

A Check-List of the Birds of Ayrshire.

BY G. A. RICHARDS.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER (*Gavia immer*).—Winter visitor; passage migrant. Regular, even numerous at times, in winter in the northern part of the Clyde, usually well off-shore. Less frequently reported from the southern coast than formerly, but this is probably due to the passing of the fishermen-naturalists who furnished so many useful records in the first third of this century. Spring migrants may pass through as late as May, some in full breeding plumage.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER (*Gavia arctica*).—Breeds occasionally; passage migrant. The first satisfactory breeding record is contained in these notes extracted from GHO's diaries:—a pair was on a loch in 1955; on 14th April, 1956, a pair was seen, and one egg was laid, but had gone by 9th June. By 16th June 2 eggs were in the same nest (photographed by DC) and one chick was seen on 10th July. The second egg hatched, but neither young bird was seen after 16th July, and a dead adult was found in early September. One bird was on the same loch on 11th April, 1957, and a pair on 13th May, 1958; ADW saw a pair here on 14th May, 1959 and 2, probably the same, were reported later in the summer at a different loch. At yet another locality, a pair was present on 5th May, 1960, and DC saw a young bird on 30th July; 2 days later a pair was reported on the original loch, but none was subsequently seen.

In 1965 2 chicks were reared on a loch in the same area as the above—the hatch took place on about the 30th May, and both young were seen in August.

At sea, a single bird on 16th February, 1965 is the only record I have outside March-May, and this species cannot be considered as a regular winter visitor—it is seen each spring in Ayr Bay, and near Turnberry, sometimes up to 8 together. About 50% of the April and May birds are in full breeding plumage.

RED-THROATED DIVER (*Gavia stellata*).—Has bred; winter visitor; passage migrant. The first recorded breeding for this county, and for the Clyde faunal area, took place in 1957, when a pair nested on a small loch, but the eggs were taken. On 2nd May, 1958, a pair was seen on a larger loch nearby, and on 13th June a single egg was photographed by DC. On 11th July, D. Bentley saw a chick with one adult. On 29th April, 1959, a pair was seen on this loch, but breeding was not proved that year, or subsequently.

In autumn and winter this diver is common along the whole coast, sometimes in parties up to a dozen; numbers are smaller on spring passage.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*).—Breeds; winter visitor. This species started to increase as a winter visitor late in the last century, and bred from about 1912. At various times Lochs Rowbank, Fergus, Riccawr, Kilbirnie, Belston, Culzean Pond, and the River Ayr, have had a nesting pair, but interference, or flooding in reservoirs, has limited breeding success or permanent colonisation. For the past few years Martnaham has been the only regular site, with 3 pairs and 5 young the maximum. Single birds, and non-breeding pairs are occasionally seen throughout the county in summer, but the greater number is off the coast in winter, along its whole length, but seldom more than 5 together.

RED-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps griseigena*).—Rare visitor. No change of status, and these are all the records since 1927, all single birds. Doon mouth, 28th January, 1940 (BB 33 : 316); Troon, 4th January, 1955 (GBB 4 : 21); Portencross, 25th February, 1957 (BB 1 : 64); Barassie, 1st August, 1960 (SB 1 : 383) and 24th January, 1965 (SB 3 : 318).

SLAVONIAN GREBE (*Podiceps auritus*).—Rare passage migrant and winter visitor. The record in BA : 155 from Loch Ryan has been disputed as actually in Wigtownshire, but there seems no way of proving the case (BFC : 105). On 18th December, 1944 GHO saw one off the Heads of Ayr (BB 38 : 235), and one on 3rd November, 1955, on Penwhapple reservoir. DG saw a single bird on Martnaham Loch on 19th March, 1959, and GF recorded one at Portencross during October, 1962.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*).—Vagrant. The record in BA : 156 is disputed as being in Wigtownshire (BFC : 106); 3 seen in Ayr Bay on 1st January, 1929 (BB 25 : 24) are assumed to be the undated record in BFC, and there is a specimen in the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock, marked "Ayrshire, January, 1932", but I can find no later occurrences.

LITTLE GREBE (*Podiceps ruficollis*).—Breeds; partial migrant. A slight decrease appears to have taken place over the past 30 years, probably due to severe winters such as 1940/41, 1946/47, and 1962/63. The lochs above Dunure mentioned in BA : 957 are no longer used, and in the central and northern areas highly suitable places only have one or 2 pairs, with Trabboch the only water I know with 6+ pairs; the southern third is very thinly populated. A few birds winter each year on estuaries, particularly the Stinchar, and at the coast.

LEACH'S PETREL (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*).—Vagrant. Remains an irregular autumn or winter storm victim only. The wreck of October/November, 1952, was the most disastrous in recent years; over 180 were seen or picked up, including 74 dead at Barassie (SN 1953 : 115). On 11th February, 1957, DC saw one being mobbed by birds near Drongan, and later found it dead.

STORM PETREL (*Hydrobates pelagicus*).—Formerly bred ; summer and autumn visitor. Ailsa was a breeding station. JAG in SN 1951 : 166 says "last definite record of eggs or young being taken is 1842. Probably bred until the end of the 19th century ; no evidence of breeding since then". It is now annual in small numbers well offshore with occasional storm-victims driven to land.

MANX SHEARWATER (*Procellaria puffinus*).—Summer visitor ; passage migrant. Commonest in August, often in hundreds, sometimes 1,500 or more, mostly North of Ayr, and more than 3 miles off-shore. Storm-victims are often found on beaches as late as the end of October, but one I picked up freshly dead on 9th December, 1964, near Irvine was very late. Spring migration is light ; I can find no early dates in print—my own earliest is one on 31st March, 1965, off Ayr. An unusual inland record was one shot on Lanfine moor on 20th September, 1912 (SN 1913 : 69).

GREAT SHEARWATER (*Procellaria gravis*).—Vagrant. One only, picked up dead at Lendalfoot on 3rd October, 1904 (ASNH 1905 : 214).

SOOTY SHEARWATER (*Procellaria grisea*).—Vagrant. One between Girvan and Ailsa on 16th July, 1955, is the first record for Ayrshire (SB 1 : 30). Another single bird off Troon on 23rd July, 1960 (SB 2 : 214) is the only other occurrence. This species has been proved by the recent increase of sea-watching to be much more regular as an autumn migrant on British coasts than was previously thought (BB 56 ; 197) but as the Clyde is not one of the migration routes the species is probably as rare there as these few records suggest.

FULMAR (*Fulmaris glacialis*).—Breeds ; visitor February to October ; scarce visitor October to February. One flying near Lendalfoot in July, 1900, and later found dead is the first record (ASNH 1902 : 183). In 1936 one was "prospecting" Ailsa Craig, and in 1939 a young bird was reared there, although only one pair had been breeding. Breeding was proved at Bennane Head in 1941, and subsequently Finnart Hill, Dunure, and Heads of Ayr were colonised. About 90 pairs are at these cliffs in summer, but many are non-breeding birds, and it is doubtful if more than 30 young are reared in the county in an average year. A pair has been seen on the ruined castle at Portencross for several years, but no breeding has been proved. During winter very few Fulmar are in the Clyde, although some return to nest-sites after December.

GANNET (*Sula bassuna*).—Breeds. With only temporary setbacks the Ailsa colony has been increasing rapidly since 1936, probably due to the cessation of "cropping." The 1963 count was 11,699 pairs. Although these birds often go far afield in search of fish they may often be seen in large numbers off all parts of the Ayrshire coast from February to October. An unusual inland record was one seen at Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, on 12th April, 1962, and found dead next day (SB 2 : 201).

CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).—Breeds ; winter visitor. Never numerous as a breeding species, but a slight increase has taken place at the main colony south of Ballantrae. On 1st June, 1964, I counted 28 occupied nests with 48 adults and 36 young, and several birds were still incubating. The only other site, Ailsa, lost its colony for a number of years (BA : 144) but had occasional birds 1946-49, with a pair nesting in 1950 (SN 1951 : 82:) up to 3 pairs have been present since then. Very small numbers are off the northern coast in summer, but these are augmented in winter, and the Cormorant then becomes numerous along the whole coast line, and not infrequent on inland waters. I saw 5 perched in trees beside Martnaham Loch on 21st January, 1964, with 3 displaying.

SHAG (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*).—Breeds ; winter visitor. The old nesting site on Ailsa was abandoned for a time, but in 1950 18 pairs were present (SN 63 : 82) and it continues to breed there. Over 100 nests were occupied on the cliffs south of Ballantrae in 1964 and 1965. Winter visitors are seen along the entire coast ; a flock of 68 at a shoal of fish off Prestwick on 31st March, 1964, is the most I have seen together. The only inland record is one on Penwhapple on 24th January, 1951 (GHO).

HERON (*Ardea cinerea*).—Breeds ; partial migrant. The decrease in breeding numbers noted in BA : 119 continues at an alarming rate ; no large heronies remain, and several have become extinct in the last 10 years. Only about 15 pairs nested in the whole county in 1964 and 1965. There is no doubt that many young birds have been killed by man in recent years, since the rapid increase in fishing enthusiasts took place. An interesting recovery was of a Heron ringed at Sund, Norway, on 30th May, 1957, found dead at Dalry on 27th February, 1958 (BB ring. supp. 1960) but numbers indicate that the birds which are regularly seen at the coast in winter (particularly south of Ayr) are local partial migrants.

NIGHT HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*).—Vagrant. The 2 records "prior to 1871" and "autumn 1888" (BA 120) are the only ones. It is as well to note that a free-flying flock now kept at Edinburgh Zoo places any current Scottish sightings under suspicion, but the above records predate their introduction.

LITTLE BITTERN (*Ixobrychus minutus*).—Vagrant. 2 records, the first found dead in Ayr on 30th April, 1947 (in SN 1954 : 66 the place of finding is incorrectly given as Maidens, actually the home of the finder) and preserved in the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock. On 18th May, 1965, I was informed of a male Little Bittern on the River Ayr, at Craigie Park, Ayr, and the following morning I watched it at ranges down to 5 yards. This record has been accepted by the BB Rarities Committee.

BITTERN (*Botaurus stellaris*).—Formerly bred ; irregular winter visitor. Has not bred since the 18th century. Numbers of visitors much as for the past 50 years, not annual, but one or 2 from time to time. GHO has reports of single birds as follows :—8th December, 1947, Bennan, Straiton (Mitchell) ; 14th December, 1947, Tallywinnoch (D. Mair) ; 9th January to 10th February, 1953 near Maybole (G. McCubbin) ; Martnaham, 23rd September, 1953 (these last 2 in SN 66 : 66) ; one flushed 3 times at Loch Fergus during autumn 1954 (H. Dunsmuir). DG records one shot Loch Fergus 21st October, 1958, and GF saw one near Stevenston on 24th October, 1958.

AMERICAN BITTERN (*Botaurus lentiginosus*).—Vagrant. One only, shot at Martnaham Loch shortly before February, 1848. Mr. (later Sir) Hugh S. Gladstone could not trace the specimen, which had been preserved, but quotes an accurate description, and measurements, given in the "Ayr Observer" of 22nd February, 1848 (SN 1910 : 70).

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*).—Vagrant. The 2 seen near Lendalfoot on 15th September, 1889, and 2 shot "prior to 1852," and near Irvine, in mid-September, 1907 are the only records (BA : 119).

MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*).—Breeds ; winter visitor. Breeds in large numbers throughout the county, on rivers, burns, lochs, ponds, and often in hedge-bottoms or the outskirts of woods if within reasonable reach of water. During the summer non-breeding birds and "resting" drakes are found at river estuaries, and on the Turnberry and Troon shores in flocks up to 80. Females and young of the year augment these in autumn. The winter visitors increase numbers to 400+ at Troon (c.700 in the winter of 1962/63, and 814 on 31st January, 1965), 300-475 at Turnberry, and 200-350 at Doonfoot. Several inland waters support over 100. This species did not decrease here as a result of the 1962-63 winter, and a very good breeding season in 1964 gave high counts in the early part of 1965 but the breeding season in that year was below average.

TEAL (*Anas crecoa*).—Breeds ; winter visitor ; passage migrant. Nests are still to be found throughout the county at small wet areas or burns on moorland, or at lochsides lower down, but numbers are not high. In autumn and winter small flocks of up to 50 are normal, generally at small reedy ponds rather than at large lochs ; Mochrum is an exception with 60 often present. The maximum I have seen in Ayrshire is 101, at a flash of only an acre near Maybole on 16th February, 1964. Few Teal go to the coast, but an occasional bird or small party may be seen there even in mild weather.

GARGANEY (*Anas querquedula*).—Vagrant. A pair at Burnfoot reservoir on 16th April, 1936 (GHO in *Collections of Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 1947-49), a male on Riccarton Moss, Kilmarnock on 28th May, 1949 (SN 61 : 184) and a further bird at the same place in the summer of 1958 (FDEW) are all the records.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*).—Winter visitor ; passage migrant. This species has increased as a breeding bird in Britain in recent years, but I have no nesting record for Ayrshire. It has become more regular here in autumn over the past 10 years, especially in October, but is very scarce at other seasons. One was on Penwhapple reservoir on 21st February, 1951 (GHO) ; one at the Hunterston shore, 4th February, 1957 (GF) ; one at the Stinchar mouth, 2nd February, 1963 (SB 2 : 374) ; a pair on Rowbank reservoir on 5th April, 1964 (SB 3 : 142) ; 3 on Camphill reservoir on 12th December, 1964, and one at Glenbuck on 24th February, 1965 (SB 3 : 319).

WIGEON (*Anas penelope*).—Winter visitor ; occasional at other seasons. I can find no nesting records, although it does breed in nearby areas ; single birds are sometimes seen in summer, and a male spent the whole season in 1955 at Culzean Pond. Winter visitors arrive from August onwards, mainly in October, and large flocks stay until April between Fairlie and Hunterston (average 300, maximum 800) and near Culzean. Small flocks may be seen along the whole coast and inland up to 200 are in the New Cumnock area (JAB) and 100-150 at several lochs in the central area.

PINTAIL (*Anas acuta*).—Winter visitor ; passage migrant. An autumn migrant in very small numbers throughout, at the shore and on lochs, but not regular at many places. Martnaham Loch has a few visitors most Octobers. Scarce as a rule in winter but some years more numerous, as in 1963/64. A male on 10th February, 1957, and another on 20th January, 1963, are recorded from Barassie (LAU), and GHO reports one or two most years on Penwhapple reservoir. Scarce in spring. Four were at Loch o' the Lowes on 3rd April, 1961, and a pair on the 17th (JAB) ; a pair stayed throughout March and April, 1948, at Burnbank Loch, Galston.

SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*).—Breeds occasionally; winter visitor; passage migrant. The account by J. A. Anderson (BB 38 : 77) of a single egg found beside an empty nest and the duck killed, in May, 1944, is the first recorded breeding attempt. On 27th May, 1949, 6, and on the 28th, 7 eggs were found at Riccarton Moss, Kilmarnock, but the nest was destroyed and both birds gone by the 31st (SN 1949 : 184). The Shoveler has bred on the centre and north of the county since that date, and 2 pairs nested on Horse Island in 1962 (BN 30 : 108) but it is not established as a regular breeding species. In autumn I have seen occasional birds at the shore at Doonfoot and Barassie, as well as on lochs and ponds, and winter numbers are very low.

SCAUP (*Aythya marila*).—Winter visitor; passage migrant; occasional in summer. A pair was on Loch Shalloch in the first week of May, 1951, but no breeding was proved (GHO). Small numbers are recorded inland each spring and autumn (SB 1 : 458, 2 : 45, 2 : 312) but in winter the flocks, which seldom exceed 100 birds, stay at sea. Ayr Bay is a regular feeding area, but elsewhere only small numbers are found. In 1965 I saw an adult male on 24th July at Barassie, and 3 males off Prestwick on the 29th. I can find no records to show whether a few birds are present at a similar time most years, or whether this was an unusual record.

TUFTED DUCK (*Aythya fuligula*).—Breeds; winter visitor. The first breeding record was at Kilbirnie in 1906 (ASNH 1906 : 198). Now breeding regularly in the northern half of the county, but the increase noted by PP in 1929 appears to have levelled off. An interesting summer count at Glenbuck is 30 males and 5 females on 23rd June, 1960 (ADW). In winter up to 40 is the normal flock, occasionally up to 100, on lochs and ponds in all areas: annually at sea in severe weather; a flock of 230 was off Prestwick on 7th February, 1963, but this exceptional number was probably a weather-movement from elsewhere in Scotland.

POCHARD (*Aythya ferina*).—Breeds occasionally; winter visitor. First bred in 1926 (SN 1926 : 131) and has nested sporadically in several localities since, but is far from established. Regular throughout the county in winter, but flocks seldom exceed 80 birds; rarely seen on the sea. Little change of status since 1930.

GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala clangula*).—Winter visitor. Visits lochs in all parts, but generally in flocks of less than 40. Regular along the whole coast, in small numbers except in Ayr Bay, where 140-240 were present in 1959-65, with an exceptional flock of 250 off Prestwick on 7th February, 1963. Almost daily counts during these winters have shown that the birds feeding off Prestwick and

Ayr remain there even in very rough weather, and their numbers are not augmented by inland birds unless a complete freeze takes place; elsewhere this may not be the case. This species normally arrives in October, with females and immatures preceding males by about a fortnight, and leaves by April, but a few linger into May.

LONG-TAILED DUCK (*Clangula hyemalis*).—Irregular winter visitor. Reported in small numbers most years, but not annually; in some winters, as in 1963/64, seen widely along the coast (SB 3 : 85) but still in small parties. Recent records are:—One off Girvan, 17th March, 1947 (GHO); one Ardeer, 27th-28th December, 1951 (SN 1953 : 3); one off Ailsa, claimed as the first for the island by JAG, 4th April, 1953 (GBB 3 : 4); 2 immatures at Barassie, 10th October, 1954 (SN 1955 : 67); an adult male off Greenan Castle, 2nd January, 1955 (GBB 4 : 33); one off Girvan on 8th February, 1956 and two off Turnberry on 30th September, 1957 (RCW); eight at Stevenston during the winter 1959/60, and one other on 1st January, 1960 (GF); an immature male at Prestwick, 12th-18th March, 1961, and a pair at Heads of Ayr on 22nd November, 1962 (self); a pair at Lendalfoot on 2nd February, 1963 (SB 2 : 374); three at Turnberry on 15th March, 1963 (RCW); four off Troon on 26th February, 1965, my only record that winter.

VELVET SCOTER (*Melanitta fusca*).—Irregular winter visitor. Another species regular on the east coast of Scotland but very scarce here. It seems to have declined here since 1930 (BA : 140) as the only recent records I have are one at Stevenston, 20th-22nd May, 1952 (SN 1953 : 117), and my own of two at Prestwick on 16th March, 1961, four at the same place on 28th November, 1962 (SB 2 : 313), with seven present on the 30th, and two immatures, probably the same in each case, at Prestwick on 25th October, 1964 and off Doonfoot on 28th and 5th November.

COMMON SCOTER (*Melanitta nigra*).—Winter and summer visitor; passage migrant. In winter small flocks are regular north of Ayr, and sometimes found to the south; scarce at other seasons. The small number of inland records include late spring birds on lochs Trabboch, Macaterick (May 15th, 1962) and Doon (an adult male on 17th June, 1964, gone next day) but I know of no attempt to breed. Irregularly at sea in summer but 1964 gave me the following records:—12th June, three at Troon; 19th June, thirty-seven off Barassie; 3rd August, three off Troon; 30th August, six off Dunure; 2nd September, a pair at Prestwick.

EIDER (*Somateria mollissima*).—Breeds; winter visitor; summer visitor 1964 and 1965. Has been expanding both its breeding and wintering ranges southwards in the British Isles for the past 20

years. It first bred here in 1945 (BS : 426) and still does in small numbers on Horse and Lady Isles, and near Fairlie. Flocks up to 150 are regular in winter north of Girvan, with smaller ones south of this. A new development took place in the summer of 1964; on 20th June I saw 101 off Troon, and on the 22nd 320 off Prestwick and Troon; only 9 females were in these flocks. By 22nd July there were 515 males, and it was obvious that they were moulting, feeding between Prestwick and Troon by day, and roosting on the Black Rocks. On 10th August I counted 575 males at Hunterston, but GF's notes show that this was not a separate flock, but the Troon birds more mobile after the moult. In the summer of 1965 500+ male Eider again stayed off Troon.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*).—Breeds; winter visitor; passage migrant. Nests in fair numbers in the south, in small numbers in the north, and irregularly on Horse and Lady Isles. Scarce in summer away from breeding-sites, but builds up from September on, and in winter dozens are seen along the entire coast. Flocks may be seen displaying in spring before leaving to breed elsewhere. Only occasionally inland, on rivers.

GOOSANDER (*Mergus merganser*).—Breeds; winter visitor. The brood of 10 seen by D. Bentley on 20th May, 1950, and by GHO on 2nd June is the first proved breeding here. 5 pairs nested in the same southern locality in 1952, but one clutch was taken; since then successful breeding has taken place there, and at least 4 other sites; a brood of 6 were on Loch Doon on 23rd June, 1964. Winter status is, as for a number of years, widespread in inland waters only, but never numerous.

SMEW (*Mergus albellus*).—Irregular winter visitor. Not annual. GHO's notes suggest the following records were of one bird, a female:—Penwhapple reservoir 31st December, 1944; 26th January, 1945; 27th December, 1946; at sea off Girvan; 28th March, 1947 (lochs frozen) and Penwhapple 3rd April, 1947. Another female was on Penwhapple on 15th November, 1951; a "redhead" on Bogton Loch, 9th January, 1960 (SB 1 : 211); one at Camphill reservoir on 27th November, 1960 (SB 1 : 385); one on Rowbank on 5th April, 1964 (SB 3 : 142); I saw one at Glenbuck on 24th February, 1965, and one on the sea at Newton-on-Ayr on 20th January (SB 3 : 319).

