

SHOREHAM ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Twentyseventh Annual Report



for the Year 1979

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TWENTYSEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year 1979

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EDITORIAL NOTES

The spell of severe weather with which 1978 ended continued into January and February, resulting in some exciting records, and the year got off to a very good start, turned persistently cold, with less birds than usual, whilst the rest of the year brought no extremes of weather. But there were some new birds for the Shoreham list; Cory's Shearwater, Red-footed Falcon and Great Snipe - all subject to acceptance - and Hen Harrier, White-fronted Goose and Merlin had not previously been recorded at the Sanctuary.

With improved and increased sea-watching, some interesting sightings were obtained and Mark Welfare has produced some useful comparisons with the Beachy Head figures. Mark, by the way, won the title of "Young Ornithologist of the Year" for the second year running and joins Tony Marr in that distinction - no mean feat for two members of the same small society.

On the less exciting side, we have once more been ably served by our uncomplaining officers. Mr. Ranger has slipped efficiently into Mr. Rampton's role, Mrs. Farmer, as always, has kept everything running smoothly, organised some splendid lectures and, with Mr. Bernard Forbes, arranged the usual successful field outings. And the other officers, ably presided over by Dr. Stafford, have all contributed.

The writer finds, rather to his horror, that this will be the fifteenth Report he has edited, and although he derives pleasure and satisfaction from the task, cannot help feeling that a transfusion of younger blood with fresh ideas might be welcomed by the members. Meantime, he records his - and the Society's - thanks to Dr. John Newnham for all his work as Recorder which forms such a major and vital part of the Report.

SANCTUARY REPORT 1979

1979 proved to be another interesting year at the Society's Sanctuary. Although the number of visits were fewer than in the past year or two, the 1979 total of about 150 visits, of which nearly a third were mist-netting sessions, must make the Sanctuary the most regularly observed site within our area.

As usual, a lot of management work was needed in an effort to keep the trees sufficiently short to enable easy observing and trapping. Furthermore many of the warblers spend more time feeding in the coppiced areas than in the tall spindly trees. Both the central area of willow and the extensive osier bed bordering the stream on the west side were coppiced and cleared with the help of a few Society members and a cheerful band of young pupils from John Seldon Middle School in Worthing. It was a pleasure in the autumn to show these young helpers the resultant habitat full of feeding warblers.

Once again during the summer the cattle from the neighbouring field broke in, destroying some of the fences and much of the undergrowth, but more annoying in many respects was the work of vandals who dismembered several of the bridges in the late spring.

The following is a chronological account of the bird life at the Sanctuary extracted from the notebooks of C.F.Helyer, M.Welfare and J.A.Newnham.

The first quarter of the year is usually very quiet; however, the early months of 1979 will be remembered for the arctic weather - the worst since 1963 - bringing with it a host of unusual birds, some of which were seen at the Sanctuary. Up to 30 Bramblings were recorded between Jan. 10 & Feb. 21; these were invariably seen feeding amongst a large flock of finches, the composition of which was mainly Linnets (peak 1500 on J. 24), Greenfinches (peak 100 on Jan. 10 & 14) and up to 10 Goldfinches (an unusual winter visitor even in milder times). On Jan. 14 this large flock of birds was disturbed by a ring-tailed Hen Harrier, a species making its first appearance at the Sanctuary. Another "first" was the party of 21 Whitefronted Geese which grazed in the fields on Feb. 25. Other wildfowl were not particularly numerous - records include only 1 or 2 Mallard, an occasional Teal and one flock of 25 Wigeon on Jan. 14. Likewise waders were virtually absent except for a few Snipe, a Woodcock on Feb. 21 and a single Water Rail. Winter thrushes were present in small numbers - the most Fieldfares recorded was 20 on Jan. 24 and Redwings peaked at 60 on Feb. 25, but by March the Fieldfares had gone and the Redwings were few and eventually disappeared on Mar. 21. The usual Collard Dove roost topped 300 individuals again, but perhaps more interesting is the unusual record of 30 Stock Doves on Jan. 30. Despit the harsh conditions, a pair of Goldcrests wintered and a solitary Chiffchaff was seen on Jan. 20.

Spring started promisingly with south and south-east winds predominating at the end of March and early April, bringing with them the first sprinkling of Chiffchaffs. However, the situation soon changed and north winds dominated the weather until the second week in May - the meteorological records showed May to have had the coldest start for 50 years. This is clearly reflected in the late arrival dates, the low numbers of migrants and the total absence of some species, as shown in the table:

Species	Spring		Autumn	
	Arrival	Peak Numbers	Departure	Peak Numbers
Yellow Wagtail	Apr. 26	No more than 2	Sep. 15	Aug 26(4) Sep. 15(4)
Chiffchaff	Mar. 21	Apr 4 & 9(5) Apr 6(4)	Oct. 31	Sep 15 & 29(8) Sep. 23(12)
Willow Warbler	Apr. 13	May 7 (20)	Sep. 15	Aug 4, 19 & 22(20) Aug 26(40)
L. Whitethroat	May 2	No more than 2	Sep. 29	Aug 25 & Sep 15(4)
Whitethroat	May 9	No more than 2	Sep. 15	Aug. 26(40)
Blackcap	May 9	No more than 2	Oct. 14	Sep. 15(13 trapped)
Garden Warbler		Not recorded	Oct. 3	Only singles on 4 dates
Sedge Warbler	May 9	May 9 (3)	Sep. 29	Never more than 2
Reed Warbler	May 9		Oct. 17	Aug. 4 (11 trapped)
Swallow	Apr. 11	May 13(8) May 19(many)	Oct. 24	No large passage seen
House Martin	May 7	May 19 (20)	Oct. 21	Sep. 23 (several thousand)
Swift	May 5	No obv. peak passage	Not rec.	Aug. 19 (c250)
Turtle Dove	Apr. 23	No more than 2	Oct. 10	No more than 2
Sp. Flycatcher	May 18	Only 1 record	Sep. 15	Never more than 1

The only notable records of this period were of a Redstart on May 2, a Grasshopper Warbler on May 4, 3 Whinchats on May 7, and the return of badgers to the hillside thickets.

The breeding season follows the usual pattern. The late spring and poor foliage cover were probably the reasons why the early clutches of residents seemed so unsuccessful. However, the later clutches must have been successful because by mid-summer juvenile Robins, Dunnocks, Blackbirds and thrushes were commonplace. Tits occupied most of the nest-boxes, 5 pairs of Mallards had 2 broods each on the ledges in the garage, and the other summer visitors nested in their usual numbers. Irregular breeding birds included a pair each of Goldcrest and Mallard.

The first sign of the return warbler passage was on Aug. 4 when 38 warblers, mainly Willow Warblers, were trapped. The peak numbers and last dates of the commoner migrants are shown in the table and can therefore be easily compared with previous years. Undoubtedly the best fall of common migrants occurred in the morning of Aug. 26; after a night of light S.E. winds and rain there were c40 Willow Warblers, c40 Whitethroats, a handful of Blackcaps, Lesser Whitethroats and flava wagtails, and the only 2 Wheatears of the year.

Other scarcer migrants this autumn included a Cuckoo on Aug. 11, another Tree Pipit on Sep. 15, a Whinchat on Sep. 23 and single Redstarts on Sep. 22 and Oct. 10.

Unlike many of the previous years, some water remained in the main dykes throughout the summer; this may have been the attraction for a Common Sandpiper throughout August, 2 Greenshank on Sep. 9, and several sightings of Grey Wagtail and Kingfisher. Finches were regularly seen drinking and bathing in the streams, and flocks of up to 60 Goldfinches could usually be recorded feeding on the large crops of thistle. Although plentiful, the numbers of finches, in particular Linnets and Greenfinches seemed lower than in most other years. Buntings, likewise, seemed fewer with no record in excess of 10 Corn Buntings, and the only large party of Yellow Buntings being 20 on Oct. 10. The now annual Redpolls appeared on Oct. 14 and were thereafter seen regularly until the end of October with the peak of 11 occurring on Oct. 24.

The autumn on 1978 was memorable for the unusual number of woodland birds occurring at the copse- this autumn only produced records of Great Spotted Woodpecker and Green Woodpecker on one or two days in September, a Jay on Oct. 13 and a Coal Tit on Oct. 24.

Although no large birds of grey were recorded, small raptors were more numerous than I can recall in the past. Up to 5 Kestrels hunted the hillside regularly, Sparrowhawks were recorded on 3 days, a Hobby was seen on Sep. 5 and 12 and a Merlin, the first for the Sanctuary, put in a brief appearance over the copse on Oct. 24. Nocturnal predators, too, were well represented with records of Little Owl, Barn Owl and Tawny Owl between October and November.

The large hawthorn berry crop attracted the thrushes in the late autumn; Blackbirds gradually built up to a peak of about 50 in late November; the first Fieldfare arrived on Oct. 14 at least a fortnight before the first Redwing, but by early December there were at least 100 Redwings, whereas Fieldfare numbers remained in a single figure. After the maws had gone the Sanctuary became very quiet apart from the usual Collared Doves and the occasional Snipe feeding alongside the flooded ditches.

I would like to express the Society's thanks to Mr. Santer and his colleagues of the Southern Water Authority for their help throughout the year.

J.A.N.

RINGING REPORT FOR 1979

During 1979 the ringing activity in the Shoreham area was sustained at the same high level as the past few years. Yet again in excess of 3000 birds were ringed; the grand total being 3201 of 58 different species and of which 245 were ringed as nestlings. Dr. J. Newnham, ringing at the Sanctuary and in his Worthing garden, totalled 1341; the Gull Study Group cannon-netted 1152 gulls; the Steyning Ringing Group, guided by P. and B. Clay, ringed 368 birds; Dr. A.B. Watson ringed 272 (mainly nestlings) at various sites around Shoreham and J. Murdoch caught 68 birds in his Hove garden.

After a brief look at both the ringing totals list and the recoveries it is apparent that more effort was spent in gull ringing, possibly at the expense of ringing fewer small passerines. In the Autumn Dr. A.B. Watson was granted a licence to operate cannon nets for gull catching so this aspect of study is likely to be enthusiastically pursued until sufficient information is gathered on our growing gull population. There were 21 cannon netting sessions on the

local beaches during 1979; 9 of these produced no birds; another 2 days accounted for 6 birds each and the best day was Jan. 21 when 316 Black-headed Gulls (including 8 foreign controls), 7 Common Gulls and 3 Herring Gulls were caught.

Below is a table of the birds ringed:-

Storm Petrel.....1	Wren.....19
Ringed Plover.....1	Duncock.....52
Dunlin.....16	Robin.....50
Redshank.....9	Whinchat.....1
Common Sandpiper.....1	Blackbird.....131
Black-headed Gull..1088	Fieldfare.....1
Common Gull.....44	Song Thrush.....61
Herring Gull.....24	Redwing.....7
Wood Pigeon.....1	Mistle Thrush.....7
Collared Dove.....16	Sedge Warbler.....22
Turtle Dove.....1	Reed Warbler.....79
Swift.....1	Lesser Whitethroat.....17
Kingfisher.....4	Garden Warbler.....2
Gt.Spotted Woodpecker.6	Blackcap.....35
Ls.Spotted Woodpecker.2	Chiff-chaff.....43
Swallow.....99	Willow Warbler.....111
House Martin.....110	Goldcrest.....15
Tree Pipit.....1	Spotted Flycatcher....3
Pied Wagtail.....44	Long-tailed Tit.....15
Willow Tit.....1	Coal Tit.....7
Blue Tit.....312	Great Tit.....79
Tree Creeper.....1	Magpie.....1
Starling.....341	House Sparrow.....9
Tree Sparrow.....1	Chaffinch.....21
Brambling.....7	Greenfinch.....121
Goldfinch.....65	Linnet.....20
Redpoll.....1	Bullfinch.....22
Yellow Hammer.....12	Reed Bunting.....5

TOTAL

3201

The Storm Petrel landed exhausted on a boat bound for Shoreham and was ringed in the local R.S.P.B. office just prior to its release. The young Green Woodpecker which was caught at the Sanctuary also appears to be a new bird to the area ringing list. The Swift, Brambling and Ringed

			Control date
m).	ringed ad.	23-01-72	Reading, Berks. 21.1.79
n).	" pull.	01-06-78	Cliffe, Rochester Kent. 28-01-79
o).	" pull.	26-06-77	Hvalstrand, Asker, Norway. "
p).	" pull.	21-06-71	Plas Ravessberg, Zuid Holland 11-02-79
q).	" pull.	04-06-78	Laugesoo, Tartu, Estonia "

In addition to these there were birds from Holland (3), Germany, Poland (2), Finland, Denmark, Estonia (2) and the U.S.S.R. for which ringing details are not yet available. As many of these birds were ringed as pulli (nestlings) a clearer picture is emerging of the precise origins of the wintering gull population.

The following recoveries are of gulls ringed in the winter and found later elsewhere:

d).	ringed	14-12-74	Ad.	recovered	19-04-76	Viheljarvi, Finland.
b).	"	21-12-75	Ad.	"	02-05-77	Pieksamaki, "
c).	"	14-12-75	Ad.	"	24-07-77	Nurmi, Hame, "
d).	"	22-01-78	Ad.	"	19-05-79	Lanmi, Hame, "
e).	"	22-01-78	Ad.	"	04-07-78	Jönköping, Sweden
f).	"	15-01-77	Ad.	"	10-05-79	Vasterbotten "
g).	"	26-11-78	Ad.	"	22-07-79	Nykobing, Sjaelland, Denmark
h).	"	28-02-79	Ad.	"	01-05-79	Augustinusga, Holland
i).	"	21-01-79	Ad.	"	15-03-79	Hamont, Limburg, Belgium
j).	"	22-01-78	"	"	25-01-79	Q.Mother Res., Slough 72km.N.
k).	"	21-01-79	"	"	24-03-79	Staines, Surrey. 68km.NNW
l).	"	13-02-77	"	"	15-07-79	Whitstable, Kent. 105km.ENE.

These augment the controls and the twenty or so movements recorded in previous reports to show that many of our Black-headed Gulls summer or breed in the Baltic Sea states. Scandinavia or the Low Countries. The British recoveries are of particular interest in suggesting substantial movement away from the coast in winter.

9. WILLOW WARBLER

- a). ringed 30-08-78 Strivens R.B.
 controlled 30-08-79 South Shields, Tyne & Wear, 457km.N.
 b). ringed 31-07-79 Llangorse Lake, Powys, Wales
 controlled 11-08-79 to 01-09-79 Shoreham sanc. 239km.SE

Willow Warbler passage through Shoreham was reviewed by Mark Wright in the 1977 Shm. Report.

10. BLUE TIT

- ringed 02-10-79 juv. Hodcombe Beachy Head.
 controlled 17-10-79 Shoreham sanc. 39km.WNW

11. STARLING

- a). ringed 21-10-76 full grown Beerse, Antwerpen,
 controlled 17-02-79 Belgium
 West Wor.
 b). ringed 14-02-79 Adult male West Worthing.
 released 08-05-79 Westfield, Hastings 67km.ENE

Starlings have a high recovery rate; previous movements involving Shoreham birds come from Belgium (4), Netherlands (3), U.S.S.R. (2), Lithuania, Poland, Germany and France as well as 8 British movements in excess of 30 miles.

12. REDPOLL

- ringed 02-11-75 Shoreham sanc. juv.
 dead 24-04-79 Freiston Shore Boston
 Lincs. 240km NNE

This is the first Shoreham recovery of this little finch which is only irregularly ringed in this area. Its finding date suggest it may still have been on return passage.

As always there were several local recoveries but fewer than usual, a rather unexpected finding in view of the harsh winter.

J.A.N.

