

# **NEWSLETTER 63**

**OCTOBER 1992**

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## **EDITORIAL**

This newsletter comes after an excellent meeting on the general theme of European Seabirds organised by the Seabird Group in March in Glasgow. I had hoped to include an independent 'European' view of the meeting in this newsletter, but this has not been forthcoming yet and will be included in the next issue. I am very grateful for all who have submitted articles for this issue - further articles are always welcome, and it would

be good to include more news of this summer's activities in the next newsletter.

Sarah Wanless tells me that the next Seabird is more or less full (maybe one more paper could be included), but that papers for the following issue would be very gratefully received.

Mark Tasker  
Newsletter Editor

## **SUPPLEMENTARY FEEDING OF KESTRELS PROTECTS LITTLE TERNS IN NORFOLK**

The colony of little terns at Great Yarmouth North Denes, Norfolk, is the UK's largest with 249 pairs in 1992 - over 10 per cent of the UK population of 2400 pairs. It has been wardened by the RSPB since 1986.

The colony has gone through a classic cycle of growth with several years of excellent productivity, followed by severe predation problems (Table 1). Hedgehogs ate virtually all the eggs in 1990, and three pairs of kestrels were seen to take 143 chicks in 1991 and probably took virtually all the young from 277 pairs.

The return of the kestrels in 1992 was inevitable, and an experimental programme of supplementary feeding with laboratory-bred white mice was put into effect. Mice, supplied to us frozen, were used as we were advised that day old chicks could be calcium deficient and hence affect the normal growth of kestrel young.

The philosophy was straightforward: to provide enough supplementary food to make hunting for little tern chicks unnecessary. This year's results suggest this works; when fed, the two pairs of kestrels stopped predating little tern chicks and 176 young fledged (.7 per pair) in total.

We established that two pairs of kestrels were predating chicks at the colony. Ideally they would have been wing-tagged for ease of identification, but this proved impracticable. However, they were identifiable by their hunting methods and direction of flight away from the colony. They were conveniently equidistant - about 2 km from the colony - and white mice were supplied to one pair from 17 June. The most successful method was to put the mice directly into this first pair's nest at the top of a hawthorn hedge. Mice were also placed on various perches near the nest but were soon taken by magpies. Later in the season, kestrels did occasionally take mice from a bird table on the dunes.

The second pair of kestrels was initially left as a control and allowed to continue predating little terns. This they did most effectively, taking 94 chicks at least (observed) and probably 120 chicks in total (estimated from daylight hours and rates of predation). Their rate of predation was declining when supplementary feeding (also into the nest) started; it then tailed right off.

The first pair had their supply of mice switched off on 24 June. Little tern predation resumed and grew to 5 chicks on the 27 June, after which the food was again supplied up to the end of the little tern season. However when the second kestrel pair had their mice supply removed they did not return to the colony, so in this sense the final results of the experiment were not as neat as they could be.

More work on this supplementary feeding technique would be helpful, but these early indications suggest it is an effective way of dealing with kestrel predation.

Table 1 Numbers and fledging success of little terns at Great Yarmouth North Denes, Norfolk, 1986-1992.

Year	Pairs	Fledged	Fledged/pair
1986	55	95	1.7
1987	70	96	1.4
1988	140	244	1.7
1989	180	160	0.88
1990	201	15	0.07
1991	277	12	0.04
1992	249	176	0.71
TOTAL	1172	798	0.68

A preliminary report is available from me at the RSPB East Anglia Regional Office etc; a full report is in preparation. The RSPB would like to acknowledge the advice of Andrew Village and Dr James Kirkwood, and to thank the dedicated efforts of the contract warden, Harry Paget-Wilkes, and a team of RSPB volunteers and other helpers.

Chris Durdin, RSPB, 97 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich NR7 0HF

## WHY DO FOULA GREAT SKUAS NOT BEHAVE OPTIMALLY?

The 'sandeel crisis' in Shetland in recent years has provided an outstanding opportunity to examine the ecological responses of seabirds to drastic changes in food supply. During the 1980s, and especially in 1984-90, sandeel recruitment at Shetland was very poor and the stock declined (Bailey *et al.* 1991 *ICES Mar. Sci. Symp.* 193, 209-216). The breeding failures of some seabirds resulting from the demise of the principal seabird food at Shetland have been widely reported. Indeed, the phenomenon led to an enormous, but probably transient, annual migration of ornithologists previously rarely or never seen in the northern isles, who were able to take advantage of the 'catastrophe' to raise funds or undertake research to 'save our seabirds'.

