

Charity number 260907

## **NEWSLETTER 71**

**JUNE 1995**

# **SUCCESSFUL SEABIRD GROUP CONFERENCE**

The fifth conference of the Seabird Group was held in the Kelvin Conference Centre in Glasgow in March. The conference was attended by some 144 delegates, of which about 40% were from 17 countries outside the United Kingdom. We were very pleased to welcome delegates from further afield in Europe, the Middle East, Australasia and North America.

The theme for this occasion was "Threats to seabirds". This topic was examined under several main headings: pollution, fisheries, introduced mammals, disturbance and others. The proceedings will be supplied to all Seabird Group members and to attendees. They contain abstracts of all contributed and invited papers. Papers at the conference were generally of a high standard.

Some threats were identified as temporary while others may cause permanent changes. Population changes caused by temporary threats (e.g. catastrophic oil spills) may recover after several years; the results of other temporary threats may be more permanent. Some threats are longer-term: of especial note here are the results of mammalian introductions to islands and other areas.

We learned of the bycatch of albatrosses and other seabirds on long-lines set by fishermen. There are long-term declines in species subject to this bycatch. If this problem remains unchallenged, then we

can expect local extinctions of some populations.

Attendees at the conference were invited to participate in the preparation of a Strategic Habitat Action Plan being assembled as part of BirdLife International's conservation programme for dispersed species in European seas. A questionnaire was handed out asking participants to judge the relative importance and geographic scale of a list of threats to a selected set of seabirds using European waters. The Strategic Habitat Action Plan will be used by BirdLife International and its partners to guide conservation actions in European Seas.

## **CONTENTS**

	Page
Seabird Group conference	1
Seabird breeding success in 1994	2
Fea's petrel in the Azores	5
Sanda Island ringing 1994	7
Medmaravis symposium	8
Tony Whilde	9
Review	
Penguins by John A. Love	9
From other publications	
Sula Vol 8, no. 4	9
Beringian Seabird Bulletin	10
CWS Bulletin Vol 16, no. 2	10
World Birdwatch Vol 17, no. 1	10
Marine Ornithology Vol 21	11
Marine Ornithology Vol 22, pt. 1	11

Offers	
Laboratory research on seabirds	11
Status and conservation of the world's seabirds	12
Marine Ornithology	12
Announcement	
Conference on cormorants	12
Committee names and addresses	13

Published by:                   The Seabird Group  
   c/o The Lodge  
   Sandy  
   Bedfordshire  
   SG19 2DL

## SEABIRD BREEDING SUCCESS IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND, 1994

Results of monitoring of breeding success (and populations) in 1994 have recently been published in the annual JNCC / RSPB / SOTEAG report on "Seabird numbers and breeding success in Britain and Ireland." A brief summary is given below, covering breeding success of a selection of species (with limited reference to population changes). For species with a large number or wide spread of colonies monitored, Table 1 gives a regional breakdown of average productivity in 1994. Figure 1 gives additional details for kittiwake (one of the best-studied species).

For each of the seven species included in Table 1, 1994 was a fairly successful year, with, on average, at least as many chicks reared per pair as in 1993. In general, the regional results also showed an improvement (or little change) compared to 1993. As usual, however, actual breeding success varied considerably between regions for some species.

Kittiwakes in Orkney and on eastern coasts of England reared twice as many chicks per pair as those around Irish / Celtic Sea coasts (a common pattern - see Figure 1) and in eastern Scotland. In the latter case, low breeding success was accompanied by a reduction in the proportion of adult kittiwakes breeding. This was particularly evident at colonies in the Firth of Forth, and suggested that food availability may have been low during the

pre-laying period (as well as during chick-rearing).

Sandwich, common and little terns all had a good year overall, with overall numbers of chicks reared per pair above average for recent years. Success was low in some regions, however, notably in eastern Scotland, and predation continues to be a major contributing factor. Roseate terns also had a successful season, but arctic terns had only a moderate or poor season (with lowest success from NW around to NE Scotland, including the northern isles). There was further evidence of population declines by arctic terns in Orkney and Shetland.