MEMBERS' RECORDS

It would be a great help to the Recorder if members would send in their records twice a year, with the second batch in December, leaving the last few records to the first week in January. This is vital if Members want to receive the annual report at the March A.G.M.

Members will have noted that the Systematic list has now been re-organised into the Vobus order and unfortunately, as yet, is not numbered. The Society's 'master sheet' records

have also been arranged in this order so it is imperative that records should now be submitted accordingly and not in chronological or the old Wetmore order. The list order appears on p.44 in the 1978 Shoreham Report - the unspotted omission (Long-tailed Tit) follows Bearded Tit. (now Bearded Reedling)

The Society's record sheets are set out as shown:-

<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Locality/Notes</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Observer</u>
Redstart	Aug.30	Cissbury	48	B.F.F.

It would be appreciated if members sending in lists would keep to this system where practicable. Rarities should have adequate supporting notes. On this point and other aspects of record keeping it is suggested that members read the special supplement issued by the Sussex O.S. on records and note taking; many of the points raised in this document should equally apply to this Society's records.

NOTABLE BIRDS OF THE AREA IN 1979

This feature is based upon the records sent in by the following:-

Miss M. Davies-Scourfield, Mrs.B.Reeve, Messrs.S.R.Allen, B.R.Clay, P.J.Clay, J.Feest, B.F.Forbes, F.J.Forbes, C.J.Helyer, G.Holman, R.Ives, Dr.J.A.Newnham, R.F.Porter, T.Smart, B.J. Short, K.J. Tanner, Dr. A.B. Watson, M.Welfare.

ABBREVIATIONS:- ad.-adult- imm.-immature; juv.-juvenile; ly.-first year; m.male; f.-female; E.-east; W.-west etc. c.c.-Cuckoos Corner; W.B.-Worthing Beaches; S.B.-Southwick Beach; H.B.-Hove Beach; Harb.-Shoreham Harbour; N.S.F. New Salts Farm. Sanc.-Sanctuary; S.R.B.- Strivens Reed Bed; W.R.D.-Worthing Rubbish Dump; S.P.-Sussex Pad; W.W.-Widewater; s.p.-summer plumage; w.p.-winter plumage; Downs.-refers to the downland area between the Adur Valley and the A.27 road, including Cissbury.

DIVER SP. 8 different days during Jan. offshore, max. 7 W.W.B. Jan. 17; 178 hours spring sea-watching produced 91 E., max. 25 E. Apr.8; at W.B. 1 W. Sept.25, 1 E. Oct. 22 and 2 E. Nov. 25

- RED THROATED DIVER. 1 W. S.B. Jan. 1; 1 W.W. Jan. 3;
singles W.B. Feb. 25 and Apr. 10;
1 Harb. Mar 27
- BLACK THROATED DIVER. 1 W.W. Mar. 23; singles W.B. Apr. 11,
May 14 and 29
- GREAT NORTHERN DIVER. 1 E. W.B. May 6 (R.I.); 1 E. There
May 10 (J.A.N)
- LITTLE GREBE. max. 12 W.W. Jan. 1; up to 2 Adur and
6 W.W. Dec.
- GREAT CRESTED GREBE up to 5 in various offshore localities
in Jan.; during spring sea-watches
10 E., last May 17.
- RED NECKED GREBE 1 Harb. Jan. 3 - 10; 1 Brooklands Jan. 29 -
Feb. 9 (both var. obs); 1 Ferring Feb 25
(FJF); 3 W.W. Mar. (RFF). These are the
first recorded since 1973; the most ever
recorded in this area was 7 in 1970.
- SLAVONIAN GREBE singles W.B. in w.p. Mar. 14 (JAN);
Apr. 15 (R.I) and Dec. 22 (var. obs)
- BLACK-NECKED GREBE 1 s.p. W.B. Mar. 14 (JAN) and 1 w.p. E.
there Oct. 23. These are the first recorded
since 1970.
- FULMAR regularly recorded offshore in spring after
Mar. 19; max. 27 May 1 and 14 May 26,
62% of the 168 sightings were moving W.;
singles W.B. Jul. 31; Sept. 5, and Sept. 18
only autumn records .
- CORY'S SHEARWATER 1 W. Brighton Beach Apr. 12 (per BJS);
1 W. W.B. June 26 (FJF). If accepted by
B.B. These are the first recorded in this
area and only the third and fourth county
observation. Both were seen on strong
S. - SW. winds.
- MANX SHEARWATER 1 E. S.B. Apr. 11 and 1 W. there Apr. 30 (MW);
9 W. W.B. (all 'puffinus') May 17 (JAN, BJS)
and 1 W. S.B. May 18 (MW)

- GANNET During spring seawatches a small no.
(less than 50) moving W., even fewer E.;
17 W. W.B. Aug. 2, 13 E and 7 W. there
Aug. 9 and 16 W. in 35 mins. Nov. 3.
- CORMORANT 12 upper Adur Jan. 6; regularly observed
offshore with max. 20+ E.W.B. Nov. 11
- SHAG On Mar.4, 1 Harb, 1 E. S.B. and 2 E. Brighton
Beach; 1 Harb. Mar. 18; 1 E. and 1 W. W.W.
Apr. 8; 1 W. W.W. Nov. 10. It is difficult
to elucidate how many birds these records
involve, possibly only 2 individuals.
- GREY HERON 17 nests Wyckham Wood.
- WHITE STORK 1 landed exhausted Adur Jan. 3 (per R.F.P.):
whether this is the individual seen moving W.
over Goring on Dec. 31 1978, or the escaped
individual which was eventually found dead
at S. Heighton, is unclear.
- BEWICK'S SWAN 12 swans, probably this sp., E. S.B. Jan.1
(MW): 3 S.P. Jan 6 - 10; 2 Adur Levels
Dec.16 and 21 there Dec. 31. This is the
largest collection seen in this area.
- GREY GEESE SP. 20 S. Hove Jan 1; 60 W. Ferring Jan. 1;
during first week Jan. 150 W. offshore.
The invasion of grey geese at the
beginning of the year is unprecedented.
- BEAN GOOSE 22 E. over Lancing in late afternoon
Feb. 11 (BJS). Only recorded previously
at Wiston Mar. 64
- WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE 39 W. Worthing Jan.1; 12 W. Lancing
Jan. 5; 8 S.P. Jan. 5-8; 8 Downs Jan.28
and on the same day 28 W. (only 2 juv)
Worthing and 14 S. Hove; 290 (in flocks
of 50 and 240) E. Shoreham Feb. 18;
120 E. Worthing Feb. 23; 21 Adur and Sanc.
Feb. 24-25.
- GREY-LAG. GOOSE 1 Hove lagoon Jan.18-19; and Feb.6.

CANADA GOOSE

3 Adur Levels Jan. 27 and only 2 there Apr. 1; 50 SE. over Goring Feb. 1 and 8 N. there Jul. 3; in Dec. 6 Wiston Pond on the 8th, 78 Adur Levels on the 16th. and 200+ there on the 31st. This enormous flock was presumably part of the Amberley wintering population.

BRENT GOOSE

178 W. W.B. and S.B. Jan. 1; a further 95 W. on 5 dates W.B. up to Jan. 23; grazing on the airfield Jan. and Feb. with max. 45 Feb. 17; eastward offshore passage commenced Jan. 28 and by May 8 550 passed, max. 100 Apr. 8; 11 W. Ferring Sept. 23 then small no. until 340 W. W.B. Nov. 7 and 311 W. W.B. in 1½ hrs. Dec. 12.

SHELDUCK

Offshore westward movement at the beginning of the cold spell were 180 W. Jan. 1, 35 W. Jan. 2, 72 W. Jan. 3 and 38 W. Jan. 27; many more than usual Adur with max. 46 Feb. 24; 178 hrs spring seawatching only revealed 50 W. and 34 E.; 7 NE. Downs May 31: 34 W. W.W. Dec. 23 is only notable record for later part of year.

WIGEON

westward offshore movements at the beginning of the year were 122 Jan. 1. 50 Jan. 2, 145 Jan. 3, 90 Jan. 4, and 60 Jan. 5; record numbers in the Adur valley with a max. 140 Jan. 7, still 40 there Feb. 17 and the last 2 Feb. 24; at Adur Levels counts of 15 Jan. 7, 150 Jan. 14, 50 Feb. 13 and 200 Feb. 17; 50 E. in small groups W.B. Oct. 23; 15 Adur Levels Dec. 26.

GADWALL

1 m. S.P. and Toll Bridge area Jan. 2 - Feb. 5 (var. obs); 4 Adur Levels Feb. 17. (PJC). These are the first recorded for many years.

TEAL

max. Adur Valley 20 Jan. 5; counts from Adur Levels Jan. 14-5, Feb. 17 - 250, Mar. 18 - 30, Dec. 16 - 130, Dec. 26 - 80; occasionally seen offshore with max. 9 E. W.B. Oct. 23.

MALLARD

200 Adur Valley Jan. 2 - 5; 21 W. offshore up to Jan. 5; Adur Level counts of 20 Feb. 17 and 40 Dec. 16.

PINTAIL

3 W. W.B. Jan. 3 and 2 E. there Feb. 11; Adur Levels counts of 2 Jan. 27, 20 Mar. 3 and 2 Dec. 16 and 26; 4 E. W.B. Oct. 23

GARGANEY

2 SRB. Mar. 10 (PJC)

SHOVELER

3 Adur Jan. 2; 3 Brooklands Jan. 20; 30 Adur Levels Mar. 18 and 1 there Dec. 16; 3 E. W.B. Apr. 9 and 2 E. there Oct. 23

POCHARD

up to 11 Southwick Canal Jan. and Feb.; 3 Adur Jan. 14 and 2 there Jan. 23; 5 W. W.B. Jan. 4; 2 pair Wiston Pond Mar. 3, Dec. 20 and 29; 1 f. Adur Levels Mar. 18.

TUFTED DUCK

max. 5 Adur Jan. 2; up to 6 Harb. Jan.; up to 2 W.W. late Feb. and 2 Adur Levels Feb. 17; recorded at Wiston Pond Feb. and Dec. with max. 8 birds; offshore movements of 6 W. W.B. Mar. 11, 13 E. W.B. Apr. 8 and 13 E. W.W. Oct. 13; 2 pairs Harb. Dec. 25. This is the highest annual total for the area since the winter of 1963.

SCAUP

a record 19 W. offshore Jan. 1; 1 m Hove Lagoon Feb. 18 and 23.

EIDER

96 E. was the spring seawatch total with max. 30 W.B. Mar. 11 and Apr. 10; 5 E. W.B. Sept. 26

LONG-TAILED DUCK

1 f. W.B. flying E. May 7 (JAN). This is the first since 1968 and one of the latest dates for the country.

COMMON SCOTER

40 E. Ferring Jan. 1; 15 W. Shoreham Jan. 5; spring sea watching total of 6142 E. with 4500 passing on Apr. 8. This day of strong SE winds was one of the largest scoter passages seen in the Channel with 12,000 observed from Beachy Head and a staggering 27,000 from Dungeness. Last record in spring June 1; 6 E. and 2 W. W.B. Aug. 9 and 50 W. Sept. 25 was only sizable autumn record.

VELVET SCOTER

between Apr.7 and May 15 33E. offshore with max. 13 Apr.8; 1 W.B. Aug.25 and 4 E. there Oct. 24. This species, too, has been recorded more in 1979 than in any previous year.

GOLDENEYE

during early Jan. 17 W. offshore; up to 3 Adur Jan; 5 f. W.W. Feb.16 - mar.6. These are the first records for 5 years.

SMEW

1 probable upper Adur Jan. (per PJC)

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

total 30 W. early Jan. offshore; up to 6 Harb. Jan.-Feb.; 30 on sea Ferring Feb.16 and 23 on sea W.B. Apr 10; 280 E. spring seawatching until May 7 with max. 135 E. Apr.8; 5 E. W.W. Oct.23 and 15 W. W.B. Oct.24 were first autumn dates; 37 Ferring Dec.20

GOOSANDER

3 from S. Adur Jan.3 (MW); 3 there Jan 5 (BFF); a party of 11 (all imms/f.) and a party of 10 (inc. 3 m.) Adur Jan. 6. (MW) 1 f. Adur Jan.14 (CFH) and 1 there Jan.20 (BFF); 2 Ferring Feb.16 (FJF) and 1 Adur Feb.17 (PJC). MW: comments 'may be over 20 birds involved on Adur'. These are the first since 1973 and the largest collection in our area.

RED KITE

1 Adur Levels Oct.14 (PJC); 1 W. Cissbury Oct.20 (BFF et al). The only other local record was from Chanctonbury in Nov.71.

MARSH HARRIER

1 possibly this sp. high over W.B. going S. May 1 (FJF).

HEN HARRIER

singles (both m. and ring-tail) on 12 dates up to Apr.14 Downs; 1 ring-tail Sanc. Jan.14; 1 Downs above Shoreham Sept.9 (KJT) - an exceptionally early date; 1 r.t. Downs Oct. 24 and 26; 1 m. Applesham Nov. 2; 1 NW. Airfield Dec.3.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER

1 imm. or f. Downs June 2 (FJF)

SPARROWHAWK

records of 1 or 2 on scattered dates from Airport, Adur Levels, Downs, E.Worthing, Ferring, Lancing, Sanc., Sompting.

BUZZARD 1 coasting E. Worthing Apr.8 (JAN): 1 Downs Sept.9 (BFF); 1 N. from sea Ferring Dec.20(FJF)

OSPREY 1 Downs Aug.5 (FJF). Ospreys have been recorded from the Downs before - see 'Raptors on the Downs' in shm.Rpt.1977.

RED-FOOTED FALCON 1 sub-adult f. Cissbury c. May 25 - June 1 (var.obs) - the first of this species to be recorded in this area.

MERLIN 1 f. Downs Oct.6 and 20 (BFF); 1 (prob.imm m.) Sanc. Oct. 24 (JAN)

HOBBY first recorded arriving from sea W.B. Apr.28; 1 N. Hove Apr.30, 1 N.Worthing May 5; singles arriving W.B. May 7 and 20; singles Downs Apr.29, May 12 and 15, and June 16; 1 Durrington May 14 and 27; autumn records were 1 Sanc. Sept.5 and 12; and 1 Downs Oct.4. This is the largest collection of Hobbies recorded in a year.

GREY PARTRIDGE 25 Swandean Hosp. lawn Feb. 8.

QUAIL up to 3 heard calling Downs 10 dates May 29 - Aug. 27; 1 Southwick Hill July.

WATER RAIL 1 - 2 Adur and Sanc., Jan.; 1 wintering S.R.B. and recorded as late as May 13.

COOT large party feeding S.P. Jan.-Feb. with max. 120 Jan.28; 26 Brooklands Jan.; 22 Adur Levels and 30 near Small Dole in Jan. These are the largest parties recorded for many years and presumably cold weather immigrants.

OYSTERCATCHER regularly seen Ferring in small numbers; spring sea-watch totals of 75 E. and 72 W. in 178 hrs.; 1 Adur Oct., Nov., and Dec.; only sizable flocks in autumn were 37 W. W.B. Sept.3 and 10 W. there Nov. 17.

AVOCET 1 Adur Mar.25 (CFH); 1 E. W.B. May 10 (FJF)

<u>RINGED PLOVER</u>	counts from Adur:-	counts from Ferring:-
	Jul.29 - 2	Jan.9 - 183
	Aug.12 - 110	Jan.27 - 131
	Sept.1 - 244	Feb.14 - 123
	Sept.3 - 138	Sept.2 - 130
	Oct.6 - 125	Oct.14 - 100
	Oct.27 - 135	Dec. 4 - 160
	Nov.11 - 104	Dec.20 - 200

this species is frequently recorded moving offshore - it would be interesting to know if birds move between these two sites.
1 pr.bred W.W.; 1 partial albino Adur Nov.