SHELDUCK (*Tadorna tadorna*).—Breeds; winter visitor; passage migrant. The increase in motor traffic on the coast road south of Ayr has reduced breeding success in that area since 1930, but a few broods are still reared each year. A few pairs nest on Horse and Lady Isles, and near Hunterston. An influx of chiefly birds of the

year takes place in September; the bulk of winter visitors arrive from December on, and flocks up to 100 are near Fairlie, with smaller numbers to the south. Occasionally single birds are inland, as at Loch o' the Lowes on 14th-16th August, 1960 (SB 1 : 430) and 3rd November, 1963; at Martnaham Loch on 1st October, 1963 (DG) and one I saw on Mochrum Loch on 29th April, 1965.

GREYLAG (*Anser anser*).—Breeds; winter visitor. For several years has been breeding on a loch which is partly in this county, but the actual sites were outside. In 1963 and 1964 a pair bred successfully at an adjacent loch in Ayrshire. The Greylag is the only goose which regularly winters here; prior to about 1940 it was irregular, and the Bean goose was the species seen each year, but from that time on the positions became reversed. Numbers seldom exceed 1,000 except when a very severe winter attracts extra immigrants to the arable areas near Kirkoswald and Maybole, which are usually snow-free. Small numbers are regular in the Hunterston and New Cumnock areas.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*Anser albifrons*).—Irregular winter visitor. One shot near Beith on 4th December, 1937, is the first record (SN 1938 : 55). In November, 1948, 2 were shot near Kirkoswald (SN 1954 : 66), 4 were seen near Maybole on 15th November, 1949, one there on 20th March, 1952, and one at Alton Albany, Barr, which arrived on 24th October, 1956, and stayed for a week, consorting with domestic ducks (GHO). One was near Ardrossan on 16th March, 1957 (GF) and 4 near Maybole on 21st January, 1960 (GHO); 4 at Loch o' the Kowes and Creoch Loch, 7th-11th March, 1960 (SB 1 : 433). Sub-species is not mentioned in these records, but it is probable that the Greenland race *A. a. flavirostris* was involved.

BEAN GOOSE (*Anser arvensis arvensis*).—Vagrant; formerly winter visitor. Prior to 1930 this was the only "grey" goose wintering here regularly, but from that date a decline took place, and by 1940 the Greylag had become the predominant goose, but it is not likely that direct competition was involved. F. Alisdair Anderson (pers. comm.) says he looked for Bean geese for several years after 1933, but never found any. GHO says "the last Bean goose of which I have any records are 4 seen by me on 26th February, 1944, at Penwhapple" (SN 1949 : 123). One at Doonfoot on 20th April, 1958 (SB 1 : 99) and one near Ardrossan on 4th April, 1959 (GF) are the only subsequent records I can find.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE (*Anser arvensis brachyrhynchus*).—Irregular winter visitor. Regular in Lanarkshire, only a short distance outside the county, but holds fast to its feeding-grounds there, and

on the Solway, with only occasional stragglers coming into Ayrshire in severe weather; D. Weir has seen or obtained a few near Dalrymple, the latest in 1963. One on 26th November, 1957, is actually the first dated occurrence, at Hunterston (GF); 2 were at Kirkoswald on 10th January, 1963 (DG), and I saw 2 near Dalrymple on 15th February, 1965, and 2, probably the same, near Maybole on 15th March.

SNOW GOOSE (*Anser caerulescens*).—Vagrant. The only record (BA : 128) was placed in square brackets by PP because sub-species was not decided, but I see no reason to do so. It was a single bird, seen by Nicol Hopkins, near Darvel, on 28th April, 1906.

BRENT GOOSE (*Branta bernicla*).—Vagrant; formerly winter visitor. Once regular at Fairlie, but after excessive shooting, and disease in the zoster beds, dwindled during the 1930s and ceased to arrive soon after. These birds were of the Pale-breasted race *B. b. hrota*. 2 near Ballantrae on 8th January, 1960 (DG) and one near Hunterston on 12th November, 1961 (SB 2 : 47) are the only recent records.

BARNACLE GOOSE (*Branta leucopsis*).—Irregular winter visitor and passage migrant. Unlikely to be overlooked, and reported fairly often, but not regularly in any one place; 4 were on Penwhapple on 9th October, 1949 (GHO); 2 stayed for several days in March, 1957, near New Cumnock, in company with Greylag (WH); 2 were at Nether Culzean on 26th December, 1957, and one stayed at Cairnwhin from 23rd October to 2nd November, 1958 (GHO); one was near Ardrossan on 20th September 1959 (GF); one near New Cumnock on 8th October, and a skein of 15 flying south on 1st November, also in 1959 (JAB); 5 were near Ballantrae on 8th January, 1960 (DG); 2 at Loch o' the Lowes on 5th October, 1960 (SB 1 : 433), 2 at Hunterston on 16th October, 1960, and 13th November (SB 1 : 386); one at Horse Island on 20th April, 1961 (SB 1 : 433); 2 at Kirkoswald on 10th January, 1963 (SB 2 : 377); I have seen 2 at Bogside on 20th October, 1964 (SB 3 : 263) and one near Maybole on 15th March, 1965 (SB 3 : 320).

CANADA GOOSE (*Branta canadensis*).—Breeds; vagrant away from single breeding site. A pair was introduced in Rowbank reservoir in 1953, and was still breeding in 1963, with the resulting colony around 30 birds in 1965 (Bird Study : 5 : 218 and SB 2 : 277). These birds are mainly sedentary; 5 on Barassie shore on 27th August, 1960 (LAU) are the only other record I have.

MUTE SWAN (*Cygnus olor*).—Breeds; winter visitor. Nests throughout, on rivers, ponds and lochs. Winters on estuaries and

at the coast if frozen out, and immigrants arrive in hard weather. The autumn numbers at the Auld Brig area of the River Ayr are the largest concentration of Mute Swans in South-West Scotland; I saw 95 adults and 7 juveniles on 20th May, 1964, 109 adults on 23rd July, 1965, and there have been over 100 birds in previous years (JGY, ADW).

WHOOPEE SWAN (*Cygnus cygnus*).—Winter visitor. Regular to all parts of the county, arriving much earlier than the 30th November quoted at BA : 123. I saw 2 on Glenbuck Loch on 7th October, 1964, and 2 near Maybole on 14th October, 1963. Up to 25 winter on the sea at Fairlie, feeding on zoster; Glenbuck has held over 250 in some years but the food supply is erratic, and in other winters no Whoopers are seen. A pair has often lingered into late spring at a suitable nesting site in the south, but no attempt to breed is recorded. An unusual summer record was one at Loch o' the Lowes from the end of May until 29th June, 1962 (SB 2 : 204), and probably the same bird on 5th September, (SB 2 : 314); one with an injured wing was at Glenbuck from the winter of 1963/64 until the summer of 1965.

BEWICK'S SWAN (*Cygnus columbianus*).—Irregular winter visitor. Not annual, and even in years when numerous in the British Isles as a whole very few are recorded here. In print since 1929 are:—one at Pow Burn, 18th April to 28th July, 1947 (BB 42 : 126), the only summer occurrence; one at Glenbuck on 3rd January, 1957 (DG); one at Loch o' the Lowes on 18th March, 1963, and two near Maybole on 29th and 30th January, 1963, were the only records in a winter which saw a large influx into Britain (SB 2 : 377 and 435); one was at the former place 10th to 31st January, 1960 (SB 1 : 211); the unusual number of eight, five adults and three immatures, were near Rowbank on 20th December, 1964 (SB 3 : 263).

