

Treshnish Isles
Auk Ringing Group
Report for 1999

Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group

Report for 1999

Expedition dates: 12th June - 26th June 1999

Expedition members in 1999:

Simon Walker (Leader), Dennis Cooper, Jan Densham, John Hodson, John Osbourne, Damian Offer, Robin Ward & Steve Willis.

Correspondence:

Simon Walker, Snipe Cottage, Hamsterley, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham,
DL13 3NX.

e-mail: snipe@snipe.screaming.net

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Map of Treshnish Isles	3
Weather	4
Systematic bird list for 1999	5
Systematic mammal list for 1999	12
Systematic butterfly list for 1999	12
1999 Breeding seabird census data for the Treshnish Isles	13
Population changes in a selection of breeding species on Lunga, 1994 - 99	14
Treshnish Ringing Totals for 1999	15
Treshnish Ringing Totals, 1971 - 1999	16
Recent Ringing Recoveries	17
References	20
Acknowledgements	20

INTRODUCTION

Since 1971, the Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group (TIARG) has undertaken to monitor through ringing and census work, the breeding seabird populations of the Treshnish Isles, Argyll (Walker & Cooper 1996). This report summarises the results of the Group's 20th expedition to the Treshnish Isles on 12th June - 26th June 1999.

As in previous years, the expedition's base was set up around the ruined village site at the northern end of Lunga. The majority of the fortnight's fieldwork was centred upon Lunga & Sgeir a Chaisteil where a full seabird census (now annual) and the systematic ringing of specific seabird colonies was performed. With much logistical help from Iain Morrison and his family, expedition members were in addition able to census the seabird colonies on all the other islands of the Treshnish Isles in 1999. This year's census was undertaken as part of Seabird 2000, the third census of all breeding seabirds in Britain and Ireland, following on from Operation Seafarer in 1969/70 and the Seabird Colony Register (SCR) census in 1985-87. This is the first time TIARG have been able to census the entire Treshnish Isles group within a year and in particular, that members have landed on Bac Mor (Dutchman's Cap).

All TIARG census and ringing data are fed into two national monitoring programmes, the Seabird Colony Register (J.N.C.C.) and National Ringing Database (British Trust for Ornithology), respectively. The data supplied are of great conservation value as they are the sole means by which the seabird colonies of the Treshnish Isles are currently monitored. The conservation importance of these islands is recognised by their designation as a Special Protection Area by the UK Government for the breeding colonies of seabirds they support. Financial support for the monitoring work TIARG undertook in 1999 was given by Scottish Ornithologists Club (SOC) and the Seabird Group in the form of £200 and £250 grants respectively towards transport costs.

WEATHER

General Summary

The expedition period was some two weeks earlier than usual, which might have been expected to produce better weather, June being usually finer than July in Scotland. In practise, however, this year's late May and early June weather was generally poor, and this continued well into the expedition period. We landed on Lunga on 12th June, a fine dry day, but then the whole of the first week was bedevilled by rain and strong winds. It was not until Sunday 20th that a steady improvement began, and by Tuesday of the second week a spell of warm, dry weather had set in which lasted until Friday night. When we left on the following day, the weather was overcast with showers during the crossing to Mull.

Special considerations

Weather plays a crucial part in our expeditions in several different ways, and prolonged adverse weather can mean the difference between success or failure, however much effort, expense and planning has gone before. Some of the effects are explained below.

Rain hampers our activities in several ways. When surveying and counting seabird colonies, it is not permissible to work in cold and wet conditions as disturbance could mean desertion, egg or chick loss. Further, counting accuracy is diminished. Similarly, ringing is not carried out in such weather. Apart from concern for the birds' welfare, there is more risk to ourselves of falls on wet rocks and slippery graa slopes, and also a reduction in physical efficiency when hampered by waterproofs. The rain does, however, provide a convenient supplement to our water supply.

Wind is rarely absent on the Treshnish and within reason can be beneficial. Fleyg-netting is most successful in a strong breeze, and a good breeze keeps midges down. But most netting techniques require calm conditions, both for the birds' safety and the fairly fragile equipment. In extreme cases our tents have been blown down by gales and other equipment severely tested. Strong wind also increases the movement of the sea.

In the last 2 years we have visited all the islands and skerries close to Lunga using an inflatable dinghy and outboard motor, and consequently sea conditions now concern us much more closely than in the past. For more ambitious trips to the distant islands such as the Cairn na Burghs and Dutchmans', we depend on Iain Morrison who, in turn, must consider wind and swell conditions and the shipping forecast when deciding if a trip is feasible.

Heat was not a problem on this year's expedition but in some years we have had to be careful to balance water supply and consumption, also taking into account the need to avoid dehydration. There are, however, other liquids which help in this! It is certainly necessary to ensure sufficient water when visiting islands lacking a safe source of fresh water, especially if the visit may be longer than anticipated.

Detailed Notes

Saturday 12th June. Weather warm and fine in Oban, cloud cover building later in day. Landed in dry, fair weather which lasted through evening. Clear night.

Sunday 13th June. Early morning very wet, brightened later in morning. Survey work possible late morning and afternoon, turned wet again in evening, with S.E. breeze and driving rain.