Fulmars, shags and guillemots showed comparatively little regional variation in breeding success. Shag success remained lowest in eastern Scotland and NE England, but improved compared to 1993. However, a marked reduction in numbers of shags was evident in SE Scotland (a 78% decrease between 1992 and 1994), following the large 'wreck' which occurred off eastern Scottish coasts the previous winter. Many guillemots were also found dead in that wreck, but no major impact on breeding numbers was detected at monitored colonies on North Sea coasts.

Among the other species, arctic and great skuas both had a successful season in Shetland, but success was lower in Orkney. Predation by mink resulted in low productivity for *Larus* gulls close to the west Scottish mainland, while there was much variation elsewhere (with notably poor seasons at major colonies of lesser black-backed gulls in south Wales and of common gulls in NE Scotland). Gannets, cormorants and puffins appeared to rear good numbers of chicks at study-colonies.

Any data on seabird numbers or success in the 1995 season will be welcomed by the report compilers:

Paul Walsh, Seabird Monitoring Programme, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 17 Rubislaw Terrace, Aberdeen, AB1 1XE

Emma Brindley, Research Department,  
The Royal Society for the Protection of  
Birds, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire,  
SG19 2DL

Martin Heubeck, Shetland Oil Terminal  
Environmental Advisory Group, Broonies  
Taing, Sandwick, Shetland ZE2 9HH.

**Figure 1** Breeding productivity (chicks fledged / well-built nest) at kittiwake colonies during 1986-94, showing regional and annual variation. Dot symbols represent 1994 figures; histograms show annual averages for each broad region (with 95% confidence limits and numbers of colonies)

**Table 1** Average breeding output (chicks fledged per pair) of selected seabird species in 1993. N = no. of colonies sampled. + or - indicates at least 10% change in average success compared to 1993 (++ or -- at least 50% change); = indicates little change.

Region	Fulmar	Shag	Kittiwake	Sandwich tern	Common tern	Little tern	Guillemot
West Scotland	0.54 <sup>3</sup> =	1.55 <sup>8</sup> +	0.89 <sup>4</sup> +		0.93 <sup>13</sup> ++		0.70 <sup>1</sup> =
Shetland	0.50 <sup>8</sup> =	1.52 <sup>5</sup> =	0.77 <sup>9</sup> +				0.75 <sup>2</sup> =
Orkney	0.51 <sup>6</sup> +		1.14 <sup>6</sup> +				0.72 <sup>3</sup> =
E Scotland	0.47 <sup>5</sup> +	1.21 <sup>4</sup> +	0.47 <sup>11</sup> =	0.31 <sup>3</sup> =	0.39 <sup>11</sup> -	0.11 <sup>7</sup> --	0.76 <sup>2</sup> =
NE England	0.64 <sup>2</sup> =	1.01 <sup>1</sup> +	0.92 <sup>4</sup> =			0.40 <sup>6</sup> -	
E/SE England			1.08 <sup>2</sup> =	0.96 <sup>6</sup> =	1.02 <sup>10</sup> +	0.72 <sup>31</sup> ++	
SW England	0.34 <sup>1</sup> +	1.66 <sup>1</sup>	0.45 <sup>4</sup> +	0.72 <sup>+2</sup> =	0.65 <sup>3</sup> =	0.51 <sup>1</sup> =	0.84 <sup>2</sup> +
Wales/NW Eng./I. of Man	0.37 <sup>8</sup> =	2.13 <sup>1</sup>	0.50 <sup>5</sup> +	0.60 <sup>1</sup> =	0.99 <sup>9</sup> =	1.05 <sup>8</sup> ++	0.71 <sup>1</sup> =
NE/NW Ireland			0.67 <sup>1</sup> +	≤1.3 <sup>2</sup>			
SE Ireland			0.33 <sup>2</sup> --		≤1.7 <sup>1</sup>	0.0 <sup>1</sup> --	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.47<sup>33</sup> =</b>	<b>1.48<sup>20</sup> +</b>	<b>0.64<sup>53</sup> +</b>	<b>0.84<sup>13</sup> +</b>	<b>0.81<sup>47</sup> =</b>	<b>0.67<sup>54</sup> ++</b>	<b>0.75<sup>13</sup> =</b>

Units: Regularly-occupied sites (fulmar, guillemot); nests with eggs (shag); well-built nests (kittiwake); breeding pairs (terns). Figures for terns are based on combined data; for other species, figures are averaged between colonies.

