

British Birds

Vol. 58 No. 9
SEPTEMBER 1965



Report on rare birds in Great Britain in 1964 (with 1963 additions)

By D. D. Harber and the Rarities Committee

THIS, THE SEVENTH annual report of the Committee, has been drawn up after the examination of about 260 records for 1964. The total was thus about the same as for each of the two previous years, if allowance is made for the removal from our list of sixteen species which were included in the 1962 report (*Brit. Birds*, 56: 394) and for the invasion of Cranes *Megalornis grus* in the autumn of 1963 (*Brit. Birds*, 57: 502-508). We note with pleasure that the proportion of rejected records was substantially lower in 1964 than in previous years. Conditions of acceptance have in no way been lowered and we can therefore attribute this change only to a general improvement in standards of observation and presentation. At the end of the report will be found five additional records for 1963. A very few 1964 records which either came in very late or which presented special problems are still outstanding. Once again our views have been requested and given on a number of Irish records and we have also been glad to help county organisations with particular records of species not on our list.

The composition of the Committee has now remained without change for two years with P. A. D. Hollom (Chairman), D. D. Harber (Hon. Secretary), D. G. Bell, A. R. M. Blake, Peter Davis, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, G. A. Pyman, F. R. Smith, R. Wagstaffe and D. I. M. Wallace. We think that we can continue to claim that all records have been considered without unnecessary delays. In fact, any delays that have occurred have mainly been the result of records reaching us late. In a few instances details of birds observed in the spring of 1964 were not sent to us until nearly a year later. In such cases it is difficult or impossible to include the record, if accepted, in our annual report for the year in question; also it is often difficult to obtain further particulars, e.g.,

from other observers, where this is necessary. We therefore hope that all records will be sent in as soon as possible after the event. In fact, particularly in cases where extreme rarities are concerned or where field identification offers difficulties, it is very helpful if we can be informed while the bird in question is still present. It is then often possible for a member or members of the Committee to see it and our task is thus facilitated.

The principles and procedure we follow in considering records were explained at length in the 1958 report (*Brit. Birds*, 53: 155-156). A revised list of the species dealt with was published last year (*Brit. Birds*, 57: 280-281) and no further changes have since been made—except that Firecrest (Scotland only) should have been omitted.

The systematic list of records is set out in the same way as its predecessors. The following points, some of which were outlined more fully in the 1958 report (*Brit. Birds*, 53: 156-158), should be borne in mind since they show the basis on which the information has been put together:

(i) The scientific nomenclature follows that given in the B.O.U. *Check-list of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland* (1952), with the amendments subsequently proposed (*Ibis*, 98: 157-168) and those resulting from the decisions of the International Commission for Zoological Nomenclature (*Ibis*, 99: 369). Any sight records of subspecies (including those of birds trapped and released) are normally referred to as 'showing the characters' of the race concerned.

(ii) No record which would constitute the first for Great Britain and Ireland is published by us, even if we consider it acceptable, until it has been passed by the Records Committee of the British Ornithologists' Union.

(iii) In general, the report is confined to records which are regarded as specifically certain. 'Probables' are never included and square brackets are used only to denote likely escapes from captivity. In the case of the very similar Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitchers *Limnodromus scolopaceus* and *L. griseus*, however, we are continuing to publish indeterminate records and this will also apply to observations of such 'difficult' groups as frigate-birds *Fregata spp.* and albatrosses *Diomedea spp.* if and when they occur.

(iv) The basic details included for each record are (1) county; (2) locality; (3) number of birds if more than one, and age and sex if known (in the cases of spring and summer records, however, the age is given only where the bird concerned was not in adult summer plumage); (4) if trapped or found dead; (5) date or dates; and (6) observer or observers up to three in number, in alphabetical order. Other relevant information is sometimes added at the end of individual records and general comments may be given in a subsequent paragraph; although the report as a whole is confined to Great Britain, these general comments may also cover Ireland and other European countries.

A word is necessary on the problem of birds which have or may have escaped from captivity. The number, both of species and of individuals, imported into this country by dealers increases annually. Many species on our list, as well as others which could occur in Britain in a wild state, either already are or may be kept in captivity. It is usually not possible for us to establish with certainty whether any

individual bird reported to us has, in fact, come from such a source—although we make every endeavour to do this—owing to the almost endless possibilities involved (for example, birds may escape from captivity on the Continent and then visit this country). Therefore, if any of our readers has information suggesting that a record published by us relates to an ‘escape’, we hope that they will let us know so that we may reconsider the matter. It is our practice to omit altogether any record where there is an overwhelming probability that the bird or birds concerned had escaped from captivity. Where it seems no more than likely that the bird had such an origin, we publish it in square brackets. If a record relates to a possible ‘escape’, it is published with a comment to this effect. Before leaving this question, we would point out to observers that the ‘tameness’ or ‘wildness’ of an individual bird is often no indication of origin in this respect. Birds which are known to have escaped from captivity are often very ‘wild’ and others which can hardly have done so are sometimes very ‘tame’.

It only remains to thank once again the individual observers and local organisations who have given us so much assistance in preparing this report. All records should continue to be sent direct to the Hon. Secretary at 59 Eridge Road, Eastbourne, Sussex, preferably (though not necessarily) on the ‘Unusual Record’ forms recently described by D. G. Bell (*Brit. Birds*, 58: 228-229) and obtainable from the Hon. Secretary.

Systematic list of 1964 records accepted

Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*)

Hampshire: Langstone Harbour, adult, 31st August (P. Colston, B. Newport, R. W. Renyard *et al.*).

