

## WORK ON NESTING SEA BIRDS

### (1) CENSUS OF THE SOUTH-WEST SAMPLE AREA

The census was carried out in June and July and consisted of a count of occupied nests multiplied by two to obtain the number of breeding birds, except in the case of the Guillemot where the figure represents the maximum number of adults counted in the area.

#### NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS PRESENT

	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1942
Shag	106	100	108	26	30	50	32	43
Oystercatcher	2	2	4	2	2	4	2	2
Great Black-backed	24	16	18	13	27	27	20	16
Lesser Black-backed	16	8	6	12	12	21	14	1
Herring Gull	398	446	490	478	332	348	171	464
Kittiwake	84	98	84	54	32	0	0	84
Razorbill	188	128	228	211	408	415	290	364
Guillemot	53	51	83	72	68	137	116	265
Puffin	0	1	1	0	0	5	0	0

### (2) CENSUS OF SHAGS

One hundred and twenty nests were found, the highest number of nests recorded in a season. It is possible that one or two may have been replacement or second brood, nests. Thirty-three nests were found on the east side, a large increase on the 1953 figure of nine.

### (3) CENSUS OF GUILLEMOTS

A somewhat incomplete census was attempted. Much of the work was done by Michael Huxtable on July 9th and 10th. The remainder of the counts were made in June by the Warden. The compiled total of adults was 2,640, which includes nine bridled birds. This figure is undoubtedly well below the actual breeding population. Besides the physical difficulties of adequately observing all possible nesting sites, the census was taken rather late in the season, when unsuccessful breeders had probably departed, also probable that one of a pair would be at sea collecting food for the chick. So a doubling of the count to 5,280 birds, is, most likely, still a conservative estimate.

### (4) CENSUS OF LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS

A complete census of nests was attempted giving a total of sixty-one. Allowing for ten pairs escaping notice we have an estimate for the breeding population of between seventy and eighty pairs. Only two colonies were noted, one of *c.* fifteen pairs around Fortification Point and another of *c.* eight pairs on the south face of Tibbetts Point. Both these colonies inhabit bracken-covered slopes, a habitat not known to be used by the Herring Gull on Lundy. The remaining pairs bred singly, or in small groups of two or three

pairs, within Herring Gull colonies; occupying similar nesting sites to the Herring Gull except that no nests were found under rocks nor were they found breeding among the large boulders just above H.W.M. which the Herring Gull frequently inhabits. In 1939 Perry estimated a population of 350 pairs.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION

Although the bad weather experienced throughout much of the season probably had an adverse effect on the breeding success of sea birds, no definite evidence was obtained.

Three sick and one dead Kittiwake nestlings observed in Kittiwake Gully may have been affected by the very wet conditions prevailing there. The small Kittiwake colonies between Long Ruse and the Devil's Slide were conspicuously unsuccessful, about eighty to ninety per cent of these nests being empty on July 11th, thought to be due to a predator. From the forty-two Kittiwake nests near Shutter Rock at least thirty young were present on August 4th, mostly in the nest though nearly fully fledged, plus a few that had flown but were still in the vicinity. It is unlikely that any of the juveniles had left the colony as the first egg was not seen here until May 31st.

Razorbills were thought to be slightly more numerous than in 1953 (Peter Davis). Two pairs were present and one chick was reared on the Rattles headland to the east of the Sample Area, which is an extension of the Island breeding range.

Puffins were probably extremely unsuccessful in breeding. Several rat-eaten eggs were found in May on Puffin Slope. Between 200—300 birds were seen here and on adjacent water during May and June. But on July 13th between 1050 and 1515 hrs when ringing operations were in progress in Kittiwake and Puffin Gullies, no Puffins were seen on land or flying near the land. It would be expected on this date to find parents feeding young. During the earlier part of the season up to eighty Puffins were seen on land at different points on the west coast, the main concentration being Battery Point and the Needles.