**Just published:**

Walsh, P.M., Brindley, E., & Heubeck, M. 1995. ***Seabird numbers and breeding success in Britain and Ireland, 1994.*** Peterborough, Joint Nature Conservation Committee. (UK Nature Conservation, No. 18.)

Availability: Free to regular contributors of data, or (priced £8.70 and £2 P&P) from Natural History Book Service Ltd, 2 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5XN.

## **THE STATUS OF FEA'S PETREL *PTERODROMA FEA* IN THE AZORES**

Fea's petrel is an endangered species with a Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC) status of Category 1 (Globally Threatened) (Tucker & Heath 1994). In Europe it breeds only on Bugio, the southernmost of the Deserta Islands south-east of Madeira, where about 150-200 pairs nest. It also breeds in the Cape Verde Islands where there are about 500-1000 pairs (Hazevoet 1995), but individuals from this population are significantly smaller, especially in tail length and bill depth, than birds from Bugio (Monteiro & Furness 1995). Bourne (1965) suggested that an intermediate between *P. feae* and *P. cahow* the Bermuda petrel, may breed in the Azores, where little effort had been made to search for *Pterodroma* colonies.

In 1990 a *Pterodroma* was caught at night at a seabird colony in the Azores by Colin Bibby and Adrian del Nevo. That bird was found to be closely similar in appearance and in most measurements to *P. feae* from Bugio but with a longer tail, matching that of *P. cahow* (Bibby & del Nevo 1991). These authors suggested that a population of *Pterodroma* intermediate between *P. cahow* and *P. feae* may breed in the Azores, as had been suggested by Bill Bourne.

In September 1993, Luis Monteiro and Bob Furness visited many islands in the Azores to catalogue seabird populations

and ecology. We spent several nights at each site, mist-netting Madeiran storm petrels *Oceanodroma castro*, little shearwaters *Puffinus assimilis*, and Bulwer's petrels *Bulweria bulwerii* and catching Cory's shearwaters *Calonectris diomedea* by hand. On our last night we caught 150 storm petrels with two 18 m mist nets set on the cliff edge of an islet. The capture rate had fallen to near zero by 2300 hrs, as usual for this species, and RWF was about to close the nets for the night when a *Pterodroma* petrel flew directly into the corner of one net. Having handled thousands of soft-plumaged petrels *P. mollis* on Gough Island, RWF immediately recognised this bird as a *Pterodroma* but not *P. mollis* as it was much more bulky, with a hugely massive bill, no pectoral band and a pale grey tail. We both, independently, measured the bird, aware of the importance of biometrics in assessing the suggestions of Bourne, Bibby and del Nevo. Our measurements were all entirely compatible with the bird being *P. feae* (Monteiro & Furness 1995). Unfortunately, Bibby and del Nevo did not ring the bird they caught so we cannot be sure if it was a different individual from the one we caught (at another site). Differences in measurements suggest that two birds were involved.

Thus in July-August 1994 Bob Furness returned to the Azores, with José-Pedro Granadeiro and later joined by Luis Monteiro, to search for further evidence of the status of *Pterodroma feae* in the Azores. We visited Corvo island first as this is one of the least explored but has extensive and dramatic cliff habitat. Although we found that Corvo holds what is probably the largest Cory's shearwater colony in the world, and has breeding little shearwaters and probably also some Manx shearwaters, we found no evidence of storm petrels, Bulwer's petrels or *Pterodroma* petrels, and in view of the presence of hordes of feral cats as well as black rats *Rattus rattus*, the apparent lack of small petrels is probably unsurprising. We played tape recordings of each species to several local fishermen and farmers and none recognised any of the

species as occurring at Corvo. Having seen cats among the boulders where Cory's shearwaters were nesting we wonder how well even that large bird will fare on this island. However, we spent most time on the area of Corvo near to the town, where feral cats are probably most abundant. The huge cliffs on the opposite side of the island might be cat-free and might even hold small petrels too. Most of these cliffs are inaccessible to (normal) humans though some areas were occupied by large numbers of goats and some sheep. The distribution of native vegetation appeared very patchy. In the areas of cliff and boulder field near town we did not hear any calls of small petrels, and obtained no responses to tape lures of *O. castro*, *B. bulwerii*, *P. feae*, *P. madeira* or *P. mollis*.

