Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group Report for 2003

Compiled by Robin M. Ward

Expedition dates: 21st June – 28th June 2003

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CONTENTS

Introductiom	
Map of the Treshnish Isles	
Weather	
Systematic List of Birds for 2003	
Systematic List of Mammals for 2003	
Systematic List of Butterflies for 2003	13
Other Species Recorded Systematically	13
References	14
2003 Breeding Seabird Census Data for Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil	15
Population Changes in a Selection of Breeding Species on Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil,	
1994 – 2003	16
An Assessment of TIARG's contribution to the British and Irish Ringing	
Scheme	
Treshnish Ringing Totals 1971 - 2003	18
Recent Ringing Recoveries	
References	
The Expeditions 1971 – 2003	
Rings used on the Treshnish Isles since 1927	24

INTRODUCTION

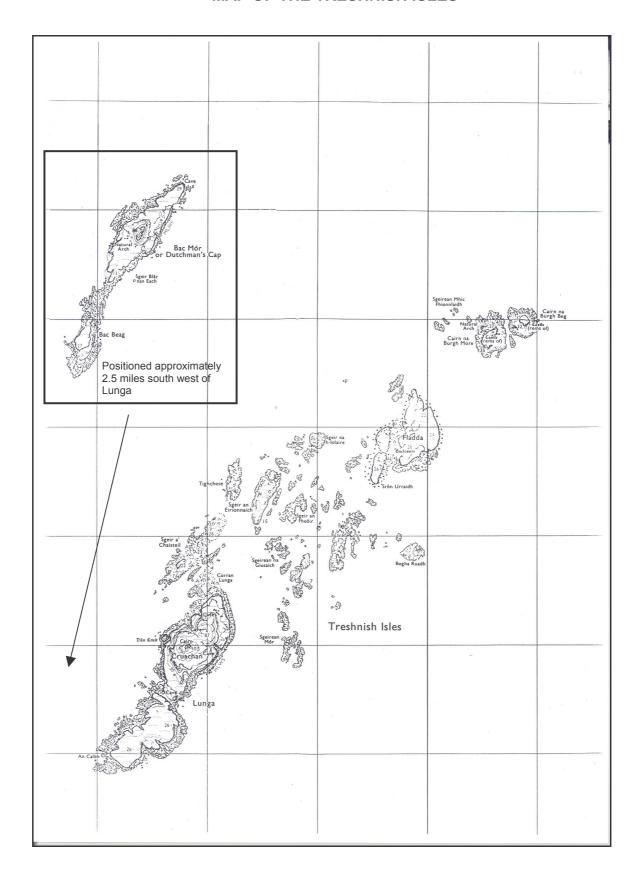
Since 1971, the Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group (TIARG) has undertaken to monitor through ringing and census work, the breeding seabird populations of the Treshnish Isles, Argyll (Walker & Cooper 1996). This report summarises the results of the Group's 25^{th} expedition to the Treshnish Isles on 21^{st} June -28^{th} June 2003.

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 week's fieldwork was centred upon Lunga & Sgeir a Chaisteil where a now annual full seabird census and the systematic ringing of specific seabird colonies was undertaken. With much logistical help from Iain Morrison and his family, expedition members were in addition able to census in part the seabird colonies on Fladda, Sgeir a Chaisteil and Sgeir an Eirionnaich in 2003.

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 2003 was given by the Hebridean Trust (www.hebrideantrust.org).

Any comments on the report and how future editions can be improved upon for relaying information required by conservation agencies are much welcomed.

MAP OF THE TRESHNISH ISLES



WEATHER

The BBC described the weather just before the expedition as being westerly and changeable. The stormiest weather occurred on the 17th June when a deep depression passed to the northwest of Scotland bringing gusts of 58mph to Lerwick and Sella Ness. The strong winds abated slowly over the next few days.

In Scotland, southwesterly winds blew throughout most of June, bringing a rather dull and wet month to parts of the west, but dry, bright and warm conditions to the east. Unsettled and showery weather predominated, but there were also interludes of warm and sunny weather. The amount of rainfall for June was categorised as being close to average (based on the 1961-1990 mean). The average temperature for June was 13°C, which was 1.9°C above the 1961-1990 mean and in the well above average category.

Weather for the period 21st to 27th June 2003, readings taken when ringing and census work allowed:

Saturday 21st June 2003 Time: 18:00 hours

Maximum Wind Speed 4 km/hr
Wind Direction Northeast
Temperature 13.4 °C
Relative Humidity 73 %

Synopsis A wet start, rainfall cleared by mid afternoon.

Sunday 22nd June 2003 Time: 12:00 hours

Maximum Wind Speed 5.8 km/hr
Wind Direction Southeast
Temperature 13.5 °C
Relative Humidity 78 %

Synopsis Very wet morning, showers in the afternoon.

Monday 23rd June 2003 Time: 16:00 hours

Maximum Wind Speed 23 km/hr
Wind Direction West
Temperature 15 °C
Relative Humidity 76 %

Synopsis Cool, windy day but mainly dry

Tuesday 24th June 2003 Time: 12:00 hours

Maximum Wind Speed 6 km/hr
Wind Direction West
Temperature 19.2 °C
Relative Humidity 69 %

Synopsis Warm, sunny and dry.