Monday 14th June. Continuing heavy rain and mist in morning. Improved around midday with weather front bringing clear skies and warmer weather from S.W.. Weather good through afternoon and into evening but poor again during night.

Tuesday 15th June. Misty during early morning, then cleared, becoming overcast but warm. Afternoon fine. Rain appeared in early evening, became heavy and continued on and off all night.

Wednesday 16th June. Very wet in morning, began to improve around lunchtime so that surveying was possible. Rain started again in late afternoon with strong S.W. breeze.

Thursday 17th June. Windy night with showers, clearing in morning with mixed cloud and clear skies. Breeze remaining strong from S.W.. Evening fine, wind dropping.

Friday 18th June. Heavy rain in early morning, continuing as mist and drizzle. Wind from S.W. around Force 4. Rain cleared in afternoon and conditions improving in evening, clear skies out to the west and wind dropping. Became very cold with strong westerly breeze from midnight.

Saturday 19th June. Heavy continuous rain from at least 06.00 hours. Wind shifted N.E., the E., then S.W., with big seas to west of Lunga. Shipping forecast Force 5 S.W. backing Force 8 N.W.. Actual

as predicted but only reached N.W. Force 6-7, around midnight to 03.00 hours Sunday. No boats landed.

Sunday 20th June. Heavy rain showers in early morning then brightened considerably. Wind S.W. Force 4, good visibility with much broken cloud and odd showers. Rain squall 21.40 hours with fresh N.W. wind.

Monday 21st June. Heavy rain squall during night, 02.00 - 04.00 hours with gusts up to gale force. Rain showers at 09.00 hours with wind still N.W. and strong. Weather improved during day with good sunny spells but strong cold breeze. Wind shifted to S.W. and largely dropped in evening.

Tuesday 22nd June. Fine, still, cold night. Sea calm by morning, sky becoming overcast. Wind light north-easterly. Became clear and sunny during evening.

Wednesday 23rd June. Fine day, blue skies with no cloud, very hot and no wind. Sea flat calm.

Thursday 24th June. Much as Wednesday, but S.E. breeze and cloud cover developed in late evening.

Friday 25th June. Began dull and overcast with S.E. breeze. Brightened during morning, warm and sunny by noon. Sea visibility poor with mist, wind rising S./S.E. and sea becoming choppy. Evening weather fine little wind by dusk.

Saturday 26th June. Damp in early morning, then improved but cloud increased with light showers around midday, and becoming colder with seas choppy. Wet return trip with rain squalls on west side Mull, clearing before we reached Craignure.

SYSTEMATIC BIRD LIST FOR 1999

The following systematic list is a brief account of those bird species seen whilst the Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group were present on the Treshnish Isles, 12th June - 26th June. The status comments refer to the species' occurrence during the breeding season based upon the records of expeditions in previous years. A detailed breakdown of breeding seabird numbers on the Treshnish Isles in 1999 is provided in a subsequent section of the report.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

A common breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Bac Mór, Bac Beag, Cairn na Burgh More, Cairn na Burgh Beg, Fladda, Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil. The breeding population for the Treshnish Isles was estimated at 1078 based upon apparently occupied sites. A single Fulmar showing characteristics of the dark morph (blue phase) was sighted on a ledge on the west coast of Bac Mór. The double dark morph and its intermediate forms with the double light morph of North-east Atlantic waters, is rare in Scottish waters.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

A regular breeding species

Presumed breeding birds were seen at night on Lunga and Bac Mór. Seven birds were mist netted around the Village at the northern end of Lunga whilst other birds were noted at night flying low over the slopes around Harp Rock.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

A common breeding species

Birds were heard churring from burrows on Bac Mór, Fladda and Lunga. In addition to birds noted at colonies documented by Gilberts *et al* 1996, single churring birds were heard on the summit of Cruchan (Lunga) and from under three isolated boulders on the cliff top plateau of Bac Mór.

Gannet *Sula bassana*

Regularly seen offshore

Between 1 and 8 birds recorded offshore on five dates, all adults other than 4 immatures in a flock of 8 birds. Of those birds seen fishing, all were off the west coast of Lunga and Bac Mór.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

A common breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Bac Mór, Bac Beag, Cairn na Burgh More, Cairn na Burgh Beg, Fladda, Lunga, Sgeir a Chaisteil and Sgeir an Eirionnaich. The breeding population for the Treshnish Isles was 601 based on a nest count.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Regularly represented by a small number of breeding pairs and a late summer moult flock

The moult flock held at least 160 birds, typically residing around the islands of Sgeir an Eirionnaich, Fladda and Sgeir an Fheòir. A further 7+ moulting adult birds were noted on Bac Mòr in addition to a pair with a well developed gosling. Extensive areas of vegetation heavily grazed and trampled by geese was located on Bac Mòr adjacent to freshwater pools at the south and north ends. Further such areas were noted on the south end of Lunga, Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Sgeir na Giusaich whilst birds were also seen using Cairn na Burgh More.