Returning to the islets where we and Bibby & del Nevo caught *Pterodromas*, we heard none and obtained no response to tape lures at Bibby & del Nevo's site. However, on the islet where we caught a bird in 1993 we heard characteristic calls of the species each night (and LM had heard them during a visit in June), though tape lures played under the mist net set at exactly the same spot as in 1993 failed to elicit any obvious response. On 6 August, having got fed up with the monotonous call of the *P. feae* tape lure, we switched to a *P. mollis* tape. At 2300 a *P. feae* flew into the net exactly in the same place as in 1993, and indeed it nearly climbed out of the shelf but was held by its ring tangled in the mesh! It was the same individual. While we had this bird in a bag we heard no other *P. feae* calls, and at no time did we think that more than one bird was calling, so we suspect that there may only be a single bird at this site. The bird had a partly developed brood patch but still with some old down on it, suggesting that it had not been incubating, so we suspect that this bird may be on its own, lost from Bugio and living in the Azores hoping for a partner to show up. The possibility that it is one of a few remaining birds from a much reduced native population is certainly not ruled out, but it seems rather unlikely that the species nests on either of the islets where they have been caught.

We now think we have identified a burrow about 3 m from the location of our mist net pole where our individual lives, but apparently as a non-breeder.

Several visits at night to the hilltop cliffs of the main island where we thought the species might occur provided no evidence, though Cory's shearwater calls were heard. However, suitable mountain habitat similar to the breeding sites used in the Cape Verdes exists on another nearby main island and has yet to be explored. We plan to examine these sites in detail in 1996, with funding provided by the EU 'LIFE' programme, Azores University, Glasgow University and the RSPB.

#### References

- Bibby, C.J. and del Nevo, A.J. 1991. A first record of *Pterodroma feae* from the Azores. *Bull. B.O.C.* 111: 183-186.
- Bourne, W.R.P. 1965. The missing petrels. *Bull. B.O.C.* 85: 95-105.
- Hazevoet, C.J. 1995. *The Birds of the Cape Verde Islands*. BOU Checklist No. 13. Tring; BOU.
- Monteiro, L.R. and Furness, R.W. 1995. Fea's petrel *Pterodroma feae* in the Azores. *Bull. B.O.C.* 115: 9-14.
- Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. 1994. *Birds in Europe: their conservation status*. Cambridge; BirdLife International.
- Bob Furness, Luis Monteiro, and Jose-Pedro Granadeiro

#### **SANDA ISLAND RINGING REPORT 1994**

Two trips were made to Sanda in 1994, the first from 26 June to 2 July and the second from 23 to 31 July. Twelve different individuals were involved including four new to Sanda; without their help we would be unable to carry out such detailed counts and ring as many birds. We hope they can continue to support our studies in future years. As usual our

priorities were to count and ring seabirds in June and to assess breeding success and monitor migration in July.

## June

The 1994 season started with a team of five arriving at Campbeltown harbour on the Saturday to find that Dick Gannon's boat was unfortunately out of the water for repairs. On Sunday morning we saw an unwelcome return to the "good old days" of being ferried over to Sanda from Southend in a small boat in less than ideal conditions.

The poor weather continued until Wednesday evening but this gave us the time to count and ring seabirds on Sanda itself. Most of the breeding seabirds had a very good season, herring gull and shag numbers have increased and most had large young. The finding of several partially eaten gull and shag corpses around the shore confirmed our suspicions of a mammalian predator on the island. The report from Dick of sightings of an otter and young at the Lighthouse suggests that they are very likely culprits. The arrival of settled weather on Thursday meant that the inflatable dinghy could be used to visit the two small offshore islands of Sheep and Glunimore to complete our counts and ring what birds we could find. Once again the guillemots were late but good numbers of razorbills and fulmars were ringed, as was our first adult kittiwake for some years.

The poor weather also limited us to three nights tape-luring storm petrels, though the Thursday/Friday night was particularly good with over a hundred birds trapped.