Wednesday 25th June 2003 Time: 18:00 hours

Maximum Wind Speed 6 km/hr
Wind Direction Southeast
Temperature 21.2 °C
Relative Humidity 56 %

Synopsis Hot and sunny during much of the day. Wind speed increased

considerably in the evening, which meant that mist net operations

that night on Fladda had to be cancelled.

Time: 18:00 hours

Thursday 26th June 2003 Maximum Wind Speed 8.8 km/hr Wind Direction Southeast Temperature 19.9 °C Relative Humidity 57 %

Synopsis Warm, dry and sunny with moderate winds from the southeast.

Time: 18:00 hours

Friday 27th June 2003 Maximum Wind Speed 3.9 km/hr Wind Direction Northwest 15 °C Temperature Relative Humidity 87%

Rainfall for most of the day, nearly all ringing and census work Synopsis

had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

It was often possible to see Coll and Tiree from Lunga, especially during the middle of the week when anticyclonic conditions prevailed.

Km/hr	Beaufort wind scale	Wind Force
6-11	2	light breeze
12-19	3	gentle breeze
20-28	4	moderate breeze
29-38	5	Fresh Breeze
39-49	6	strong breeze
50-61	7	Near Gale

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BIRDS FOR 2003

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, 21st June – 28th June 2003. Unless specified, no records are available for the Cairn na Burghs and the Dutchmans. The status comments refer to the species' occurrence during the breeding season as recorded by previous years expeditions.

For some seabird species, average annual rates of population change have been calculated by linear regression of the natural logarithms of the breeding numbers on year. The significance of the slope of the regression, equivalent to the average annual rate of increae or decrease in the population, is then assessed using the t-statistic (Fowler & Cohen 1986). A detailed breakdown of breeding seabird numbers on Lunga and Chaisteil in 2003 is provided in a subsequent section of the report.

Fulmar Fulmarus glacialis

A common breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Fladda, Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil. Birds were also seen at suitable breeding sites at the Cairn na Burghs.

The breeding population for Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil was estimated at 523 based upon apparently occupied sites, a 17% increase from 2002. This increase was noted across most count sectors with the notable exception of Sgeir a Chaisteil where numbers had declined by 35% to 65 apparently oocupied sites. When excluding the outlying count of 1995, the average rate of change in the numbers of breeding birds on Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil between 1994-2003 is calculated at -4.1% per annum, the significance of the trend being highy significant (P<0.01); when 1995 is included, the respective outcomes are -2.5% p.a. and a non-significant trend.

A rarely observed two-egg clutch was found in one nest of a species that usually lays only a single egg (Harrison 1985).

Manx Shearwater Puffinus puffinus

A regular breeding species

Presumed breeding birds were seen at night on Lunga. During the evenings at Harp Rock, small numbers of birds were noted flying past distantly offshore.

Storm Petrel Hydrobates pelagicus

A common breeding species

Many birds were heard churring from burrows on Fladda and Lunga. Mist netting on two consecutive nights at the Village and Boulder (Landing) Beach provided a total of 478 birds. An attempt to mist net one night on Fladda was thwarted by an unexpected increase in wind speed, the team having to spend a memorable cool night on Fladda until daybreak allowed their return to Lunga.

Gannet Sula bassana

Regularly seen offshore

The passage of birds offshore was noted on only two dates totalling 52 and 9 individuals on the 23rd and 26th June respectively.

Shag Phalacrocorax aristotelis

A common breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Fladda, Lunga, Sgeir a Chaisteil and Sgeir an Eirionnaich. The breeding population for Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil was 308 and 17 pairs respectively, based upon a nest count. When combined, the number counted has increased by 14% from that in 2002, continuing the trend of an overall population increase noted since 1994 (+6.5% p.a., significant trend P<0.01). During the 10-year period the population has doubled at an annual rate of increase above those measured for regions of Scotland and North-east England (Mavor 2002).

At least two breeding pairs were on Sgeir an Eirionnaich with no counts made on Fladda where the breeding population is at a minimum high into double figures.

Greylag Goose Anser anser

Breeding noted in some years, with a moulting flock present during late summer

The late summer moult flock in June held at least 101 birds, typically most residing around the

islands of Sgeir an Eirionnaich, Fladda and Sgeir an Fheòir. Extensive areas of vegetation heavily grazed and trampled by geese were located once again on Sgeir an Eirionnaich and at the south end of Lunga where there was a brood of two goslings with 5 adults.

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Peak count	25	160	240	268	79	101

Shelduck Tadorna tadorna

Rare visitor

One pair present on Lunga throughout the week was seen on 28th June to led six newly hatched ducklings off the Landing Beach beside Corran Lunga. Within an hour, the brood had apparently been reduced to one duckling, observations suggestive of a boat splitting the family and allowing the young to be albeit briefly vulnerable to gull predation. The only previously documented record of the species by TIARG was of a pair regularly seen in June 1976.

Eider Somateria mollissima

Regularly breeds in small numbers

A empty lined nest was located on Sgeir a Chaisteil. A poor breeding year is suggested from only 2 broods of single young noted, these at the south end of Lunga and within the north bay of Fladda. The late summer moult flock, typically male bias, centred upon the waters between Fladda and Lunga was notable by its virtual absence. No more than 26 birds were counted. Elsewhere up to three females were noted around the south end of Lunga.