170 birds were seen on 14th June flying west from the Treshnish Isles.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Rare visitor

Single ducks were flushed from pools at the south ends of Bac Mòr and Lunga on the 24th and 16th June respectively. A single drake seen on Sgeir na h-Iolaire on 23rd June.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Regularly breeds in small numbers

Incubating females were located on Sgeir an Eirionnaich (3 nests), Sgeir na h-Iolaire (2) and Lunga (2, Corran Lunga). In addition a minimum of 8 broods of between 1 and 7 young were noted at Cairn na Burgh Mor (3 broods), Sgeir na Fheòir (1), Sgeir a Chaisteil (2) and Lunga (2, Tarbet). At least a further 10 ducks frequented Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil whilst only two ducks were noted at Bac Mòr. The only drakes noted amongst the Treshnish Isles were a flock of 9 off Sgeir a Chaisteil on 17th June.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*

A rare visitor

Two birds were noted flying north offshore from Bac Mòr on 24th June.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

One pair breeds in most years

No evidence of breeding though one bird was regularly noted within the vicinity of the cliff nest site used in 1998.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

At least one bird regularly present with breeding known to occur on adjacent coasts

Breeding was confirmed for one pair at Bac Mòr, with one, possibly two, well developed young noted on 25th June. A single bird was seen on four dates from the islands to the north of Bac Mòr, a male when sexed. On one of these occasions, the bird was hunting Puffins off Sgeir a Chaisteil; this species was also found amongst prey remains on Bac Mòr.

Corncrake *Crex crex*

Probably a regular breeder in small numbers

Single calling birds were heard from 6 localities within the northern half of Lunga involving at least 5 individuals. All birds were associated with nettlebeds surrounded by Bracken. Three birds were heard daily, day and night, during the expedition's first week within close vicinity of the village (expedition base). Only two remained calling during the second week. This is the third year calling birds have been noted at this locality, the previous occasions being in 1996 and 1998. A single bird was also regularly heard by day beside the cliff path above the cave/gully north of Harp Rock. The remaining localities at which single birds were heard, each on two occasions at night, were to the north of Shag Alley and on the saddle north-east of the summit of Cruachan.

Lone calling birds were also noted on single dates on Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Cairn na Burg More whilst one was reported from Cairn na Burgh Beg.

This increase in the total number of calling males on the Treshnish Isles reflects that reported in general for the Scottish west coast islands from a population low in the early 1990's (Ogilvie *et al* 1999).

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Regularly breeds in small numbers

Breeding was confirmed on the Treshnish Isles for 5 pairs and probable for a further 18 pairs (alarming at predators). 12 breeding pairs held territories on Lunga's beaches and rocky outcrops (3

pairs Corran Lunga, 1 in area 5, 3 in area 6a, 2 in area 8, 2 at Tarbet and 1 in area 10) with only three broods and one clutch located. Elsewhere territorial pairs were located at Bac Mór (3, one with a pullus), Bac Beag (1 possibly 2), Carn na Burgh Beg (1), Cairn na Burgh More (1), Sgeir na h-Iolaire (1), Sgeirean na Giusaich (1) and Sgeir an Fheòir (1).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

One or two pairs breed

Four pairs were considered to have attempted breeding with 2 pairs located on Fladda, 1 pair incubating on Sgeir a Chaisteil and a pair with young at Corran Lunga, Lunga.

Additional records relate to adults, three roosting at high tide at Corran Lunga on 26th June and two on the strand line at Sgeir na h-Iolaire on 23rd.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Rare visitor

One bird was recorded on Sgeir an Fheòir on 23rd June.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Regularly breeds in small numbers

At least four drumming males were located along the north-east coast of Lunga; one above Shag Alley, one above Shearwater Gully and two within the vicinity of the village. Up to four individuals were flushed from the south end (count area 7) on a given day with at least 4 pairs considered to be breeding. Elsewhere during a survey of the whole island, up to 9 individuals were flushed on Fladda where at least two drumming males were noted on a subsequent visit. A single bird was flushed from a clutch of 4 eggs on south end of Bac Mór.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Irregular visitor

Up to 2 birds were noted around Fladda and a single was heard calling from Bac Mór on 25th June.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Rare visitor

One bird was recorded on Fladda on 24th June.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

One pair occasionally breeds

Single birds alarming and displaying were noted at Sgeir a Chaisteil, Sgeir an Fheòir, Fladda (south bay) and Sgeir an Eirionnaich.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Small numbers seen daily presumably from the breeding colony on Coll

Up to 7+ seen daily kleptoparasitising auks and Kittiwakes at Harp Rock. Both dark and light phase birds were observed, with count maxima of 5 and 2 respectively.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

First known record for the Treshnish Isles.

A single adult of this less than annual visitor to Argyll, was seen flying over Corran Lunga, Lunga towards Harp Rock on 26th June.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

An increasingly regular species, with one pair holding territory since 1996 where breeding was confirmed in 1998.

During the expedition's first week one pair was regularly seen perched on high ground south of the Tarbet, Lunga (area 6), apparently holding territory. The pair was agitated by approaching Great Black-backed Gulls as well as humans but no evidence was found of a nest or young. A pair later seen over the Village, at the north end of Lunga, became agitated at the presence of a dog and a human. At the latter locality birds, often in pairs, regularly flew overhead with a maximum of five birds at one time on the 23rd June, a sixth following later that day, identifiable from moulting inner primaries. Elsewhere a single bird was seen over Cairn na Burgh More on 12th June and up to 2 over Fladda where no evidence of breeding was found this year.