On the passerine front things were quiet as migration had not started. However, we did begin our colour ringing project on wheatears to monitor breeding success, survival and migration routes. We already have some data on movements of juveniles around the island and our first international recovery. Only a handful of rock pipits frequented the beach so very few were ringed. A total absence of

breeding swallows completes their decline from a peak of four pairs in 1992.

## July

The usual crew were joined by one first visitor from the south and three Belgian ringers. These, brought an international flavour to the menu and also to the ringing totals as they were particularly interested in rock pipits, resulting in us ringing 70, is about 25% of the U.K. totals in most years. Most unusual passerines for this trip were single wood warbler and chiffchaff, two grasshopper warblers heard in the netting area which managed to avoid capture.

Excellent numbers of storm petrels were handled including 250 ringed bird, many of which had been ringed by us over the last 12 years. We also caught the first Portuguese ringed bird for the Clyde area, the ringing details of which are eagerly awaited.

Good estimates of seabirds breeding success were obtained, the majority of them having their best year for some time. With the earlier than normal timing of this visit it meant that the guillemot colony was still in full swing and large numbers of nearly fledged young could be ringed for the first time since 1991. A record number of fulmar chicks were also ringed thanks to the very enthusiastic continentals. Similar numbers of Manx shearwaters were ringed despite some more new burrows being located, the overall result is that this species is doing well on Sanda.

Other records of interest were the sightings of a single whimbrel and an arctic skua. Also recorded were several migrant butterflies including 2 large tortoiseshell, 1 small tortoiseshell, 1 painted lady and 2 red admirals.

The Sanda Ringing Team in June consisted of Gaynor Cross, Iain Livingstone, John McKeller, James Morton and Rab Morton.

In July the team consisted of: Warren Claydon, Dirk de Mesel, Marc Hebbelink,

Phil Littler, John Middleton, Rab Morton, James Morton, Nigel Scrivens, Mike Sykes, Stefan Shibau and John Walder.

We do of course wish to express our sincere thanks to all for making such valuable input into our ongoing study of the breeding birds of Sanda Island.

Rab Morton and Iain Livingstone

#### **4TH MEDITERRANEAN SEABIRD SYMPOSIUM**

The 4th Medmaravis symposium was held in Hammamet, Tunisia from 12-16 April 1995. Having just enjoyed the Seabird Group conference as programme organiser, it was a contrast to be a member of the audience at another group's conference. We soon learned that Tunisian time keeping is radically different from that practised in Scotland and that the programme and abstracts that we had been presented with were subject to considerable change. Sadly logistics prevented the attendance of seabird researchers from several of the North African countries, but it was good to meet others from countries not normally associated (in my brain) with seabirds, such as Croatia and Turkey.

It was difficult to pick any outstanding presentation, but several stay in my memory. Dietrich Ristow of Germany has been visiting, for weeks on end, an uninhabited Greek island every year for many years (carrying only a large sack of porridge oats as far as I could determine). Primarily he has been studying a colony of Eleanora's falcons, but he has also been following the fate of birds within the local 900 pair Cory's shearwater colony. His talk discussed the progress of prospectors at the colony. With individual marking he was able to show how these nocturnal activities were primarily aimed at obtaining a good nest site, and that mate choice was a secondary consideration. The quantity and apparent quality of the information seemed extraordinary; Dietrich Ristow is a busy business man usually, and there seemed to be a considerable

amount of analysis still outstanding. I enjoyed Joe Sultana's talk on storm petrels in Malta; the main colony on Filfla has excellent storm petrel breeding habitat because it was used for bombing practice for many years. This activity has stopped, and the scree slopes are now washing into the sea. Joe has also discovered a colony in a cave at the base of some cliffs on Gozo. This made me wonder if there are similar colonies in the UK and Ireland; especially on those coast where small islands are absent, and storm petrels are relatively easily tape-lured. The technique used to find the cliff-base colony consisted of taking out an inflatable boat on a very calm dark night. Sadly we don't get many of these in Scotland!

As at the Seabird Group conference, the BirdLife Habitat Action plans were discussed and worked on, this time in some relatively successful workshop sessions. For those delegates attending from Britain, probably the most memorable day was the trip to Zembra Island. This lies off Tunis, and a trip was arranged there on board two ships of the Tunisian Navy by Professor Hillis, who had been largely responsible for ensuring that a tourist development was not completed on this important island for seabirds. It is one of the largest Cory's shearwater colonies, and several birds were extracted from their burrows, partly in the interests of science. A few Audouin's gulls were also seen, but we did not have time to visit their colonies. Those of us keen on watching seabirds at sea had an extremely wet trip home, with relatively little reward on the seabird front. I recommend Tunisia (particularly away from the tourist areas) as an excellent and very friendly country to visit.