Buzzard Buteo buteo

Until recently, one pair bred in most years

One pair were raising two young at a nest site on the north-east coast of Lunga as used in previous years. The adults were regularly seen flying between the nest and Sgeir a Chaisteil returning with prey including adult rabbits. When passing the Village, the adults were often seen being mobbed by Oystercatcher and other locally breeding species. Birds were also regularly seen over the south end of Lunga, majority identified as worn moulting adults. On one occasion however a moulting adult was seen to arrive at Tarbet with food to be joined later by what was presumed to be a recently fledged juvenile on account of its very fresh and fringed plumaged and lack of wing moult. Two young were seen on subsequent days in the nest.

Peregrine Falco peregrinus

Seen most years with breeding known to occur on adjacent coasts

A single bird was noted from the Village, Lunga, stooping down towards the sea off the Boulder Beach on 23rd June. Several Peregrine kills of Puffin were noted around Lunga's north end.

Corncrake Crex crex

Probably a regular breeder in small numbers

A single bird was heard calling briefly on several occasions on the 21st June from the traditional site just east of the Village, Lunga. The lack of regular calling as in other years may indicate that the male was pre-occupied with an incubating female (A.Leitch *pers comm.*). A brief search of other areas of Lunga that had in recent years supported calling birds resulted in a null count. A lone calling bird was noted during the night of the 25th June on Fladda, typically in the low-lying ground between the North and South Havens.

Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus

Regularly breeds in small numbers

Only 8 breeding pairs were found to be holding territories on Lunga's beaches and rocky outcrops (2 in area 6a, 2 in area 8, 2 at Corran Lunga, 1 in area 4 and 1 at Tarbet west) with no chicks, eggs or nests located though food-carrying adults suggested the presence of chicks at Corran Lunga. Elsewhere territorial pairs were located at Fladda (1 on the south-east beside Common Gull colony), Sgeir a Chaisteil (2 pairs) and a pair present on Sgeir an Eirionnaich. Small flocks of presumed failed breeders were evident on Lunga (area 6a) and Sgeir an Eirionnaich with up to 5 and 13 birds noted respectively.

Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula

One or two pairs breed

One pair had successfully raised to the flying stage two young on the Landing Beach. A second pair was typically on territory at Corran Lunga. Observations suggested at least one pair were attempting to breed on Sgeir a Chaisteil and one pair on Fladda's south-east coast (beside the Common Gull colony). The distribution of these breeding pairs was much as noted in recent years.

Snipe Gallinago gallinago

Regularly breeds in small numbers

The species was considered to be more abundant on Lunga than observed in recent years. Up to three male birds were noted displaying at one time over the Village at Lunga's north end, possibly involving up four territorial pairs with these apparently centred upon the Landing Beach Well, the area immediately north of the Village, the area to the east of the Village and from the slopes of Cruchacen above the Village. North of Tarbet additional territories were suggested from displaying males over Corran Lunga (1), just north of East Tarbet (1) and between Shag Alley - Shearwater Gully (2). At the south end of Lunga, as many as six birds (individuals?) would be flushed during a visit with one pair centred beside the reedbed. Otherwise only the occasional bird was noted drumming over the south end during the "midday" visits.

During the visit to Fladda on the 25th June, at least six birds (individuals?) were flushed when transversing the island's eastern plateau. One bird was flushed from the top of Sgeir a Chaisteil.

Curlew Numenius arguata

Irregular visitor

Single birds were heard from Lunga's north end on 25th and 28th, with 2 birds seen later on 28th flying low south past Sgeir a Chaisteil.

Greenshank Tringa nebularia

Rare visitor

A single bird was heard from north of Lunga's Landing Beach on the night of 25th June. This is the first documented record of the species by TIARG.

Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos

One pair occasionally breeds

One bird was daily in attendance alarming and thus suggestive of breeding at the western tip of Lunga's Landing Beach. Further alarming individuals were suggestive of the presence of one breeding pair at Fladda (south-east coast) and Sgeir an Eirionnaich.

Arctic Skua Stercorarius parasiticus

Small numbers seen daily presumably from the breeding colony on Coll

Up to 5 birds seen on 4 dates, generally offshore from the Harp Rock - Sgeir a Chaisteil coast of Lunga pirating incoming auks and Kittiwakes. Both light and dark phase birds were observed.

Great Skua Stercorarius skua

A regular and increasing breeding population following one pair holding territory in 1996 where breeding was confirmed in 1998.

For the second consecutive year breeding was confirmed on high ground south of the Tarbet (area 6), a pair incubating one egg in a nest close to that used in 2002.

Successful breeding by single pairs on both the west and east coast of Fladda was also confirmed with nests within territories used in previous years. Both pairs were rearing single chicks with an unhatched egg in the west Fladda nest, the chick days old with an egg tooth. One pair of birds were seen to flying through the west Fladda territory and on northwards.

Up to three birds were regularly noted along Lunga's west and north coasts.

Black-headed Gull Larus ridibundus

A rare visitor

The first documented records of the species by TIARG were of two birds on 23rd June over Tarbet and the Village on Lunga, followed by a single at Sgeir a Chaisteil on 26th.