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Irregular breeding species in small numbers

Breeding was confirmed for single pairs on Sgeir an Fheòir and Sgeirean na Giusaich south, nests being found at both localities. Elsewhere 6 pairs were considered to be breeding on the south-east of Fladda where breeding was confirmed in 1998. Otherwise single birds were seen at Sgeir a Chaisteil and Sgeir na h-Iolaire on 17th and 23rd June respectively.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Regularly breeding species in small numbers

The breeding population for the Treshnish Isles was estimated at 40 pairs with breeding either confirmed or considered to have occurred on all islands except Sgeirean na Guisaich (north and south) and Sgeir an Eirionnaich. Bac Mòr and Cairn na Burgh More held the largest single colonies, 8 pairs each, whilst the remaining colonies supported between 7 and 1 pairs.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

A common breeding species

The breeding population for the Treshnish Isles was estimated at 225 pairs with breeding either confirmed or considered to have occurred on all islands except Sgeirean na Guisaich (north and south). The largest single colony was of 54 pairs on Cairn na Burgh More.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Regular breeding species that has declined in recent years

The breeding population for the Treshnish Isles was estimated at 342 pairs with breeding either confirmed or considered to have occurred on all islands except Sgeirean na Guisaich (south) and Sgeir na h-Iolaire. The largest single colony was of 52 pairs at Lunga's south end, area 6.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

A localised breeding species

Breeding was only confirmed on Lunga and Bac Mòr with 786 nests in total, the main colony situated around Harp Rock. Colonisation of Corran Lunga, Lunga (area 1) continues with one nest in 1998 increasing to 3 in 1999.

1998 Correction: no evidence of breeding was found for this species on Fladda and Sgeir a Chaisteil.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Irregular breeding species

Up to 4 pairs were considered to be breeding amongst the Arctic Tern colony on Sgeirean na Guisaich (south). Numbers breeding remain substantially lower than the 50 pairs noted in 1995.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Irregular breeding species

After only one pair probably bred in 1998 (on Sgeir an Eirionnaich), the traditional breeding colony of Sgeirean na Guisaich (south) held good numbers in 1999 (95 nests, 180 birds) with a second smaller colony on Sgeir an Fheòir (58 nests, 160 birds). Not all birds present within the vicinity of a colony are breeders, with immatures prospecting for future years.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Common breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil, the main concentration typically located within the vicinity of Harp Rock with 8926 adult birds estimated. For the Treshnish Isles as a whole, the counts provided an estimated 9566 adult birds.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Common breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Lunga, Fladda and Sgeir a Chaisteil. Birds were also seen on suitable breeding sites at Cairn na Burgh Beg and Cairn na Burgh More, whilst 7 birds were noted inshore off the north-west cliffs of Bac Mòr. For the Treshnish Isles as a whole, the counts provided an estimated 1231 adult birds.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

Regular breeding species in small numbers

Adult birds were seen around Fladda (21 birds), Sgeirean na Giusaich (3), Sgeir an Eirionnaich (25), Sgeir an Fheadair (5), Cairn na Burgh More (5), Bac Mór (7) and Lunga's south end (1, area 8). Breeding was confirmed on Fladda and the south end of Lunga (area 6) with 3 and 1 nests located respectively in different areas from the adult above.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Common breeding species

Adult birds were apparently occupying burrows on Bac Mór, Lunga, Fladda and Cairn na Burgh More. For the Treshnish Isles as a whole, the counts provided an estimated 1788 pairs.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Regular breeding species in very small numbers

A single pair were found in each of the two caves on the north-west coast of Lunga between Harp Rock and Corran Lunga. Single birds were seen on occasions elsewhere on Lunga including the Village (north end), Shag Alley, South end and feeding at Cruachan.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

A very rare visitor

A single bird was seen perched near the Village at the north end of Lunga on 17th June.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Regular breeding species in small numbers

A minimum of 8 singing birds were considered to be holding territory on Lunga; five at the south end (2 & 3 in areas 6 & 7 respectively), and three on the high ground between Cruachan summit and the Village to the north. The only other birds noted were territorial pairs on Bac Mór (2) and on Fladda (1).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

An irregular visitor

Singles were seen over the north end of Lunga on the 17th & 18th June.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Regular breeding species in small numbers

Widespread breeding species on Lunga and Fladda with at least 2 pairs on territory on Bac Mór. The species may have been overlooked on the other islands visited.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

Regular breeding species in small numbers

Common along the coast of Lunga with birds also noted on Bac Mór, Fladda, Sgeirean Mor and Sgeir a Chaisteil. Breeding was only confirmed on Fladda (1 nest with 4 eggs) and Lunga but was considered to have occurred on the other islands mentioned given the presence of recently fledged juveniles. The species is likely to have been overlooked on the other islands visited, given the limited duration of visits.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrelli*

Irregular breeding species

A pair with newly fledged young were located at the boulder beach, Lunga between Shearwater Gully and the Landing Beach on 14th June. A presumed second pair with two fledged young were in residence around Harp Rock from at least 20th June. Away from the general locality of these two families, the only other sighting was of a pair again on Lunga in the south-west end of area 8.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Regular breeding species, quite common where habitat suitable.