Mark Tasker

#### **TONY WHILDE**

We were very sad to learn of the death of Tony Whilde in early February. Tony was one of the stalwarts of Irish Ornithology, and a much valued member of the Seabird Group. He wrote many papers

and several books on the birds and other fauna of western Ireland. Among these were reviews of the status of Ireland's threatened vertebrates (*Threatened mammals, birds, amphibians and fish in Ireland*), of potential EC Special Protection Areas in Ireland and, most recently, *The natural history of Connemara*. established the Lough Corrib Conservation Centre on the shores of Lough Corrib in the mid-1980s. This was a centre for environmental courses. His interest in Irish seabirds centred on the inland breeding populations of gulls and terns. The comprehensive nature of these surveys in western Ireland deserves to be emulated in many other areas. We shall miss him.

Mark Tasker

### **REVIEW: PENGUINS by JOHN A. LOVE**

This is a further book in the Whittet imprint on wildlife. Seabird Group member, John Love, summarises not only the biology of penguins, but also many stories about penguins. The first chapter introduces penguins, mentioning that the original penguin was the great auk. The facts surrounding the release of penguins off Norway in the 1930s are summarised in a box: a good technique used extensively throughout the book, providing helpful breaks in blocks of text. The second chapter is entitled Working Penguins: it deals with their physiology. Later chapters deal in turn with little, jackass (*Spheniscus*), yellow-eyed, crested (*Eudyptes*), brush-tailed (*Pygoscelis*) and regal (*Aptenodyptes*) penguins. These chapters describe numbers and distribution as well as the biology of these groups or species. Chapters are not exclusive to each group or species though and, where relevant, references to other groups are made. The final chapter is on

penguin conservation. A useful reference list and a comprehensive index are included.

I very much enjoyed reading this book of 128 pages. It provides a neat, and as far as I could determine, accurate summary of knowledge on penguins. I congratulate John on a well-written book and recommend it to anyone wanting an easy to read introduction to penguins. It costs only £7.99.

Mark Tasker

### **SULA, Vol. 8, no 4**

This issue has two main articles, one by Peter Meininger and Pim Wolf on the breeding seabirds of Libya. The authors, with Libyan zoologists, surveyed the greater part of coastal Libya in two weeks in July 1993. This was late for most species, but evidence of breeding by shag, yellow-legged herring gull, lesser crested tern and little tern was obtained. All of the Mediterranean lesser crested tern population breeds in Libya, and a total of over 1700 pairs was estimated. The discussion gives no indication as to whether nocturnal or burrow-nesting seabirds were searched for. Kees Camphuysen and Guido Keijl review the age, sex, condition and diet of guillemots stranded on the Dutch coast in November 1990. Most appeared to be adults of Scottish origin, which had been eating sprat and herring. In the short notes section, Mardik Leopold and co-authors review black-browed albatross occurrence in the North Sea and Fred Cottar reviews the growth in the roof nesting lesser black-backed gull colony in IJmuiden. Reviews and recent reports complete the issue.

### **BERINGIAN SEABIRD BULLETIN, No 2**

This was published in 1994. The bulletin provides information to those interested in the seabirds of the Bering Sea. Scott Hatch reviews the amount and distribution

(both temporarily and spatially) of seabird monitoring effort in the North Pacific. He is bringing together this data to form a joint regional database. Vivian Mendenhall describes the seabird monitoring programme in western Alaska. V.P. Shuntov discusses some large scale changes in seabird distribution in the north-western Pacific over the last 90 years, and finds that changes in ocean currents have had dramatic effects on seabirds. Two papers deal with spectacled guillemots. Six papers describe seabird populations on individual islands or island groups. Chris Haney and co-authors have started a large co-operative study of the ecosystem of the waters around Pribilof Island. Kittiwake breeding success is described from two Russian islands. Two papers are on the return of adult and immature whiskered auklets to colonies after the breeding season. Various news items complete the issue.