For reasons not yet understood, sandeels 'reappeared' in large numbers in 1991, and seabirds had a generally successful breeding season, though many seemed to be caught out by the sudden reappearance of abundant food and did not have time to start breeding that year. This summer, breeding numbers of many seabirds at Foula bounced back dramatically and chick production was good for most species, fuelled by a wealth of sandeels.

I have visited Foula every summer since 1971 and some dozen PhD students have worked on seabirds there, so we have a long series of data that show changes in seabird ecology as the sandeel availability fell and then recovered. In 1992 some 1400 pairs of Arctic terns nested on Foula, fledging over 700 chicks fed almost exclusively on sandeels. These chicks reached the same weights as those reared on Foula during the 1970s and on Mousa, Shetland, in 1983 (Ewins, 1985, *Seabird* 8, 59-68). Yet no Arctic tern chicks fledged from Foula or from most of the rest of Shetland, from 1984-89 and there were only from 150-350 breeding pairs of Arctic terns at Foula in those years. So where did the 2000+ Arctic terns that recruited to Foula in the last two seasons come from? Almost certainly not from elsewhere in Shetland as numbers have apparently increased at other Shetland colonies

too. Either they immigrated from other regions or countries, or they are survivors from the Shetland population of the early 1980s that have refrained from breeding for about ten years. Either would be remarkable. As a result, the Arctic tern numbers nesting at Foula in 1992 were higher than in any of the 27 years in which counts were made outwith the 8 consecutive years 1974-81. Pronounced year-to-year movements of breeding Arctic terns have long been known to naturalists, and can be ascribed to their being able to assess conditions and to respond by moving colony (or perhaps refraining from breeding) if appropriate.

By stark contrast, our main study species at Foula, the great skua, appears to lack the common sense of the Arctic tern. We have individually colour ringed several hundred adult great skuas, many of which had already been metal ringed as chicks so are of known adult age. Only a very few of these birds elected to take years off during the times of sandeel shortage. Perhaps they can hardly afford to do so or they lose their territory to another. Although they worked much harder to try to provision their chicks, they achieved only very low breeding success (Hamer *et al.* 1991, *J. Zool., Lond.* 223, 175-188). Interestingly, under conditions of food shortage, breeding performance of older adults was better than that of younger adults (Hamer & Furness 1991 *J. Anim. Ecol.* 60, 693-704) although no difference in performance was detectable when sandeels were abundant (Furness 1987 *The Skuas*, Poyser).

Great skuas accumulate higher levels of mercury than almost any other European bird and analysis of museum skin feather samples has shown this contamination to have increased over the past 150 years in Britain (Thompson *et al.* 1992 *J. Appl. Ecol.* 29, 79-84). If such pollution was to affect birds it would be especially likely to do so during a period of several seasons of food stress. By measuring mercury concentrations in feathers of nest-trapped adults and then monitoring their survival and breeding success we could show that mercury concentration had no measurable correlation with these parameters (Thompson *et al.* 1991 *J. Appl. Ecol.* 28, 672-684). Other pollutants also seem to be at levels too low to affect breeding or survival.

Not only did great skuas not refrain from attending the breeding colony when conditions were very bad, but young birds continued to show extreme natal philopatry, the vast majority of fledglings from Foula recruiting not just to their natal colony but to the section of the colony in which they were raised (Klomp & Furness 1991 *Proc. XX Int. Orn. Congr.* pp.1677-1688). Since only the Shetland colonies of great skuas suffered breeding failures in the late 1980s, it would have seemed more sensible for these recruits to emigrate. Few did (though one of our colour ringed Foula