Kent: Sandwich Bay, 8th April (B. Hawkes); Dungeness, 20th May (L. A. Batten, P. F. Bonham, R. E. Scott).

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Huntingdonshire: Paxton gravel-pits, 19th May (Mr. and Mrs. Packer, C. F. Tebbutt).

It must again be pointed out that most sight records of this species do not exclude the Snowy Egret *E. thula* of North America, the two being virtually indistinguishable in the field when not in breeding plumage. However, the latter has never yet been recorded in this country whereas the former now occurs annually from southern Europe.

Squacco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*)

Devon: Slapton Ley, first-winter, 19th to 30th September (H. G. Hurrell, J. D. Pickering, F. R. Smith *et al.*).

Apart from two records in 1958, both for Devon and perhaps relating to one individual, this is the first recorded since 1954. The species' range across southern Europe is very similar to that of the Little Egret, though it is much less numerous in the western parts.

Cattle Egret (*Ardeola ibis*)

[**Dumfriesshire**: near Dumfries, 7th July (W. Austin, J. Maxwell, R. T. Smith).]

[**Lancashire**: Walney Island, 26th July (T. K. Bradshaw, E. F. Pithers, F. Quayle).]

[**Westmorland**: Appleby, 3rd July (Miss C. W. Hull, R. W. Robson).]

[**Sussex**: Ford, 14th to 20th December, then captured by hand in poor condition and treated in captivity (B. Duffin, M. H. Terry, Major W. W. A. Phillips *et al.*).]

It seems that we were incorrect in suggesting that the Cattle Egret in Somerset in 1963 was likely to be one of those missing from Whipsnade Zoo (*Brit. Birds*, 57: 264) since we now learn that the birds kept there are pinioned in a manner which renders them permanently incapable of full flight. However, this species is kept in captivity elsewhere and we still consider it likely that the 1963 one and those listed above had come from such a source. The first three records here may well have related to the same individual. The date of the one in Sussex and the fact that it could be captured by hand make it particularly probable that it had escaped from captivity. This species is resident in Spain and Portugal, and is much less prone than other herons to wander north in Europe.

Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Northamptonshire: Ditchford Lakes, two, 27th April to 3rd May (R. Felton, T. A. Hasdell, E. Taylor *et al.*).

As has been pointed out previously (e.g. *Brit. Birds*, 53: 159-160), some records of this species may relate to escapes from Edinburgh Zoo. An immature was also reported near Skibbereen, Co. Cork, from 22nd June to 5th July (*Irish Bird Report*, 1964: 10-11).

Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*)

Cornwall: Falmouth, ♂, found exhausted (died later), 3rd May (Rev. J. E. Beckerlegge, Miss F. G. Doughty, R. G. Hadden *et al.*); Sithney Common Hill, ♂, 11th May (J. S. Gilbert).

Gloucestershire: Frampton-on-Severn gravel-pits, ♂, 31st May (R. E. Saunders, C. M. Swaine *et al.*).

Glamorgan: Oxwich, ♀, 4th July (R. J. Howell, C. Stockton).

Hampshire: Winchester water meadows, ♀, 7th May (R. A. Cheke, J. R. MacKinnon, T. J. N. Sparrow *et al.*).

Kent: Dungeness, ♂, trapped, 15th May (H. A. R. Cawkell, D. Gladwin, R. E. Scott *et al.*); Sandwich Bay, ♂, trapped, 23rd to 27th May (D. M. Batchelor, W. Harvey, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*).

RARE BIRDS IN GREAT BRITAIN IN 1964

Lincolnshire: Chapel Pits, near Skegness, ♂, 21st to 26th May (A. E. Smith, A. Sykes, A. D. Townsend *et al.*).

Pembrokeshire: Haverfordwest, ♂, found dead, 26th April (J. W. Donovan).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, ♂, 16th April (P. Schousboe, M. J. Southam).

Sussex: Chichester gravel pits, ♂, 29th May to 2nd June (M. Shrubbs, Miss J. V. Stacey *et al.*).

These eleven records suggest a remarkable spring 'invasion', particularly when one takes into account the fact that this is a shy, skulking bird, very easily missed. A female was also reported near Rosslare, Co. Wexford, on 9th and 10th May and found dead on the 11th, while another female landed exhausted at Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford, on the 12th; the latter was captured, fed, and released on the 13th (*I.B.R.*, 1964: 11). Thus there were almost as many in Britain and Ireland in 1964 as the total of 14 during 1958-63, of which six occurred in 1958. The possibility of breeding should not be overlooked since the species nests in suitable areas of most Continental countries bordering the English Channel and southern North Sea.

White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)

Nairnshire/Inverness-shire: Auldearn, Dores and Fort Augustus, 17th April to 10th May (J. MacGeoch, L. MacNally, K. Tuach *et al.*).

Here again the possibility of the bird having escaped from captivity cannot be ruled out. A White Stork which was recorded in various localities along the south coast certainly had such an origin and is therefore not included.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*)

Devon: localities between the Axe Estuary and Axminster, 21st November to 19th December (G. A. Oliver, H. Palmer, W. H. Tucker *et al.*).

In the period 1958-63 about five of these birds were recorded in Britain, all between 16th September and 26th October except for one in December. This is a species which may be expected to occur here less and less frequently as the number breeding in western Europe continues to decline.

Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca carolinensis*)

Drakes showing the characters of this American race were reported as follows:

Gloucestershire: Slimbridge, 3rd and 4th May (L. P. Alder, M. A. Ogilvie).

Norfolk: Salthouse and Cley, 7th to 11th April (N. J. Phillips, R. A. Richardson *et al.*).

Another drake was reported near Blennerville, Co. Kerry, on 19th January (*I.B.R.*, 1963: 11).

Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*)

Derbyshire: Butterley Reservoir, 29th February to 7th March (R. A. Frost, B. C. Potter, T. G. Smith *et al.*). Ogston Reservoir, near Chesterfield, adult ♂, 8th March (R. G. Hawley).

Hampshire: Isle of Wight, Bembridge, 14th December to 17th January 1965 (Mrs. S. Newell, Mrs. M. Seabroke, Mrs. I. Warren *et al.*).

Middlesex: King George VI Reservoir, Staines, adult ♂, 19th December (J. B. Cox, S. Greenwood, D. M. Putman).

Nottinghamshire: Hoveringham gravel-pits, ♂, 3rd March (W. Priestly); [Holme Pierrepont, ♂, 29th August to 7th November (A. Aitken, P. M. Hope).]

As we have mentioned in previous years, this species is commonly kept in captivity and all the above records could therefore relate to escapes. The long stay of the one at Holme Pierrepont strongly suggests that it came from such a source. Ferruginous Ducks in captivity sometimes hybridise with Tufted Ducks *A. fuligula* and Pochards *A. ferina*; such hybrids, particularly Ferruginous × Pochard, can be very confusing in the field.

Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*)

Kirkcudbrightshire: Southernness Point, ♂, 1st January (C. Bower).

Morayshire: Moray Firth, ♂, 14th October (C. C. I. Murdoch, R. C. Parkinson).

There are now one or two records of this North American duck in most years.

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*)

Shetland: Lerwick, ♂, 19th October (G. Bowers, D. Coutts, W. G. Porteous *et al.*).

This is only the third record of this arctic duck in Britain and Ireland in the seven years from 1958.

Ruddy Shelduck (*Casarca ferruginea*)

[**Lancashire:** Freckleton, two, 14th August, one remaining until 13th September (L. Eccles, Dr. N. Yates *et al.*); a female shot at Southport on 2nd October and now in the Liverpool Museum (R. Wagstaffe) was doubtless one of these.]

This species is frequently kept in captivity and the chances of genuinely wild individuals visiting this country are now much reduced with the decline in the European breeding population.

Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*)

Gloucestershire: Slimbridge, adult, 2nd to 4th February (L. P. Alder).

Norfolk: Breydon Water, immature, 5th January (P. R. Allard, G. I. Morris); Halvergate Marshes, adult, 15th January (R. H. Charlwood).

RARE BIRDS IN GREAT BRITAIN IN 1964

Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)

Gloucestershire: Slimbridge, the one first recorded on 31st December 1963 (*Brit. Birds*, 57: 266) was last seen on 10th March (M. A. Ogilvie).

Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

Gloucestershire: Slimbridge, 26th January to 11th March (R. E. Hitchcock, M. A. Ogilvie, P. Stott *et al.*).

Lancashire: Preston, 25th August (G. Blackwekk, M. Jones, H. Shorrocks).

Outer Hebrides: St. Kilda, 1st December to 24th January 1965 (P. Grubb, D. Gwynne).

Six Gyr Falcons were recorded in the period 1958-63, but this is yet another species of which any record may well relate to an escape from captivity. In Europe, this circumpolar arctic species breeds in northern Scandinavia and Iceland.

Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*)

Hampshire: near Godshill, immature ♂, 31st May (G. H. Rees); Nursling Old Gravel Pit and its vicinity, immature ♂, 30th May to 9th June with a second bird also present on the last date (D. Glue, A. Gutteridge, N. H. Pratt *et al.*); Milford, ♂, 2nd October (Mr. and Mrs. I. R. Beames).

Kent: Sandwich Bay, 23rd to 30th May (D. M. Batchelor, R. S. Brown, A. Green-smith *et al.*); another bird, 21st to 27th June and 4th to 9th July (D. M. Batchelor, K. A. Chapman, J. Websper *et al.*).

Shetland: Unst, ♀, 19th May (E. A. Machell, M. Sinclair, R. J. Tulloch *et al.*).

Yorkshire: near Doncaster, ♀, 5th July (R. J. Rhodes).

These records conform to what has now become the normal pattern of occurrences here of this summer visitor to eastern Europe and Asia (most in May-June and occasional ones to October).

Crane (*Melagornis grus*)

Kent: Dymchurch, the juvenile first recorded on 30th October 1963 (*Brit. Birds*, 57: 506) was last seen on 4th April (*per* R. E. Scott).

This straggler from the influx of October 1963 (*Brit. Birds*, 57: 502-508) furnishes the only acceptable record of this species in 1964, in striking contrast to the situation not only in 1963 but in most other recent years.

Little Bustard (*Otis tetrax*)

Wigtownshire: Whithorn, ♂, 29th April (F. W. Champion, R. Nicholson).

Only four were recorded in the period 1958-63. The species breeds no farther away than northern France, but, when it has been possible to determine the subspecies, most of the stragglers to Britain have proved to belong to the more distant eastern race which occurs in south-east Europe and Asia.

Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*)

Derbyshire: Egginton sewage farm, 29th February to 22nd March (R. H. Appleby, C. N. Whipple *et al.*).

The only other British record in recent years of this common North American plover was also in an inland county (Huntingdonshire) and at about the same time of year (7th to 9th March).

Long-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)

Northumberland: Cresswell Ponds, 27th October to 28th December (B. Hallam, T. Hallam, P. J. Stead *et al.*).

Long-billed or Short-billed Dowitcher (*Limnodromus scolopaceus* or *griseus*)

Dunbartonshire: Ardmore Bay, 15th August (R. S. Baillie).

Lancashire: Withington sewage farm, Manchester, 29th August (J. S. Shakeshaft).