Common Gull Larus canus

Irregular breeding species in small numbers

Breeding was once again confirmed on the south-east of Fladda, the colony having expanded on previous years to an estimated 11 pairs (22 adults noted on site); 6 chicks were ringed. Breeding was confirmed on Sgeir an Eirionnaich for the first time since 1986 where a single pair was again found, on this occasion incubating 2 eggs. Between 1 - 3 birds were occasionally seen or heard from the north end of Lunga and in area 8 alarming with the local Herring Gull colony. Breeding was not however suspected at the latter locality.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Larus fuscus

Regularly breeding species in small numbers

Breeding was suspected on Lunga (area 8) with 1 pair plus a subadult within the west coast Herring Gull colony. Since the start of annual seabird censuses of Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil in 1994, the species breeding population has fluctuated between 1 and 9 pairs with no significant trend (1994-2003). Elsewhere single pairs were present in the gulleries on Cairn na Burgh Beg and the north end of Fladda. No counts were available from Sgeir an Fheòir if the species was indeed present in the gullery there.

Herring Gull Larus argentatus

A common breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Lunga (25 pairs), Sgeir a Chaisteil (12 pairs), Sgeir an Eirionnaich (2 pairs), Fladda (5+ pairs), Sgeir na h-Iolaire (12 pairs), Cairn na Burgh Beg (no count), Cairn na Burgh More (no count). No birds were occupying territories on Sgeirean na Guisaich or Sgier an Fheòir. The low total count for Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil, is comparable to that of 1999 (34 pairs), when during the period 1994-2003 counts have been between 63-97 pairs with no significant trend evident.

Great Black-backed Gull Larus marinus

A regular breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Fladda (17+ pairs, most in north-east gullery), Lunga (34 pairs), Sgeir a Chaisteil (3 pairs). Scanned from adjacent land or a boat, breeding was also considered to have occured on Sgeir an Eirionnaich (38 pairs), Sgeirean na Guisaich (north 2 pairs, south 0 pairs), Sgeir na h-lolaire (1 pair) and Sgier an Fheòir (3 pairs) amongst those islands between Fladda and Lunga. For the second consecutive year breeding numbers on Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil have declined by around 25% though numbers still remaining within the range of the widely fluctuating population for the period 1994-2003 (37-67 pairs, no significant trend).

Kittiwake Rissa tridactyla

A localised breeding species

Breeding was only confirmed on Lunga where the main colony is situated around Harp Rock. The numbers of apparently occupied nests on Lunga totalled 880, a 11% decline from 2002 following a highly significant trend of increase between 1998-2002 at an average 10.7% p.a. (P<0.01). Previous to this, the population in the mid 1990s had been stable at c.725 pairs (1994-1997).

Typically a flock of up to 300 adults and including the occasional 1st summer bird, were noted daily on rocks between Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil.

Common Tern Sterna hirundo

Irregular breeding species

A ternary was present for the third consecutive year on Sgeir an Eirionnaich where 40 nest were counted with the majority of nests (no count) however on the adjacent islet. An estimated 3-400 birds took flight from the ternary with the passage of TIARG on their arrival to the islands on 21st June. Several days later on 26th June, estimates of numbers ranged between 4-800 birds when the colony took flight in response to human intruders and later a Great Black-backed Gull predating a egg/chick. A photo of the colony in flight provided a count of 506 birds with an additional 150 birds estimated by the photographer to be out with the picture.

At least two "portlandica" (1st summer) birds were noted associating with the colony on 26th & 28th June.

Arctic Tern Sterna paradisaea

Irregular breeding species

Very small numbers of the species (less than 5%) were noted within the Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* colony during a visit to the ternary on 26th June.

Sandwich Tern Sterna sandvicensis

A rare visitor

A single bird was present off the Landing Beach on 28th June. This is the first documented record of the species by TIARG.

Guillemot Uria aalge

Common breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Lunga, Fladda and Sgeir a Chaisteil, the main concentration typically located within the vicinity of Harp Rock with 7050 adult birds estimated.

The numbers of individuals counted on Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil totalled 7316, a 0.3% decline from 2002. The average annual rate of change for this population is calculated at 2.8% p.a. for the period 1994-2003, the trend not significant.

Razorbill Alca torda

Common breeding species

Breeding was confirmed on Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil. Birds were also seen at suitable breeding sites on Cairn na Burg Beg (8 birds) and Fladda.

The numbers of individuals counted on Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil totalled 1247, a 10% increase from 2002. The average annual rate of change for this population is calculated at 4.9% p.a. over the period 1994-2003, the trend not signficiant. Within this decade however was a significant period of increase (+24% p.a. 1994-1998) to a count of over 14,000 individuals followed by counts fluctuating between 950 and 1200 birds thereafter (1999-2003; no significant trend).

Black Guillemot Cepphus grylle

Regular breeding species in small numbers

Adult birds were seen around Fladda (7 birds) Sgeir an Eirionnaich - Sgeir an Fheòir sea area (25). Carn na Burg More (2), Sgeir a Chaisteil (2) and Lunga's south end (7). Two birds sitting offshore with fish suggested breeding on Sgeir a Chaisteil.

Puffin Fratercula arctica

Common breeding species

Breeding adults were occupying burrows on Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil. Birds were also seen at suitable breeding sites at Fladda where over 100 birds were gathered in South Haven on the evening of the 25th June.

A 49% reduction in breeding numbers is suggested from the census data for Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil. The species is difficult to census accurately, especially when other burrowing species are present in the vicinity of the colonies as is the case i.e. Rabbits and Manx Shearwaters. However evidence of a marked decline in breeding Puffin numbers is supported when just considering those sectors (11, 12 & 12a) where over 70% of birds breed and, importantly for consistency and reliability, have been counted by the same single observer each year. Along these sections of cliff, counts of apparently occupied burrows have declined by 43% (range of 37- 54%) from those counted in 2002. Whether this is a local phenomena or one shared more widely between seabird colonies in northern European waters has yet to be ascertained. Previous to the 2003 count of 1006 estimated breeding pairs for Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil, the mean for the past 9 years had been at 1801 pairs (range 1684 - 2544, n=9).