nonbreeders is now nesting in a new colony in Russia). Even more surprising is that the adults seem to have increased their reproductive effort to a point where survival has been severely affected (contrary to predictions of life history theory). The annual mortality of great skuas was estimated from ring recovery data in the 1970s at about 8% p.a. Mortality of great skuas nesting at Handa, Highland Region, in 1989-92 was also about 8% p.a. However, both colour ring and ring recovery data indicate a mortality rate about twice as high at Foula in the 1980s. This has caused breeding numbers to fall a little, but seems to have stimulated increased recruitment so that numbers of nonbreeders on clubs have fallen far more. There seems to be a case for monitoring numbers of nonbreeders as a more sensitive index of population wellbeing (Klomp & Furness 1992 *J. Appl. Ecol.* 29, 341-348), as suggested by Porter & Coulson (1987, *J. Anim. Ecol.* 56, 675-689). The breeding failures of great skuas in recent years can be anticipated to lead to a dearth of recruits in the near future and so to more pronounced population decline.

The increased mortality rate of adult great skuas seems to be due to the poor food conditions at Shetland in summer since the mortality rate of birds at Handa is no higher than it used to be in Shetland. Handa birds still have high breeding success and no food shortage. Birds from both areas winter in the same places, so the higher mortality of Shetland great skuas is presumably due to the problems during the breeding season. Perhaps great skuas have evolved in places where they do not normally experience drastic fluctuations in food supply. This would certainly seem to be true of subAntarctic great skua populations which feed on petrels and penguins.

Much of our research has been funded by NERC, but it has been a struggle to maintain funding over a 22 year period. Small but continued annual grants from SOTEAG have been a particularly great help in supporting the Foula seabird studies, as has help from numerous volunteers. The benefits of having such a long time series are self-evident, and the 30,000 great skua chicks and 700 adults ringed over the years will continue to provide opportunities for research into population ecology through further periods of ecological change. It is unclear whether sandeels will remain abundant or continue to fluctuate erratically, while likely future changes in discarding practices from North Sea fisheries may have an equally dramatic influence on great skua fortunes. Furthermore, the contrasting responses of terns and great skuas at Foula to the same food crisis may provide some insight into the conservation problems for these species. In the longer term, such changes in food supply may hit the great skua harder because it has a less flexible response to change. On the other hand,

great skuas could always eat the terns, and they might even learn to behave optimally one day.

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Department of Zoology,  
University of Glasgow

## TROUP HEAD GANNETS IN 1992

Britain's second mainland colony was discovered at Troup Head (Grampian), on the southern coast of the Moray Firth, in 1988 (Jill Matthews and Steve North in *Scottish Birds* 15: 132-133). Up to 24 adult and immature birds were present on land, and 4 chicks probably fledged. In 1989, 12-14 occupied nests and 100+ adults/immatures were recorded, with a further increase to 37 occupied nests in 1990 and at least 94 nests in 1991. Numbers of birds on land reached 400-500 in the latter years.

Rapid expansion continued this year, with peak counts of 270-272 nests (234-241 well-built) and 900 adults/immatures ashore on 8th June. Numbers of occupied nests had fallen to 212-213 by 23rd July, but this was probably largely through loss or abandonment of 'trace' nests. At least 124 chicks were present, and 136 chicks were visible on 14th August. Fledging probably began shortly after this, but 101 chicks were still present on 29th August - clearly a successful season for such a recently-established colony.

How soon will numbers catch up with Bempton, the other mainland site (currently over 1200 nests)? Thanks to Mike Harris, Jill Matthews and Sarah Wanless for some of the above counts.

Paul Walsh

## NATIONAL BEACHED BIRD SURVEY, FEBRUARY 1992

More than 400 volunteers took part in the annual Beached Bird Survey at the end of February, co-ordinated by the regional offices of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and by the Shetland Oil Terminal Environmental Advisory Group. Over 2100 km of beaches were walked, providing good coverage for most of the British coastline, but unfortunately due to an error, no surveys were organised in Northern Ireland this year. Excluding records of only wings, a total of 791 dead birds were found, of which 662 were seabirds, wildfowl, divers and grebes, and the other 129 were waders, land-birds and unidentified birds.