Shetland: Unst, 23rd and 24th May (E. A. Machell, M. Sinclair).

Suffolk: Havergate Island, 1st June (R. Partridge, Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Roberts).

Very few of either of these North American waders have been recorded in spring and so the Shetland and Suffolk records are noteworthy.

Great Snipe (*Gallinago media*)

Sussex: Pagham, 10th November (Major W. W. A. Phillips).

This is only the tenth record of this vagrant from north-east Europe and Asia since 1958.

Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*)

Suffolk: Minsmere, 24th September (H. E. Axell, P. J. Makepeace, P. Muller *et al.*).

During the period 1958-63 there were only three records of this American wader, all October-November.

Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*)

Cornwall: Camel Estuary, 4th and 7th October (D. J. Britton, R. J. Salmon, Mrs. R. P. Weeks).

Leicestershire/Northamptonshire: Stanford Reservoir, 17th to 23rd October (Miss K. Kirton, F. P. Littlemore, R. Ratcliffe *et al.*).

Single ones were also reported at Tacumshin, Co. Wexford, from 11th to 13th September and on the Swords estuary, Co. Dublin, from 25th October to 10th December (*I.B.R.*, 1964: 19-20). There have now been 19 records of this North American wader since 1958.

Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*)

Norfolk: Blakeney, 20th September (T. H. Bell).

There are now about 15 records of this summer visitor from east Europe and west Asia, but this one and the two in 1963 were the first for some years.

White-rumped Sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*).

Cornwall: Devoran, 19th October (Rev. J. E. Beckerlegge).

Essex: Hanningfield Reservoir, 27th August (H. J. C. Seymour, A. P. Simes).

Lancashire: Inner Ribble Marshes, two, 1st to 5th November (G. Blackwell, M. Jones, H. Shorrock *et al.*).

Lincolnshire/Norfolk: Wisbech sewage-farm, trapped, 24th October to 1st November (J. A. Hardman, Dr. C. D. T. Minton, C. W. G. Paulson-Ellis *et al.*).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, 22nd to 29th September (D. L. Clugston, D. G. Healey, F. C. Reeves *et al.*).

One was also reported at Akeagh Lough, Co. Kerry, on 20th September (*I.B.R.*, 1964: 21-22). The seven years 1958-64 produced 27 records of this North American wader in Britain and Ireland.

Semi-palmated Sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*)

Pembrokeshire: Skokholm, trapped, 21st July (A. W. Diamond, R. Harris, W. J. Plumb) (*Brit. Birds*, 58: 218-219).

This is the third British record of this North American wader and the second in July.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*)

Leicestershire: Belvoir, two, 7th and 8th September (C. Pask).

Norfolk: Salthouse, 11th and 12th May (D. J. Britton, R. A. Richardson).

Though this species is now recorded almost annually, despite its rarity on the Atlantic coast of North America, both these records are unusual, the first because of the inland locality and the second in being during spring. There have now been 20 records, involving 25 individuals, since 1960.

Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*)

Flintshire: Bettisfield Pools, 11th October to 1st November (T. W. Pemberton, G. Wood, C. Wright *et al.*).

Northumberland: Holy Island Lough, 12th to 17th September (F. G. Grey, K. Hardcastle, P. J. Stead *et al.*).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, 22nd and 23rd June (P. F. Bonham, R. Overall, H. E. Scott *et al.*).

There are now 17 British and Irish records of this North American wader which was not recorded over here until 1954.

Pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*)

Somerset: Chew Valley Reservoir, showing the characters of the Black-winged *normanni*, 6th to 9th September (H. H. Davis, M. Latham, J. E. Squire *et al.*).

Only four Pratincoles were recorded in the period 1958-63, one in spring and three in autumn. This species is a summer visitor to southern Europe and Asia.

White-winged Black Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*)

Cornwall: Melancoose Reservoir, Newquay, 3rd to 5th May (Rev. J. E. Beckerlegge, Dr. D. Harvey, C. D. Parkyn *et al.*).

Dorset: Lodmoor, Weymouth, 7th June (J. Bellamy, F. R. Clifton *et al.*); Brownsea Island, Poole Harbour, 15th June (A. Bromby, Miss H. A. J. Brotherton, A. St. G. Walton *et al.*).

Essex: Abberton Reservoir, adult, 20th August (L. T. Davenport, R. V. A. Marshall *et al.*); Hanningfield Reservoir, juvenile, 20th and 22nd August (S. Hudgell, A. P. Simes).

Glamorgan: Kenfig Pool and vicinity, adult, 16th to 23rd August (R. G. Knight, J. L. L. Lyons, R. G. Newell *et al.*).

Gloucestershire: Horcott gravel-pit, Fairford, adult, 23rd July (D. Veevers, Mrs. U. Wegman, G. L. Wegman).

Hampshire: Hayling Island, juvenile, 1st September (G. H. Rees).

Kent: Sandwich Bay, 29th May (J. N. Hollyer).

Lincolnshire: Huttoft Pit, adult, 2nd and 7th August (E. Mackrill, D. G. H. West); Tetney Lock, adult, 5th August (K. Robinson); it seems likely that these records refer to the same individual.

Middlesex: Staines Reservoir, juvenile, 16th to 23rd August (J. Cox, S. Greenwood, D. I. M. Wallace *et al.*); King George VI Reservoir, Staines, juvenile, 13th September (J. B. Cox, R. J. Johns, D. Putman).

Norfolk: Cley and Salthouse, juvenile, 13th and 15th August (R. J. Johns, R. A. Richardson).

Outer Hebrides: near Borue, Benbecula, 23rd May (R. Rhodes, G. Thomason, K. Williams *et al.*).