Rock Dove Columba livia

Regular breeding species in very small numbers

Three birds were noted at the south end of Lunga in the gully between count sectors 5 and 6a. On the same day, single birds were also noted from Shearwater Gully and Tarbet where also 2 birds were two days later. Elsewhere, a single bird was seen from Sgeir an Eirionnaich on 26th June. No evidence of breeding was found.

Swift Apus apus

Irregular visitor

Two birds over the summit of Cruachan, Lunga on the 22nd June were followed on the evening of the 25th by an unprecedented 11 over South Haven, Fladda.

Skylark Alauda arvensis

Regular breeding species in small numbers

The sole record refers to a single bird singing daily from over the north slope of Cruachan immediately above the Village. No birds were noted during an evening visit to Fladda. This is the lowest record breeding population for Lunga, this perhaps a consequence of the change in vegetation structure in response to a lack of grazing on Lunga in recent years.

Swallow Hirundo rutisco

An irregular visitor

Single birds were either heard or seen over Corran Lunga, Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Cruachan on three individual dates.

Meadow Pipit Anthus pratensis

Regular breeding species in small numbers

Widespread breeding species on Lunga and Fladda with no estimation of territories made though probably less numerous than Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*.

Rock Pipit Anthus petrosus

Regular breeding species in small numbers

Common breeding species along the coast of Lunga with birds also noted on Fladda, Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Sgeir a Chaisteil.

Pied Wagtail Motacilla alba yarrelli

Irregular breeding species

At least one pair is suggested to have bred on Lunga with an adult and dependant juvenile at Corran Lunga. Elsewhere on Lunga, 1-2 adults were noted around Tarbet, Harp Rock and Village. Single birds were noted during visits to Fladda, Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Sgeir a Chaisteil.

Wren Troglodytes troglodytes

Regular breeding species, quite common where habitat suitable.

As in previous years, the vast majority of 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. However, all count sectors of Lunga had a minimum of one singing male, many several. A single nest was found at the south end of Lunga (area 5) whilst fledged broods were noted at Tarbet (2+ young) and around the Landing Beach Well. Birds were also noted during a visit to Fladda.

Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe

Regular breeding species in small numbers

A minimum of five families of dependant and presumed locally bred young were noted on Lunga around Cruachan summit, Shag Alley, north of Tarbet, Corran Lunga and Shearwater Gully. Adults were also taking food to a nest in the slope above the Village.

Elsewhere birds were noted on Fladda and a brood on Sgeir an Eirionnaich during a brief visit on 26th June.

Blackbird Turdus merula

Irregular visitor

A single male at the Village, Lunga, on 23rd June was the first record by TIARG since the late 1970s.

Hooded Crow Corvus corone cornix

Regular breeding species in small numbers

The species was noted daily on Lunga, predominately in those areas from Cruachan summit southwards involving both moulting adults and non-moulting juveniles. A minimum of 4 birds were involved that included one pairs of adults and two juveniles suggesting at least one pair may have

successfully bred on the island. No nest site was found. Atleast two birds were seen during the evening visit to Fladda on 25th June.

Raven Corvus corax

At least one pair breeds in most years

A family party of two moulting adults and four juveniles were in residence on Lunga joined briefly by a fifth non-moulting bird, presumed juvenile, on 25th June. Five birds could be seen on Fladda on 24th June, with none seen during the evening visit of the 25th followed by two at South Haven on 28th. No nest sites were located.

Starling Sturnus vulgaris

Regular breeding species in small numbers

As the week progressed, the flocks reported around Lunga typically increased in size from 12 on 22nd June to one of 40 birds at the south end on 26th June. The flocks were comprised of both adults and juveniles, the island's population peaking at the week's end at an estimated 60-100 birds. 3 nests with young were located in cliffs at Lunga's south end. Elsewhere birds were seen on Fladda and a flock of 20 at Sgeir an Eirionnaich during a brief visit on 26th June.

Twite Carduelis flavirostris

Regular breeding species in small numbers

Up to five birds, including 1+ juvenile, were regularly seen with in the vicinity of the Village at north-east Lunga and Shearwater Gully. Elsewhere 1-2 birds were regularly recorded between the Village and Harp Rock but none at Lunga's south end.

Elsewhere birds were noted on both "halves" of Fladda during the evening visit of the 25th June.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF MAMMALS FOR 2003

Otter Lutra lutra

Evidence of presence regularly noted

There was one possible sighting of an animal swimming through the channel between Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil on the early afternoon of the 28th June.

House Mouse Mus musculus

Resident

Unusually, no animals were detected at the expedition base, the Village, at the north end of Lunga.

Pygmy Shrew Sorex minutus

Status unknown

One Shrew spp. seen on Fladda near the Gullery in the north-east, was considered probably to be S.minutus.

Rabbit Oryctolagus cuniculus

Resident, numbers much reduced in recent years.

Though no systematic monitoring of this species occurred, casual observations on Lunga continued to suggest fewer visible animals to than noted in the years immediately prior to 2002. All sightings of black individuals were of singles noted in the northern half of Lunga.

No animals were seen during brief visits to Fladda.

