations on lambs, chickens and ducklings, or to attempts at destruction of the young, usually by shooting.

**Carriion-Crow.** 1.4.78: 'Crow went away with China nest egg from Turkey's nest'. 17.3.86: 'Many crows and 1 gull' feeding on dead sheep. Only three other records, all of birds being shot.

**Rook.** 11.12.78: '4 rooks have roosted in sycamores many nights, last night 6 came'. 14.12.78: 'multiplied to 8 for roosting', 22.1.79: 'Rooks non sunt a cause de ravens; driven away', reappeared 9.4.79. 29.11.84: 'many rooks in', still present 1.12. 13.11.87: 'rooks in trees in evening'.

**Magpie.** One reported 30.11.87 survived until 28.2.88 when it was shot. It was sent ashore for stuffing on 14th March!

**Starling.** Only mentioned three times and no indication of breeding. 6.3.84: 'Many Starlings been about lately—so thick about Lighthouse tower the other night that it was only needful to stand outside and make grabs into space to catch them. Mr Sales and Mr Whitchurch caught 30 in no time; the birds flew against their faces, hands, etc.'

**Hawfinch.** 23.10.04: 'A Grosbeak in Cotoneaster at dinner time'.

**Goldfinch.** 21.10.84: 'many birds in—goldfinches among them'.

**Lesser Redpoll.** 30.12.74: 'Many Redpoles on Island'. There is no published winter record of Redpolls.

**Linnet.** One shot 21.8.82, several 26.8.82.

**Chaffinch.** 27.10.81: 'Ward caught and gave Annie a Chaffinch'. No other mention.

**Snow Bunting.** A flock seen 4.10.02. 15.10.04: 'first Snow Bunting noticed'.

**Sky-Lark.** 8.4.86: 'Fred Ward caught Lark damaged by wind against barn revived and imprisoned it for captive melody'.

**Grey Wagtail?** 6.3.84: 'Pretty yellow wagtail about so natty and dainty of plumage'. From the date, and even perhaps the description, should be referred to this species.

**Red-backed Shrike.** 12.7.70: 'A butcher bird so busy'.

**Goldcrest.** 17.10.82: 'Golden Wrens about'.

**Sedge Warbler, Garden Warbler, Common Whitethroat.** 17.5.87: 'Q. brought in 3 little feathered corpses (victims of Lighthouse lantern), Sedge Warbler, Garden Warbler, Common Whitethroat'. (Q. was the familiar designation of the Rev. H. G. Heaven.)

**Blackcap.** 10.12.77: 'Little Black Cap Warbler killed itself against Laundry door'. 9.11.02: 'Blackcap Warbler on Cotoneaster by dining-room window'. There have been no subsequent winter records.

**Thrush, sp?** Many recorded 3.11.77, and again in early March 1886 when a large number died during hard weather. Some seen 19.11.03. These might be Song Thrushes, Redwings, or even Fieldfares. A note of 15.10.04: 'Big Thrushes . . . seen' might refer to the Mistle Thrush though there are no records of autumn passage.

**Ring Ouzel.** 28.9.71: 'about lately', 17.10.82: 'many by light-house night or two ago'. 21.3.85: several seen.

**Blackbird.** Nests mentioned 6.4.79, 16.5.84. Unusual numbers noted 3.11.77, 11-13.10.84, 19.11.03.

**Wheatear.** One seen 8.4.81. 18.4.85: 'Wheatears been in some time'.

**Wren.** 21.3.85: 'Fred says that a little wren builds every year by the works [i.e., Quarries] and uses the nest after eggs are disposed of for bedchamber'.

**Swallow.** Referred to on seventeen occasions. Dates when first seen 8.4.79, 14.4.80, c. 20.4.84, 18.4.85, c. 17.4.86, 6.4.03. Several times reported seeking shelter in bad weather, and many died 25-28.5.85. Only two autumn notes—many 14.9.80 and 16-18.10.02.

**Sand-Martin.** One seen about a fortnight prior to 27.4.84. A note of 'Martins' seen 8.4.79 is the only other reference to either species.

