

WORK ON NESTING SEA-BIRDS

This work had to be abandoned early in July, and only two projects were completed: (1) the census of birds in the south-west sample area, and (2) the census of Shags.

1. Several counts of the sample area were made in June. The auk figures given below are the maxima of the counts of adults on the cliffs and on the water; for the other species a census of nests was carried out. This is believed to be exact except in the case of the Herring Gull, where a few omissions may have occurred. The Great Shutter Rock, which is within the sample area, was climbed, and for the first time in recent years the breeding population of its south-west face was accurately computed. This examination has significantly affected the figure given for the Shag population, which leapt from a maximum of fifty-six birds in the early June surveys (made from the 'mainland'), to an actual figure of 108 birds when the nests were counted.

The data obtained are compared with Perry's figures for 1939, those of Alexander *et al.* for 1942, those of Hugh Boyd for 1948 and 1949, and those of David Lea for 1950 and 1951.

	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1942	1939
Cormorant	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Shag	108	26	30	50	32	43	72
Oyster Catcher	4	2	2	4	2	2	4
Great Black-backed	18	13	27	27	20	16	26
Lesser Black-backed	6	12	12	21	14	1	2
Herring Gull	490	478	332	348	171	464	1000
Kittiwake	84	54	32	0	0	84	80
Razorbill	228	211	408	415	290	364	1390
Guillemot	83	72	68	137	116	265	1010
Puffin	1	0	0	5	0	0	0

Remarks.—The 1952 figures suggest a considerable increase in the island population of Kittiwakes. It is unfortunate that the census of breeding Kittiwakes was not completed, but there is no doubt that numbers were much greater than in 1951, when 2,026 pairs were counted. The 1952 population probably exceeded 2,500 pairs.

The Herring Gull continues to increase, whilst the Lesser Black-back has certainly decreased on the island as a whole.

The Razorbill and Guillemot did not recover from the alarming fall in numbers in 1951, though this fall is thought to have been far more pronounced in the south-west than elsewhere on the island. D. H. Smith, who worked on the sea-birds in both seasons, was convinced that Razorbills were more numerous in 1952 than in 1951.

A single Puffin was seen on several occasions on the water near Seals' Hole, and a pair may have bred within the area.

2. The count of nesting Shags was made in the course of the sea-bird ringing work, with special surveys to fill in the gaps, and the final figure of eighty-six pairs is thought to be exact. In 1951 fifty-four pairs were counted, in 1950 thirty-seven, in 1949 seventy

to seventy-five, and in 1939 110 pairs. The 1952 census included thirty-six nests on the seaward face of Great Shutter Rock, which may mean that the increase over 1951 is more apparent than real, for no ascent was made in the earlier post-war counts. It is not known if Perry went onto the rock in 1939 (F. W. Gade did not hear of his doing so), but at that time the main concentration of Shags on Lundy seems to have been at North-East Point, where none now breed. Other colonies have been equally impermanent, and the establishment of a large colony on the Shutter may be a comparatively recent development. This shifting of nest-sites may have caused the decline in numbers between 1939 and 1950 to be exaggerated.

BIRD MOVEMENTS IN 1952

The list that follows is a summary of the year's observations on birds moving through Lundy. Some of this movement is local, as for example the weather-movements of late January, or the mid-seasonal movements of the Swift, but it has not seemed desirable to attempt to separate it from true migration at this stage. The picture given is believed to be an accurate one, where the diurnal migrants are concerned; in the case of nocturnal migrants it must be less reliable. Observations at the South Light during the night have shown that large-scale movements can occur without leaving any evidence which could be detected on the following day, though often they are indicated by a *decrease* in the number of birds on the island.

In preparing the summary I had to decide if it was possible to show resumption of movement by birds which had been resting for some time on the island, but eventually I rejected the idea as impracticable. As it stands, the list gives only the date of arrival of any individual or group, and in so far as I have known the facts, these individuals and groups have not been listed subsequently.

Three arbitrary divisions of the species have been made. Block capitals indicate a strong movement (over forty seen); italics indicate light movement; and plain type indicates that five or fewer were seen. The letters in brackets show the direction of movement, when it was other than north in spring and south in autumn.

The confused movements of Swifts and hirundines in early autumn seem to occur only in warm anticyclonic conditions. Such conditions may have a physiological effect which retards or reverses the development of the 'migrational urge'. The northward passage of Starlings and finches in November is really part of the big east-west movement from the continent to Ireland. It was on a much larger scale this autumn than in 1951.

I have omitted from the summary the movements of the Gannet, and of those sea-birds which breed on Lundy, with the exception of the Cormorant, which usually flies high when moving for some distance.