Sussex: Langney Point, adult, 12th and 13th August (R. H. Charlwood, D. D. Harber, M. Rogers); juvenile, 13th and 14th August (R. H. Charlwood, D. D. Harber, M. Rogers).

Yorkshire: Kilnsea and Spurn, adult, 24th July (G. R. Edwards, R. W. N. Knapton).

An unusually large and widespread influx, covering both spring and autumn. Not only was the number recorded probably unprecedented for a single year, but the proportion of adults in autumn was also unusually high. In addition, an adult in summer plumage was reported in Donegal Bay on 15th July (*I.B.R.*, 1964: 28). Thus there was a total of 18 or 19 records in 1964 of this species, a summer visitor to south-east Europe and Asia, compared with three to nine in each of the preceding six years 1958-63, May-June and August-September being the normal months.

Whiskered Tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*)

Cornwall: Marazion Marsh, 27th May (R. G. Hadden).

Middlesex: King George VI Reservoir, Staines, 22nd to 24th June (K. Barrett, D. Putman, D. I. M. Wallace *et al.*).

Yorkshire: Coatham Sands, adult, 30th August (W. Norman).

The last is only the second British sight-record of a Whiskered Tern in winter plumage. The other two records above were at the normal time for this south European, Asiatic and African species, but the six years 1958-63 produced only six records.

Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*)

Kent: Dungeness, two, 22nd August (J. B. Cox, R. J. Johns, D. M. Putman); Stodmarsh, 22nd August (R. G. Pitt).

Northumberland: Hauxley, 15th July (B. Galloway, E. Robson).

Sussex: Selsey Bill, 19th April (B. A. E. Marr, E. T. Welland); 21st May (L. S. Brown, I. R. Willis); 24th May (R. J. Johns, B. A. E. Marr); Pagham Harbour, 25th May (Miss J. Stacey); it seems likely that the three May records refer to the same individual.

Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

Sussex: Rye Harbour, 19th July (K. Verrall); Langney Point, 13th September (D. D. Harber).

Yorkshire: Kilnsea, 26th July (G. R. Edwards).

This almost cosmopolitan but very local tern, which in Europe is largely confined to the Baltic and the Black Sea, is now being recorded almost annually in Britain though the numbers are very small, the total for 1958-64 being about 17.

Snowy Owl (*Nyctea scandiaca*)

Midlothian: Moorfoot Hills, 16th February (L. M. and J. Young) and 1st March (W. Brotherston).

Isles of Scilly: various islands from 10th October into 1965 (P. R. Colston, J. M. Crocker, R. B. Tozer *et al.*).

Shetland: Fetlar, Whalsay and Yell, various dates from 10th June to 14th October, probably only one individual being involved (L. Brown, A. Gilpin, R. J. Tulloch *et al.*).

The possibility of escapes cannot be overlooked. Relatively large numbers have been offered for sale in this country and the species breeds readily in captivity. It is noteworthy that there were more records in 1963 and 1964 than for many years and this was the second successive year that this circumpolar arctic owl appeared in Shetland in summer.

Alpine Swift (*Apus melba*)

Anglesey: Church Bay, 2nd August (A. J. Mercer).

Lincolnshire: Sturton Park, Bauber, 23rd April (R. Fox, P. A. Prince).

Somerset: Minehead, 22nd April (J. Martin).

Sussex: Hollingbury Camp, Brighton, 11th October (M. J. Helps).

Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)

Dorset: Portland Bill, 27th to 30th May (D. Carr, F. R. Clifton, C. M. Veysey *et al.*).

Suffolk: Minsmere, 8th June (H. E. Axell, F. Tate, P. J. Makepeace *et al.*).

One was also reported at Crosshaven, Co. Cork, on 26th April (*I.B.R.*, 1964: 30).

Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella cinerea*)

Pembrokeshire: Skokholm, 27th and 28th June (Dr. M. P. Harris, Dr. C. M. Perrins, W. J. Plumb *et al.*).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, 25th September (D. L. Clugston, D. J. Montier, J. R. Mullins *et al.*).

Shetland: Fair Isle, adult, 15th May (G. Barnes, R. H. Dennis, C. S. Waller); adult, 18th to 20th May (R. H. Dennis, C. S. Waller); immature, trapped, 9th to 11th July (G. Barnes, R. H. Dennis, C. S. Waller).

There have now been about 20 records of this south European, Asiatic and African species in Britain and Ireland since 1958.

Red-rumped Swallow (*Hirundo daurica*)

Kent: Ruxley gravel-pit, 25th April (E. T. W. Kemp, F. F. B. Martin; P. Rayfield *et al.*).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, trapped, 10th and 11th November (F. H. D. Hicks, Miss H. M. Quick).

Yorkshire: Spurn, 3rd May (J. Cudworth, B. R. Spence, G. R. Wilkinson).

There are only nine previous British and Irish records of this species (which, however, seems to be spreading in Iberia and the Balkans). All have been in spring (March-June) except for one in autumn (Kent, 28th August 1959). The November date of the St. Agnes record is therefore quite without precedent.

Eye-browed Thrush (*Turdus obscurus*)

Northamptonshire: Oundle, 5th October (M. J. Smith, Mrs. W. Smith).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, 5th December (J. A. Burton, F. H. D. Hicks, S. D. G. Stephens).

Inner Hebrides: North Rona, 16th October (N. Picozzi).

These are the first British records of this Siberian thrush and full details will be published later. However, the species has long been known as a vagrant to central and western Europe and, for example, there are about 20 records for Germany (though only two in the present century).