Low numbers of birds were found in most regions and the national average density was three times

lower than found in February 1991 (0.4 compared with 1.2 birds/km). The greatest difference was for the auks (Table 1) where the average density was 10 times higher in 1991. The count in February 1991 coincided with a winter mortality incident in which Britain (Campbell, in press). This accounts for the higher densities and lower proportion of oiled auks found in 1991.

116 (17.5%) of the 662 seabirds, wildfowl, divers and grebes were noted to have been oiled, compared with 14.2% in 1991. Given the large numbers unoiled birds in the 1991 wrecks, it is surprising that the percentage oiled was not higher in 1992. Of the 10 most numerous seabird species found in 1992, all but Gannet and Fulmar had a lower proportion oiled than reported for 1971-79 in Stowe (1982). This supports the general view that oil pollution around British coasts, and particularly that arising from identifiable oiling incidents, is less common now than in the 1970s and early 80s.

As generally found in previous surveys, the highest densities of dead seabirds were in the north, notably Orkney and Shetland and Northwest Britain (Table 2). The highest proportion of oiled birds were found along the south coast of England, which is also consistent with previous surveys and with other international surveys of the southern North Sea (Camphuysen 1989). The proportion of birds oiled on Shetland was relatively high with 6 out of the 10 auks found recorded as oiled.

Many thanks to all who took part. It is planned to continue with a national Beached Bird Survey each February as part of the international effort to monitor the incidence of oil pollution. The results contribute to an international database currently held in Denmark. We will be looking to involve large numbers of volunteers in order to achieve good national coverage and to publicise the continuing problem of chronic oil pollution. Anyone wishing to take part in next year's survey on 27/28 February 1993 should contact their local RSPB regional office.

Jane Sears  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

### References:

Campbell, L. in press. National Beached Bird Survey, February 1991. In: *Britain's Birds 1990-91*.

Camphuysen, C.J. 1989. Beached Bird Surveys in the Netherlands, 1915-1988. *Techn. Rapport Vogelbescherming 1, Wergroep Nordsee*, Amsterdam.

Stowe, T.J. 1982. Beached Bird Surveys and Surveillance of cliff-breeding seabirds. *Nature*

**Table 1**

Average densities and proportion oiled for seabirds found in the national Beached Bird Survey, comparing February 1992 with February 1991.

	February 1992			February 1991		
	Number	Density no/km	% oiled	Number	Density no/km	% oiled
Auks	158	0.07	46.2	994	0.71	11.7
Gulls	283	0.13	6.0	387	0.28	19.6
Cormorant & Shag	62	0.03	4.8	91	0.07	14.3
Fulmar	30	0.01	33.3	78	0.06	10.3
Gannet	24	0.01	41.7	23	0.02	21.7
Total distance	2106.5 kms			1397.5 kms		

Wings not included. Oiled included lightly and heavily oiled.

Auks include: guillemot, razorbill, puffin, tystie, little auk and 'auks'.

Gulls include: all gulls and kittiwake.

**Table 2**

Numbers, density and proportion oiled of all seabirds found dead in the national Beached Bird Survey, February 1992.

Region	Distance covered(km)	Number	Density no/km	% oiled	Number oiled
Shetland	48.3	27	0.56	44.4	12
Orkney	43.9	34	0.77	17.6	6
Northeast	442.6	89	0.20	10.1	9
Southeast	424.0	92	0.22	17.4	16
South	296.2	90	0.30	63.3	57
Southwest	532.2	94	0.18	12.8	12
Northwest	319.3	136	0.43	2.2	3

Wings not included. Oiled includes lightly and heavily oiled. Seabirds include: auks, gulls, petrels, cormorants, shags, shearwaters & gannets.

## GULL SURVEY, WESTERN IRELAND - INTERIM REPORT

A repeat of 1977 counts of some inland gull and tern colonies in western Ireland was undertaken using a Seabird Group grant in summer 1992. Counties Galway, Sligo, Fermanagh and Donegal were rechecked, along with parts of Counties Leitrim and Mayo. The remainder of these latter countries will be surveyed in 1993. Preliminary results indicate a decline of about 30% in total numbers of gulls, but herring gulls have declined by 90%, lesser black-backed gulls by 54% and common gulls by 38%. A full report will be prepared for the Seabird Group Newsletter after surveys in 1993