**Swift.** Seen 3.5 and 5.5.87. No other records.

**Nightjar.** One seen 28.5.85 by Rev. H. G. Heaven.

**Hoopoe.** One seen 7.5.86, and another 2.5.88.

**Cuckoo.** Noted fourteen times, always between 26th April and 25th May, singly except for two singing together 11.5.86.

**Short-eared Owl.** 5.10.83: 'Woodcock Owl seen.' 9.10.83: 'Woodcock Owls seen'—cf. D'Urban and Mathew *The Birds of Devon*, p. 131, 'On Lundy Island the Short-eared Owl is considered the precursor of the Woodcock'.

**Barn-Owl?** 25.1.81: 'G. shot Barndoor Owl about this time.'

**Greenland Falcon.** 21.3.03: 'Pennington shot a Gerfalcon to-day—a very fine specimen Q. says'. This bird, incorrectly identified here, was subsequently exhibited in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.

**Peregrine.** Only mentioned three times. 21.6.75: 'Dark went for young falcons and found them flown', 6.6.78: 'Young Hawks went to Major Fisher', 28.6.04: 'G.T. says two young Peregrines just ready to fly near North End.

**Whitefronted Goose.** 18.10.77: 'Mr D. shot another goose (Laughing Goose as other [albifrons] we think)—likewise in wing as other' (which was shot 16.10.77). 15.2.78: Wild goose (whitefronted) came in field, attracted by captive whitefront and tame goose.' One 'that came discovering its captive kindred' shot 29.10.80. Three shot 31.1.81.

There are also notes of unidentified geese on 6.12.75 (three seen), 8.12.75 (one shot), 29.10.80 (one seen, in addition to Whitefront shot), 13.12.02 (seen), 15.12.03 (three seen), 30.10.03 (one shot), 4.12.03 (one shot).

**Common Shelduck.** 25.1.81: 'W. picked up dying Sheldrakes'. There is no other Lundy record of this species.

**Mallard.** There are only two notes in which this species is named: 5.12.79 (one wounded) and 23.10.80 (one shot), but the following references to 'wild duck' may be taken as referring to this species: 30.12.70 (one shot), 29.12.72 (many on Pondsburry), 8.1.75 (five seen), 16.1.78 (one shot), 4.10.83 (one shot), 24.11.02 (one shot). A note of 23.3.86 'large flights of wild duck (?) went overhead midday' does not permit of identification.

**Teal.** 29.11.79 two shot, 30.11.79 three seen, 26.11.80 one shot, 25.11.84 one shot. The graphic record of 18.12.74: 'Q. and Mr D. out "killing something" (a snipe [and a teal supposed])' is not very satisfactory, while 'Dr Smith brought down a "duck"—red-head' is much less so—but cf. Loyd's Lundy, p. 184 'The widow of a Mr Smith, who used to spend some considerable portion of his time on Lundy, testifies that her late husband shot several specimens of this species'.

**Wigeon.** 29.12.72: 'Wild duck and widgeon many on Pondsburry'. One shot 1.12.77. 7.12.83: 'Q. shot widgeon and crow and got wet wading in Pondsburry for former'.

**Shoveler.** 2.11.04: 'Strange Goose seen'. 3.11.04: '"Strange Goose" shot by Pennington turned out to be a "Shoveller Duck"'.

**Cormorant.** 16.6.75: '—explored Limekiln and got Cormorant eggs at S.W.P.' (South West Point). 13.11.77: 'A. interviewed one affable young Cormorant'.



**Gannet.** 4.5.81 three eggs taken. 2.4.84: 'A. and W. at N. End. Gannets in'. 9.5.87: 'W. at N. End early in morning, starting about 3.30 (on lui a dit que quelqu'un l'a (?) a cheval tous les matins de tres bonne heure pour voler les oeufs de Gannet)—saw no one there—went again about 12.30 found some one had been out; the Lightkeepers were there and said there were no G's eggs when they got out tho' Wr. left some'. 17.3.04: 'Q. had a letter from Hon. Secty of Wild Bird preservation people about the Gannets being looked after (with his permission) on the Island'. According to Jourdain (*British Birds* 16, p. 154, footnote), no eggs were laid in 1904, nor has any pair nested successfully since that date.