White's Thrush (*Turdus dauma*)

Cheshire: Weaverham, 7th May (C. Allen, F. Allen, M. Winnington).

Nearly all the previous 28 or so British and Irish records of this Asiatic species have been in winter and the above date is therefore remarkable. However, it must be pointed out that a few of these birds are imported and kept in captivity in this country.

Black-eared Wheatear (*Oenanthe hispanica*)

Shetland: Fair Isle, ♀, trapped, 19th May (R. H. Dennis, C. S. Waller); first-winter ♀, trapped, 27th September (R. H. Dennis, E. J. Wiseman).

Though there are 15 previous records of this summer visitor to southern Europe and Asia, in both spring and autumn, the species has not been recorded in Britain and Ireland since 1956.

Savi's Warbler (*Locustella luscinioides*)

Suffolk: Minsmere, 20th April to 30th May (H. E. Axell, A. J. J. Cranmer, P. J. Makepeace *et al.*).

Great Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus arundinaceus*)

Inverness-shire: a locality in the east of the county, 8th to 20th June (Miss H. L. Glenn, C. C. I. Murdoch, D. N. Weir *et al.*).

Shetland: Fair Isle, trapped, 8th to 11th June (G. Barnes, R. H. Dennis, C. S. Waller *et al.*).

Suffolk: Minsmere, 26th May (H. E. Axell, P. J. Makepeace, A. E. Smith *et al.*).

Sussex: Sidlesham, trapped, 25th June (J. Weller).

One was also reported on Cape Clear Island, Co. Cork, from 10th to 26th June (*I.B.R.*, 1964: 33-34), bringing to 26 the total of records since 1958 of what is a common summer visitor to many adjacent parts of the Continent. Field observations do not normally exclude the Clamorous Reed Warbler *A. stentoreus* of southern Asia and Egypt, but this species is practically unknown in Europe.

Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

Cornwall: Marazion Marsh, 3rd October (B. Pattenden, N. R. Phillips).

Devon: Slapton Ley, trapped, 12th August (F. R. Smith); trapped, 19th August (H. P. Sitter, F. R. Smith); trapped, 20th August (H. P. Sitter); trapped, 3rd September (S. G. Madge, H. P. Sitter); Dawlish Warren, 11th September (R. Angles).

Kent: Dungeness, 27th September (R. E. Emmett, D. I. M. Wallace).

Sussex: Pagham, trapped, 23rd August (S. Boddy, C. J. Mead, P. J. Straw *et al.*).

These eight records of this summer visitor to eastern Europe and western Asia bring the total since 1958 to about 70.

Subalpine Warbler (*Sylvia cantillans*)

Dorset: Portland Bill, ♂, trapped, 19th to 21st April (Dr. J. S. Ash, F. R. Clifton, R. J. Jackson *et al.*).

Shetland: Fair Isle, ♂, trapped, 23rd and 24th April (G. Barnes, R. H. Dennis, T. Henderson *et al.*).

These are the first April records for the British Isles. This summer visitor to southern Europe has now been recorded here 22 times (16 since 1951).

Greenish Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochiloides*)

Dorset: Verne Common, Portland, 21st November (D. C. Mole).

London: Dollis Hill, 1st October (E. Simms).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, 20th December and staying on into 1965 (F. H. D. Hicks, J. L. F. Parslow, Mrs. R. E. Parslow).

The last of these is the first December record for Britain, though there is one for January-February. Three were also reported on Cape Clear Island, Co. Cork, between 25th September and 4th November (*I.B.R.*, 1964: 35-36). This summer visitor to north-east Europe and Asia, which normally winters in India, has now mustered about 40 records here, all but one in the last 20 years.

Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*)

Shetland: Fair Isle, adult, trapped, 14th to 19th August (R. H. Dennis, P. Heppleston, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*); first winter, trapped, 9th September (R. H. Dennis, D. Rowlands, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*); two, first-winter, trapped, 12th September (R. H. Dennis, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*).

Yorkshire: Spurn, trapped, 5th September (J. Cudworth, J. R. Mullins, B. R. Spence *et al.*).

The total recorded during 1958-63 was only eleven, so that these five records in four weeks were unusual. This north European and Siberian species, which winters in south-east Asia, nests as near to Britain as Lapland.

Pallas's Warbler (*Phylloscopus proregulus*)

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, 1st November (B. P. Austin, F. H. D. Hicks, B. S. Milne).

This is the fourteenth record of this summer visitor to southern Siberia. All but one of these have been since 1951 and there were no less than six in 1963 (*Brit. Birds*, 57: 508-513). Continental countries have also had several records in recent years.

Dusky Warbler (*Phylloscopus fuscatus*)

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, trapped, 19th October (B. P. Austin, P. C. Chance, B. S. Milne, *et al.*).

This is only the third British record of this summer visitor to the eastern half of Asia.

Radde's Bush Warbler (*Phylloscopus schwarzi*)

Suffolk: Walberswick, trapped, 4th October (H. E. Axell, G. L. Clarke, D. J. Pearson *et al.*).

This is the fifth British record of this summer visitor to southern and eastern Siberia, and the fourth since 1961.

Collared Flycatcher (*Muscicapa albicollis*)

Cumberland: Eskmeals, near Ravenglass, adult ♂, found dead, 2nd June (J. Cairns, J. Jackson, A. B. Warburton).

This is the fifth British record. It must be noted, however, that even this species is sometimes kept in captivity and that at least one is known to have escaped in 1964, though that was a first-summer male.