Tony Whilde, Corrib Conservation Centre,  
Ardnasillagh, Oughterard, Co Galway, Ireland

## ROSEATE TERNS IN EUROPE

European Roseate terns have experienced a summer of mixed fortunes. The Rockabill and Lady's Island lake colonies in Ireland continue to increase with 378 and 78 pairs respectively. Breeding success at Rockabill was high with a least 1.73 young/pair. In northern Ireland less than four pairs attempted breeding and no chicks fledged. The Scottish birds were concentrated on one site in the Forth estuary with approximately 19 pairs. The French colony in Brittany fared well considering the loss of 52 incubating adults last year. Between 75-80 breeding pairs produced at least 50 young. On the Azores, numbers were down by 35% to c. 750 pairs. The Azores birds fledged few young due to the complete failure at the largest (280 pair) colony, due to human disturbance. Elsewhere in the archipelago large

numbers of dead and starving chicks of roseate and common tern were found.

## **FISH SHORTAGE IN THE AZORES**

In collaboration with the University of the Azores and the Azores Regional Government the RSPB has been conducting studies into the breeding ecology of roseate terns and other seabirds in the Azores since 1989. During each summer field season data has been collected on clutch size, egg size, chick growth, feeding ecology and adult body weight for both roseate and common terns. Comparable data has also been collected for other seabirds such as Madeira Storm Petrel, and Cory's Shearwater. All of the seabirds in the Azores experienced severe food shortages during 1992. In the case of roseate and common terns this represents a continued worsening of feeding conditions measured since 1989.

## **4th INTERNATIONAL SEABIRD GROUP CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS "EUROPEAN SEABIRDS"**

As with previous Seabird Group conferences, abstracts of (virtually) all papers - both poster and oral - have been collected together in one volume. Although these are not refereed, they provide a valuable source of information on current work in seabird biology. All participants in the conference received a free copy of these proceedings. A few extra were produced, and are available at £2 each (including postage) from Dr RW Furness, Applied Ornithology Unit, Zoology Department, Glasgow University, Glasgow, G12 8QQ. Please make all cheques payable to The Seabird Group.

## **SOUTH AFRICAN CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS STILL AVAILABLE**

Cooper, J (ed.). 1981. Proceedings of the Symposium on Birds of the Sea and Shore, 1979. Cape Town: African Seabird Group. 474pp. ISBN 0 620 06354 8

This proceedings contains 27 papers, approximately half of which are on seabirds, the balance on charadriid waders. MJ Imber (New Zealand) discusses diets and foraging methods of procellariiform seabirds, RW Furness (Scotland) and RJM Crawford (South Africa) write on interactions with commercial fisheries. A ten-year review discusses the rehabilitation of oiled jackass penguins. Other seabirds covered in papers include arctic skuas, common terns, cormorants, gentoo penguin, giant petrels and prions.

To clear stocks, the African Seabird Group is offering the Proceedings at a specially reduced price, inclusive of packing and surface mailing of 25 Rands, £10 or \$US20. Cheques should be made payable to the "African Seabird Group" and sent to PO Box 34113, Rhodes Gift 7707, South Africa.

Write to the same address for information on joining the African Seabird Group and receiving its journal *Marine Ornithology*, as well as the special offer on back numbers of the journal.

## **FIRST SYMPOSIUM ON THE FAUNA AND FLORA OF THE ATLANTIC ISLANDS, FUNCHAL, 4-6 OCTOBER 1993**

Following the 5th symposium on the Fauna and Flora of the Cape Verd Islands, held at Leiden, Netherlands in 1989, it was decided to expand the remit of the next meeting to be held in Funchal, Madeira, to include all of the Atlantic islands.

The organising committee invite all those with with new information on any aspect of Botany, Biogeography, Nature Conservation, Paleontology, and Geology (both marine and terrestrial) on any Atlantic Island to offer a paper. Papers should (preferably) be presented in English. Oral presentations of papers may range from 10 to 30 minutes duration.

There will be a registration fee of about \$100 (\$50 for students). Full details will be available in a second circular to be issued shortly.