GOLDEN PLOVER

1 Downs Feb.24 and 1 there Sept. 21; 2 W. Adur Mar.3; 1 Ferring Sept.2; 9 Adur Levels Dec.16 and 71 there Dec. 26.

GREY PLOVER

peak counts at Ferring:- Jan. 11 - 114, Jan.27 - 173, Feb. 10 - 184, Dec.20 - 109. Last spring record. W.B. May 30; 2 W. Adur Mar. 3 and 1 there Nov. 11.

LAPWING

on Jan. 1 700 SW. W.W., 245 W. W.B. and 2000 Adur, c.300 S.P. Feb.; 5 prs. bred Highdown; post-breeding flocks in Adur of 7-800 Aug.11 600 Aug. 19 and 658 Oct.10.

KNOT

1 Adur Jan.3; 2 W.W. Jan. 23, 4 in s.p. W.B. May 12; recorded 6 dates Aug.25 - Sep. 19 Adur with max. 6 Sept.15; 2 W.W. Nov. 7. This species remains an unusual wader in our area.

SANDERLING

150 E. with Dunlin W.W. Jan.1; peak winter counts Ferring:- Jan. 15 - 86, Jan.27 - 82, Feb. 10 - 62, Dec. 4 and 20 - 80; during May 129 E. and 70 W. W.B. with last date May 26; 1 Adur Sept. 27.

LITTLE STINT

1 Adur Aug. 25 (MW). This is the first since 1975 and only the sixth of the decade.

CURLEW SANDPIPER

a good autumn with records from Adur on 8 dates Aug. 26 - Oct.26 with max. 5 Sept. 1.

PURPLE SANDPIPER

4 Ferring Jan. 1 and 3 there Jan. 27.

DUNLIN selected counts Adur:- selected counts Ferring:-

Jan.17 - 1050	Jan.15 - 320
Jan.31 - 750	Feb.10 - 300
Sept.1 - 34	Dec. 4 - 250
Oct.27 - 79	Dec.20 - 300
Nov.14 - 253	
Nov.24 - 593	

Usual small numbers on Adur throughout Aug.
but higher numbers than usual in Sept.

350 E. in small parties W.B. in 1½ hrs. Dec.22
and 150 E. there in 5 mins. Dec. 23 both on a
rising tide, a smaller W. movement noted on
falling tide. Dec.5 and 30, possibly the Ferring
Dunlin are roosting with the Adur birds therefore
considerable interchange may take place between
these 2 sites.

PUFF singles Adur Aug.4, Aug.26 and Sept.3 (MW)

JACK SNIPE 1 S.P. Jan. 1 was the only record.

SNIPE 150 Adur Jan.5; 35 in S.R.B. Jan.13; Adur
Levels counts of 500 Jan.27 and 200 on Feb.3
and 17; the largest no. recorded at the end
of the year was 19 Annington Dec. 18.

GREAT SNIPE a bird showing some of the features of this
species (and compared with Snipe) Coombes Jan.2-3
(BR). (see note).

WOODCOCK 1 S.P. Jan. 1; 1 Lancing Jan. 4 and 1 Clapham
May 31.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT 1 W. W.W. Jul.29 and 1 W. there
Oct.27 (MW)

BAR-TAILED GODWIT 1 or 2 occasionally W.B. and Ferring
Jan. and Feb.; spring passage very poor with only
429 E. offshore in 178 hrs.; recorded Adur
Sept. 13 - Oct. 6 with max. 4 Sept. 15.

WHIMBREL spring offshore passage of 85 E. after Apr.11
with low peak of 13 E. W.B. Apr.27; up to 5 Adur
May 4 - 11; 7 Goring Beach May 5; 1 over Applesham
May 3; in autumn 8 dates Adur Jul.15 - Aug.26 with
max. 5 Aug.4; 1 W.B. Sept.2 and 1 there Sept.5
were the last recorded.

CURLEW

1 Adur Jan.5; 13 over S.R.B. Jan.13; 15 Durrington Jan.27; 3 W. W.B. June 13, 13W there Sept. 5 and 11 W. Sept.22; up to 4 Downs 6 dates Sept.24 - Dec. 21.

SPOTTED REDSHANK

REDSHANK

1 Adur Jan.5 and 7 (BFF & CFH): 1 Adur Aug.26 (MW). Adur counts:- Feb.4 - 68, June 25 - 20 July 3 - 65, Sept.1 - 69, Oct.27 - 76, Nov.24 - 68, these figures suggest a further decline in the Adur population- 15 Ferring Jan. 14 and 23 there Feb.10. This species (along with Snipe and Yellow Wagtail) is the subject of a county breeding survey during the next 3 years.

GREENSHANK

no spring records. 12 dates Adur Aug.26 - Oct.3 with max. 8 Sept.9; 2 E. Sanc. Aug.19.

GREENSANDPIPER

2 Adur Levels Feb.3 and 17; 1 Ferring Rife Feb.18; 1 S.R.B. Apr.22; 1 Upper Adur July 27; 2 Adur Levels Oct.14, 4 there Nov.18 and 1 Dec.16.

WOOD SANDPIPER

2 S.R.B. Apr.8 (PC). This is the first record since 1971 and the first spring sighting.

COMMON SANDPIPER

first recorded Adur Apr.20; thereafter singles W.B. Apr.23,24 and May 3; 2 Washington Sandpits May 6; during autumn regularly recorded Adur (Aug.6 - Oct.7) with max., on upper reaches of 7 Aug.29 and on the lower stretches, max. 5 Sept.3.

TURNSTONE

14 Ferring Feb.10, 4 there Sept.2,3 Dec.4, and 4 Dec.20.; singles Adur May 5 and Sept.23; up to 4 W.B. May, Oct.-Nov.

ARCTIC SKUA

between Apr.12 and May 28 29 E. offshore with peak 10 May 1; 1 W. W.B. Sept.5; 1 E. W.W. Oct. 13; 3 E. W.B. Oct. 22 and 1 there Nov.15.

GREAT SKUA

singles E. W.B. Apr.12, Apr.22 and May 2; singles W. there Nov.8 and 12. These are the most 'Bonxies' recorded in a year.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL

1 ad. S.B. and Hove Lagoon Jan.11 (MW); 1 2.y. W.B. Jan. 21 (per JAN); 1 ad. W.B. Mar. 11 (PC); 1 1.y. Footbridge Adur Mar (per R.S.P.B. office); 1 ad. W.B.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL (cont.)

Oct.7 (BJS); 1 2y. W.W. Oct.23 (MW), possibly the same bird seen there Nov.14 - Dec. 13 (var.obs); 1 ad. W.W. Oct. 26 (MW) 1 2y in Footbridge area Dec.(RSPB) (A record number of sightings.) 1 ly. W.W. moved off inland Nov. 1 (A.Prater)

LITTLE GULL 1 Harb Jan.14; 1 W.B. Jan.28 and Feb.2; only 10 E. during 178 hrs spring sea watching between Apr.8 and May 10; 1 ad. W.W. Apr.8; no autumn records; 1 W.B. Dec.8.

SABINE'S GULL 1 W. W.B. Jan.4 (JAN) and 1 there Aug.28 (FJF). The only other Society record is of 1 in Sept. 56.

BLACK-HEADED GULL Coastal small-gull roost count (mainly this sp.) Jan.20 totalled 39, 266 between Brighton and Ferring; 15 - 20,000 roosting S.B. Mar.19; autumn roost estimates W.B. 8,000 Aug.11, c.50,000 Sept.5 and c.40,000 Sept.27; 2,000 following plough Erringham Fm. Sept.30; 15,000 roosting Adur Nov.7 in strong SW winds. All counts or estimates of large roosts, movements or feeding flocks of this sp. (and the other commoner gulls) are welcome.

SLENDER-BILLED GULL a bird showing several characteristics of this sp. passed W. W.B. Sept.26 (JAN).

COMMON GULL 7,000 roosting S.B. Mar.19; 2-3,000 Airfield Apr.8 and 1000 there Apr.9; possibly 10,000 in large gull roost W.B. Sept.27

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL 6 Adur Oct. 10.

HERRING GULL between Brighton and Ferring the total no. of 'large' gulls roosting Jan.20 8954 - mainly this sp.; bred successfully Worthing; up to 9 individuals of yellow-legged race Adur 9 dates July 15 - Oct.13.

GLAUCOUS GULL 1 imm. E. W.W. Apr. (MW), this bird was also seen at Selsey Bill earlier in the morning

GREAT BLACK BACKED GULL counts of roosting birds Adur:- Jan.17 - 500; Jan.31 - 800; Nov. 7 - 900; Dec.5 - 750

KITTIWAKE 1 imm. W.W. Mar. 11 and 1 ad. there Aug.16; 178hrs spring seawatching total 84 E. and 44 W. (late Mar. 50 E., 5 E. in Apr. and the rest May)- 1 dead C.C. Dec.19.

SANDWICH TERN first recorded W.B. Mar.24 thereafter 2314 E. with max. 232 Apr.8; small autumn passage with peak 18 W. Sept. 25; only 2 sightings at the beginning Oct. and last seen W.B. Nov.14

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN first seen Apr.7, spring sea-watch total of 1180 with the peak period May 8 - 10; much smaller autumn passage recorded until Sept.25 with max.48 W. Sept.6.

LITTLE TERN first recorded Apr.13 thereafter 270 E. with max. 31 May 7 and 43 May 20; 1 W.B. Sept.18 and 1 there Sept.25 are the only autumn records.

BLACK TERN only 4 recorded in spring all W.B.; 1 Apr.11, 2 May 14 and 1 June 13; autumn records likewise all W.B., 2 W. Aug.9, 6 W. Aug.17, 2 W.Aug.24 and 3 W.Sept.25.

AUK ST 29 sightings during 178 hrs spring sea-watching, max 18 May 16 thought to be Guillemots; 1 prob. Razorbill W. W.B. Nov. 3.

RAZORBILL 1 W.B. May 20.

PUFFIN 1 found dead W.B. Jan. 21.

STOCK DOVE 30 - 40 Sanc. Jan.30; 90 Downs Mar.2 and 30 there July 18; breeding season records from Ferring Rife, Durrington, Downs, Patching, New Erringham Fm.

WOOD PIGEON 160 W. offshore in early Jan.; c2,000 Downs above Shoreham Jan.28.

COLLARED DOVE Sanc. roost often in excess of 300 during winter months.

TURTLE DOVE 1 Downs Apr.19 and 1 Sanc.Apr.23 marked their arrival; breeding season sightings from Sanc., Downs, S.R.B., Durrington, Highdown and Patching; autumn peaks Downs 25 July 17 and 30 July 18, still 10 there Sept.9; last recorded Sanc. Oct.10.

RING-NECKED PARAKEET 1 E. Worthing Apr.13.

CUCKOO 1 S.R.B. Apr.22 and 29; and 1 Downs Apr.25 are the only Apr.birds; 3 Downs May 7 and 4 there May 14; also May 14 1 Sanc. and 1 W.B. arriving from the sea; few autumn records - only singles from the Sanc. Aug.11 and Downs until Sept.2.

BARN OWL nested Adur Levels; 1 Sanc. Oct.17 until Dec.; 1 Downs Nov.21.

LITTLE OWL up to 2 Downs 8 dates Apr.25 - Oct.13.

TAWNY OWL pairs Shoreham, Lancing, Durrington, Steyning, West Worthing, Lychpole/Cissbury (?)

LONG-EARED OWL 1 roosting Downs Sept.12.

SHORT-EARED OWL 1 Adur and Airfield Jan.7 - May 7, 2 there Apr.18; 1 arriving from sea Shoreham Oct.10, 1 Downs Oct.20 and 1 seen departing SW. W.B. same day p.m.

SWIFT 1 Goring and 1 Sanc. May 1; 2 Shoreham and 2 Sanc. May 4; 3 N. Downs May 7 were the first spring records; 200 Hoe Court May 25; 500 Downs July 8; 250 Sanc. Aug.19; last 2 seen Shoreham Sept.12.

KINGFISHER records from vicinity of Adur (upper and lower stretches) Jan.-Mar. and Aug.-Dec.; pr. bred near Washington.

GREEN WOODPECKER 1 - 2 recorded at various times of the year from Coombes, Sanc., Downs, Hill Barn, Goring, Highdown, S.R.B.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER recorded from at least 16 wooded sites with max. 3 Washington Sandpits and Ashurst, and 5 individuals trapped S.R.B.

- LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER 1 Durrington during breeding season;
1 S.R.B. July 1; 1 Lychpole Aug.26;
1 Buckingham Park Aug.27; 1 Swandean
Sept. 14 and 1 Highdown Dec.13
- SKYLARK 7 - 10,000 W. over Shoreham Jan. 1 yet only
300 W. in 3hrs. W.B. on the same day; 300NE
Shoreham Jan.2 and 250 W. there Jan.24;
320 Palatine Pk. Jan.26; 410 W. W.B. Jan.27
and 500 Downs N. of Shoreham Jan.28.
- SAND MARTIN 2 N. airfield Apr.18; 40 occupied holes
Washington Sandpits July 2.
- SWALLOW 1 Sanc. Apr.11; 1 Sanc., Ferring and Downs
Apr.13 and fairly numerous by Apr.18; 5 prs
bred Sanc.; Sept.15 and 16 400 NW. in $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.
Sanc. in 2 hrs. Salvington Sept.22 4,000
passing; late dates of 100 W.B. Oct.20:
7 W.W. Oct.27; 4 W.B. Nov.11, 1 there Nov.23
and 1 feeding by Worthing Pier Dec.19.
- HOUSE MARTIN 1 Shoreham Apr.19 and 1 Worthing Apr.25 seem
to be the only records for this month; main
arrival in May but no large flocks noted;
peak autumn passage in late Sept. - Sept.23
800 over Shoreham in $\frac{1}{2}$ hr and 'thousands' E.
high over Sanc.; Sept.28 1500 NE. Shoreham
in $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.; Sept.29 steady E. Passage but less
than 500 per hr.; 200 Downs Oct.13; 350
Worthing Oct.20, 16 there Oct.28 and 5 Nov.10.
- TREE PIPIT 1 singing Shaves Wood Apr.29 on at least
8 dates Aug.25 - Sept.4 Downs with max. 14
Aug.27 and 12 Aug.31; 7 Sanc. Aug.26 and
1 trapped there Sept.15.
- MEADOW PIPIT 40 Harb. Jan.3; 256 N. W.W. Mar.31; 40 Downs
Aug.30; autumn passage over Sanc. and
Shoreham Sept.21 - Oct.10 with max. 150E.
Sept.29 and 50 SW. Sept.23; 60 W.R.D. Oct.3;
200+ Downs Oct.7.
- ROCK PIPIT 2 Harb. Jan - Feb.

YELLOW WAGTAIL 1 Airfield Apr.18 and 2 Sanc. Apr.26 were only Apr. records; 3 in from sea W.B. May 6; possibly breeding Annington - a breeding survey of this sp. is being undertaken by the Sussex. O.S. in 1980. Autumn records of 20 Downs Sept.16 and 2 W.R.D. Oct.3 - no notable passage on the Downs.

GREY WAGTAIL 1 Adur Jan. and Sept.; 1 S.R.B. Jan.13 and 2 there Apr.10; 1 Lancing Clump Apr.18; 1 - 2 Sanc. Aug. and Sept.; 1 Durrington Dec. 12.

ALBA WAGTAIL Steyning Road reed bed roost present but not counted autumn; widespread in winter.

WREN marked reduction in no. Sanc.