Grey Seal Halichoerus grypus

Regular breeding species

Up to 67 animals regularly hauled out on intertidal reefs north and north-east of Lunga. A single animal was also noted off the South end of Lunga.

Bottlenose Dolphin Tursiops truncatus

Resident in Hebridean Waters

3 animals accompanied a boat arriving from the Coll/Tiree direction into the shallows off the Landing Beach, Lunga, on 25th June. For over half an hour the Dolphins followed, intercepted and

bow rode with three boats in the area between Lunga and Sgeir an Eirionnaich, one boat in particular spending much time encouraging them to do so much to the day visitors delight, and ours! These are the first record of Bottlenose Dolphin and fourth Cetecean species to be recorded by TIARG from the Treshnish Isles.

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF BUTTERFLIES FOR 2003

Common Blue Polyommatus icarus

Regularly breeder

Up to 7 individuals on four dates were noted from around Lunga, typically most (up to 5) at Tarbet and immediately north of. Elsewhere 2 and 3 individuals were noted on Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Sgeir a Chaisteil respectively.

Green-veined White Pieris napi

Migrant

One individual was seen at Tarbet on 24th June.

Red Admiral Vanessa atalanta

Migrant

Single butterflies were seen at the Village, Lunga and Sgeir an Eirionnaich on single dates.

Painted Lady Cynthia cardui

Regularly migrant

A good year with up to 12 individuals recorded daily on Lunga. Elsewhere 1, 2 and 4 individuals were noted on Fladda, Sgeir an Eirionnaich and Sgeir a Chaisteil respectively.

OTHER SPECIES RECORDED SYSTEMATICALLY

Brown Hawker Aeshna grandis

Migrant

One individual was watched for a minute, at one point hawking a fly, by all expeditions members when the north end of Lunga on 25th June. This record represents only the second for Scotland but the first for over 100 years. Winds on the 25th and the previous two days were from the southwest, ideal conditions perhaps to bring migrants from Ireland. 2003 was an outstanding year for Ordanota species from south of the Border being seen in Scotland for the first time (Betty Smith *pers comm*; Regional Recorder for Scotland).

Silver Y Moth Autographa gamma

Migrant

One individual at Tarbet on 26th June.

The Magpie Abraxas grossulariata

Probable resident

Single moths were seen at the Village, Lunga and to the east of, and on Fladda.

Map-winged Swift Hepialus fusconebulosa

Status unknown

A moth photographed at the Village, Lunga, was later identified as this species.

Popular Grey Acronicta megacephala

Status unknown

A moth photographed at the Village, Lunga, was later identified as this species.

Oyster Plant Mertensia maritima

Resident species known only from "colonies" at Tarbet (west), Lunga and the north end of Sgeir a Chaisteil.

Over 145 plants were identified on the beach at Tarbet (west), Lunga, with much spreading of many well-established plants making separation of individuals very difficult. Though still present, no

count was made of the plants at the north end of Sgeir a Chaisteil. A newly established colony of a "few first year plants" was discovered on the Sgeir a Chaisteil beach facing Corran Lunga.

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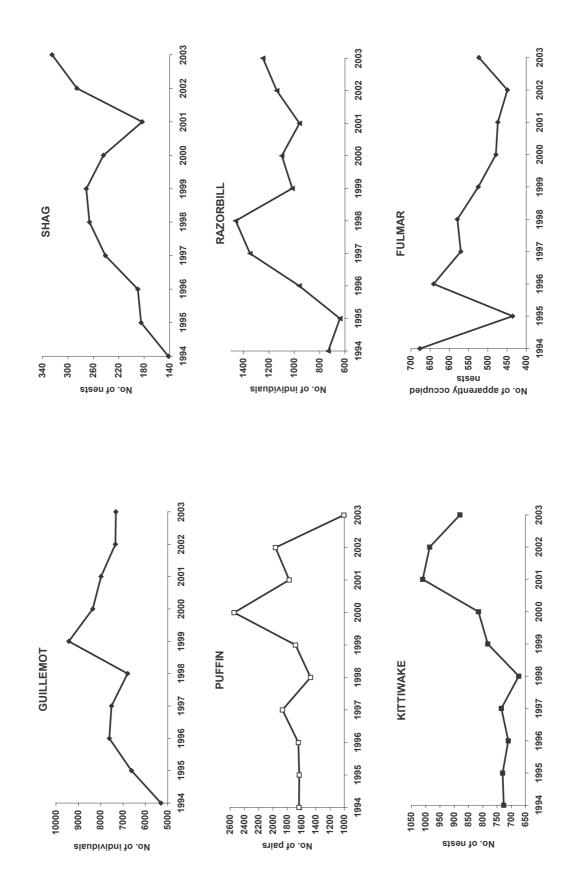
2003 BREEDING SEABIRD CENSUS DATA FOR LUNGA AND SGEIR A CHAISTEIL