Please contact: The Secretariat, First symposium on the Fauna and Flora of the Atlantic Islands, Museu Municipal do Funchal, Rua da Mouraria 31, P-9000 FUNCHAL, Madeira, Portugal.

Manuel José Biscoito  
Head of Organising Committee

## **COLONIAL WATERBIRD SOCIETY CONFERENCE**

The 1993 Colonial Waterbird Society conference will be held on 6 - 10 October 1993 at the Tour du Valat biological station in the Camargue, France. This is the first time that CWS has organised a meeting outside North America. The Society view the occasion as a good opportunity to develop contacts between researchers on each side of the Atlantic. The 1993 symposium will be devoted to The Study and Conservation of Colonial

Waterbirds in the Mediterranean Region, with a special emphasis on the conservation of Mediterranean wetlands as both breeding and feeding habitats for colonial waterbirds. The scientific programme will include key talks dealing with The Behavioural REcology of Colonial Waterbirds. If you are interested in further details, please contact Dr Frank Cézilly, Colonial Waterbird Meeting, Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat, Le Sambuc, 13200 Arles, France.

### **COASTAL HERITAGE 1993**

A conference will be held at Eastbourne from 24-26 March 1993 on the impact of tourism and recreation on the conservation of the coast. This conference aims to bring together those interested in this area of coastal management policy and will include contributions from elsewhere in Europe. Those requiring more information should write to Coastal Heritage '93, Heritage Coast Forum, Manchester Polytechnic, St Augustines, Manchester M15 6BY.

### **COOK ISLANDS**

An enquiry has been received from RDA International Inc asking if any members of the Seabird Group would be interested in visiting Penrhyn (Tongareva) on the Cook Islands to carry out seabird and related studies. RDA will be running a marine station on Tongareva, located relatively close to some bird islands. RDA feel that the Cook Islands government would be supportive (although not financially) and appreciative. RDA could offer quarters (relatively spartan) at the marine station, as well as local transport, including boats to the bird islands. The research centre's staff are not trained bird observers, but would probably be able to assist if given guidance. They might be able to make periodic observations that would support more detailed studies of annual or long-term variation or change. It might be possible to enlist the active support of several local islanders, which might help them to view these birds more as a national resource and less as a quick meal.

If you are interested and wish to know more, please contact Kenneth B Craib, President, RDA International Inc, 801 Morey Drive, Placerville, California 95667, USA (Fax: +916 626 7391).

### **ARE THE SEABIRDS BREEDING IN THE SOUTHERN ENGLISH CHANNEL EUROPEAN?**

La Société Guernesaise organised a seminar on 23-24 May 1992 on seabirds in the southern part of the English Channel.

Several organisations gathered in Guernsey on May 23th and 24th 1992: La Société Guernesaise, La Société Jersiaise (represented by RSPB), the Seabird Group/ Joint Nature Conservation Committee, SEPNB (Société pour l'Etude et la Protection de la Nature en Bretagne), GONm (Groups Ornithologique Normand), GOB (Groupe Ornithologique Breton).

Each organisation presented the results of recent studies on seabird breeding numbers and discussed census problems. It was obvious that breeding birds in this south-western area of the English Channel belong to one population. The meeting therefore decided to gather all available data each year into one report and to name this region the Gulf of St Malo. This region corresponds to the northern part of the Massif Armoricaïn geological region: East Normandy (Saint Marcouf-Pointe du Hoc) and West Brittany (Ushant-Molène Archipelago) including the Channel Islands.

The contribution of the Seabird Group/JNCC at this meeting in placing the breeding seabirds of this region in a northern European context and for presenting the JNCC/Seabird Group work in the British Isles was much appreciated. Mr Griff Caldwell, who organised this seminar so well, will produce the meeting report.

Everybody hopes to have frequent and good exchanges in the future and congratulate La Société Guernesaise for its initiative.

LPO (Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux), manager of les Sept-Iles, was contacted after the meeting and agreed to join with the group. The first annual report will be available end of 1992.

## **LES OISEAUX MARINS SE REPRODUISANT DANS LE SUD DE LA MANCHE, SONT-ILS EUROPEENS?**

La Société Guernesiaise a pris l'initiative d'organiser un séminaire sur les oiseaux marins nichant dans le sud de la Manche. Plusieurs associations se sont réunies: La Société Guernesiaise, La Société Jersiaise représentée par le RSPB, le Seabird Group et le JNCC, la SEPNB, le GONm, le GOB.