**Manx Shearwater.** 15.3.84: '1st Shearwater heard this year'. 7.4.85: 'Shearwaters been vocal some days or evenings'. 31.3.88: 'Shearwater talking at night'. 15.3.88: 'Yesterday Ethel Easterbrook brought down Shearwater she had found, damaged by flying against wall. It was "tended" and put on roof of House Beautiful with straw, to be out of the way of cats and dogs. This morning non est whether flown or cat enveloped uncertain.'

**Albatross** sp? 13.6.74: "'Albatross" skin on beach'. 23.9.74: 'except Albatross's head no striking (?) appearance put in to-day'. There is no mention of an albatross in the list of birds published in the 1877 version of J. R. Chanter's *Lundy Island*, which list is described as revised and added to by the Rev. H. G. Heaven, so that it must be presumed that these records were later rejected by him.

**Great Northern Diver.** 7.2.74: 'People shot "Northern Diver" (?) in Bay.' In view of the query found in the original text this record is not satisfactory though the date is a likely one.

**Wood-Pigeon.** 14.5.88: 'Wood Pigeons about'.

**Turtle-Dove?** 16.5.82: 'pr of doves about island'. 16.5.84: '1 Dove found dead in garden, 2 others about for some days'. 29.5.84: 'Doves about'. Though these notes are not specific the dates provide good additional evidence.

**Common Curlew.** 17.12.78 seven shot. 29.12.78: 'in plenty'. 4.1.79 one shot. 28.7.86: 'big Curlew and 2 or 3 weenie ones in field, or Whimbrel'.

A record of a Whimbrel shot on 30.13.70 must be considered doubtful. Under the same date appears 'A Curlew or Whimbrel comes close to the House seeking food.'

**Woodcock, Common Snipe, Golden Plover.** Records of these birds shot are frequent in autumn and winter. No analysis will be attempted here.

**Jack Snipe.** Single birds shot 12.1.87, 25.10.02, 20.11.02, 14.10.05.

**Grey Phalarope.** 9.12.81: 'W.B. shot phalarope (grey) evil deed'.

**Lapwing.** Recorded as numerous 1.4.70, 10.12.78, 29.12.78, 2.3.86, 8.3.87. 12.6.88: 'Two tiny Lapwings found'. This is the only indication of the Lapwing breeding on Lundy before 1928, other than Parfitt's designation of 'frequent breeder' in his Fauna of Devon, pt XIV, Birds (*Trans. Dev. Assoc.* VIII, pp. 245-310, 1876).

**Black-headed Gull.** 8.4.81 one seen.

**Kittiwake.** 10.8.80: 'Wounded Kittiwake flew into castle wall'. The species is not referred to again by name, though the victims of a party of 'marauders' shooting birds off the west cliffs in late July, 1883 and early August 1870 and 1879 must have been Kittiwakes for the most part.

There are no other specific records of gulls, though there are several remarks about gull's-egg collecting which must refer principally to the Herring Gull.

Neither the **Razorbill** nor the **Guillemot** are mentioned by name in the diaries.

**Puffin.** A note of the taking of three eggs, 4.5.81, is the only mention of the bird for which the island is above all famous.

**Corn-Crake.** There are several records of birds heard in May, and many more of birds shot in the autumn—too numerous to be listed here.

**Spotted Crake.** 17.5.87: 'F. Ward saw the other day a brown bird, whity speckled all over "by pond" which Q. supposes to be "spotted rail (or crake)". This is the only dated record of this species on Lundy though it is described as an occasional visitor in Chanter's and Parfitt's lists, and accepted as such by D'Urban and Mathew.

**Water-Rail.** Several shot: one 17.10.72, one 18.10.72, two 2.1.78, one 9.1.78. One seen 11.12.79. 25.10.80: '2 Water Rail having Homeric combat by stream by drawing room for long time with shouts and screams of conflict (like warring rabbits)—then one fled'.

Several attempts at the introduction of **Pheasants** and **Common Partridges** were made during the period covered by the diaries, with varying success.

**Quail.** 12.7.70: 'Men at mowing have destroyed 5 Quail nests'. In this year Mr Heaven knew of thirteen or fourteen nests, according to D'Urban and Mathew (*Birds of Devon*, p. 269). One was shot 30.10.70, but the species is not mentioned subsequently.