All records of the species were confined to the northern half of Lunga, predominately amongst the boulder scree and bracken covered slopes from Cruachan down to the sea and on Corran Lunga. Singing males suggested 8 territories along the west coast between Harp Rock and the north end.

Other singing males included birds at Shag Alley, Shearwater Gully and the boulder beach south-east of the Landing beach. Fledged young were noted at Corran Lunga, the Boulder beach and the Village at the north end.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

Irregular breeding species

No birds were recorded by the 1999 expedition.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Rare visitor

One juvenile was noted on two dates (including 20th June) around the Village at the north end of Lunga during a period of poor weather.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Regular breeding species in small numbers

In contrast with 1998, there appeared to be less wheatears on Lunga this year. In particular, there seemed to be less juvenile birds around. Despite arriving one week earlier than last year, the young present were well-developed. Family parties were very once again quite mobile and dispersed across the island. Estimating territories was difficult due to the scarcity of birds although adults were seen in locations approximating to 8 territories on the main body of Lunga (excluding south end) distributed similarly to last year.

Despite considerable effort (particularly in attempting to catch known ringed birds), the number of birds ringed was less this year. Only 22 new birds were caught along with 3 retraps using seven spring traps baited with meal-worms. One bird was re-caught in Shearwater Gully near to its original place of ringing. However two others were both caught at locations differing from those of initial ringing.

One was a female bird, ringed as a juvenile in 1997 near the cottages, which was re-caught on the south side of Cruachan. The other, a male, was also ringed as a juvenile by the cottages and was re-caught on the cliffs around the north summit of Lunga.

No effort was made to trap birds on Fladda this year.

	Juvenile	Adult		TOTAL
		Male	Female	
New birds	19	1	2	22
Retraps	-	2	1	3
TOTAL	19	3	3	25

	Location								
	Lunga Area 14			Cottages	N Beach	Shearwater Gully		Tarbett	
	Juv.	Adult		Juv.	Juv.	Juv.	Adult		Juv.
		M	F				F	M	
New Birds	3		1	8	6	1	1	1	1
Retraps		1	1					1	

Three birds were re-trapped from the previous year:

Ring No.	Age	Wing	Weight	Site	Date
A297487	3J	99	24.7	Cottages	29/06/98
	4M	96	22.8	Area 14	22/06/99
A297499	3J	98	23.9	Shearwater Gully	30/06/98
	4M	98	26.6	Shearwater Gully	21/06/99
E196506	3J	94	22.8	Cottages	02/07/97
	4F	94	26.1	Area 14	23/06/99

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Rare visitor

A single bird was heard calling on the 19th - 20th June around the Village at the north end of Lunga during a period of poor weather.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Rare visitor

One bird was noted singing from the reedbed at the south-east end of Lunga. A singing bird was also present there in the previous two years but as yet no evidence found of breeding or a second bird.

Hooded Crow *Corvus corone cornix*

Regular breeding species in small numbers

A recently fledged juvenile in the gully between area 6 and 8 of Lunga was the only indication of breeding on the Treshnish Isles in 1999. The species was noted daily on Lunga referring to either two or three birds, one of the latter possibly a juvenile, most records from Cruachan south. Caches of corvid-predated gull eggs were again to be found on the south end of Lunga. Elsewhere up to two birds were noted on Fladda and, on 15th June, a pair on Sgeir an Eirionnaich.

Raven *Corvus corax*

At least one pair breeds in most years

Usually a pair, sometimes a single bird, was seen on occasions within the northern half of Lunga. At least one pair was also seen at Fladda on 17th June with a single on Cairn na Burgh Beg on 27th June. No confirmation that breeding had been attempted was obtained.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Regular breeding species in small numbers

Up to 9 birds, adults when aged, were seen on 6 dates on Lunga, most records from the north end. A single bird was seen on Sgeir an Fheòir on 25th June. No evidence of breeding was found.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*

Regular breeding species in small numbers

Observations suggested no more than 4-5 pairs resident on Lunga with probably no more than 2 juveniles. The largest flock was of five or six birds seen and heard at Harp Rock and Shearwater Gully. At least one pair with a juvenile, plus a second pair roved along the north east coast of Lunga from Shearwater Gully to the Landing Beach. A second lone juvenile was seen on occasions to join birds around the Landing Beach. The birds recorded from the south end of Lunga were of a pair on single dates at the reedbed and Tarbet.

Only two pairs were noted during a brief visit by the expedition to Fladda on the 17th June. On Bac Mòr a minimum of 6 birds (no definite age) were present on 24th June, these seen in a flock feeding on the south face of the Hill. Also on the same date, one pair accompanied by 2 juveniles were seen at the north end of Bac Mòr whilst at the south end 1 pair were seen.

SYSTEMATIC MAMMALS LIST FOR 1999

Otter *Lutra lutra*

Evidence of presence regularly noted

Fresh tracks and freshly eaten auk eggs were found in the first cave north of Harp Rock. In the previous two years, fresh tracks suggested Otters were using the second cave north.