Chaque association a présenté les dernières données dont elle disposait et il a été question des problèmes des méthodes de recensement. Il est clairement apparu que tous ces sites forment une unité. De ce fait les propositions de réunir annuellement les données et de baptiser cette région "Golfe de Saint-Malo" ont été acceptées à l'unanimité. Cette zone correspondant au nord de l'unité géologique du Massif Armoricaire, Est de La Normandie (Saint-Marcouf-Pointe du Hoc) et l'Ouest de la Bretagne (Quessant-Archipel de Molène), intègre les Iles anglo-normandes.

La participation du Seabird Group/JNCC au cours du séminaire, a permis de situer les oiseaux marins nichant dans cette région dans la population nord-européenne et de faire une présentation rapide du travail du Seabird Group dans les îles britanniques.

M. Griff Cadwell, parfait organisateur de ce séminaire, fournira le rapport.

Chacun espère avoir des contacts fréquents et constructifs dans le futur et félicite la Société Guernesiaise pour son initiative.

La LPO responsable de la gestion des Sept-Iles a été contactée depuis et accepte de travailler avec le groupe.

Le premier rapport annuel sera disponible fin 92.

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## **REVIEW**

Birds in Jeopardy: the imperiled and extinct birds of the United States and Canada  
by Paul R. Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin and Darryl Wheye. Stanford University Press 1992.

For those interested in rare and endangered species, this book of North American birds (including Hawaii) is an essential source book. It is an illustrated red data book, which includes those on the official US Threatened or Endangered species list, those birds now extinct, and birds which could be considered for future Endangered status. A total of species is described. Each species account is accompanied by a coloured sketch of the bird's head, a summary of knowledge on breeding ecology, food, range (breeding and winter), status, notes on such items as sub-species, why the bird is endangered, where it is listed as endangered (or otherwise) and finally a summary of plans to improve the situation of each species. The book is completed with a summary of generic threats, a description of present US monitoring programmes, and information on how the general public can help in bird conservation projects.

The book seems to be admirably concise. Not knowing many of the species in detail means that I was unable to check many points in the species texts. I found the lack of references within the text very unhelpful, and obviously makes the process of checking virtually impossible. Seabird species include brown pelican, least tern (the Californian subspecies is treated separately),

roseate tern, Newell's shearwater, dark-rumped petrel, black tern, American white pelican, double-crested cormorant, common tern, labrador duck, great auk, marbled murrelet and a number of grebes and divers. A number of these species are only locally endangered. I commend this book as an easy summary of birds at risk in the United States and Canada, but it is not ideal if a comprehensive summary of knowledge is needed.

Mark L Tasker

## **BOLETIN DEL GRUPO IBERICO DE AVES MARINAS (GIAM) NO 15**

The bulletin has taken a slightly different emphasis with this issue, and includes more short notes/papers and less in terms of news and recent reports. The debate over whether southern ocean seabirds arrive off Iberian shores with the assistance of ships or not is continued by Raphael Costas. An article on the likelihood of storm petrels breeding in Galicia follows; although there is no conclusive evidence, tape-luring at likely colonies has been productive. Numbers of seaduck off Murcia, E Spain were censused monthly using a boat transect in 1990 and 1991. Red-breasted mergansers and common scoter were the commonest species seen.

G.G. Rombouts describes an increasing wintering population of cormorants in Gipuzkoa, N. Spain, and seawatching results from the same area in autumn 1991. Forty hours of watching saw nearly 13,000 birds pass one point. Gulls, gannets and unidentified guillemot/razorbills were the commonest groups. Two notes indicate that wintering Mediterranean gulls in N. Spain are increasing in number in N. Spain, and that these may come from the increasing populations in northern Europe. J. Huertas shows again that the installation of rafts for terns to nest on can be successful in areas of high disturbance or predation. J. Ignacio and B. Dies describe the threat to a storm petrel colony from a plant(!), *Lycium intricatum*, an introduced alien. Large spines have caught at least six birds in a colony only thought to hold 20 pairs. The news section of the bulletin tells of the co-ordination of a Spanish action plan to ensure the conservation of Audouin's gull at all of its Spanish colonies.