NIGHTINGALE 1 Cissbury May 7 and 2 there May 8; 1 Lychpole mid-May; 1 Tottington Wood June 6; 1 Oreham Common Apr.29, May 3 and June 23; 1 Cissbury Aug.30 was only autumn record. During late May and early June of 1980 the B.T.O. are running a national census of this species, if anyone would like to help count Nightingales in Sussex contact Dr. J.A. Newham.

BLACK REDSTART between Jan.7 and Feb.17 up to 3 in Harb. area; Jan.28 - Apr.9 1 W.B.; 1 Downs Apr.11, 1 there Aug.29 and 1 there Oct.13. 3 Oct.15 and 2 Oct.26; singles recorded W.W. Mar.10, Oct.27 and from Dec.23; 2 West Worthing Oct.20.

REDSTART 1 Downs Apr.25 and 4 Ferring May 5 only spring records; autumn counts Downs 16 dates Aug.26 - Oct.7 with max. 48 Aug.30 and 28 Aug.31; surprisingly few elsewhere - 1 Shoreham Sept.13, 1 Sanc. Sept.22 and 1 there Oct.10.

WHINCHAT 2 Ferring May 5, 3 Downs and 3 Sanc. May 7 and 2 Ferring May 8 were only notable spring records; peak autumn passage Downs late August with max.23 Aug.28, 38 Aug.29 and 14 Aug.30; last recorded Downs Oct.5; fewer nos. seen elsewhere with 5 Adur Valley Aug.26

WHINCHAT (cont.) and 6 Adur Levels Sept.16; last singles Old Salts Fm. and Ferring Oct.13.

STONECHAT Jan. and Feb. records from Ferring, W.W., and Harb; no breeding records in the area- no autumn passage recorded Downs and generally much scarcer than usual with records of 1 - 2 only from Downs, Sanc., Adur Levels, W.W., Ferring/Goring.

WHEATEAR No Mar. records; 10 W.W. Apr.2 and 9 Goring Apr.3 and 7; 14 Downs May 7 and 11 there May 8; in autumn regularly recorded Downs Aug.10 - Oct.26 with peaks coinciding with the other chats - 31 Aug.28, 46 Aug.29, 48 Aug.30 and 45 Aug.31; 10 W.B. Sept.21; last birds 1 W.W. Oct.27 and 1 W.B. Nov.11.

RING OUZEL 1 Downs Apr.19; all autumn records also from Downs with sightings 11 dates Oct.4 -28 with max.5 Oct.7 and 7 Oct.24.

BLACKBIRD counts Cissbury of 40 Oct.7, 65 Oct.24 and 50 Oct.28

FIELDFARE 150 W. Shoreham Jan.1 and 50 W. WB. on the same day; on Jan.24 40 W. Shoreham, 20 Sanc, and 20 feeding in Worthing garden; 100+ Adur Levels Feb.3; 1 Downs Apr.11 and 2 Mill Hill on the incredibly late date of May 6 (S.R.A.) 1 Sanc.Oct.14; 80 High Salvington Oct.23; 35 Downs Oct.31 and 40 there Nov.23.

REDWING cold weather movements on Jan.1 of 230 W. W.B. and 100 W./hr W.W.; 300+ Adur Levels Feb.3 and still 30 there Apr.1; max. 60 Sanc.Feb.24; 1 Downs Oct.13 and 22 increasing to 20 by Oct.24, max.250 Nov.23; first 30 Sanc. not until Oct.31 and peak 100 there early Dec.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER 1 Sanc.May 4; 1 Downs May 12, June 19 and the late date Oct.20. This last bird was picked up exhausted. During 1980 the Sussex O.S. breeding survey continues.

SEDGE WARBLER 1 Airfield Apr.13, 4 there Apr.18,
8 Apr.22 and 13 May 7; first arrival
Sanc. not until May 9; few autumn records
with the last Sanc. Sept.29.

REED WARBLER 1 New Salts Fm. Apr.20, next arrival
Steyning Rd. reed bed May 7 and 2 Sanc.
May 9; breeding in most suitable habitats
in the area; autumn max. Sanc. 11+ Aug.4
and 7+ Sept.1; last recorded Sanc. Oct.17.

LESSER WHITETHROAT 4 Downs Apr.28, 6 there May 7 and
7 May 12; bred at various localities
including Downs, Sanc., and Durrington;
in autumn regularly recorded Downs Aug.
10 - Sept.16 with max. counts 31 Aug.27
and 30+ Sept.16; fewer Sanc. than usual
with only 14 trapped; last record 1 Sanc.
Sept.29.

WHITETHROAT 1 arriving from sea W.W. Apr.18; 2 Downs
Apr.19, 3 there Apr.28 and 15 May 7;
Downs Aug.10 - Oct.7 with peak counts
of 48 Aug.10, 50 Aug.26, 62 Aug.27 and
100 Sept.16; 40 Sanc. Aug.26 but few on
other days.

GARDEN WARBLER 1 singing Coombes May 8 and 1 Shaves
Wood June 3 are only spring records;
4 Downs Aug.25; only 4 individuals seen
or trapped Sanc. Aug.27 - Oct.3.

BLACKCAP 1 f. High Salvington Jan.28- at least
1 m. and 1 f. attending bird table West
Worthing regularly Feb.16 - Mar.5;
2 Southwick Mar.14 were probable first
arrivals; 1 Coombes Apr.17 but none Sanc.
until May 9; regularly recorded Downs
Aug.25 - Oct.13 with peaks of 50 Sept.
12 and 70-80 Sept.16; recorded Sanc.
until Oct.24 with max. 13+ Sept.15;
last 3 seen Ferring Oct.29.

CHIFFCHAFF wintering individuals at Worthing Jan.15,
Sanc. Jan.20, N.Lancing Feb.11 and
Sompting Feb.12; 3 Sanc. Mar.24, 2 Mar.25
and 5 Mar.28- no larger number throughout

CHIFFCHAFF (cont.) spring- 16 Downs Sept. 9 was the only significant record from this locality; Sanc. average autumn with max. 12+ Sept.23, 8+ Sept. 29 and the last occurrence Oct.31.

WILLOW WARBLER late spring arrival - 2 S.R.B. Apr.10, 6 Downs Apr.11 and 2 Sanc.Apr.13; peak spring numbers Downs 35 Apr.19, 30 Apr.25 and 40 May 7; 20 Sanc. May 7 also; 110 Downs Aug.10, and 80 there Aug.25 and 27; average passage Sanc., max.40 Aug.26 and 6 dates when 13 or more were trapped, last trapped Sept.15.

GOLDCREST pair wintered and bred Sanc.; no autumn passage noted.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER 1 Downs May 8 was the only early May record; bred Coombe S.R.B.; Swandean, Durrington; autumn passage Downs Aug.11 - Sept. 16 with peaks of 50 Aug.29, 102 Aug.30, and 59 Aug.31.

PIEN FLYCATCHER 1 m. Coombes May 7 and 1 m. Downs May 8; 1 Sanc. Aug.26 and 1 Goring Aug.29.

BEARDED REEDLING 2 S.R.B. Nov.25, Dec.9 and 23 (PJC). The only previous record came from the same site in Oct.76.

LONG-TAILED TIT 13 S.R.B. June 13, small parties Coombes Oct. No autumn parties Sanc. - seemingly scarcer than usual.

MARSH TIT 2 Downs Apr.20.

NUTHATCH 2 stealing nuts Durrington Mar.4; 1 Ashurst Apr.13; 1 Chanctonbury July 12.

TREECREEPER 1 West Worthing garden Jan. 19 and Feb.12; all year in Coombes garden; up to 2 Wiston Pond in Dec.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE 1 imm. Cissbury Sept.4 (BFF). This is only the 4th of the decade.

JAY 2 Wiston May 15; 2 Highdown Oct.5; 1 Sanc. Oct.13 and 11 Downs Oct.15.

MAGPIE 12 Lancing College Mar.5; 1 N. W.W. Nov.10.

- ROOK Rookery counts: Cement Works - 37.
Southlands Hosp. - 24
- STARLING c.100,000 E. to roost Lancing Mar.7;
130 NW. W.W. Nov.10.
- TREE SPARKOW 20 Downs Jan.20, 50 there Jan.28 and
65 Mar.2; up to 70 Flood Arch early Mar.;
breeding season records from Ferring and
S.R.B.; few in autumn with max. 12 Downs Nov.12.
- CHAFFINCH 50 Downs Oct.20: 30 Highdown Dec.31.
- BRAMBLING recorded Sanc. Jan. 10 - Feb.21 with max.
30 -40 Jan.30: 20 Adur Jan.12; 1 Downs Jan.20
and 2 there Jan.28; max.60 Flood Arch Feb. -
Mar.3, still 12 there on Mar.3; 5 Goring Feb.18;
1 Downs and 1 Ferring Oct.20, 1 Downs Oct.22
and 1 S.R.B. Dec.23.
- GREENFINCH 100 Sanc. early Jan.; and 100 Highdown Dec.31.
- GOLDFINCH up to 10 Sanc. Jan.; 16 N. W.B. Apr.28;
60 Sanc. Oct.10; 140 W.R.D. Oct.3.
- LINNET large flock Sanc. Jan.-Feb. with peak 1500
Jan.28; 500 Downs Feb.25; 240 Downs Oct.4;
60 Sanc. Oct.13; 100 Highdown Dec.31.
- TWITE 2 N. W.W. Jan.1; recorded 5 dates Adur Jan.10 -
Feb.26 with max.30 Jan.23; 8 Adur Nov.1 is the
only record for the late months.
- REMPOLL recorded 14 occasions Oct.14 - Nov.6 with
max. 15 Downs Oct. 27, 11 Sanc.Oct.21 and
12 E. West Worthing Oct.26.
- SNOW BUNTING 1 m. Goring Feb.17 (JF); 1 f. W.W. Nov.25 -
Dec.10 (Var. obs)
- GIRL BUNTING No record for the first year since the
Society started.
- REED BUNTING max. 10 recorded Goring garden Feb.19 -
Apr.14;
- CORN BUNTING winter roost S.R.B. up to 300 birds; 40
Downs Mar.2; no large flocks Sanc. in autumn.

CHANGES IN BIRD POPULATIONS 1960 - 79

At the end of the decade it seems appropriate that some attempt to evaluate changes in the local bird population should be made. In this article I have used the reports of our Society 1960-1979 inclusive to investigate any such changes and relate them to more widespread changes in Sussex as shown in "The Birds of Sussex" by Michael Shrubbs (1979). I have selected a number of species for consideration, based broadly on whether they are well represented and/or consistently recorded in our area. At the end of each column of the table I have given the comment of Mr. Shrubbs, and preceding the table is a summary of the recorded changes.

Divers

The number of winter (Nov.-Feb.incl.) records has decreased from an average of 3.6/year in the '60s to just over 2/year in the '70s in accordance with M.S.'s findings.

Fulmar

The numbers are distorted by the amount of sea-watching in each year, but it is clear that since the early '60s they have increased a great deal, along with numbers summering on the East Sussex cliffs.

Garganey

More were recorded in the '70s than the '60s, but this was probably due to increased watching. M.S. notes a decrease.

Shelduck

This species, along with Brent Goose, has increased over the period, due possibly to a series of good Arctic breeding seasons. Compare the numbers seen in the two hardest winters: 50 in '63 and more than 400 in '79.

Brent Goose

Increased over the period, although number per year depends largely whether the spring and autumn passages are noted.

Bewick's Swan

Has undoubtedly increased with reasonably regular records from Old Steyning Railway in the '70s, these birds probably being wanderers from the increased Amberley population.

Sparrowhawk

The population of this raptor was at an all-time low in the late '50s and throughout the '60s, but has increased greatly over the last decade so that although M.S.'s comment that the species had decreased was true for the '60s it does not hold now. He notes an increase since '65, mirrored exactly by our records.

Hen Harrier

From only 3 in the '60s there were more than 30 records in the '70s in agreement with the increase noted by M.S. This cannot entirely be due to increased coverage of the Downs.

Quail

Numbers fluctuate with very high numbers in so-called 'quail years' e.g. '65 when over 20 were recorded. However, the population seems to have remained fairly stable, in agreement with M.S.

Avocet

No increase noted at all with exactly the same numbers in '60s and '70s, despite increased coverage in the '70s.

Mediterranean Gull

Apparently large increase since '60s, but may well be due to increased awareness and coverage. However M.S. notes an increase.

Little Owl

Has definitely increased since the '60s with up to 6 pairs on the Downs between Cissbury and the Adur in recent years which do not seem to have been present when the Downs were covered in the '60s. M.S. notes a decrease, which is certainly not reflected locally.

Woodpeckers

All three woodpeckers have increased greatly, the two spotted species no doubt due to the temporary increase of suitable trees thanks to Dutch elm disease.

Woodpeckers (cont.)

As the affected trees are removed, it seems probable that the population will drop dramatically. For the Green Woodpecker, less dependent on such trees, the reason for its increase is not so apparent. M.S. notes an increase for Great Spotted.

Nightingale

This appears to vary with observer coverage, as the most was in '76, the year of the Sussex O.S. survey; otherwise varying between 1 and 5 records per year throughout the period.

Grasshopper Warbler

Great fluctuations have been noted throughout Sussex in the past and in the early '60s the Shoreham population was very low, rising to a peak in '67-'75, when many singing males were noted at Devil's Dyke, Mill Hill, Lychpole Hill etc. The population in '77-'79 was again very low with just one or none in some years.

Blackcap

The wintering population of Blackcaps in Shoreham has shown no signs of increasing since the '60s, with no more than one in any one year other than 1960, although the habit did not start until then, so M.S.'s comment is reflected here.

Chiffchaff

Numbers wintering have remained fairly static '60-'79. although there were none in '66-'69. However, as with Blackcap, overwintering appears only to date from 1960, so we are in agreement with M.S.

Pied Flycatcher

Has increased from an average 5/year in '60s to nearly 7/year in '70s, although this may well be due to increased watching.

Redpoll

Has increased greatly since '60s when only a few were recorded each year, to the peak of more than 400 in '75. This was part of a widespread increase throughout the U.K., and has been attributed to an influx, possibly of foreign birds, similar to Crossbill invasions. The population has returned to near normal levels over the last 2 years, and it will be interesting to see what the next 5 years will bring.

Twite

Has increased from just a few in the early '60s to a regular flock of 35-60 in the late '70s - nothing at all to do with coverage as they are reasonably easy to find.

Decrease from at least 3 regular pairs in the early '60s to just an occasional singing male in the late '70s - a trend noted throughout Sussex.

Tree Sparrow

Other than very large numbers in Jan.-April 1962 very few were recorded in the '60s, but now flocks of over 100 are common. Decrease noted, however, in '78-'79 (c.f. Redpoll). The decrease seems unlikely to be connected with observer coverage as this was as high as in any year in '78-'79, but very few were recorded.

CONCLUSION

It was impossible to investigate the population of many of our common species (e.g. Whitethroat, Swallow, Yellow Wagtail, Song Thrush) for which changes are suspected because no comparative data are given in our local Reports. However, of the species investigated 4 had decreased, 13 had increased and 7 had similar populations at the start and finish of the 20 year period. When M.S.'s comments are considered in context, we concur for 19 of the species considered, and disagree for only 3, the rest being either indeterminate or without comment from M.S.