I have been asked by several people how they might obtain a copy: it is published jointly by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Russian Academy of Sciences of Biological Problems of the North. The US editor is Kenton D. Wohl, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine and Coastal Bird Project, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, USA.

### **COLONIAL WATERBIRD SOCIETY BULLETIN, Vol. 18, no 2**

This issue contains many details on the 1994 Annual meeting. The formal meeting minutes reveal what CWS has been doing, and some ideas of future activity. The second half of the issue is devoted to abstracts of papers from the meeting. These are arranged into several biology sections, and includes a symposium on colonial waterbirds as bioindicators.

### **WORLD BIRDWATCH, Vol. 17, no 1**

There are rather few seabird items; surveys on islands off Abu Dhabi have revealed larger populations than expected of bridled tern (40,000 + pairs), white-cheeked tern (21,000 + pairs) and lesser crested tern (24,000 pairs). Seabirds of arctic Norway and Russia and of the Benguela current are mentioned. Perhaps most impressive is a description of the Ghana Wildlife Society. This flourishing group was founded as a spin-off of the project to protect roseate terns on their wintering grounds in the country.

### **MARINE ORNITHOLOGY, Vol. 21**

This is a slim double issue. The main paper is a review of the population genetics of southern seabirds by Viot, Jouventin and Bried. Twenty-two species were examined using protein gel electrophoresis, with results of five species compared with mitochondrial DNA studies. different populations of king penguin were found to have a high level of isolation. Storm petrels were found to be distant from three other families of Procellariiforms. Punta, Saravia and Yorio review the diet and foraging behaviour of imperial cormorant *Phalacrocorax atriceps* and rock shag *P. magellanicus* off Argentina. The shags feed alone and on the seabed, while the cormorants could feed alone, but also fed in groups, and were not confined to feeding on the seabed. Norman and Ward examined foraging by Adelie penguins off East Antarctica, and found co-operative foraging. Van den Hoff, Kirkwood and Copley describe some aspects of the breeding cycle of king penguins among the exponentially increasing population on Heard Island. Thompson describes the diet of Magellanic penguins on the Falkland Islands. The short notes section includes various records from the Southern Ocean, along with a rather late

set of records from a Swedish naturalist collected *en route* to South Africa in the 1830s and 1840s. Minutes of the 1992 SCAR meeting complete the volume.

### **MARINE ORNITHOLOGY, Vol. 22, part 1**

This is a much more substantial issue than Vol. 21, but holds only one paper, 192 pages by Vincent Ridoux on the diets and dietary segregation of seabirds at the subantarctic Crozet Islands. This might be subtitled 'all you ever wanted to know about the diets of 27 species of seabird in the Crozet Islands'. The study was carried out in 1981-83 (although it took me a while to determine this) and covered four species of penguin, six albatross species, eleven petrels, three storm petrels, two diving petrels and one cormorant: virtually the entire pelagic seabird community of the area. Non-lethal methods were used to collect samples. Pelagic divers specialised in small highly gregarious prey (myctophid fish, hyperiid amphipods and euphausiids), while surface feeding species took a much wider variety of prey. The results suggested that similar sized congeneric seabirds were not taking different prey species or sizes, but rather were choosing to forage in different areas or had different breeding seasons. This spectacular study provides the basic information necessary to look at the role of seabirds in the marine food web of the Crozet Island area.

Mark L Tasker

### **LABORATORY RESEARCH ON SEA-BIRDS**

The Netherlands Institute for Sea Research has recently found a forgotten stock of the popular report Laboratory research on sea-birds, published in 1977 and written by Kees Swennen. It concerns experiments with pelagic seabirds in captivity on Texel. Chicks of puffins, razorbills, kittiwakes and guillemots were caught (under licence) in

Scotland, raised and kept in cages until all birds reproduced successfully. Topics in the report include accommodation facilities, water conditions (including surface quality), rearing of chicks, food, vitamin requirements, food uptake, disease, mortality, endoparasites, moult, sex determination, behaviour and experiments with oiled seabirds. If you would like a FREE copy of this report, please contact Kees Camphuysen or Theunis Piersma at the Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, P.O. Box 59, 1790 AB Den Burg, Texel, The Netherlands.