## **PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP BULLETIN VOL 19 NO. 1**

Craig Harrison has contributed an article to this bulletin calling for PSG to establish an action plan to eliminate alien predators from seabird colonies. He points out that press and media attention has been focussed on oil spills and high seas

driftnets. He puts these in perspective by illustrating that the high seas fishery killed an estimated 416,000 birds in 1990 in the North Pacific, and the Exxon Valdez killed an estimated 350,000 - 390,000 birds. Losses to predators are many times greater, and in addition continue on year after year until the seabird resource is eliminated.

Several PSG members have worked to remove predators from individual islands, but so far no coherent plan exists for all islands. Craig Harrison calls for PSG to establish a priority list of islands, and then work to eliminate all alien predators from island colonies within a decade. This is a goal that I certainly applaud, and one that perhaps the Seabird Group could emulate.

Four pages of the bulletin are taken up with a comprehensive analysis of PSG members likes, interests and dislikes. It appears that when PSG holds symposia on auks and conservation, their membership increase is greatest, Sulidae seem less popular. Some of the issue is taken up with reports on members activities. There is an interesting analysis of the attitudes to seabirds of the main contenders for the US presidency. Abstracts of the 1992 Annual Meeting take up several pages, and the issue concludes with a review of the Seabird Group's 1992 conference in Glasgow by Vivian Mendenhall.

## **SOUTH WEST OILED SEABIRD GROUP BULLETIN 2**

This 12 page bulletin was issued in June 1992. It starts with a review of the Seabird Group conference in Glasgow. Two short articles deal with rehabilitation of oiled birds (fulmar and use of activated charcoal granules). The majority of the issue is concerned numbers of live guillemot and razorbill strandings on the south Devon coast. These are usually victims of oil pollution and show considerable year to year and geographical variation. Most birds strand live in between December and February, and just east of Start Point, the southernmost part of the study area. The issue ends with the slightly irritating news that a prosecution of an oil tanker, observed to have discharged a three mile long oil slick into Torbay in February, had failed due to a technically inaccurate case bought by the Department of Transport.

## **WORLD BIRDWATCH (NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BIRD PRESERVATION) VOLUME 14, 2.**

The Seabird Group is a member of the shortly-to-be -dispanded British Section of ICBP. The executive committee will, however, be deciding shortly whether the Group should join ICBP as an associate organisation. The issue of their newsletter contains little on seabirds, but does have rather alarming news of increased threat to that honourary seabird, the Junin grebe. Visits to Lake Junin have been rather hindered recently by terrorist activity, however two intrepid Peruvian ornithologists have recently visited the lake only to find at least two dead grebes on the two kilometres of shore they were able to see. Local fishermen confirmed that this sort of death toll was not unusual. If this is typical throughout the lake, then the population of 200-300 birds is at severe risk. Blame is being laid on pollution from local mining activities, coupled with an associated hydroelectric scheme.

## **NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF CURRENT SEABIRD GROUP COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

There have been several problems with communications within and to the Seabird Group in the past. We suggest that if you wish to communicate with a specific committee member, you write direct to them. If you are not sure who to write to, then send to the Secretary, or to our permanent address.

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## **THE TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SEABIRD GROUP**

The twenty-seventh Annual General Meeting of the Seabird Group will be held at 1730 hours on Saturday 9 January 1993 during the British Trust for Ornithology's Ringing and Migration Conference at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire.

### **PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

1. Minutes of 26th Annual General Meeting held at Glasgow on 27 March 1992.
2. Matters arising.
3. Motion to adopt 27th Annual Report (1991-1992).
4. Hon. Treasurers report and motion to adopt accounts for 1992
5. Election of Auditors
6. Election of new officers

The following are due to retire from the Executive Committee at this AGM

Bob Furness

Nominations are being sought by the Chairman, any proposals should be notified to him (Dr K Taylor, Pitgaveny House Flat, Elgin, Moray IV30 2PQ).

7. Any other business

Martin Heubeck  
Honorary Secretary