TABLE

Year										Species
'60	'61	'62	'63	'64	'65	'66	'67	'68	'69	
2	2	5	7	2	2	0	11	2	3	Diver spp. *
5		2					1		4	Garganey
			3			10	2	2		Fulmar
2	7	12	50	32	27	20	14	12	65	Shelduck *
	8	26	160	105	11	60	440	41	150	Brent Goose
		2								Bewick's Swan
						2	1	2	2	Sparrowhawk
					1	1		1		Hen Harrier
2	1			c5	c20		2	1		Quail
9	1	1						2		Avocet
	2		1	1				2	1	Mediterranean Gull
	2	3	4	5	1	2	4	5	6	Little Owl
3	2	7		2	2	2		4	1	Gt. Spotted Woodpecker
	1	1	1							Lesser Sp. Woodpecker
2	2					4	2	3	5	Green Woodpecker
?	3	3		1	4	4	3	1	4	Nightingale
1		1			1	5	7	6	c10	Grasshopper Warbler
3	1	1	1				1		1	Blackcap *
6	5	3	1	4	2					Chiffchaff *
5	5	2		1	7	2	4	13	6	Pied Flycatcher
c10	6	4		c25	1	9			9	Redpoll
	3	2			20	30	20	15	6	Twite
8	2	2	3		2	4	3	1	1	Girl Bunting
17	200	1000	100	30	20	20	80	100	250	Tree Sparrow

* Winter only

M Many

? Indeterminate

Year

'70	'71	'72	'73	'74	'75	'76	'77	'78	'79	M.S.'s	Comment
7	2	3	2		3	1	2		13	Decrease	
	10					3		4	2	Decrease	
2	M	3	5		2	c20	M	120	180	Increase	
72	117	30	55	8	6	30	12	200	450	Increase	
54	140	52	100	196	53	130	21	1000	1500	Increase	
6	8	8						3	38	Increase	
1	?	8	8	7	10	10	10	12	10	Decrease from '50	
	5	5	5	7	1	2	2	4	4	Increase	
	4	3	4	4		3	6	3	3	No change	
						8	1	2	2	Increase	
	2	1			1	5	2	3	9	Increase	
1	6	12	2	4	5	6	12	10	2	Decrease	
3	8	c20	7	8	4	12	15	20	20	Increase	
2	3	4	7	2	6	4	6	10	6	Increase	
6	11	?	5	5	c10	8	20	20	7	Increase	
3	4	4	2	5	3	c10	4	4	7	Decrease	
c12	c15	9	8	7	9	5	1	2	4	Fluctuates	
1		1			1	1	1	1	3	Increase	
5		2	2	4	2	6	7	3	4	Increase	
5	c8	2	4	5	14	8	8	7	4	Increase	
3	1	15	10	20	400	c100	c80	c30	38	Increase	
		57	120	60	50	110	70	65	40	Increase	
2	2	6	2	5	1	1	2	2		Decrease	
300	500	1200	250	500	500	430	480	15	150	Increase	

BIRDS AROUND SHOREHAM 1979

After looking through the systematic list I suspect most local watchers will agree that 1979 was a good year; indeed probably the best year of the decade and possibly the most interesting since the formation of the society. Despite the obvious wealth of birds in our area I only received records from 18 members. As usual notable contributions came from B.F. and F.J. Forbes' coverage of the Downs; Miss M. Davies-Scourfield's observations near Steyning; B. and P. Clay's watching of the Adur Levels and Striven's Reed Bed; J. Feast's recording from the western limits of Goring, Ferring, Durrington and Salvington; and M. Welfare who kept notes on the migration both offshore and overland.

The arctic weather in January and February brought a promising, albeit uncomfortable, start to the year. This period was described in detail by M. Welfare in 'Hard Weather Movements New Year 1979' appearing in last year's report. Sixteen years have passed since the 1963 hard winter when wildfowl were recorded in our area in such abnormally high numbers. This winter will certainly be remembered for the large flocks of grey geese, predominately White-fronted Geese but also Grey-Lag and Bean, passing through the area. Other notable wildfowl include the Bewick's Swan at the Sussex Pad, the unusual number of Wigeon both offshore and in the Adur Valley, the first Gadwall for several years, the Goosanders and Smew on the river and the large number of diving and sea-duck offshore. The real rarities of this period must be the Sabine's Gull off Worthing, the White Stork and the possible Great Snipe in the Adur Valley. The high number of Coot, Brambling and possibly Linnets were probably due to the hard European weather but this alone doesn't account for the Snow Bunting in Goring, the sightings of Little Gulls nor the record counts of Grey Plover at Ferring. Despite the snow and ice both Chiffchaffs and Blackcaps were recorded wintering in various places.

Grebes were apparently widespread during the early months: our area certainly saw more than usual. Throughout January and February there was a Red-necked Grebe seen in the Harbour or at Brooklands; however, in March 3 were seen off Widewater. During this month both Slavonian and Black-necked occurred off Worthing. An Avocet on the Adur and Garganey at Striven's Reed Bed were the other interesting March birds.

By April spring is usually well underway; 1979 was exceptionally cold and with the exception of the first 10 days dominated by north winds, Passerines were few and thinly distributed but during the early part of the month the fresh S.-SE. winds produced an exciting sea passage of Brent Geese, Scoters, Mergansers, Eiders, Terns and skuas, it was during one watch that a Cory's Shearwater was seen passing by offshore, and during another that a Buzzard glided over. Two very unusual April records were the Glaucous Gull at Widewater and the 2 Wood Sandpipers at Striven's Reed Bed.

Most of the summer migrants arrived in May, and although no large 'falls' were recorded both Redstart and Pied Flycatcher were seen. As before, the offshore passage continued well into the month, the best records being of Arctic Skuas, Long-tailed Duck, 2 Great Northern Divers, an Avocet and at least 10 Manx Shearwaters. Raptors again provided talking points, in particular the large number of Hobbies, the harrier moving S. over Worthing and the sub-adult female Red Footed Falcon on Cissbury which obliged many members with close views.

Downland watchers were rewarded in June with a passage Montagu's Harrier and tantalising views of a large dark raptor which remained unidentified. The other rewarding site to watch was the coast where, in strong winds, 8 Manx Shearwaters, including at least 2 Balearic race, and yet another Cory's Shearwater were seen.

July is always one of the quieter months, 1979 was no exception, but by August return passage had begun in earnest and in no place was this better recorded than on the Downs. During the autumn passerine totals were at a level higher than many bird observatories; examples were 48 Redstarts, 102 Spotted Flycatchers, 110 Willow Warblers, 38 Whinchats and several Tree Pipits in August and 100 Whitethroats and 50 Blackcaps in September. The sightings of Osprey, Buzzard and imm. Red-backed Shrike also came from this area in the early autumn.

August and September are often the best months for watching passage waders on the Adur when Ringed Plover, Dunlin and Redshank are common and Greenshank, Whimbrel and godwits regular. Unfortunately there is no shallow wader pool in our area to attract stints and sandpipers therefore the records of Little Stint, Ruff, Spotted Redshank and Curlew Sandpiper are particularly noteworthy.

Apart from some Black Terns, interesting coastal movements during early autumn were few. Gulls began to increase in number throughout August and September when some large coastal roosts were recorded. As more observers watch gulls so more unusual plumage characteristics and species are noted; this is probably the explanation for the increase in Mediterranean Gull records and could account for the sighting of another Sabine's Gull in August and a possible Slender-billed Gull in September.

The best October birds were undoubtedly raptors and none more splendid than 2 sightings of Red Kite, one over the Adur Levels and the second from Cissbury a week later. Hen Harriers and at least 2 Merlins were recorded from downland habitat. Ring Gulls are now regularly seen on the Downs in October but many of our other summer visitors were still present during the month, perhaps the most unlikely being a mid-Oct. Reed Warbler at the Sanctuary and the very late Grasshopper Warbler on the Downs.

In the last two months of the year the best records came from the Adur Levels where 4 Green Sandpipers, 21 Bewick's Swans, 200+ Canada Geese, 71 Golden Plover and 2 Bearded Reedlings were seen. On the coast large parties of Brent Geese were seen moving westward to their wintering estuaries. 2 more Bonxies passed off Worthing Beach, a Little Gull was seen feeding with other gulls, a Snow Bunting visited Widewater and a Swallow was seen feeding over seaweed on Worthing Beach in mid-December.

J.A.N.

STRIVENS REED-BED REPORT 1979

Unfortunately, due to the pressure of the problems of having the new Steyning, Bramber and Beeding Bypass cut his farm in half, Mr. Strivens feels he cannot any longer let us operate on his land. This year, therefore, there will be no full report - ringing totals are combined in the ringing section of this report and sight records in the classified list.

The Steyning Ringing Group does still operate on adjacent land owned by West Sussex County Council, so bird ringing will continue in a limited way in the Steyning area.

The Group has started a nest-box scheme on the Wiston Estate, by kind permission of Mr. H. Goring. It is hoped that a brief report of this and other activities of the Group can be published next year.

P.J.C.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES OF MIGRANTS IN 1979

This feature has been compiled by records sent in by members:- abbreviation as in Notable birds of the area.

Whimbrel	Apr.11	W.B.	Sept.5	W.B.
Common Sandpiper	Apr.20	Adur	Oct.7	Adur
Sandwich Tern	Mar.24	W.B.	Nov.14	W.B.
'Commic' Tern	Apr.7	S.B.	Sept.25	W.B.
Little Tern	Apr.13	W.B.	Sept.25	W.B.
Turtle Dove	Apr.19	Downs	Oct.10	Sanc.
Cuckoo	Apr.22	S.R.B.	Sept.2	Annington
Swift	May 1	Goring	Sept.12	Shoreham
Sand Martin	Apr.18	Airfield	?	
Swallow	Apr.11	Sanc.	Dec.19	W.B.
House Martin	Apr.19	Shoreham	Nov.10	Worthing
Yellow Wagtail	Apr.18	Airfield	Oct.3	W.R.D.
Redstart	Apr.25	Downs	Oct.10	Sanc.
Whinchat	May 7	Downs	Oct.13	Ferring
Wheatear	Apr.2	W.W.	Nov.11	W.B.
Fieldfare	Oct.14	Sanc.	May 6	Mill Hill
Redwing	Oct.13	Downs	Apr.1	Adur Lev.
Grasshopper Warb.	May.4	Sanc.	Oct.20	Downs.
Sedge Warbler	Apr.13	Airfield	Sept.29	Sanc.
Reed Warbler	Apr.20	N.S.F.	Oct.17	Sanc.
Lesser Whitethroat	Apr.28	Downs	Sept.29	Sanc.
Whitethroat	Apr.18	W.W.	Oct.7	Downs
Garden Warbler	May 8	Coombes	Oct.3	Sanc.
Blackcap *	May 14	Southwick	Oct.29	Ferring
Chiffchaff*	May 21	Sanc.	Oct.31	Sanc.
Willow Warbler	Apr.10	S.R.B.	Sept.15	Sanc.
Spotted Flycatcher	May 8	Downs	Sept.16	Downs.

* excluding possible wintering birds

J.A.N.

GARDEN BIRDS 1979

Garden at Coombes (B.R.) breeding Pheasant, Green Woodpecker, Woodpecker, Swallow, Magpie, Blue Tit, Tree Creeper, Wren, Mistle Thrush, Song Thrush, Blackbird, Robin, Chiffchaff, Spotted Flycatcher, Dunnock, Starling, Greenfinch, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, House Sparrow, also seen Garden Warbler, Whitethroat, Long-tailed Tit, Snipe, Great Snipe ?, Pied Flycatcher,

Garden at West Chiltonington (G.H) Water Rail

Garden at Goring (J.F.) Redwing, Reed Bunting, Bullfinch, Snow Bunting, Goldfinch, Collared Dove, Great Tit, Willow/Chiffs;-overhead Fieldfare, Skylark, Lapwing, Heron, Grey Wagtail, Canada Goose, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Magpie, Stock Dove, Meadow Pipit, Kestrel, Tawny Owl, Yellow Wagtail, Wheatear,- in the past 7 years 68 different species have been seen from this garden in a very built up area.

Garden at West Worthing (J.A.N.) at least 2 wintering Blackcaps, feeding Fieldfare and Redwings, breeding Tawny Owl, over head Rose-ringed Parakeet, Buzzard, Brent and White-fronted Geese, Waimbrel, Common Sandpiper and Redpoll. *****

A DREAM COME TRUE

After a bad start (I boarded the wrong train), I met my friend Dorothy Du Boisson en route for Heathrow, where we met our friends from Stockton-on-Tees, Geoff and Wendy Grievson. They had done all the bookings etc., that were necessary, so we had plenty to talk about while waiting to board the plane to Miami.

At the airport we picked up our car just inside the perimeter. It was now dark, but ablaze with lights flashing and otherwise. After going round in a circle a very kind driver guided us out and on our way to Homestead, where we booked in at the Holiday Inn. We found it most comfortable and the food in the restaurant excellent. The staff were very friendly and helpful, and in fact the laugh we had with the Manager and Receptionist helped us to unwind after the journey. After our breakfast, egg, bacon, pancakes, syrup and lots of coffee, we went out to find the overhead wires alive with Grackles and in the distance raptors soaring. We were soon off on the real start of our holiday, bound for the Everglades. I wonder we made it, there was so much to see, Killdeer and vultures on a ploughed field, 70 plus vultures and several Hen Harriers over the distant trees, also a very colourful Meadow Lark, and Kestrel. At Taylors Slough we saw our first Little Green Heron, Anhinga and Belted Kingfisher. A quick visit to the Park Centre and into the Park with its acres of sawgrass, hammocks,

(stands of trees) and mangrove swamps. Ibis, herons, various egrets were numerous, we were seeing Ospreys and Red-shouldered Hawks. We returned to Homestead very pleased with our day, and planned to explore the area again next day on our way to Flamingo. This we did, stopping off at various ponds and trails. At Taylors Slough we were joined by friends from Majorca, Pat and Eddie Watkinson. Unfortunately a trail we'd been told not to miss, Long Pine, was being "burnt off" and closed to visitors. We journeyed to Flamingo having added several new birds to our list, including Glossy Ibis, Wood Stork, and Pileated Woodpecker. The following morning we were delighted to see from our window, terns, pelicans and waders. There was a Red-shouldered Hawk on the TV aerial over our door, and a Black and White Warbler by the restaurant.

We went for a very interesting walk after breakfast; beautiful butterflies, unusual insects, but they did not compare with the Roseate Spoonbills with the sun on them, or the Hen Harrier, and above all, a pair of Bald Eagles calling. Back at the Marina we had a closer look at the pelicans, Skimmers and Caspian, Royal and Forsters, Terns, before going back to Florida City for the night.

From there we made our way to Key West, stopping on the way at the Audubon Society's office. The owners of a house opposite had put a platform on a pole in their front garden and a pair of Ospreys were nesting!! We went off the highway at one point to see White-crowned Pigeons, Western Kingbirds, woodpeckers, sapsuckers, and Scissor-tailed Flycatchers. Back on the highway we counted 12 Osprey nests on the poles carrying the power cables across a 7 mile bridge with the Gulf of Mexico on one side and Atlantic Ocean on the other.

Key West has some very fine old colonial houses. Ernest Hemingway wrote some of his books there. Full of colour; Orchid trees, Bougainvillias, Poinsettias, Hibiscus and variegated shrubs growing 15 to 20ft high. Above all the sky was full of raptors, hawks, vultures and Frigatebirds, coming from all directions. We went to the beach and found waders, terns, Dowitchers, etc., and on a pond by the roadside what was the highlight of the day a Reddish Egret; its behaviour was so hilarious, it's indescribable. We made our way back to the Golf Course at Marathon to see the Burrowing Owls. We were very lucky and saw them sitting outside their holes on the fairway.

Back to Floria City, exploring here and there, finding one pond by the highway with several pairs of Roseate Spoonbills making a lovely splash of colour against a darkish background. We went back to see the Scissor-tailed Flycatchers and found an Osprey on a pole eating a 12" fish, again in a front garden. It was not a bit concerned about the movement on the ground, barely 8' away 3 cameras trying to get some good shots.

