

# ZEISS THE CARL ZEISS AWARD

Every year, we select, from amongst the prints and transparencies submitted to the British Birds Rarities Committee (either directly or via *British Birds*), the photograph or set of photographs which has been most instructive in the record-assessment processes during the year. Carl Zeiss Ltd, the sponsor of the

BBRC as well as this Award, presents the winning photographer with a pair of Carl Zeiss binoculars.

This year, there was a bumper crop of contenders, and the longest 'short list' since the Award was initiated. In alphabetical order, by photographer, these were:

Gary Bellingham	Blyth's Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
J. Burgess	Thrush Nightingale <i>Luscinia luscinia</i> (3)
Mrs A. M. Henderson	White's Thrush <i>Zoothera dauma</i> (plate 12)
D. Kightley	Citrine Wagtail <i>Motacilla citreola</i> (2)
Dr Iain H. Leach	Lesser Sand Plover <i>Charadrius mongolus</i> (20)
Dr Iain H. Leach	Olivaceous Warbler <i>Hippolais pallida</i> (2)
Michael McKee	Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella certhiola</i> (2)
Jim Pattinson	Lesser Sand Plover
Jane M. Reid	Thrush Nightingale (3)
Bryan Thomas	Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus smithsonianus</i> (3)

It was not an easy task to select a winner from such a varied list, which included some single prints and also several sets, including one of 20 shots; some in-the-field shots of renowned skulkers and also in-the-hand shots of trapped birds showing feather detail; and photographs taken by the lucky owner of a garden attracting a

major rarity and also others by famed bird-photographers.

In our final selection, however, the contribution made by Dr Iain H. Leach could not be denied. His set of 20 prints of the Pagham Harbour Lesser Sand Plover made a crucial contribution to the acceptance of that record as the first for Britain (and it



207. Adult Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*, Pagham Harbour, West Sussex, August 1997 (Iain H. Leach)



208. Adult Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*, Pagham Harbour, West Sussex, August 1997, with Great Ringed Plovers *C. hiaticula* (Iain H. Leach)

should not go unnoticed that his two photographs of the St Agnes Olivaceous Warbler were also contenders, and that his set of photographs of the Dawlish Warren Semipalmated Plover *C. semipalmatus* came third in this competition last year, *Brit.*

*Birds* 91: plates 106-109). Dr Iain H. Leach was the Award winner and has chosen Zeiss 10 x 40 BGAT binoculars as his prize. Two of his 20 photographs are shown here (plates 207 & 208).



209 & 210. First-winter Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella certhiola*, Fair Isle, Shetland, 1st October 1998 (Michael McKee)

In second place, the two shots of one of Fair Isle's four 1998 Pallas's Grasshopper Warblers by Michael McKee together show all the key features of this extreme rarity (plates 209 & 210).

Third place was achieved by Bryan Thomas with instructive photographs of the *smithsonianus* Herring Gull which overwintered from December 1997 to April 1998 on St Mary's, Scilly (plates 211-213).

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211-213. First-winter Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* of North American race *smithsonianus*, St Mary's, Scilly, 1998 (Bryan Thomas)