House Mouse *Mus musculus*

Resident

One animal was regularly observed most evenings indoors at the expedition base, the Village at the north end of Lunga.

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Resident, numbers much reduced in recent years.

Up to 4 animals regularly observed in the Harp Rock area, including an entirely black animal. Other sightings included up to 4 animals on the summit and southern slope of Cruachan, Lunga, where there was much evidence of grazing by the species. No evidence of animals on the other islands were noted.

Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus*

Regularly breeding species

Up to 40 animals regularly hauled out on intertidal reefs between Lunga and Fladda. On the reefs between Bac Beag and Bac Mór, and off Accessible Gully, Bac Mór, were 24 and 10 animals hauled out respectively on 25th June.

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

A resident in West Scottish coastal waters.

A single animal was seen off Harp Rock on 23rd June. Three periods of sightings from Bac Mór east coast involved on two occasions 2+ animals and once a mother and calf only 200 metres offshore. All animals appeared (from a highly variable course taken) to be feeding.

SYSTEMATIC BUTTERFLIES LIST FOR 1999

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

Regularly breeder

From the 21st June up to 3 butterflies were seen daily along the north-east coast of Lunga. On the 24th June individuals were seen at five locations on Lunga, including the south end.

Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*

At least one individual of this species was seen on Lunga during the expedition.

1999 Breeding seabird census for the Treshnish Isles

Eivonaich?

Seabird 2000 census results

Sector	Count unit	Lunga	Chaistiel	Giusaich	Fheoir	Gronaich	Hi-Iollaire	Fladda	Caim na Burgh More	Caim na Burgh Beg	Bac Mor	Bac Beag	Grand Total Treshnish Isles
Fulmar	AON	525	106					44	132	56	147	68	1078
Manx Shearwater	No census												
Storm Petrel	No census	+	+					+	+	+	+	+	
Shag	AON	271	24			10		222	26	3	42	3	601
Great Skua	PRS	(1)											(1)
Common Gull	PRS			1	1			6					8
Lesser B-b Gull	PRS	9					1	5	8	7	9	1	40
Herring Gull	PRS	34	19		15	6	35	49	54	5	8		225
Great B-b Gull	PRS	65	5	2	8	44		64	21	5	80	48	342
Kittiwake	AON	782									4		786
Common Tern	IND			4		2							6
Arctic Tern	IND			95	58								153
Razorbill	IND	1015	16					190		6	5		1232
Guillemot	IND	9426	100					40					9566
Black Guillemot	PRS	3		3	5	25		21	5	7	1		70
Puffin	AOB	1684						40	2		62		1788

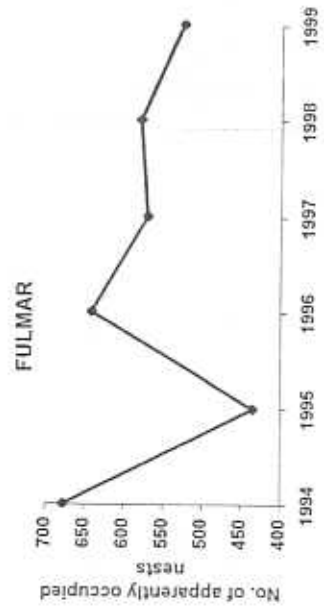
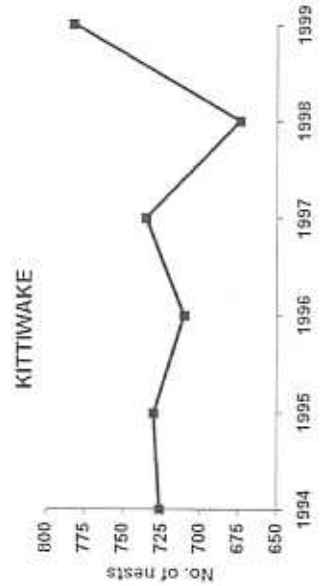
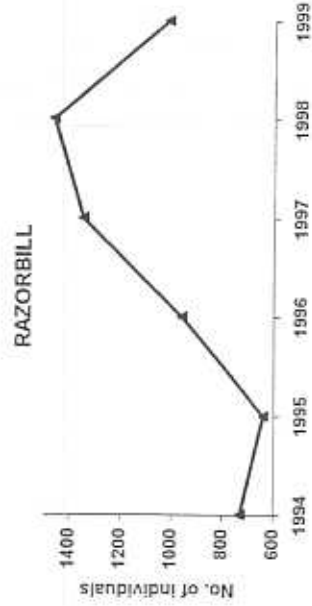
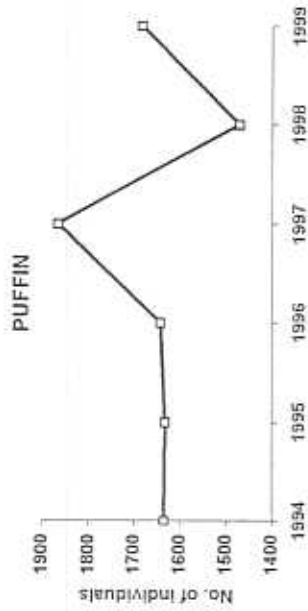
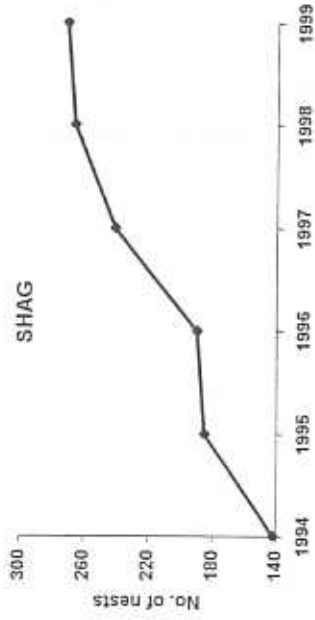
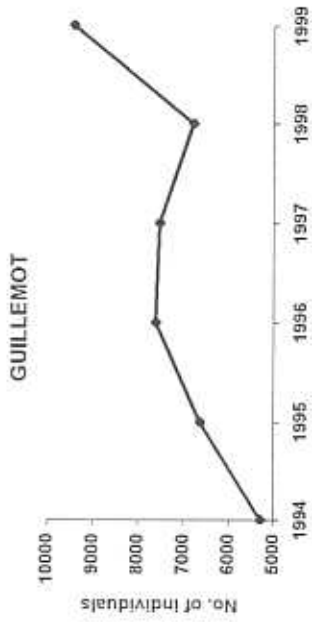
Totals for each Sub Colony Zones of Lunga and Chaistiel