Totals for each Sub Colony Zones of Lunga and Sgeir a Chaisteil

Sector	Count					Count S	ectors o	n Lunga	(1 - 12)	and Sg	eir a Ch	Count Sectors on Lunga (1 - 12) and Sgeir a Chaisteil (13)	3)				Lunga & Chaistiel
	nnit	-	7	3	4	2	9	6a	7	8	6	10	11	12	12a	13	Totals
Fulmar	AON		22	4	22	22		52		37	23	27	39	127	12	65	523
Shag	AON		32	99	6	46				32	_	41	19	9	4	17	325
Lesser B-b Gull	PRS									_							_
Herring Gull	PRS	-	_							21			_	_		12	37
Great B-b Gull	PRS	2			_	_	23		9				_			3	37
Kittiwake	AON											14	816	37	13		880
Bonxie	AON						7										_
Razorbill	2		98	47	16	115		20		37	_	56	710	134	24	2	1247
Guillemot	2					11						230	7050		25		7316
Black Guillemot	PRS							∞									∞
Puffin	2		02	66	2	30				2		93					296
Puffin	AOB							1					240	204	342	71	858

Key to count unit codes:

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



TRESHNISH RINGING TOTALS FOR 2003

Site	Species	Adults	Pulli	Retraps	Controls	Total
Fladda	Common Gull		6			6
	Great Skua		1			1
Lunga	Fulmar	25		3		28
	Manx Shearwater	2				2
	Storm Petrel	360		93	25	478
	Shag	14	85	7		106
	Herring Gull		8			8
	Kittiwake	2				2
	Guillemot	261		61		322
	Razorbill	46	10	9		65
	Puffin	244		27	2	273
	Meadow Pipit	1				1
	Rock Pipit	2				2
	Wheatear	2				2
Sgeir an Eirionnaich	Great Black-backed Gull		21			21
Treshnish Isles	Grand total for 2002	959	131	200	27	1317

Note: Rings used in 2003 were registered under *Treshnish Auk Ringing Group, Hardman, Juckes & Cooper*, and *Robin Ward*.

Retraps: No retraps of birds ringed earlier during the 2003 expedition are included.

AN ASSESSMENT OF TIARG'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE BRITISH AND IRISH RINGING SCHEME.

Since 1971, the Treshnish Isles Auk Ringing Group (TIARG) has ringed over 25,000 seabirds between the years 1971 - 2003, a substantial proportion of the national ringing total for some species and years. Tabulated below is TIARG's contribution to the National Ringing totals in 2001 (Clark et al 2002)*.

	Juv/a	ad ringed 2	001	Pull	i ringed 20	001	Ringing To	otals to & i	ncl 2001
	UK &	TIARG	% UK	UK &	TIARG	% UK	UK &	TIARG	% UK
	Eire		& Eire	Eire		& Eire	Eire		& Eire
Fulmar	558	25	4.5	830	0	0	106,774	291	0.3
Manx	2,278	0	0	448	0	0	297,946	53	0.02
Shearwater									
Storm Petrel	9,261	1030	11.7	37	0	0	385,982	8752	2.3
Shag	373	3	8.0	4,732	34	0.7	196,905	1151	0.6
Common	135	0	0	2,233	11	0.5	78,145	20	0.03
Gull									
Herring Gull	477	0	0	3,966	8	0.2	297,478	407	0.1
Great black-	15	0	0	2,233	27	1.2	67,926	292	0.4
backed Gull									
Kittiwake	630	11	1.8	1,671	0	0	121,439	166	0.1
Guillemot	2,508	312	12.4	10,257	0	0	270,239	5313	2.0
Razorbill	427	31	7.3	2,081	0	0	96,700	2143	2.2
Puffin	8,310	214	2.6	503	0	0	222,228	4417	2.0

^{* 2001} is the most recent British & Irish annual ringing totals available at the time of publication.

TRESHNISH RINGING TOTALS 1971 - 2003

SPECIES	1971	1974	1976	1977	1978	1980	1982	1984	1986	1989	1991	1993
Fulmar	17	6	4		8	21	14	18	7	21	15	
Manx Shearwater		2	13		4	4	1	8				
Storm Petrel		254	22		1	283		203	800	411	975	75
Shag	150	7	10	10	24	80	50	160		40	10	
Buzzard						1	2					
Oystercatcher		1				1	4	2				
Common Sandpiper												
Great Skua												
Common Gull												
Herring Gull	6	1			14	46	35	56	4	4	3	
Great Black-backed	3	6	3	7	6	22	14	35		22	15	
Gull												
Kittiwake						1	1	1	2	2	4	
Guillemot	32	20	14		66	502	137	364	180	250	306	
Razorbill	65	72	90		115	266	218	236	151	103	64	
Black Guillemot												
Puffin	70	198	271		203	200	208	182	174	160	114	
Meadow Pipit												
Rock Pipit									5	1		
Pied Wagtail												
Wren												
Wheatear			12					1	3			
Willow Warbler												
Twite												
TOTAL	343	558	439	17	441	1427	684	1266	1326	1014	1506	75

SPECIES	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	TOTAL
Fulmar	4	27	38	7	24	23	12	25	22	25	338
Manx Shearwater	9	1		2	1	4	4			2	55
Storm Petrel	440	536	331	1104	741	732	814	1030	15	360	9127
Shag	10	59	96	99	150	100	59	37	97	99	1347
Buzzard											3
Oystercatcher						2		1			11
Common Sandpiper					1						1
Great Skua					1				1	1	4
Black-headed Gull											
Common Gull					4		5	11	11	6	37
Herring Gull	5	24	19	52	73	39	15	11	11	8	426
Great Black-b. Gull	6	25	16	48	19	16	2	27	5	21	318
Kittiwake	6	10	1	50	41	23	13	11	3	2	171
Guillemot	109	498	349	472	503	507	892	312	425	261	5999
Razorbill	81	101	105	98	112	102	133	31	110	56	2309
Black Guillemot				1				1			2
Puffin	358	236	301	267	398	274	389	214	351	244	5012
Meadow Pipit		4		1			12	1	4	1	23
Rock Pipit		2	4	2		2	1	2	2	2	23
Pied Wagtail	1	3	2								6
Wren		3						1			4
Wheatear			5	24	37	22	50	24	2	2	182
Willow Warbler		1									1
Twite				2					1		3
TOTAL	1029	1530	1230	2130	2109	1844	2401	1739	1060	1090	25402