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*).—Breeds; vagrant away from single breeding-site. Until the end of the 18th century numerous about Loch Doon, and breeding regularly near Straiton, then largely exterminated during the 19th. Two pairs bred at Straiton in 1837 and it bred in South Ayrshire 1911-1918, and in 1920, 1921, and 1923 (BFC : 76). Became a vagrant until 1948 when, again in the south, 2 eaglets were reared. The next year an eaglet was seen on 19th July, and on 4th June, 1950, 3 young had hatched but were reduced to two by 12th July; these were well grown and ready to leave the eyrie. 1951 was unsuccessful; 2 eggs were laid but abandoned. The next year a new nest was built, and at least one chick had hatched by the 16th May. In 1953 a third site was chosen but no eggs were seen. In 1954 yet another nest was built the hen was sitting on 16th April but no hatch took place; the

following spring the pair returned to the 1952 eyrie but no young were seen. In 1956 3 eggs were taken and in 1957 3 were added. After these setbacks 1958 was a successful year at a new nest 2 miles south of the previous group, but it is not known how many young flew. 1959 and 1960 failures, although 3 eggs were seen on 5th April, 1960. In 1961, 1962 and 1963 one eaglet flew each year. In 1964 and 1965 the hen incubated for a time but later abandoned the nest. Although only one breeding pair has been involved from 1948 to 1965 there was a change of hen in 1953 and 1954, and at one time 3 birds were at the site. The prolific laying of these females is encouraging, and it is to be hoped more than one pair may breed in the future. The only record I have away from the breeding site is over Glenafton in the winter of 1962/63.

BUZZARD (*Buteo buteo*).—Breeds; irregular passage migrant. Badly persecuted, and probably only 5 or 6 pairs breed. Found chiefly in the south with a few near Largs and Beith, mainly resident but sometimes wanders in winter, and is nowhere regular as a passage migrant.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD (*Buteo lagopus*).—Vagrant. No recent records. One trapped about 1898 on Mochrum Hill, Maybole, and one shot later (ASNH 1902 : 183, quoted BFC : 78, but overlooked in BA) are the only occurrences.

SPARROWHAWK (*Accipiter nisus*).—Breeds; mainly resident. Although a reduction in numbers has taken place over the past 30 years, this hawk is not as desperately reduced here as in other parts of Britain, and may be found throughout in woods where active game preservation is not carried out. It may be seen in areas where it does not breed, in winter, but I am uncertain if immigration or local movement is involved.

KITE (*Milvus milvus*).—Formerly bred. Nested until about 1860; the bird seen October to November, 1892, by Berry, and one shot a week later near Pinmore, presumed the same, are the final records (BA : 116).

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE (*Haliaeetus albicilla*).—Formerly bred. Another fine bird shot out of existence. Once bred on Ailsa, but was only a vagrant by 1871. One was shot there in 1881 and preserved in Culzean Castle. Not seen after the turn of the century (BA : 117).

HONEY BUZZARD (*Pernis apivorus*).—Vagrant. One only, shot on 21st September, 1864, at Wellwood, Muirkirk (BWS : 48).

MARSH HARRIER (*Circus aeruginosus*).—Vagrant. On 31st May, 1952, GHO saw an adult or near adult male on Tarriefessock; it was being mobbed by Curlew when first seen, then watched for a time hunting low over the ground. This previously unpublished record is the first for the county, and a male seen by Sir Arthur Duncan and ADW on a moor in the south on 4th August, 1960, is the only other occurrence.

HEN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*).—Breeds occasionally; winter visitor; passage migrant. Once numerous, but the successful hatch of 3 young in 1960 was probably the first this century; one nestling ringed by ADW was found dead near Gladhouse reservoir Midlothian, on 16th November, 1962. Attempts to breed have been made in subsequent years, but have failed due to interference. As a winter visitor most regular near Barr, and occasional on other moorland areas. Passage migrants, very few in number, may also be seen on lower, cultivated ground in the west of the county.

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*).—Formerly bred; vagrant. Frequented Loch Doon until about 1854; one was shot at Blairquhan by E. H. Blair about 1886 (BA : 117). Not seen again until 1965, when a single bird spent 10 days fishing in Glenbuck Loch, arriving on the 21st May; with the re-introduction as a Scottish breeding species in 1959 it is to be hoped that more migrants may pass this way, although the 1965 bird could have been en route to Scandinavia.

HOBBY (*Falco subbuteo*).—Vagrant. A juvenile shot at Darvel in August, 1915, is the only acceptable record (BA : 105).

PEREGRINE (*Falco peregrinus*).—Breeds; winter visitor; passage migrant. The general decline of this species in Britain has been much discussed, and although it is still a regular winter visitor here because the last few strongholds are to the north of us, breeding success has been poor over the past 5 years. Two or 3 coastal sites have been abandoned during that time, and it is doubtful if more than 3 pairs bred successfully in 1964 and 1965 in the whole county.

GYR FALCON (*Falco rusticolus*).—Vagrant. One only, found dead near Largs at the end of February, 1913, and preserved by C. Kirk. This was of the Greenland race *F. r. candicans* (BA : 102).

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*).—Breeds; summer visitor; passage migrant. Nests in very small numbers, and absent from breeding-grounds in winter. Regular at the coast at Hunterston and Irvine, particularly in October; one was near New Cumnock on 14th October, 1962 (SB 2 : 314); I have seen several in the past 5 years in the Maybole and Barr areas in spring, hunting over farmland. Females are always predominant in these passage occurrences.

KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*).—Breeds; passage migrant. This bird of prey at least is not declining here. It is difficult to go for a day's walk anywhere in the county without seeing one, and it breeds in all regions. It is seen as a bird of passage on Ailsa.

RED GROUSE (*Lagopus lagopus*).—Breeds. A common species on the moors, but subject always to large fluctuations due to disease and bad weather in the breeding season. 1963 was a lean year due to 2 bad summers followed by an exceptionally severe winter, but numbers were high at the beginning of the 1965 summer.

PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus mutus*).—Formerly bred? In Armstrong's "New Map of Ayrshire," 1775, against "Shalloch on Minnoch hill (Parish of Barr)" is stated "The cairn of the Shalloch and the 3 hills south of that are exceedingly barren and rocky; on them are found the beautiful white moor fowl called the Termagent, and nowhere else south of Stirling." This is the only reference to this species in the wild in Ayrshire; it was introduced in 1843, and early in this century, but only survived for a year or so.

BLACK GROUSE (*Lyrurus tetrrix*).—Breeds. Found in fair numbers in the south, where new afforestation has greatly increased the area of suitable habitat in recent years; irregular in the west central part, but found near Fenwick. In SB 2 : 205 "Seen to be on the increase in the upper regions of River Ayr. On 6th May (1962) 3 groups, of 10 cocks and a hen, 7 cocks, and 8 cocks were noted on a run from Sorn to Glenbuck, and they have been seen regularly in the area for the past year of two." On 14th December, 1964, Lord Weir saw "10 blackcock with at least an equal number of greyhen" (*Glasgow Herald*), in this area.

CAPERCAILLIE (*Tetras urogallus*).—Vagrant. Dr. I. D. Pennie (SN 1951 : 14) writes "Ayr—a small-scale introduction was made in 1841 or 1842 at Glenapp by hatching eggs obtained from Taymouth, and some of the birds are known to have survived until 1848 (Harvie-Brown, 1879)." A hen was shot at Tarbolton Moss in 1905 (ASNH 1906 : 116) and is preserved in the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock. The only other record, previously unpublished, is a male seen by N. F. Stewart near the Kelburn estate, Largs, on 7th September, 1959.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE (*Alectoris rufa*).—Introduced about 1880 without success, and not recorded in the wild.