Sector	Count unit	Count Sectors on Lunga and Chaistiel													Lunga & Chaistiel Totals
		1	2	3	4	5	6	6a	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Fulmar	AON	87	23	24	71	40	65	42	21	51	88	13	106	631	
Shag	AON	44	48	8	68	5	32	35	22	8	1	24	295		
Lesser B-b Gull	PRS	1				2	6						9		
Herring Gull	PRS	15				15				2	1		53		
Great B-b Gull	PRS	3		1		52	7			1		5	70		
Kittiwake	AON	1	1	3									782		
Razorbill	IND	74	53	82	104	24	48	4	30	358	150	88	1031		
Guillemot	IND	20			15				115	892	320	30	9526		
Black Guillemot	PRS								6						
Puffin	AOB	58	45	2	9	1			50	580	480	460	1684		

Key to count unit codes:

AON = Apparently occupied nest IND = individuals PRS = pairs AOB = Apparently occupied burrow

Population changes in a selection of breeding seabird species on Lunga 1994 - 99



TRESHNISH RINGING TOTALS FOR 1999

SPECIES	NEW BIRDS RINGED			TOTAL RINGED	RETRAPS	CONTROLS
	ADULT	JUVENILE	PULLI			
Fulmar	23			23	7	
Manx Shearwater	4			4	1	1
Storm Petrel	732			732	95	62
Shag	78		22	100	6	1
Oystercatcher			2	2		
Herring Gull		9	30	39		
Great Black-b. Gull			16	16		
Kittiwake	23			23	17	
Guillemot	507			507	65	4
Razorbill	102			102	23	
Puffin	274			274	57	2
Rock Pipit				2		
Wheatear	3	19		22	3	
TOTALS				1844	179	8

Note: Rings used in 1999 were registered under *Treshnish Auk Ringing Group, Hardman, Juckes & Cooper, and J.R.Hodson.*

TRESHNISH RINGING TOTALS 1971 - 1999

SPECIES	1971	1974	1976	1977	1978	1980	1982	1984	1986	1989	1991	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	TOTAL
Fulmar	17	6	4	4	8	21	14	18	7	21	15	4	4	27	38	7	24	23	254
Manx Shearwater		2	13	4	4	4	1	8				9	1	1		2	1	4	49
Storm Petrel		254	22		1	283		203	800	411	975	75	440	536	331	1104	741	732	6908
Shag	150	7	10	10	24	80	50	160		40	10		10	59	96	99	150	100	1055
Buzzard					1	1	2												3
Oystercatcher		1				1	4	2										2	10
Common Sandpiper																	1		1
Great Skua																	1		1
Common Gull																	4		4
Lesser Black-backed Gull																			
Herring Gull	6	1		7	14	46	35	56	4	4	3	5	5	24	19	52	73	39	381
Great Black-backed Gull	3	6	3	6	6	22	14	35		22	15	6	6	25	16	48	19	16	263
Kittiwake					1	1	1	1	2	2	4	6	6	10	1	50	41	23	142
Guillemot	32	20	14	66	502	137	364	180	250	306	109	109	498	498	349	472	503	507	4109
Razorbill	65	72	90	115	266	218	236	151	103	64	81	81	101	101	105	98	112	102	1979
Black Guillemot	70	198	271	203	200	208	182	174	160	114	358	358	236	236	301	267	398	274	3614
Puffin														4		1			5
Meadow Pipit									5	1				2	4	2		2	16
Rock Pipit													1	3	2				6
Pied Wagtail														3					3
Wren														3					3
Wheatear			12				1								5	24	37	22	104
Willow Warbler														1					1
Twite																2			2
TOTAL	343	558	439	17	441	1427	684	1266	1326	1014	1506	75	1029	1530	1230	2130	2109	1844	19111

NOTES: Data for 1971 - 1995 extracted from Walker & Cooper (1996).
Ringing data for a three day visit in 1972 was not available.