Richard's Pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*)

Norfolk: Blakeney Point, 5th September (P. Colston, R. J. Johns, J. Whitelegg *et al.*).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, 18th October (J. M. Crocker, B. S. Milne, R. B. Tozer *et al.*); up to three (one trapped), 24th to 29th October (B. P. Austin, F. H. D. Hicks, B. S. Milne); St. Mary's Airport, 27th October (B. S. Milne).

Shetland: Fair Isle, 21st May; single birds on many dates between 12th September and 3rd October and up to two on dates between 17th and 30th October (R. H. Dennis, C. S. Waller, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*).

Sussex: Falmer, 8th to 11th October (M. J. Helps, A. R. Kitson).

Yorkshire: Spurn, two, 24th September (R. C. Parkinson, D. A. Scott, B. R. Spence *et al.*).

Thus the record numbers of 1963 were about equalled in 1964. The one in May is very unusual.

Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*)

Fife: Isle of May, 26th to 29th May (Prof. M. F. M. Meiklejohn).

Norfolk: Blakeney Point, 9th June (A. K. Searle).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, trapped, 18th to 20th October (B. P. Austin, P. C. Bance, B. S. Milne *et al.*).

Sussex: Sidlesham, 2nd and 3rd September (M. Shrubbs, Miss J. V. Stacey); Selsey Bill, 6th September (M. J. Helps, B. A. E. Marr, R. F. Porter *et al.*); Langney Point, adult, 3rd September (R. H. Charlwood), juvenile, 7th to 11th September (R. H. Charlwood, D. D. Harber, M. Rogers *et al.*).

Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*)

Middlesex: Staines Reservoir, 17th and 18th April (J. B. Cox).

Northumberland: Hauxley, two, 9th May (E. Robson, B. Little); two, 9th to 11th September (B. Little, B. Marshall, E. Robson).

Thus there were again two spring records of what used to be regarded almost exclusively as an autumn visitor; this applies now to seven of the total of 14 records since 1958. However, the April date is particularly early for this summer visitor to north-east Europe and Siberia.

Citrine Wagtail (*Motacilla citreola*)

Shetland: Fair Isle, first-winter, trapped, 19th September (R. H. Dennis, D. A. Rowlands, E. J. Wiseman).

Suffolk: Minsmere, first-winter, trapped, 17th October to 14th November (H. E. Axell, J. Bennell, P. J. Makepeace *et al.*) (*British Birds*, 58: 344-346).

There are now seven British records of this Russian and Siberian species, all from Fair Isle except for this one in Suffolk, which is therefore the first for mainland Britain and which is made more unusual still by the long off-passage period.

Black-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla flava feldegg*)

Cornwall: Marazion Marsh, ♂ showing the characters of this subspecies, 29th June (Rev. J. E. Beckerlegge).

This race of the Yellow Wagtail breeds in the Balkans and Asia Minor.

Steppe Grey Shrike (*Lanius excubitor pallidirostris*)

Shetland: Fair Isle, first-winter showing the characters of this subspecies, trapped, 18th October (G. L. Barnes, R. H. Dennis, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*).

This race of the Great Grey Shrike breeds in desert scrub from the lower Volga and the Caspian eastwards. The above is the second British record. The previous one, similarly involving a first-winter bird trapped at Fair Isle, occurred on 21st September 1956 (*Brit. Birds*, 50: 246-249).

Lesser Grey Shrike (*Lanius minor*)

Outer Hebrides: near Loch Druidibeg, South Unst, 29th May (R. P. Cockbain, G. Follows, G. Thomason *et al.*).

This summer visitor to southern and eastern Europe and south-west Asia was formerly regarded as a very rare vagrant here, but it is now proving of almost annual occurrence, with 14 records in Britain and Ireland since 1958, this number being almost equally divided between spring and autumn.

Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*)

Caernarvonshire: Bardsey, 26th May (G. H. Evans, P. Davis).

Dorset: Portland Bill, juvenile, trapped, 5th and 6th September (F. R. Clifton, J. Lovatt, R. Wilby *et al.*).

Norfolk: Holme, 24th to 26th April; 24th to 26th May (P. R. Clarke, H. P. Crawley, C. N. Arnold); Salthouse Heath, 23rd May (D. Christie).

Pembrokeshire: St. Davids, two, 20th April (E. H. Taylor).

Isles of Scilly: St. Agnes, immature, 25th to 29th August (D. G. Healey, F. H. D. Hicks, P. R. Holness *et al.*).

Yorkshire: Kilnsea, 7th to 14th June (J. Cudworth, B. R. Spence, C. Winn *et al.*).

An immature was also reported on Cape Clear Island, Co. Cork, on 4th August. This flush of records reverses the decreasing trend of the previous three years when this summer visitor to western and southern Europe was recorded only five, three and two times respectively.

Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)

Caernarvonshire: Bardsey, trapped, died later, 29th August (R. F. Durman, G. H. Evans, H. Miles *et al.*).

This is the first British and Irish record of this American warbler. Full details will be published in due course.

Rose-coloured Starling (*Sturnus roseus*)

Dorset: Lodmoor, Weymouth, adult, 21st August (D. R. Rowston).

As has been stated previously, this fluctuating summer visitor to south-east Europe and south-west Asia is regularly kept in captivity and individuals doubtless escape at times.

Serin (*Serinus canarius*)

Devon: Budleigh Salterton, ♂, 22nd to 25th May (R. Khan).

Dorset: Portland Bill, 1st November (Dr. J. S. Ash, F. R. Clifton, K. D. Smith *et al.*).

Kent: Dungeness, ♂, trapped, 4th to 7th April (D. Gladwin, T. P. Inskipp, R. E. Scott *et al.*).

Shetland: Fair Isle, ♂, 29th May (R. H. Dennis, C. S. Waller).