PARTRIDGE (*Perdix perdix*).—Breeds. Common on farmland throughout, but scarcer on high ground than it was 30 years ago.

QUAIL (*Coturnix coturnix*).—Breeds occasionally; occasional summer and winter visitor. Bred near Killochan, Girvan, in 1943 (DC), at Dailly in 1946 (GHO), and at Otterden in 1952, young being seen in August (DC). One was at Penwhapple on 14th December, 1947 (GHO) and another at Maidens at the end of November, 1952 (SN 1953 : 117). "November-December, 1952" in R. E. Moreau's "Quail in the British Isles, 1950-53" (BB 49 : 161) presumably refers to the latter bird. One was seen by GF on 3rd June and 7th June, 1960, near Stevenston (SB 1 : 280) and another during September, 1961, at Saltcoats. The summer of 1964 saw a big irruption into England, but I have only one record for Ayrshire, a female killed by striking wires near New Cumnock during July.

PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*).—Breeds. Common resident species.

WATER RAIL (*Rallus aquaticus*).—Breeds. Widely scattered pairs nest throughout the western half, but at one small loch in the central area 14 were seen together in January, 1965.

SPOTTED CRAKE (*Porzana porzana*).—Occasional winter visitor. BFC and BA between them quote 6 records up to 1936; there is only one satisfactory record since, one near Barr during the first 2 weeks of November, 1945 (GHO).

LITTLE CRAKE (*Porzana parva*).—Vagrant. One found dying in a boat in Girvan Harbour on 29th March, 1909, and later preserved, is the only record (ASNH 1909 : 185).

CORNCRAKE (*Crex crex*).—Breeds; summer visitor. Annual in the Ayr and Ballantrae districts, and occasionally widespread and fairly numerous, as in 1952, 1964 and 1965. Formerly regularly common but a decline took place, as in other parts of the British Isles, after about 1920, with the introduction of mechanical harvesting.

MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*).—Breeds; irregular passage migrant. Found wherever there is water throughout the county; in autumn tends to congregate on lower ponds and lochs, sometimes in flocks up to 50. "The Handbook" 5 : 201 quotes a few autumn records from lighthouses, but I have no indication of much migratory movement at the coast or inland.

COOT (*Fulica atra*).—Breeds. Very common, but not as numerous as the Moorhen, preferring larger areas of water. Winter flocks seldom exceed 50. Losses during the severe winter of 1962/63 were not great, and subsequent breeding success has been high.

GREAT BUSTARD (*Otis tarda*).—Vagrant. One found dead near Irvine on 20th June, 1895 (ASNH 1895 : 253) is the only record.

OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus ostralegus*).—Breeds ; winter visitor ; passage migrant. A general increase in the past few years, with a marked tendency to breed inland, on burn-sides and pasture-land. In winter the entire coast is populated, with up to 1,000 at Fairlie, and flocks up to 200 common elsewhere, even on fields some miles inland in the central area.

LAPWING (*Venellus vanellus*).—Breeds ; winter visitor ; passage migrant. Suffered great losses in the severe winter of 1962/63, and breeding birds, although still widespread, were down to 10% of former numbers in most areas in 1963. A slow recovery is taking place, but it will probably be some years before breeding populations approach the pre-1962 figures. Migrants and winter visitors are still numerous ; the count of 19,000-21,000 between Girvan and Turnberry in September, 1962, was, however, exceptional (SB 2 : 315).

RINGED PLOVER (*Charadrius hiaticula*).—Breeds ; winter visitor. In BA : 167 quoted as "very abundant" at Lendalfoot and quite numerous elsewhere at the coast. Although still a common species on all beaches, and nesting in fair numbers on suitable shingle, I think it is not as numerous as in 1929. Flocks of over 40 are seldom seen except in spring, and even then 80 is a normal maximum. Nests on the pierhead at Ardrossan, between railway lines, but I have no reports of breeding as far from the sea as the Hareshaw-muir site used just prior to 1929 (BA : 167).

GREY PLOVER (*Charadrius squatarola*).—Winter visitor ; passage migrant. Regular in autumn ; no inland records ; 16 at Irvine on 20th October, 1964, is the largest trip I have seen, and one I saw at Doonfoot on 1st September, 1964, the earliest autumn date I can find. Scarce but regular in winter, particularly at Barassie and Fairlie ; few spring records, and one I saw at Doonfoot on 7th June, 1965, in full breeding plumage, the only summer occurrence.

GOLDEN PLOVER (*Charadrius apricarius*).—Breeds ; winter visitor ; passage migrant. Dozens still breed on the high moors and hills, and hundreds winter, but it is in autumn that large flocks, sometimes of thousands, but generally 200-800, are seen throughout the county. Spring passage, though marked, is less spectacular ; I have seen the northern race *C. a. altifrons* in breeding plumage among spring flocks ; as it is indistinguishable from the southern race *C. a. apricarius* in winter dress it is very likely regular in autumn and winter, but ringing returns would be the only proof.

DOTTEREL (*Charadrius morinellus*).—Irregular passage migrant. The first record was one near Heads of Ayr on 27th September, 1942 (BB 36 : 241) ; D. Weir (pers. comm.) has seen occasional birds on fields near Montgreenan, Irvine, in autumn, between 1950 and 1962. Three were present on 20th August, 1951. It seems likely that a few Dotterel pass through each year in inland areas not thoroughly watched.

TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*).—Winter visitor ; non-breeding summer visitor ; passage migrant. Common along the flat shores in winter in flocks seldom exceeding 150 except near Girvan and Ardrossan. Scarce in summer in parties of 30 or less but numbers build up from August on.

SNIFE (*Gallinago gallinago*).—Breeds ; winter visitor ; passage migrant. Widespread breeder in suitable areas, and not drastically reduced by the 1962/63 winter. Passage is heavier in autumn and fluctuates ; 1963 saw a large influx. "Bad-weather" movements occur most winters, probably of birds en route to Ireland. On 17th December, 1964, I saw 109 Snipe at a marsh less than an acre in extent near Ayr, and 106 on the 24th January, 1965.

GREAT SNIFE (*Gallinago media*).—Vagrant. BA : 185 quotes the following widely-separated records:—One at Stewarton on 15th September, 1868 ; one at Pinmore "at the end of the 19th century" ; 2 at Muirkirk "prior to 1907," and one on 8th September, 1921, preserved in the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock ; one at Barrhill in 1925 ; 2 or 3 undated at Darvel and Eglinton. I have no later records.

JACK SNIFE (*Limnocryptes minimus*).—Winter visitor. No recent change in status ; seen throughout the county from October to April, usually singly. A very early date was 12th August, 1950, on Whiteclachrie (GHO).

WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rusticola*).—Breeds ; winter visitor. Nests wherever there are undisturbed woods with enough cover. Seldom numerous in winter, although "bad-weather" movements often augment numbers. Sometimes at the shore in severe weather.

CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*).—Breeds ; winter visitor ; passage migrant. Nests in large numbers on rough ground throughout, and the numbers in the autumn flocks, composed of both locally-bred and passage birds, have increased greatly in the past few years, especially inland. "The Handbook" (4 : 167) writing of Britain as a whole in 1940 says "except quite close to coast flocks of any size are uncommon inland ; occasionally 40 or 50 may occur ; larger numbers are exceptional." Regular spring and autumn counts

of 300 at New Cumnock (JAB), of 400 in 2 flocks at Tarbolton on 28th September, 1964, and 250 at Maybole throughout that month indicate a large increase here. Although large autumn flocks are usual at the shore, one of 421 which was on the Black Rocks, Troon, on 8th August, 1964, was above average. Winter flocks, chiefly at the shore, seldom exceed 50 birds.