RECENT RINGING RECOVERIES

STORM PETREL

TIARG have in the past year received details of 36 recoveries of birds ringed within Britain and Ireland in the months July - August and controlled by TIARG on Fladda or Lunga in June - July 1998. These recoveries are summarised in both the table and map below; all birds were ringed as adults (Euring code 4).

Ringing Site	No. of controls at:		Time interval (days)		Distance km	Direction (degrees)
	Fladda	Lunga	Minimum	Maximum		
Sanda Island, Kintyre, Strathclyde	7	4	335	6883	145	339
Tullagh Point, Donegal, Eire	1	0		322	149	26
Valtos, Isle of Lewis, Western Isles	1	0		3256	194	170
Copeland, Down, Northern Ireland	6	0	1055	5424	209	345
Sheepland Hbr., Ardglass, Down, Northern Ireland	1	0		698	254	348
Faraidh Head, Highland Region	0	1		1058	255	202
Calf of Man, Isle of Man	5	2	338	706	290	340
Noss Head, Highland Region	0	1		3607	300	222
John O'Groats, Highland Region	1	0		327	310	220
Brough Head, Orkney	1	0		319	344	212
Inishglora, Mayo, Eire	1	0		318	346	43
Twinyess, North Ronaldsay, Orkney	2	0	1790	2903	395	216
Yell, Shetland	1	1	2530	5460	550	214

Storm Petrel D016420	4 R	8/06/95 2/07/98	Ponta de Almadena, Faro, Algarve, PORTUGAL Fladda, Treshnish Isles 1120 days 2166 km 5 degs
Storm Petrel E403448	4 R	7/08/93 28/06/98	Krakenes Fyr, Vagsoy, Sogn og Fjordane, NORWAY Lunga, Treshnish Isles 1786 days 894 km 226 degs
Storm Petrel 9986446	4 R	17/07/95 2/07/98	Skogsoy, Oygarden, Hordaland, NORWAY Fladda, Treshnish Isles 1081 days 790 km 235 degs
Storm Petrel E404090	4 R	4/08/93 2/07/98	Runde, Heroy, More og Romsdal, NORWAY Fladda, Treshnish Isles 1793 days 944 km 226 degs
Storm Petrel 2311988	4 R	2/07/98 1/08/98	Fladda, Treshnish Isles Sanda Island, Kintyre, Strathclyde 30 days 146 km 160 degs
Storm Petrel 2238546	4 R	2/07/98 19/07/98	Fladda, Treshnish Isles Calf of Man, Isle of Man. 17 days 290km 160 deg

RECOVERIES OF OTHER SPECIES

Shag 1170602	1 XL	27/06/95 10/08/98	Lunga, Treshnish Isles near Balevulin, Tiree, Strathclyde 1140 days 32 km 277 degs
Guillemot X42526	1 R	6/07/94 29/06/98	Isle of Canna, Highland Region Lunga, Treshnish Isles 1454 days 63 km 174 degs
Guillemot X67898	6	4/07/97 25/12/98	Lunga, Treshnish Isles Bahia de San Juan, Bakio, Vizcaya, Spain 539 days 1474 km 170 degs Oil victim, fate unknown
Guillemot GP74564	1 X	28/06/78 26/3/98	Lunga, Treshnish Isles Tarskavaig, Sleat, Isle of Skye, Highland Region 7211 days 73 km 20 degs

Guillemot X42526	1 R	6/07/94 29/06/98	Isle of Canna, Highland Region Lunga, Treshnish Isles 1454 days 63 km 174 degs
Guillemot T96906	6 R	13/06/98 30/06/98	Port Ban, Isle of Colonsay, Strathclyde Lunga, Treshnish Isles 17 days 46 km 344 degs
Razorbill M72732	6 XL	3/07/97 30/01/98	Fladda, Treshnish Isles St Just, Cornwall 211 days 711 km 176 degs Body amongst 150 other auks dumped in mineshaft by fisherman.
Razorbill M85629	6	1/07/94 3/01/98	Lunga, Treshnish Isles West Bexington, Dorset 1282 days 692 km 159 degs Oil victim

REFERENCES

Gilbert, G. *et al.* 1996. *A survey of Storm Petrels on the Treshnish Isles*. Unpublished RSPB Report.
Walker, S. & Cooper, D. 1996. *Birds on the Treshnish Isles 1971 - 1995*. Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly we would like to express our appreciation to Sir Alick Rankin for permission to allow our continuing studies to be made on these beautiful islands.

We thank Iain Morrison and his family, for providing our transportation in the 1980's and 1990's and are grateful for his continuing advice, co-operation and help.

Once again thanks to Jan Densham for organising the expedition's food and provisions (a thankless task!).

We are grateful for the second of three research grants of £200 from Scottish Ornithologists Club and for a grant of £250 from the Seabird Group in 99 to help with the extra costs of Seabird 2000. Thanks is also due to TIARG members who donated Storm Petrel rings free of charge.