On our way to the West Coast we decided to have a quick look at the Anhinga Trail. Unfortunately it was raining, Geoff and Wendy decided to have a quick look round and were richly rewarded, a Least Bittern. The rain was easing up but we had a long journey ahead, so had to go. Shark Valley was disappointing the water level was too high, so was inaccessible. Then along the road, the birds we had come to see, Everglades Kite, male and female, super! Soon after dawn came the rain again. I think we were all relieved to reach Naples and find a Motel for the night, it was a hair-raising finish to the journey.

The next morning we went back to Corkscrew Swamp, and again we were told the water level was too high and not many birds about. We saw the usual woodpeckers, hawks, vultures, Ibis, Egrets, Smoothed-billed Ani's, Brown Thrasher and a little Blue Heron who stood on a bench to be photographed, and we almost missed the Limpkins.

Having left Naples we were getting into Orange country, with its groves and factories where the juice is extracted. Sunday the 9th we decided to have a quiet day on the beach, leaving Pat and Eddie to catch up on the mail. We find we are getting blasé about hawks, Kestrels, kingfishers, egrets, etc., so it was nice to see waders, Willets, plovers, Dunlin, Dowitchers, terns, Curlew (Whimbrel), Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers, and Mergansers. Not bad for a rest day. The next 2 nights we stayed at Fort Myers, we wanted to visit Sanibel Island; it is noted for its beautiful shells. We made for the Reserve - huge areas of water surrounding mangroves. We saw our usual Egrets etc., plus a Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow Crowned Night Heron, Pintail and Wigeon, which differs from ours, (it has a white bar over its head.) From Sanibel we went to Highland Hammock. I think this was one of our best days, on the journey we saw a lot of colourful robins, a pair of Scrub Jays, 2 Sandhill Cranes, and to Eddie's delight 3 Cara-Cara's.

At the Hammock which is quite an extensive place a Red-tailed Hawk, Hermit Thrush, Carolina Wren, alligators and terappins, and in the undergrowth a Deer eating grapefruit, it only made off when startled by another one falling from the tree. We were going to make an early start next morning and have another look round. Unfortunately there was a power failure. We had to wait for our breakfast to be cooked "the old way". We had gone to Big Bill's Bar-B-Que for it. I wonder what they used? From the Hammock to Moor Park, another large expanse of water with picnic area and woodland. We did not see the Red-headed Woodpecker, but the Blue Jays, Cardinals, warblers, Robins, Loggerhead Shrike and Bald Eagle, plus a raptor we could not identify made it another good day.

We had now come to the penultimate night and Titusville. Pat and Eddie took us to a motel they use when in the area. It looks across the Indian River to the Space Centre, and launching pad. We were somewhat shaken in the morning; it was foggy!! We could only see a short distance, just far enough to see 6 Horned Grebes (Slavonian). By the time we had our breakfast and joined Eddie the fog was clearing, so we went to the Centre. It was being reorganised for the influx of Xmas visitors. We were only able to go into one exhibition hall and the grounds. There were actual capsules and space suits that had been used, plus many models that would be very interesting to the technically-minded. The launching area was closed as they were hoping to launch another satellite over the weekend.

Pat joined us after lunch and we went to Merritt Island. It is a super place! I think I saw everything there, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Gallinules, Glossy and White Ibis, storks, herons, egrets, vultures, Scaup, Gadwall, Pintail, Widgeon, Pochard, Long and Short Billed Dowitchers, Snipe, Teal, Ring-billed and Laughing Gulls, Anhingas, woodpeckers, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, kingfishers, Kestrels, Hen Harrier, and Bald Eagle. A fitting climax to a "Dream come true". A farewell to Pat and Eddie next morning and a 200 mile journey to the Airport. No problem getting in, only in finding where to return the car! We checked in our cases and found a shabby place with benches where we spent our last daylight hours, watching our own familiar House Sparrow and listening to the plaintive song of the Catbird. B.M.B.

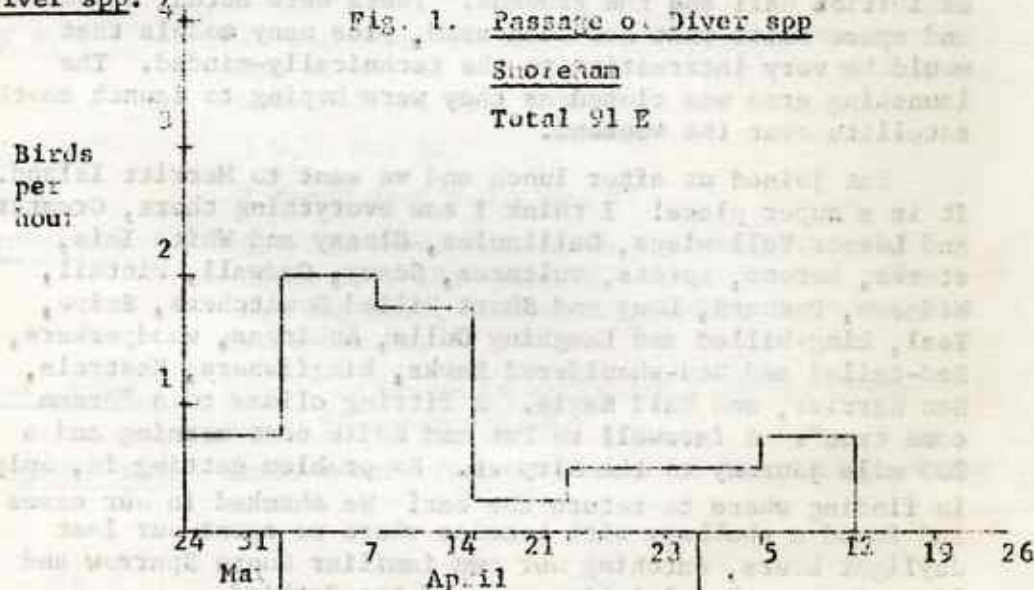
SEA MIGRATION AT SHOREHAM AND BEACHY HEAD SPRING 1979

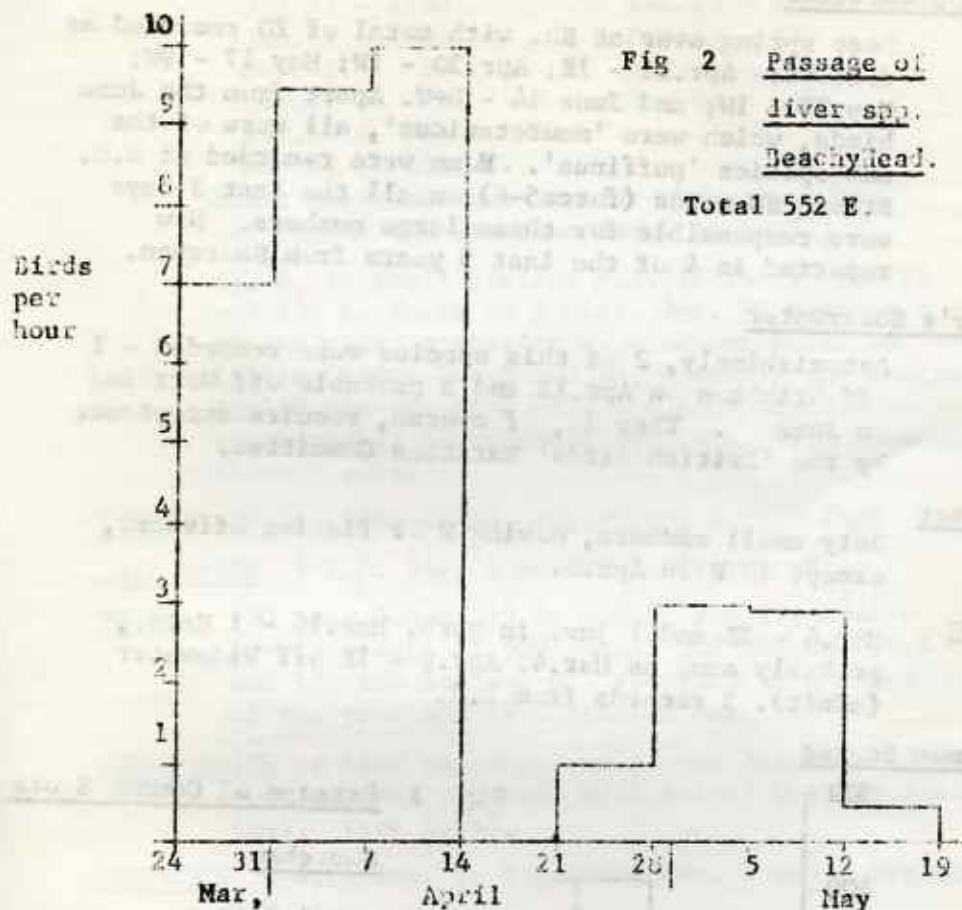
This article attempts to summarize the diurnal migration between March and June as observed from the coast between Southwick and Worthing. It also compares this passage with that seen from Beachy Head by M.J. Rogers. (The Shoreham area records were provided by R. Ives, F. Forbes and J.A. Newnham and myself) By providing this summary, I hope to provide a complement to last year's spring sea-watch summary (which should be consulted for comparison) and a supplement in the shape of the direct comparison with Beachy Head.

At Shoreham the total hours watched was about 180, representing 13 days in March, 28 in April and every day in May. At Beachy Head Mike Rogers covered a very similar total of hours, and in this respect direct comparisons of the respective totals are valid.

The following species summaries cover the period March - May inclusive and give the total movement for each species, with the relevant Beachy Head figures. "E" denotes that birds were flying up Channel, "W" down Channel. Shoreham is denoted by "Sh." and Beachy Head by "B.H."

Diver spp.





Great Crested Grebe

10 E with increase in numbers offshore in early April, coinciding with diver passage.

Black-necked/Slavonian Grebe

1 Slav.(w.p.) and 1 Black-n.(s.p.) off Worthing Mar.14
1 (w.p.) not specifically identified Apr.15.

Fulmar

First recorded Mar.19 with total of 163 moving in both directions (62% W). At Selsey 90% were moving W.

Manx Shearwater

Best spring ever at Sh. with total of 20 recorded as follows:- Apr.11 - 1E; Apr.30 - 1W; May 17 - 9W; May 25 - 1W; and June 14 - 8+W. Apart from the June birds, which were 'mauretanicus', all were of the sub-species 'puffinus'. None were recorded at B.H. Strong SW winds (force 5-8) on all the last 3 days were responsible for these large numbers. Now reported in 4 of the last 5 years from Shoreham.

Cory's Shearwater

Astonishingly, 2 of this species were recorded - 1 off Brighton on Apr.12 and a probable off Worthing on June . They do, of course, require acceptance by the 'British Birds' Rarities Committee.

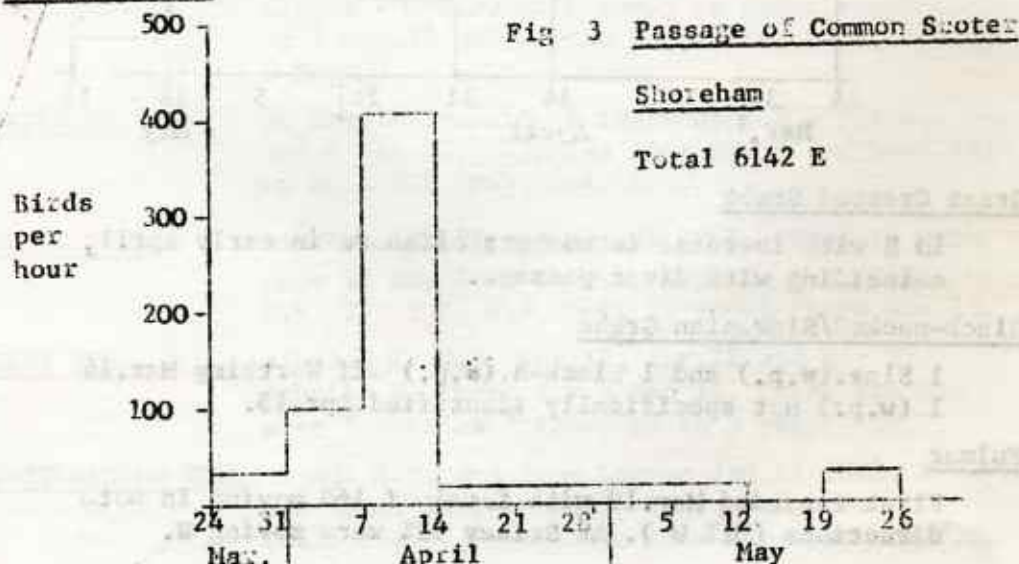
Gannet

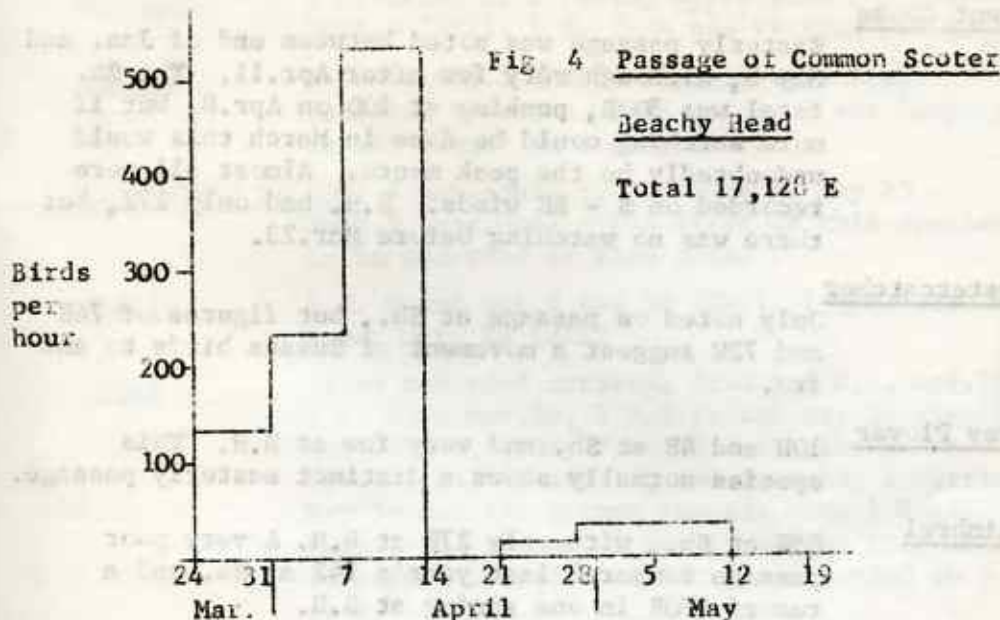
Only small numbers, moving W or fishing offshore, except 18 E on Apr.8.

Shag

Mar.4 - 3E and 1 juv. in Harb. Mar.18 - 1 Harb., probably same as Mar.4. Apr.8 - 1E off Widewater (adult). 3 records from B.H.

Common Scoter





Velvet Scoter

A very good spring, 33E being recorded at Sh.
with maximum of on Apr. 8. At B.H. 70E., also
peaking on Apr. 8.

Red-breasted Merganser

280E from Sh., a very good total. The peak came
in late Mar./early Apr., including 135E on Apr. 8.
B.H. also had 280 with peak on Apr. 8.

Eider

96E from Sh. (a record) with no peak. At B.H. 138E.

Shelduck

50W and 36E at Sh. - probably part of large
summering population in West Sussex.

Also recorded were 7 Mallard, 3 Teal, 36 Wigeon,
a few Tufted Duck and 1 Long-tailed Duck on May 7.

Brent Goose

Easterly passage was noted between end of Jan. and May 8, although very few after Apr. 11. The Sh. total was 500E, peaking at 100 on Apr. 8, but if more watching could be done in March this would undoubtedly be the peak month. Almost all were recorded on S - SE winds. B.H. had only 272, but there was no watching before Mar. 23.

