

LUNDY FIELD SOCIETY

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

1953

The year which has just passed may perhaps best be described as one of consolidation. Members will recollect that at our last general meeting the financial position of the Society was causing anxiety, and consideration was given to possible means of improving this. The outcome of the debate was agreement on proposals to increase the minimum annual subscription—a charge which has only now, in 1954, come into effect—and to modify the charges for accommodation at the Old Light, the new charges being instituted during the 1953 season. At the same time your Officers and Committee were actively exploring other possible means of raising support for our work. It is too soon to know what benefits will accrue from the higher subscription, but, as the Treasurer's Report will show, the new charges at the Old Light have improved the balance on the year's working, and there seem to be good prospects that in future years we may begin to expect a small profit. In the meantime, it is with great pleasure that we are able to report that our anxieties of last year have been in large measure allayed thanks to the decision of the Council of the University College of the South-West to renew its support. A grant of £150 has been made during the current session, and there is every prospect that this will be renewed in succeeding years. The thanks of the Committee have already been conveyed to the College, but we are sure that members will wish this public appreciation of their action to be given, together with the assurance that, as is evidenced by the quality of the papers in our Seventh Annual Report, a high standard of scientific work is being maintained.

Thanks largely to the devotion of the Warden, Peter Davis, who has been very active, both in the observation and capture of birds and also in devising improvements to the traps and in methods of handling trapped birds, the ornithological list for the year is as comprehensive as ever. Although not this year high-lighted by new records, nevertheless it is studded by unusual occurrences, among which in particular the very large influx of Lapland Buntings is of sufficient interest to merit the Warden's special report. It should be noted, however, that more help is needed if a sufficiency of young gulls and auks is to be ringed, and we hope that a few volunteers may be forthcoming to assist Davis during the crucial few weeks of June and July when this job is pressing. It is also a little disappointing to find that so few members have been able to take advantage of the long periods of the autumn and early

spring which are now available to them. The station is closed for little more than one month of the year, from early December until mid-January. Visitors, however, normally withdraw by early October and do not appear again until March. As a result some of the most interesting of the winter movements of birds through the island are missed.

The non-avian fauna and the flora of Lundy have received much attention during the season, but the work has comprised for the most part contributions towards long-term surveys which are not yet complete enough for report. Readers of the report will, however, find two papers, the one by M. J. Delany summarising two seasons' observations on the bristle-tails—those primitive, wingless insects which are so often to be seen crawling on the rock faces, and hopping distractedly away when disturbed—the other by A. L. Galliford, who for two seasons has been examining samples from as many as possible of the freshwater localities, and is now reporting on the minute waterfleas, wheel animalcules and the like. We have also acceded, gladly, to our Owner's request, expressed in his 'Letter' of last year, and have included a short summary report on the domesticated and semi-domesticated stock which adorn the island.

In conclusion it is fitting to record the thanks of the Society to all who have helped during the year; to John Dyke who once again contributes the tail-pieces which decorate the report; to Dudley Iles and John Cudworth for their help with the ornithological work during September; to Barbara Bizzell who cooked so nobly and palatably throughout many months of the season; to the authorities of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum for permitting us the use of their rooms; and to our President, Martin Coles Harman, and Mr and Mrs Gade for their continued co-operation and sympathy with the interests of the Society.