Yorkshire: Spurn, 8th May (P. J. Carlton, B. R. Spence, G. R. Wilkinson).

It is considered that the one in Devon may have escaped from captivity. As a breeding species the Serin is still spreading slowly along the Channel coast of France. The above five records (all but one in spring) compare with none in 1963 and 12 in the five years 1958-62.

Scarlet Grosbeak (*Carpodacus erythrinus*)

Orkney: Auskerry, three, 19th September (E. Balfour, E. J. Williams).

Shetland: Fair Isle, trapped, 1st September; trapped, 18th September; up to three, 19th to 24th September; single birds, 26th September and 4th October (R. H. Dennis, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*).

Yorkshire: Spurn, 26th and 27th May (G. R. Edwards, B. R. Spence, G. Tuffnell).

All the above records relate to females or immatures. Adult males of this summer visitor to eastern Europe and Asia are very seldom recorded here. The May occurrence was unusual as most appear in autumn.

BRITISH BIRDS

Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)

Yorkshire: Spurn, trapped, 18th May (J. Cudworth, G. R. Edwards, B. R. Spence *et al.*).

This is the second record of this American species, the first having been on Fair Isle from 27th April to 10th May 1959 (*Brit. Birds.* 52:419-421).

Black-headed Bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*)

Caernarvonshire: Bardsey, ♂, 16th May (G. H. Evans).

Though this species is kept in captivity, the date seems to suggest a genuine migrant, like the one which was recorded at the same place on 27th May 1963. Spring records are perhaps more likely to be genuine, as a result of overshooting, since this summer visitor to south-east Europe and Asia Minor migrates south-east in winter.

Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*)

Orkney: Auskerry, 22nd September (E. Balfour, E. J. Williams).

This summer visitor to north-east Europe and northern Asia, whose range is expanding in Finland, has now been recorded here 19 times (nine times since 1958), all but twice in September.

Rustic Bunting (*Emberiza rustica*)

Shetland: Fair Isle, ♀, trapped, 26th to 28th September (G. Barnes, R. H. Dennis, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*), ♂, 4th October (R. H. Dennis, C. K. Williams, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*).

There have now been 22 records of this north-east European and Siberian bunting since 1958, mostly September-October but five April-June.

Little Bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*)

Northumberland: Holy Island, at least two, 4th and 5th October (J. M. Butterworth, W. Mulligan, A. R. Sumerfield); Ross links, 9th October (P. J. Brewster).

Shetland: Fair Isle, first-winter ♂, trapped, 7th October (R. H. Dennis, E. J. Wiseman *et al.*).

Sussex: Langney Point, 15th October (D. D. Harber).

Another north-east European and Siberian bunting which has produced nearly 40 records since 1958, about 23 of them on Fair Isle and mostly September-November but about nine March-May.

*Supplementary systematic list
of 1963 records accepted*

Albatross (*Diomedea* sp.)

Yorkshire: Spurn, 10th November (J. Cudworth).

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Somerset: Blagdon Lake, 22nd December (R. J. Prytherch, H. A. Thornhill).

This is the first British and European record of this North American species and full details appeared in *Brit. Birds*, 58: 305-309.

Marsh Sandpiper (*Tringa stagnatilis*)

Essex: Rainham and Aveley Marshes, 26th to 28th August (B. Kemp, K. Noble *et al.*).

This was almost certainly the same individual as the one recorded across the Thames at Swanscombe, Kent, from 18th August to 2nd September (*Brit. Birds*, 57: 268).

Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*)

Lincolnshire/Norfolk: Wisbech sewage-farm, 22nd July to 6th August (J. S. Clark, G. M. S. Easy, C. A. E. Kirtland *et al.*)

Nine records of this American wader are now accepted. All the others have been in September-October except for one in May-June.

American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

Isles of Scilly: Gugh and St. Agnes, two, a day or two prior to 20th December; one trapped, 20th December, and found dead, 28th December (F. H. D. Hicks, L. Hicks, Miss H. M. Quick *et al.*).

This is the sixth record for Britain and Ireland.

Appendix. Observations in 'Recent reports' not now accepted.

The following records were mentioned in 'Recent reports', but were found to be unacceptable upon examination by the Rarities Committee. This list includes all the records of this kind (apart from Irish ones) unless they were qualified by such terms as 'apparent' or 'probable', or unless they appeared in brief summaries without precise date or location. A few other observations remain outstanding, no decision having yet been reached on them. It should be noted that in a number of cases records mentioned in 'Recent reports' have not been submitted for our consideration, because they have either been withdrawn by the observers or been rejected by county recorders. It should once

BRITISH BIRDS

again be stressed that rejection of records does not imply a slur on the observers concerned. Often it merely means that we considered the evidence insufficient for complete acceptance.

1964

Black Duck	King George VI Reservoir, Staines, Middlesex to 8th, 15th November (<i>Brit. Birds</i> , 58: 31).
Crane	Cley, Norfolk, 8th April (57: 260)
Gull-billed Tern	Selsey Bill, Sussex, accepted only for three dates between 19th April and 24th May (57: 339)
Red-rumped Swallow	Littlebrook, Kent, 23rd April (57: 338)
Aquatic Warbler	One of two, Sandwich Bay, Kent (57: 444)
Greenish Warbler	The Naze, Essex, 9th-10th September (57: 444)
Dusky Warbler	Huttoft, Lincolnshire, 1st November (57: 524)
Richard's Pipit	Holme, Norfolk (57: 524)
Woodchat Shrike	Salthouse Heath, Norfolk, 23rd April (error for May) (57: 338)
Two-barred Crossbill	Two, Bawtry Forest, Nottinghamshire (57: 524)