

ORKNEY BIRD RECORDS

JULY 2016

There were only scattered records of **Great Northern Divers**, the most being five off Papay on 23rd. A lingering **Slavonian Grebe** was in Inganess Bay on 19th while the long-staying **Great Crested Grebe** was last seen at the Loch of Tankerness on 1st.

Sea movements began with three **Sooty Shearwaters** of North Ronaldsay on 25th, one in the Pentland Firth next day and another off North Ronaldsay on 29th. Much rarer was the **Great Shearwater** off North Ronaldsay on 22nd. **Storm Petrel** ringing sessions on North Ronaldsay resulted in catches of 131 on 14th and 187 on 27th, a **Leach's Petrel** also being caught on the latter date.

60 **Golden Plovers** had gathered on Papay by 11th but this count was eclipsed by North Ronaldsay's totals of 864 on 20th and 904 on 28th. The best **Lapwing** count was of 391 at Foubister, Toab on 31st. North Ronaldsay took all the plaudits for counts of smaller waders with maxima of 122 **Sanderlings** on 29th, 13 **Purple Sandpipers** on 25th, 186 **Dunlins** on 28th and sightings of single **Curlew Sandpipers** on 3rd, 16th and 25th and a **Little Stint**, also on 25th.

Two **Ruffs** appeared at The Shunan, Harray on 10th and two more on North Ronaldsay on 31st. 21 **Black-tailed Godwits** were also seen at The Shunan on 10th, North Ronaldsay's best count being nine on 27th. 87 **Bar-tailed Godwits** were on North Ronaldsay on 5th, Papay mustering five on 11th. There was a good passage of **Whimbrels** with 38 gathered on Papay's silage fields on 11th and 19 on 23rd, a maximum of 11 on North Ronaldsay on 27th and several records of one-two in the East Mainland. Single **Greenshanks** were on North Ronaldsay on 24th and at Graemeshall Loch on 31st. **Green Sandpipers** were on North Ronaldsay on 17th and at Widewall on 29th and a **Wood Sandpiper** on North Ronaldsay on 31st. **Turnstones** peaked at 273 on North Ronaldsay on 29th but nicest of all the waders there, was a run of records of **Red-necked Phalaropes** with one on 3rd, one on 10th and three on 17th.

10 **Little Terns** were counted at the main breeding site on 11th while, as **Arctic Terns** dispersed from their breeding sites, a large count of 4254 was made on North Ronaldsay on 28th. A rare sighting of a **Roseate Tern** was also made there that day.

Perhaps the most surprising sighting of the month was that of a female **Nightjar**, disturbed from a peat track on Mid Hill, Birsay on 1st. A total of five **Swifts** were noted in scattered localities during the month. 30 **House Martins** were gathered around one of the main breeding areas at St. Andrew's School on 19th while, on the same day, counts of **Sand Martins** included 130 at Northfield, Burray and 70 at Newark Bay, South Ronaldsay.

A late **Chiffchaff** was on North Ronaldsay on 2nd. **Goldcrests** were reported as having reared two broods at Hestily, South Ronaldsay during the month and a **Spotted Flycatcher** with a juvenile in attendance was at Hatston on 19th.

Up to 37 **Greenfinches** were at Cairston Road, Stromness where **Goldfinches**, **Siskins** and **Lesser Redpolls** were all seen with fledged young. Two **Lesser Redpolls** were also seen on North Ronaldsay on 20th with one or two unidentified redpolls in the Hope on 15th.

Finally, there a most unusual record of a **Lapland Bunting** on North Ronaldsay on 30th; this is a species that we wouldn't expect to see until mid-September.

Eric Meek