Oystercatcher

Only noted on passage at Sh., but figures of 74E and 72W suggest a movement of Sussex birds to and fro.

Grey Plover

10W and 4E at Sh. and very few at B.H. This species normally shows a distinct easterly passage.

Whimbrel

85E at Sh., with only 27E at B.H. A very poor passage compared last year's 142 at Sh. and a record 960E in one spring at B.H.

Bar-tailed Godwit

Only 429E at Sh. compared with 1541 last year. B.H. had 2206, rather below average. Both localities peaked on May 7/8.

Common Sandpiper

Several on beaches between Apr. 23 and May 6.

Other waders moving through were Turnstone, Curlew, Dunlin, Sanderling and a single Avocet on May 10.

Arctic Skua

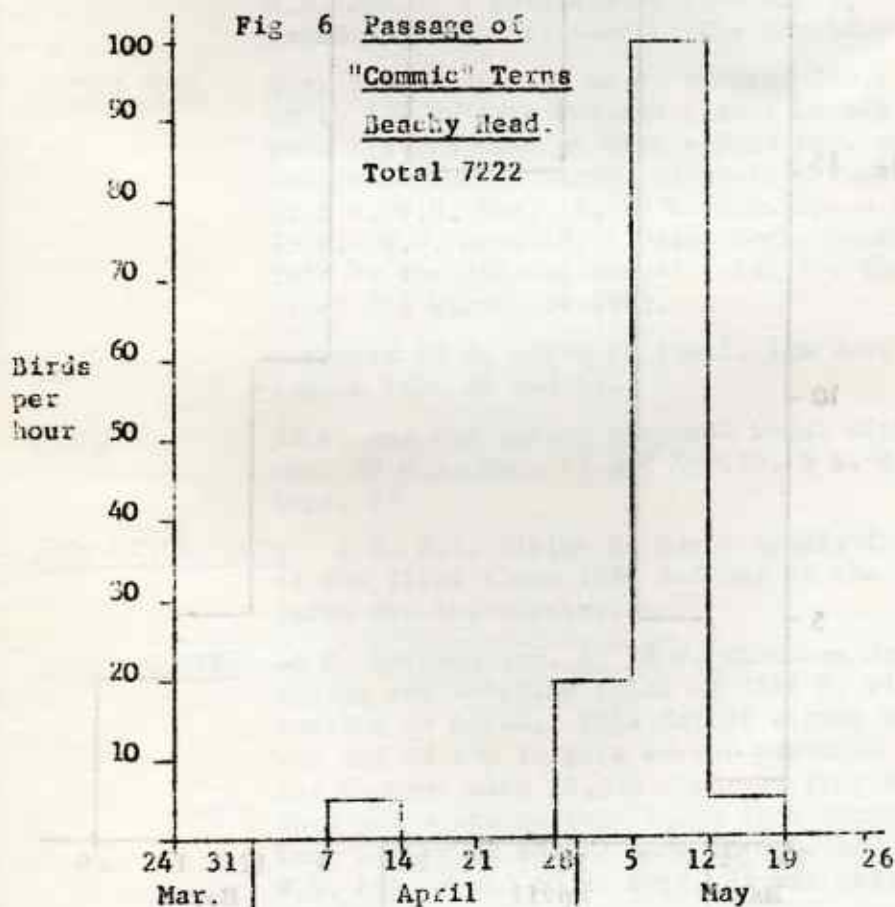
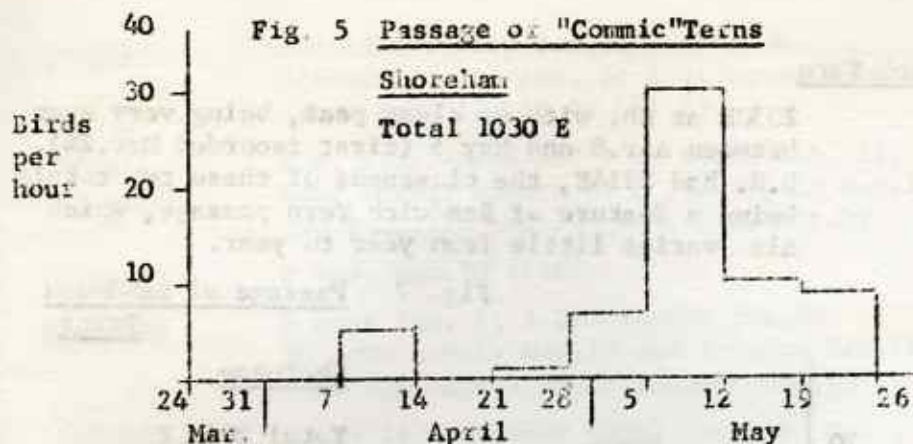
26E, including 10 on May 1. B.H. had 147E.

Great Skua

2E, the normal poor total for Sh. B.H. had a record 24, reflecting the very good passage of just about every species in mid-April.

"Commic" Tern

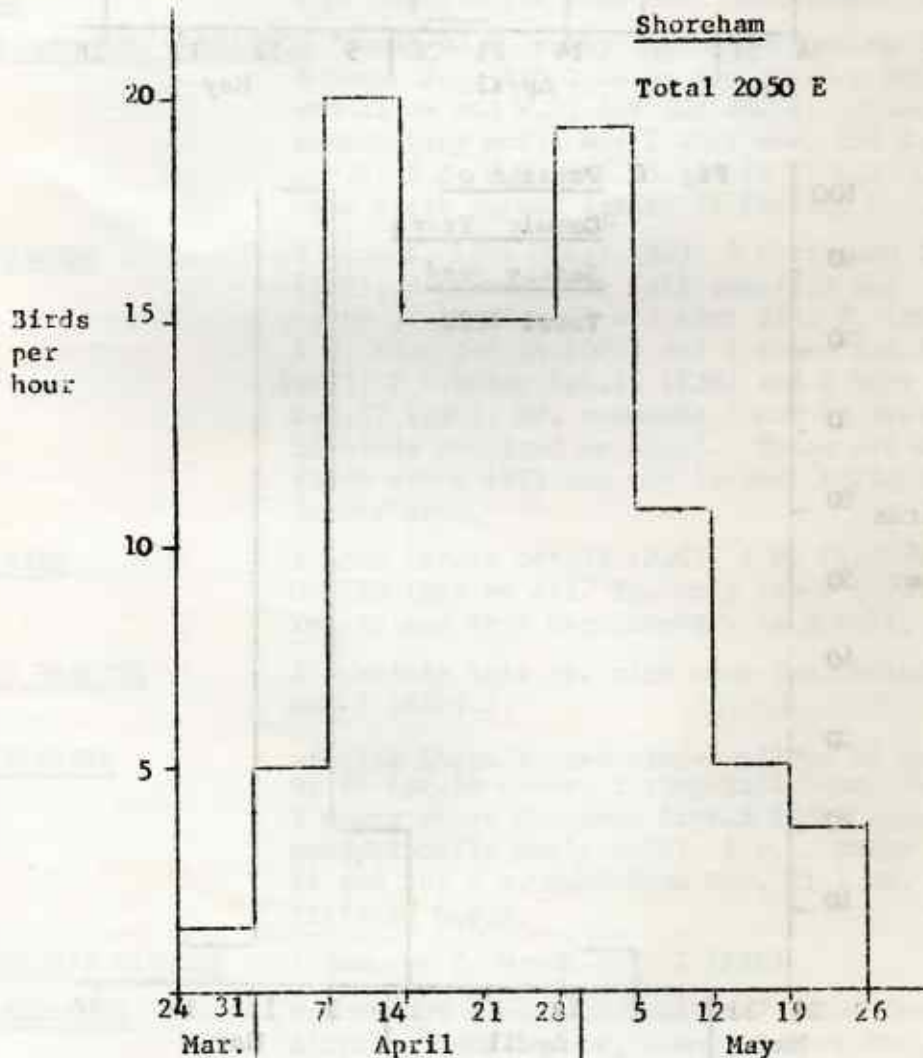
A total of 1300E at Sh. was very small compared with 4776 last year, although B.H. had 7222E, an above average total. The graph shows a peak in the second week in May at both sites

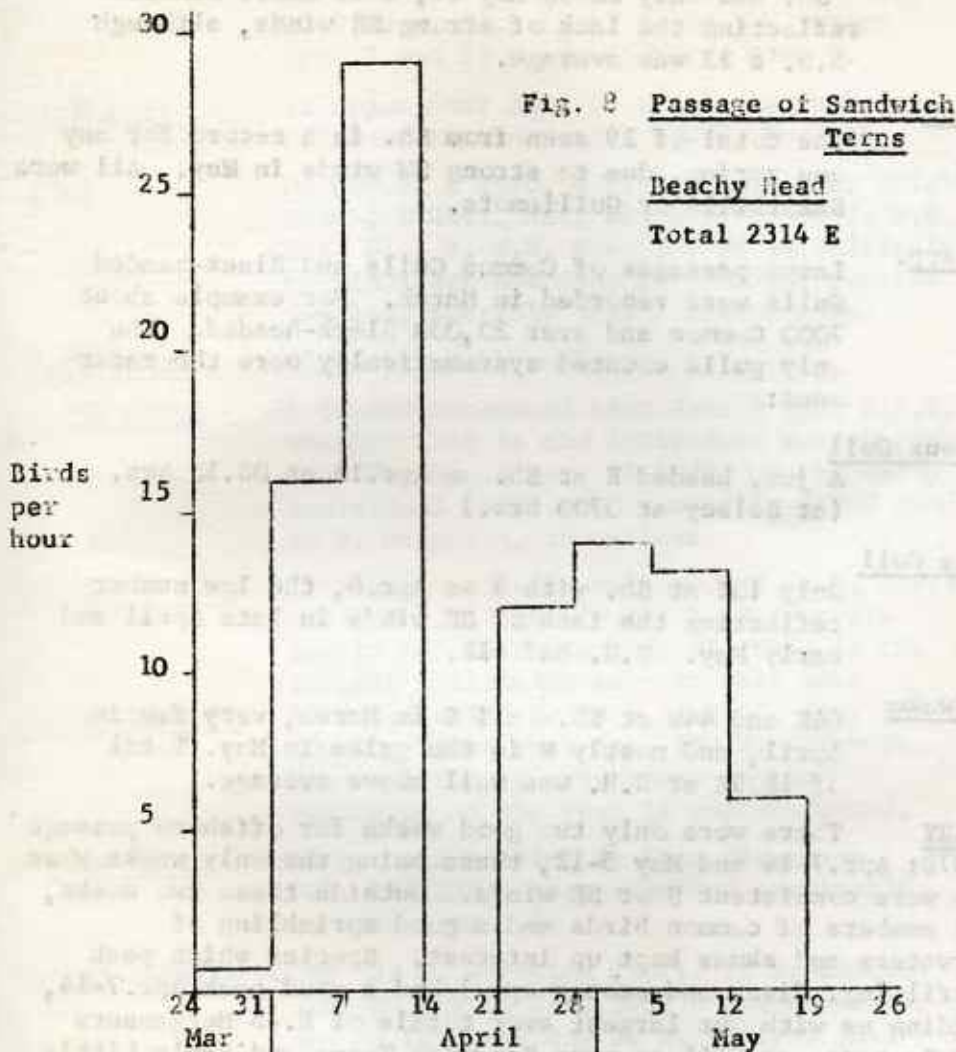


Sandwich Tern

2050E at Sh. with no clear **peak**, being very even between Apr.8 and May 5 (first recorded Mar.24). B.H. had 2314E, the closeness of these two totals being a feature of Sandwich Tern passage, which also varies little from year to year.

Fig. 7 Passage of Sandwich Terns





Little Tern

First recorded Apr. 13 - a fairly early date, total 266E at Sn., with only 68 at B.H., a below-average passage. Most recorded in second week in May.

Black Tern

Sh. had only 2E on May 14, this small number reflecting the lack of strong SE winds, although B.H.'s 23 was average.

Auk spp.

The total of 29 seen from Sh. is a record for any one spring, due to strong SW winds in May. All were Razorbills or Guillemots.

Gull spp.

Large passages of Common Gulls and Black-headed Gulls were recorded in March. For example about 7000 Common and over 20,000 Black-headed. The only gulls counted systematically were the rarer ones:

Claucous Gull

A juv. headed E at Sh. on Apr.13 at 08.10 hrs. (at Selsey at 0700 hrs.)

Little Gull

Only 10E at Sh. with 3 on Apr.8, the low number reflecting the lack of SE winds in late April and early May. B.H. had 41E.

Kittiwake

84E and 44W at Sh.- all E in March, very few in April, and mostly W in the gales in May. Total of 1209E at B.H. was well above average.

SUMMARY

There were only two good weeks for offshore passage in 1979: Apr.7-14 and May 5-12, these being the only weeks when there were consistent S or SE winds. Outside these two weeks, small numbers of common birds and a good sprinkling of shearwaters and skuas kept up interest. Species which peak in April (eg. diver and scoter spp.) had a good peak Apr.7-14, providing us with our largest ever totals of R.-b Mergansers and C.Scoters, as well as many Sandwich Terns and early Little and "Commic" Terns, Whimbrels and Arctic Skuas. Those species which peak in May ("Commic" and Little Terns, skuas and most waders) had their peak over May 5-12, especially May 10. Those which depend on strong SE winds in early May were virtually non-existent (e.g. Black Tern and Pomarine Skua).

Finally, approximately 10,500 birds of the species mentioned (other than gulls) were recorded from our beaches this spring, and the number of species, including raptors and passerines, was more than 60. However, more important than the interest value is the fact that the results obtained by regular watching are scientifically valuable, as comparison with Beachy Head's records.

M.W.

FROM OUR MEMBERS' NOTEBOOKS

Sabine's Gull at Worthing. Whilst sea-watching off Worthing Beach on Jan.3 in a cold SE wind, my attention was drawn to a small, slim tern-like bird flying W 100 yards offshore. It was strikingly smaller than all the other gulls and seemed to have proportionately longer and narrower wings held at a more acute angle at the carpal joint. The other striking feature was the pattern on the upper wing and body, with uniform muddy-brown back, nape and coverts, ending in a distinct edge from the carpal angle to the base of the tail, giving a large triangular area. The secondaries and inner primaries were white, with no dark diagonal band as in imm. Little Gull or Kittiwaks. Outer 4 - 5 (perhaps 6) primaries jet black, no white seen at wing-tip, this forming another, more acute-angled triangle with its apex at the wing angle. Under-sides and tail white; tail seemed squarer ended than other gulls'. Flight light and buoyant, low over waves and into troughs.

J.A.N.

Bean Geese over Lancing. On Feb. 11th in the late afternoon 22 geese flew east, but did not settle on the Airfield or the Adur Levels. Medium size, unbarred bellies, dark necks, unfamiliar call and some paler feathers on forewing.

B.J.S.

Great Snipe at Coombes? On Jan.2 with snow 3 - 4 inches deep, this bird flew in heavily and landed clumsily near the frozen pond in my garden. It was watched from the window by myself and my husband (not a bird-watcher) and then cautiously approached in the open and in full view until it flew, when the white on the tail was remarked by both of us. The next day I saw it again in woodland at the bottom of the garden with two Common Snipe. Points noted were large size, overlarge bill and gorgeous white on the tail.

Unfortunately, when Drs. Stafford and Watson came to verify, we were unable to find the bird.

B.R.

(Recorder's note: this notoriously difficult bird, only recorded three times in Sussex in the last 50 years, would of course require acceptance by the Rarities Committee. All the characteristics described can apply to Common Snipe - i.e. size, bill length and amount of white on tail are all very variable. Three main identification points are a Woodcock-like flight, characteristic under-side barring, and a speculum-like appearance on the wing.