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*).—Passage migrant. As for many years this remains a regular bird of passage in small numbers, most often reported at the coast in autumn, but also inland, and in spring.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa limosa*).—Passage migrant; rare winter visitor. In my experience the most transitory of the waders in Ayrshire, seldom staying more than a day. Prior to 1942 there are only 2 records, from Troon in 1911 and 1912, both in September, but during 1942-44 GHO had the opportunity of almost continuous watching at the Doon estuary, and he reported "very small numbers regular in spring and autumn" (BB 36 : 241). I saw a single bird there on 24th August, 1963, and 2 on 4th August, 1964; at Barassie 2 were seen on 20th November, 1949 (SN 1952 : 29) and one on 24th September, 1959 (GF). I searched this area during the autumn of 1963 without success, but in 1964 I saw 8 on 2nd September, one on the 6th, and one on the 18th. Although there has been a recent increase in numbers of this species on passage through Scotland it is worth mentioning that 2 regular haunts, Hamilton, Lanarkshire, and the Endrick mouth, Dunbartonshire, were unsuitable in autumn, 1964. My first spring record was one at Hunterston on 5th April, 1965; a flock of 36 near Maybole on 26th April, 1948, was exceptional (GHO). Rarely seen in winter; one was at Prestwick from 5th January to 11th February, 1943 (BB 37 : 119) (BB 38 : 235).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*).—Winter visitor; passage migrant. In BA : 182 the authors state "seen fairly regularly in the autumn, and a few have been seen in the spring," and quote 16 as the largest flock seen. A marked upsurge has taken place in the ensuing 26 years. I have only once seen a larger flock than the 60-70 at Prestwick during the winter of 1942/43 (BB 37 : 119), 74 on 22nd February, 1963, also at Prestwick, but flocks up to 50 are now regular on passage at Fairlie and Barassie, with smaller parties on other sandy shores. Fair numbers winter. During 1941-45 GHO saw more in spring than autumn at Doonfoot (BB 39 : 284), but this is not generally the case.

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*).—Occasional passage migrant. First recorded at Darvel on 6th-20th August, 1919

(SN 1920 : 56); one at Dalrympleston marsh on 8th March, 1954 (DG), 2 at Craigendunton reservoir on 20th August, 1960 (SB 1 : 384), one near Stevenston on 6th July, 1960, and another at the same place on 24th August, 1963 (GF) are all the records I can find.

WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*).—Vagrant. One near New Cumnock on 5th September, 1965, is the first record for the county (SB 3 : 425).

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Tringa hypoleucos*).—Breeds; summer visitor. Arrives at the coast or inland in April, and nests in fair numbers beside burns on high ground, and by the rivers in the west. Leaves from July to September, and seen again at the coast at this time; a few non-breeding birds stay in summer, but it is not seen at other seasons.

REDSHANK (*Tringa totanus*).—Breeds; winter visitor; passage migrant. Nests in fair numbers in all suitable parts; numbers are slightly lower than 30 years ago. In autumn and winter flocks up to 400 at Fairlie, and 300 at Irvine and Barassie, are regular, and smaller trips are widespread along the coast. It is a summer visitor to breeding areas, but may be seen up to 5 miles inland in winter, especially at high tide. Some migrants and wintering birds are of the Iceland race *T. t. robusta* (Handbook 4 : 331, BB 32 : 374, and personal records.).

SPOTTED REDSHANK (*Tringa erythropus*).—Occasional winter visitor and passage migrant. Reported less than annually, and a recent addition to the county list, with one on 2nd May, 1942, at Doonfoot (BB 36 : 241). Single birds were at Irvine on 19th February, 1950 (SN 1952 : 30), Doonfoot on 10th March, 1957 (DG), Fairlie from 11th-26th December, 1962 (SB 2 : 316) and on 28th February, 1965 (SB 3 : 321).

GREENSHANK (*Tringa nebularis*).—Passage migrant; winter visitor. Numbers are small in autumn, and very small in spring. Single wintering birds are now of annual occurrence at the coast, particularly at Doonfoot and Fairlie; at Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, 2 were seen on 20th-21st February, 1961, and one on 1st-2nd January, 1963 (SB 1 : 434 and 2 : 51).

KNOT (*Calidris canutus*).—Passage migrant; winter visitor. A spectacular change of status since 1933, when E. R. Paton was quoting single birds at Barassie as significant. GHO, on 29th February, 1947, described a flock of 150-200 as "the biggest flock I have ever seen in Ayrshire." During the winters and autumns of

1954-64 flocks of 400-1,000 were regular at Barassie, with one exceptional flock of 7-8,000 on 27th January, 1963, in very severe weather, and 2-500 were often seen at Girvan, Prestwick and Irvine. Very few Knot go inland; one in breeding plumage was near Loch Riccawr in May 1960, (GHO) and one was near New Cumnock on 16th August, 1964 (JAB—the observer's first record for the area).

PURPLE SANDPIPER (*Calidris maritima*).—Winter visitor; passage migrant. The singularity of this bird's habitat, wave-washed rocks, make it easy to find, and Ballantrae, Lendalfoot, Girvan, Ayr, Prestwick, Troon and Portencross have flocks in winter and spring, usually of 15-25 birds, but occasionally up to 40. A few birds pass through in September, but the main arrival is in October; most are gone by the end of April, but a few are seen up to the third week in May.

LITTLE STINT (*Calidris minuta*).—Irregular autumn migrant. This wader is sporadic over the British Isles, and recent records are apparently the fringe of drift-migration associated with easterly winds in autumn. One I saw at Barassie on 5th-6th September, 1963, 2 at Doonfoot on 4th November, 1963, and one at Prestwick on 15th August, 1964, all arrived with an easterly airstream. Earlier records are one at Barassie, October, 1940, one at Gables, September, 1946, 2 at Hunterston, 1951 in October (SN 1953 : 3). At Doonfoot one 29th August, 2 31st August, 3 3rd September, all in 1943; one September, 1945 (BB 38 : 235).

TEMMINCK'S STINT (*Calidris temminckii*).—Vagrant. One record, at Shalloch on 3rd August, 1934 (BB 28 : 209).

DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*).—Breeds; winter visitor; non-breeding summer visitor; passage migrant. Breeding numbers are not large, but high ground in the north and south-east is used each year. Common along the whole coast autumn to spring in flocks usually from 50-300. Up to 200 are regularly seen on passage near New Cumnock. A very small number of non-breeding birds stay at the coast in summer.

CURLEW SANDPIPER (*Calidris testacea*).—Irregular autumn migrant. Another drift-migrant (cf. Little Stint), varying in numbers over the British Isles each year, and sometimes very scarce here. 1963, however, gave many records, and they were seen on all sandy shores from late August until mid-September. 13 at Barassie was the largest party. They were scarce again in 1964; I only saw 5 all autumn.

SANDERLING (*Crocethia alba*).—Passage migrant; occasional winter visitor. Seen regularly, in small parties, but never numerous. All the sandy beaches may be used. Surprisingly, since it winters in adjoining areas, I have no personal winter records, nor can I find any in print since the December, 1915, to February, 1916, occurrences quoted at BA : 179. It is a very scarce spring migrant.

RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*).—Irregular autumn migrant; occasional winter visitor. More frequently reported in recent years, though this may be due to an increase of observers rather than birds. In print are—a Reeve at Doonfoot on 17th September, 1943 (BB 38 : 235); 2 near Ayr on 23rd September, 1956 (SB 1 : 7); one at Craigendunton reservoir on 20th August, 1960, and one on 21st at Barassie (SB 1 : 384); 4 at Loch o' the Lowes on 30th August, 1961 (SB 2 : 51) and 4 Ruffs with 2 Reeves there on 13th August, 1964 (JAB); I saw a Buff and a Reeve at Barassie the next day. The only winter records are a specimen in the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock, shot at Dunure on 22nd December, 1938, and a Ruff which stayed at Prestwick throughout the winter of 1962/63 (SB 2 : 317 and 2 : 378).

GREY PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus fulicarius*).—Vagrant. One at Lendalfoot on 9th October, 1904, is the first record (BA : 182). There was a minor "wreck" in November, 1911; one was found dead at Dunure on the 5th, and one shot there the following day is preserved in the Dick Institute; "9 or 10" were seen at the same place on the 7th (BA : 182) and one was found dying at Girvan on the same day (SN 1912 : 16). Later records (SN 1956 : 116) are—one dead at Dunure on 16th October, 1937, one dead near Straiton on 10th December, 1948, now in the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow, and one found dead near Ayr on 10th December, 1955.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus lobatus*).—Vagrant. One found at Ballantrae, following a gale, on 2nd November, 1952 (SN 1953 : 118—date misquoted) is the only record (SN 1955 : 102).

ARCTIC SKUA (*Stercorarius parasiticus*).—Spring to autumn visitor. Regularly in the Clyde, and harries terns and gulls at Horse and Lady Isles, and behind fishing boats. I have often seen them over the shore at Barassie, sometimes in family parties with a pair of adults and 1 or 2 juveniles.

GREAT SKUA (*Catharacta skua*).—Spring to autumn visitor. Although breeding numbers have greatly increased in North Scotland in the past 20 years there are still few records from the Clyde; I am sure this is due to a shortage of observers at sea, and that in fact more migrants are passing in the autumn. In 1964 and 1965

I made weekly trips from Ayr to Arran between July and September and saw one Great Skua on 28th August, 1964, one on 30th July, 1965, and a different bird on 10th September, 1965. Other records are one between Ailsa and Girvan on 4th April, 1950 (SN 1953 : 4) and on 7th April, 1953 (GBB 3 : 4) ; 3 at Barassie on 16th August, 1953 (SN 1954 : 68) ; one at Troon on 17th October, 1954 (SN 1955 : 70).

POMARINE SKUA (*Stercorarius pomarinus*).—Vagrant. BA : 201 quotes a few occurrences prior to 1929, but I can find no later records ; there is an undated specimen in the Dick Institute, Kilmarnock, from Ailsa.

LONG-TAILED SKUA (*Stercorarius longicaudus*).—Vagrant. A juvenile brought to me freshly dead on 21st October, 1963, had been found about 20 yards inland from the southern end of Prestwick beach. Identification was confirmed by Kenneth Williamson, and is the only record for Ayrshire (SB 3 : 38).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus marinus*).—Breeds ; summer and winter visitor. The Ailsa colony, which had been regular for many years, died out around the turn of the century, but was re-established on 1922, after 1936 it built up steadily, and 12 pairs nested in 1950 (SN 1951 : 90) ; about 100 pairs were present in 1963 but less than half were breeding. On the mainland J. M. McW. saw 3 eggs on the cliffs near Ballantrae on 30th May, 1922 (SN 1923 : 51), and CEP saw several pairs nesting there in 1959, but I saw only 2 pairs in 1963, 1964 and 1965, with no proof of breeding. A pair nested on Horse Island in 1961, probably a first record. In addition to these areas this species may be found over the whole county at all times of year, though always most numerous at the shore ; it forages at rubbish tips as far inland as New Cumnock, and over moors ; at favoured spots such as Doonfoot 50-70 are often present. A flock of 80-100 seen on Loch Doon by ADW on 22nd February, 1953, is still above average, but in general this bird has steadily been increasing in recent years.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*).—Breeds ; summer visitor ; occasional in winter. Colonies are found on Ailsa, Horse Island, and Lady Isle, totalling about 150 breeding pairs. Numerous elsewhere throughout the summer, with a few remaining into November most years, and occasional winter records, but not enough to claim it as regular at that season. Three birds of the typical race *L. f. fuscus* were at Ayr on 8th March, 1955 (SN 1956 : 160) and I saw 2 at Newton-on-Ayr on 2nd April, 1963, and one at Barassie on 23rd October, 1964 (SB 3 : 265).

HERRING GULL (*Larus argentatus*).—Breeds ; non-breeding summer visitor ; winter visitor. Very numerous, with up to 100 pairs nesting on Ailsa, 100 pairs on the southern cliffs, and 25-35 pairs on Lady and Horse Islands. Found throughout the county at all seasons, but most numerous in winter when large influxes occur of birds bred in North Scotland (2 found on Prestwick beach in October/November, 1964, had been ringed as nestlings on Pabbay, Outer Hebrides, that summer). Rubbish tips are most favoured inland, and fishing boats on the Clyde may have 500-700 birds each. Numbers roosting at the coast in winter exceed 10,000.

COMMON GULL (*Larus canus*).—Breeds ; non-breeding summer visitor ; winter visitor. Nests on Horse Island (20 pairs in 1961), Lady Isle, and near, or on islets in Lochs Riccawr and Macaterick (total about 12 pairs) ; a former colony on Alisa has died out. Small numbers of non-breeders seen in summer, but from September on large flocks are found, often up to 700 in one field, in the west central area. Up to 4,500 roost on Lady Isle in winter, and at least 9,000 more along the coast.

GLAUCOUS GULL (*Larus hyperboreus*).—Winter visitor ; irregular autumn visitor ; occasional summer visitor. References in SN and SB, too numerous to quote in full, show this to be an annual visitor from December to April, with a few August to November. Summer records, such as one on 8th July, 1961 at Doonfoot (SB 1 : 463) and 27th May to 13th July, 1962 (SB 2 : 259) are rarer. Ayr Harbour is a regular winter haunt especially when fish-gutting is carried out at the quay ; Barassie is another favoured place, but elsewhere they are irregular. Two inland records come from Hareshawmuir, 14 miles from the sea, from 4th January to 4th February, 1915 (BA : 199) and on 23rd March, 1931 (SN 1931 : 132).

ICELAND GULL (*Larus glaucooides*).—Winter visitor ; occasional at other seasons. Reported annually at the coast from January to April in very small numbers, with Ayr Harbour the most favoured spot. Seldom seen from spring to autumn, or inland. One was at Doonfoot on 2nd July, 1942 (BB 36 : 241) and I saw an immature there on 7th and 21st June, 1965 (SB 3 : 371) which I suspect had been at Ayr Harbour most of the previous winter (SB 3 : 21). One near Kilmarnock, 14 miles from the sea, on 28th February, 1939, was claimed as a first inland record by ERP (SN 1939 : 104) ; another was at Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, on 6th February, 1962 (SB 2 : 207).

LITTLE GULL (*Larus minutus*).—Irregular visitor. Very few old records ; one was shot at Lendalfoot on 16th December, 1902, and 3 were seen in Ayr Bay in October, 1907 (BA : 193). One was