### **STATUS AND CONSERVATION OF THE WORLD'S SEABIRDS**

This venerable, in many cases 'state of the art' publication, produced by the International Council for Bird Preservation (now BirdLife International) in 1984, under the editorship of John Croxall, Peter Evans and Ralph Schreiber has been out of print for a number of years. About 30 copies have recently come to light and Seabird Group members have been offered a special deal by BirdLife International. The price of each book is £20.00, including postage (although if you are ordering from overseas, BirdLife would probably want extra). If you are interested, contact Christine Alder, BirdLife publications/sales, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge, CB3 0NA, UK (Phone + 44 (0)1223 277318, Fax + 44 (0)1223 277200).

BirdLife International have stocks of other relevant publications. The supplement to the above, edited by John Croxall is available at £17.50. Seabirds on islands: threats, case studies and action plans edited by David Nettleship, Joanna Burger and Michael Gochfeld is presently also out of print, but a reprint will be available in July at £21.50. Further BirdLife International volumes have individual papers on seabird issues. Postage on these volumes is £3.50 for any number of books inside the UK, and £3.50 per book outside the UK. Orders and a full list are available through Christine Alder.

Mark L Tasker

### **MARINE ORNITHOLOGY - A SPECIAL OFFER**

For double the cost of the normal 1995 subscription to Volume 23 of *Marine Ornithology*, new subscribers will also receive five years' of back numbers (Vols. 18-22, 1990-1994). *Marine Ornithology* is an international, fully refereed journal dealing solely with seabirds, and thus should be on the shelves of all marine ornithologists.

Payment should be made in the name of the 'African Seabird Group' and sent to PO Box 34113, Rhodes gift 7707, South Africa. Special offer for the 1990-1995 issues of *Marine Ornithology*: personal - \$US 60 or £ 40, institutional - \$US 90 or £ 60. Most earlier back numbers are also available, please direct enquires to the above address. Also available from the same address are Proceedings of the Symposium on birds of the sea and shore, held in 1979 in Cape Town at a cost of \$US 10 or £ 5.

### **4th EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON CORMORANTS**

This conference, which will also be the 1st meeting of the IWRB Cormorant Research Group, will be held in Bologna, northern Italy from 1 to 3 November 1995. Three main sessions are planned: cormorant numbers in Europe and the Mediterranean; cormorant ecology and behaviour in winter and interactions with fish and fishermen (at breeding and non-breeding areas). A workshop on methods of studying cormorant diet and feeding ecology is also scheduled. Posters, abstracts and registration are wanted by 31 May 1995. Contact Nicola Baccetti, INFS, Via Ca'Fornacetta 9, I-40064 Ozzano Emilia, Bologna, Italy for further details.

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

The Seabird Group maintains an accommodation address at c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG14 2DL, UK. However, a more rapid response may be obtained to queries by writing directly to committee members. Please help the Group by enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

Chairman: Kenny Taylor, Easter Brae, Springfield, Culbokie, Ross-shire, IV7 8JU. Tel: 01349 877625

Secretary: John Uttley, c/o 2-4 Alexander Buildings, The Esplanade, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0LL. Tel: 01595 693345; Fax: 01595 692565

Treasurer: Bob Furness, Graham Kerr Building, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, G12 8QQ. Tel: 0141 339 8855 (ext. 8038); Fax: 0141 330 5971; e-mail: gbza16@udcf.gla.ac.uk.

Membership Secretary: Sheila Russell, Clober Farm, Craigton Road, Milgavie, Glasgow, G62 7HW

Editor of Seabird: Sarah Wanless, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Hill of Brathens, Banchory, AB31 8QQ. Tel: 01330 823434

Newsletter Editor: Mark L Tasker, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 17 Rubislaw Terrace, Aberdeen, AB1 1XE. Tel: 01224 642863; Fax: 01224 621488; e-mail: seabirds.jncc@aberdeen.ac.uk.

General committee members  
Dave Okill, Heilinabretta, Cauldhame, Trondra, Shetland

Mike Harris, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Hill of Brathens, Banchory, AB31 8QQ

Keith Hamer, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Durham, Science Laboratories, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE

Euan Dunn, c/o RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG14 2DL