J.A.N.

Long-tailed Duck off Worthing. Seen 200 yds. off Worthing Beach on May 7, in good light through x25 telescope. Small duck flying W; uniform brown upper-parts and wings, white under-parts, tail tapering but no streamers, head brown with white patch round eye and on to chin and neck. Breast pale brown, flight typical of L.-t. Duck, banking and swerving, with virtually no upstroke above the body level.

J.A.N.

Balearic Shearwaters off Worthing. On June 14 in strong SW winds and good light about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile offshore. Two small shearwaters with typical 'Manx' flight, clearly seen when banking but lost in troughs; no flapping of wings - just planing westward on stiffly held wings. Upper-parts dark brown, distinctly not black, under-parts paler brown, not markedly so on one individual; no white seen.

J.A.N.

Osprey at Cissbury Ring. Bird seen at 0800 hrs. on Aug. 5th at about 1 Km. flying W. Seen from above looking down on bird, and then after it flew past underside seen at a greater distance. Seen for 3-4 minutes going West over Findon, although only seen at close range for 1 minute.

Upper-parts very dark except pale head; distance too far to make out facial pattern. Underside - pale body with dark tail; black carpal patches with underwing coverts pale, rest of underside appearing dark. First appeared gull-like, but flight more powerful and wings not so narrow as dark gull's and more angled.

Second Sabine's Gull at Worthing. Whilst sea-watching at 1020 hrs. on Aug. 28th a small white gull with a striking upper-wing pattern flew into binocular view and settled on the sea

directly in front of me. The tide was out and the bird was in shallow water about 5m. from the edge, where it was watched through a telescope for 20 minutes.

Upper-parts all white except black primaries, the black extending to start of secondaries, more extensive at wing-tips. Mantle and greater wing coverts greyish-brown, rest of upper wing white, forming a large triangle of white on rear of wing. Tail white with dark terminal band, but fork could not be seen. Traces of grey or brown hood seen on crown and around eyes, with gap between nape and back giving effect of white collar. Bill small and dark.

Flight more graceful and tern-like than other gulls, especially when skimming over water to feed. When settled on sea it was smaller than Black-headed Gull, and the head was held quite high, like a phalarope. It finally flew off West.

F.J.F.

Red-backed Shrike at Cissbury Ring. On Sept.4th at about 0830hrs., whilst counting migrants, I was confronted by a Red-backed Shrike perched on a fence-post in front of me, and I watched it for a few minutes before it was disturbed by a farm vehicle, when it flew off to the south.

Size of Corn Bunting, with generally brown upper-parts, slightly paler under-parts with crescentic markings. No trace of white in wing but small amount of white in tail in flight. The upper mandible was hooked over lower.

Flight undulating, showing longish tail.

F.J.F.

Red-Kite at Cissbury Ring. Whilst leading the Shoreham field outing round the Ring, the bird suddenly appeared overhead flying west, being mobbed by two Carrion Crows. Longer winged than Common Buzzard, wings more angled and longer tail, which was deeply forked - well seen when the bird passed overhead at about 150m. White patches on wings at carpal joints; this was very well defined against underside, contrasting with dark wing-tips and general rusty brown of body and tail. Head distinctly lighter brown. Flight more graceful than C.Buzzard with shallower wing-beats. Wings held level when gliding, with tips upturned. Bird seen for about two minutes, directly overhead and from the rear as it flew off westward, still mobbed by the two Crows.

D.F.

Possible Slender-billed Gull at Worthing. Whilst watching gulls drifting in to roost on the ebbing tide-line on the evening of Sept.26 I noticed an odd-looking gull flying gently W by itself. It gave an initial impression of a large Black-headed Gull with a long neck, 'odd' head and large, particularly long bill. It was watched for about a minute at 60-100 yds., and compared with B.-h., Common and Herring Gulls. Unfortunately it didn't settle but continued drifting slowly W.

In size and build it was nearer Common than B.-h.Gull, and may have had slightly longer wings than either. Head was white, with no sign of hood or dark markings, curiously sloping forehead giving the head an angular look compared with with rounded heads of the other gulls. Bill long, fairly heavy, and appeared dark - possibly red. The bill and the head were the two most prominent features which made it stand out. Neck was pure white, longer and held 'lower' in flight than the other gulls. Mantle, back and wing-coverts were uniform light grey as in B.-h.Gull. The rest of the wing could easily have passed as B.-h. Gull but after comparison one or two differences were observed. The dark posterior edge formed by the primary tips appeared broader and extended more medially than on B.-h.G. No obvious white trailing edge to the wing, and the area of white on the leading edge was more extensive and without the thin, short dark line on the front edge at the tip. Underwing and under-parts white; rump and tail white and not different in shape from Common Gull. Flight as C.G.

Unfortunately this bird couldn't be found again despite exhaustive hunting on subsequent evenings. After such a short view of possibly a very rare bird (only 3 British records - all from the S.E.) I didn't feel I could submit this as a Slender-billed Gull.

J.A.N.

Cory's Shearwater at West Worthing? In fine clear weather with a SW wind force 4-6 on June 26 at 10.48 hrs., a sea-bird flying like a Fulmar moved W. When it came nearer, I saw that it had longer and more slender wings, dark on the upper surface, white below when it banked. Flight was several flaps then a glide. When opposite me at about 600m. I could see that it was not black on top but brownish from head to tail, with a

. yellowish bill, and on gliding and banking showed white under-parts from head to tail and light patches on the underwing. It was clearly a shearwater, but not a Manx. It was watched until out of sight, flying and gliding over the waves.

F.J.F.

Note; B.J.S. had a similar sighting from Brighton Beach on April 12. If both records are accepted by the Rarities Committee they will be our first for this species and only the 3rd. and 4th. for the country.

Red Kite over the Adur Levels. Early on Oct. 14 about 300 Lapwing, 50 Starling and 3 Redshank all took off. About 2 minutes later, still in the same spot, I noticed a raptor which had a distinctly forked tail and light patches on the underside of the wings, which were long and square-ended with splayed primaries. It circled round for 5 minutes and was mobbed by a Carrion Crow, which seemed half its size by wing-span. Viewed at about 150 yds. due east with early morning sun.

P.J.C.

Red-footed Falcon at Cissbury. Brief summary of field notes: Hobby-sized falcon, pale head and collar, dark facial and moustachial markings. Back and rump nut-brown with chocolate-brown barring, tail similar but paler, long tail. Under-parts sandy, virtually unstreaked, bill yellow-horn, legs and feet scarlet. Whilst perched sat upright like a shrike, flight Hobby-like with long glides, when wings held downward like Cuckoo. Seen by many members at close range.

SUMMARIES OF FIELD OUTINGS

Saturday 6th January - Amberley Wild Brooke with Mr. B. Forbes.

Seven members of the Society arrived at Greatham Bridge in arctic weather conditions, with parts of the river frozen and many of the fields iced over, with snow still lying - a real silver meadows scene. Severe weather indeed for the birds, and a trek down the river bank to Amberley produced an amazing list of species. Five male

Smew together were observed several times feeding in the unfrozen stretches of the river - a rare sight indeed. Large numbers of duck had gathered on the river bank; estimated numbers were 1500 Wigeon, 500 Teal, 300 Mallard, 10 Shoveler and a large flock of Coot. Near the river a herd of 102 Bewick's Swans could be seen busily feeding and calling. We were also lucky to watch 62 White-fronted Geese grazing on a small part of the raised peat bog in the centre of the Brooks. Two Greylag Geese were also seen.

After returning to the cars, we proceeded to Wiggonholt Common where, at the edge of the woods, a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Brambling were seen. Other birds recorded during the day included Nuthatch, Little owl, Stonechat and Kingfisher - a good day for everyone.

Sunday 4th.March - Sidlesham Ferry/Church Norton with Dr.J.A. Newham.

Eight members joined the leader for a pleasant stroll from Sidlesham Ferry to Church Norton in sunny weather. We all enjoyed good views of the common waders and ducks. Unfortunately, many of the exciting birds present in the harbour during the earlier cold months had moved on. However three Avocets were seen and some of the party had a very close but brief glimpse of two Hen Harriers.

Saturday 28th April - Lychpole Hill/Cissbury Ring with Mr.B.Forbes

The wind and rain ruined the morning's bird-watching. With a strong north-westerly blowing and heavy showers, most of the migrants were skulking in the bushes, although a few brief snatches of warbler song could be heard. Five of us had a very brief walk on to the Ring but it proved too exposed to the weather, so we abandoned that and walked instead in the lee of Lychpole Hill, where we heard a Cuckoo. Willow Warblers and just arrived with at least 30 singing in small groups. Three Common Whitethroats were seen and four Lesser Whitethroats heard - their rasping call audible above the wind. Stock Dove and Chiffchaff were added to the day's list, but with the rain more continuous, our small party returned to the cars and called it a day after a couple of hours.

Wednesday 13th June - Wiggonholt Common with Miss M. Jennings.

About ten members joined the leader at 20.30 hrs. for this evening meeting hoping for Nightjars. The weather conditions, dull and wettish, were unfavourable to bird-watching, however, and in the event only one Nightjar was heard but not seen. Among other birds seen or heard were Blackcap, Whitethroat and Cuckoo; and three or four Woodcocks were watched in their roding flight.

Sunday 23rd September - Sidlesham Ferry/Church Norton with Mr.O. Mitchell.

Twelve members attended at the Ferry on a bright, quite mild morning. Waders there included 4 Curlew Sandpipers, 1 Little Stint and 2 Ruffs. All had good views, plus also Dunlin and Bar-tailed Godwit. On the walk to Church Norton the party saw 3 Greenshank, many Grey Plover, 1 Black-tailed Godwit, 4 Wigeon, 20 Teal, Curlew and a flock of 50 Goldfinch. Many of the party saw 10 Whenters, 1 Yellow Wagtail flying over, and also had views of 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 3 Whitethroat, 4 Blackcaps, 1 Garden Warbler plus a number of Willow/chiffs. Excellent views were also obtained of 3 Redstarts, 5 Spotted Flycatchers, 7 Whinchats and 1 Reed Warbler.

Offshore, 4 Sandwich Terns, a party of c25 Eider and 12 Great Crested Grebes were recorded, and in the harbour a "Commic" Tern.

During the afternoon the weather became colder and very dull, with rain threatening as the party arrived back at the Ferry, having further views of the waders, plus 8 Shoveler, Meadow Ptitit and Reed Bunting.

The outing ended about 3.30p.m. - and just in time as rain began to fall as we reached the car park.

Saturday 20th October - Cissbury/Stump Bottom with Mr.B.Forbes.

It seems a shame that so few members of our society support the outing programme, especially when an outing like this one is only a few minutes drive from the majority of our homes. Eight turned up at Cissbury Ring in a cold north wind with plenty of cloud, although the weather brightened up with the birds.

We set off up the gentle slope of Cissbury through the scrub to the area known as the Rifle Butts, where we had distant views of a migrant Brambling, a flock of Linnets and a Green Woodpecker. About five Redpolls headed south, calling, a Goldcrest could be heard in the wood on top of the Ring, and Jay and Long-tailed Tit were seen.

Following the dry moat along the east face of Cissbury, I thought we had better check out the scrub cover round the flint mines - usually a good place for Ring Ouzel. Then the unexpected happened: overhead a large raptor at about 150m. being mobbed by two Carrion Crows - a splendid Red Kite. We all had a perfect view of this grand bird, forked tail and all, as it drifted over our heads SW towards Findon. After that we could only expect crumbs instead of the whole pie!

We descended from the Ring, gathered our lunch from the cars and looked for a suitable place to eat along the foot of Lychpole Hill, seeing a Short-eared Owl put up by a shooting party in an adjoining valley. A strange find beside the footpath was an exhausted Grasshopper Warbler picked up by a member and released a few minutes later in a sunny glade, hopefully to continue its migration south but by the late date unlikely to arrive. Along the bottom of Lychpole we saw a G.S. Woodpecker, and whilst lunching a female Merlin flew past, hotly pursuing a large flock of Linnets towards Chanctonbury.

In the afternoon we finished with a walk up to No Man's Land, where we heard the brief alarm note of a Ring Ouzel. Not a bad day's birding - I was lucky to be standing in for Colin Messer as leader.

THE BOTANY OF THE SANCTUARY

In last year's Report it was thought it might be of interest to reprint the list of the Sanctuary's flora from the 1954 Report and to check on the flowering plants present in 1979, to which end I have visited the Sanctuary and noted the plants in flower throughout the year, with the exception of the month of September, when I was out of the country.

Of the 1954 list, the species I did not find were:

Cardamine flexuosa (Wavy bittercress)	Honeysuckle
Hemlock (now Common) Stork's-bill	Marsh Bedstraw
Dewberry	Brookweed.
Field Rose	Sorrel
Procumbent Apium	

any or all of which may have been overlooked.

On the other hand, the following species were found, although I may have set more liberal limits to the Sanctuary than did Col. Roberts:

Yew	Petty Spurge	Deadly Nightshade
Hazel	Dwarf Spurge	Sharp-ly, Flueller
Osier	Annual Mercury	Round-ly, Flueller
Sycamore	Common Milkwort	Pink Water Speedy
Amphibious Bistort	Common Mallow	Eyebright
Redshank	Perforate St. John's Wort	Field Scabious
Knotgrass	Common Dog Violet	Scentless Mayweed
Broad-leaved Dock	Field Pansy	Ragwort
Common Mouse-ear	Parsley Water Dropwort	Yarrow
Creeping Buttercup	White Bryony	Coltsfoot
Common Red Poppy	Broad-leaved Willowherb	Musk Thistle
Charlock	Upright Hedge Parsley	Greater Knapweed
Watercress	Wild Carrot	Smooth Sow-thistle
Dropwort	Lesser Centaury	Prickly Sow-thistle
Salad Burnet	Yellow Wort	Hawkweed Ox-tongue
Dog Rose	Bedge Bedstraw	Bristly Ox-tongue
Creeping Cinquefoil	Lady's Bedstraw	Black Bryony
Rest Harrow	Ground Ivy	Pyramidal Orchid
Red Clover	Black Horehound	Common Spotted Orchid
White Clover	Red Dead-nettle	Corn Salad
Herb Robert	Wild Basil	
Sun Spurge	Wild Thyme	

Any additions to this list which other members visiting the Sanctuary can make will be welcome.

C.F.H.

SHOREHAM ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS TO 31st DECEMBER, 1979

RECEIPTS

Brought forward from	
31.12.78	186.82
Subscriptions	
110 at £2	220.00
" Jun. 4 at £1	4.00
" 1980 8 at £2	16.00
Interest	13.32
Sale of Reports	6.45
Gift	1.00
Cash in Hand	1.53

£449.12

(signed) F.G. Ranger
Hon. Treasurer.

EXPENDITURE

Subscriptions	British Birds	15.00
	R.S.P.B.	5.00
	British Trust	
	Ornithology	5.00
	Southern Water Authority	4.00
	Binding British Birds	5.00
	Hall	19.50
	Lecturers	44.00
	Printing	122.60
	Postage	24.51
	Sundry item	3.00
	Carried forward to	1.1.80 201.51

£449.12

Audited and found correct
(signed) C.F. Melyer.

LIST OF LECTURES 1979

February 24th	'Birds of the Hawaiian Islands'	Mr. Brian Hawkes
March 24th	Annual General Meeting	
	'Herons and a Hill'	Mr. R.E. Scott
Oct. 13th	'Bardsey Island'	Mr. N. Lewes
November 24th	'Ornitholidays in Ceylon'	Mr. L.G. Holloway

SHOREHAM ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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| Mrs. I.M. Crocker, | 11 Hebe Road, Shoreham. |
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