NOTES:

- Data for 1971 1995 extracted from Walker & Cooper (1996).
- Ringing data for a three day visit in 1972 was not available.
- In 2003 wind speed and in particular direction was unfavourable for the fleyging the large numbers of auks usually ringed at Harp Rock. Likewise wind was a factor in the reduced Storm Petrel catch.

RECENT RINGING RECOVERIES

Abbreviations used:

Age 1 - Pullus

4 - Hatched before this calendar year, exact year unknown6 - Hatched before previous calendar year, exact year unknown8 - Hatched more than two calenders before year of ringing

Manner of recovery

R - Caught and released by a ringer

X - Found dead

XF - Found freshly dead or dying

XL - Found long dead

SR - Sick or injured, released with ring

VV - alive and probably healthy, ring read in field by non-ringer

// - condition on finding wholly unknown

All ringing recoveries relating to the Treshnish Isles received since the previous TIARG report are listed below.

Guillemot

R07096 4 24/6/2000 Lunga

XL 15/7/2002 Isle Of Staffa, Strathcylde

8km 137 degs 751 days

Remarks: Only leg and ring found

Guillemot

R19875 4 27/6/2000 Lunga

R 11/6/2002 Isle Of Colonsay

46km 164 degs 714 days

Guillemot

R24353 6 23/6/2002 Lunga

X 24/1/2003 La Couarde-Sur-Mer Lie De Re, Charente-Maritime, France

1194km 163 degs 215 days

Remarks: Found dead on beach

Guillemot

T82144 4 28/6/1991 Lunga

XF 11/2/2002 Sainte-Marie-De-Re, Cahrente-Maritime, France

1202km 163 degs 3881 days

Remarks: Dead, oil victim

Guillemot

X33908 1 3/7/1996 Isle Of Canna, Highland Region

R 24/6/2002 Lunga

63km 174 degs 2182 days

Guillemot

X42741 1 5/7/1994 Isle Of Canna, Highland Region

R 29/6/2000 Lunga

63km 174 degs 2185 days

Guillemot

X63352 6 26/6/1996 Lunga

XF 11/1/2000 He D'yeu, Vendee, France

1121km 165 degs 1294 days

Remarks: Freshly Dead, Victim Of Erika Oil Spill

Guillemot

X63383 6 26/6/1996 Lunga

X 3/3/2002 Saint Martin De Varreville, Manche, France

858km 156 degs 2076 days

Remarks: Dead, oil victim

Guillemot

X67606 6 28/6/1997 Lunga

R 16/6/2002

200km 48 degs 1814 days

Guillemot

X79516 6 4/7/1997 Lunga

XF 3/1/2003 Foz, Lugo, Spain

1436km 182 degs 2009 days

Remarks: Dead, oil victim (Prestige oil spill)

Guillemot

X99198 6 19/6/1999 Lunga

XF 23/12/2002 Gijon, Oviedo, Spain

1440km 178 degs 1283 days

Remarks: Died in care, oil victim (Prestige oil spill)

Guillemot

T82252 6 25/6/1995 Lunga

XF 1/3/2003 Traigh an Luig, Loch Indaal, Isle of Islay

78 km 176 degs 2815 days

Remarks: Found freshly dead on beach

Puffin

EG23785 4 27/6/2000 Lunga

XF 15/6/2002 Isle Of Canna, Highland Region

63km 354 degs 718 days

Remarks: Found freshly dead on shore

Puffin

ES64189 8 30/6/1994 Lunga

F 12/1/2003 Carballo, Coruna, Spain

1483km 186 degs 3118 days

Remarks: Dead, oil victim (Prestige oil spill)

Puffin

ET80144 8 3/7/1998 Lunga

S 7/12/2002 Vicedo, Lugo, Spain

1419km 184 degs 1618 days

Remarks: Sick or injured: fate unknown: oil victim (Prestige oil spill)

Razorbill

M85762 4 24/6/2000 Lunga

X 18/2/2003 Portencross, West Kilbride, Strathclyde

129km 133 degs 969 days

Remarks: Dead, on shore

Shag

1366952 6 21/6/1999 Lunga

X 19/7/2002 Triagh Hough, Tiree,

34km 273 degs 1124 days

Remarks: Dead, bird found on beach

Storm Petrel

2238560 4 2/7/1998 Fladda

R 25/7/2002 Calf Of Man, Isle Of Man

290km 160 degs 1484 days

Storm Petrel

2554132 6 27/6/2001 Fladda

R 29/6/2002 Beigins, Nr Slea Head, Kerry, Eire

557km 209 degs 367 days

Storm Petrel

2542868 6 25/6/2001 Lunga

R 18/7/2002 Langness, Isle of Man

292 km 157 degs 388 days

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THE EXPEDITIONS 1971 – 2003

A list of participants through the years, with brief notes on the work performed

1971 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, John Eatough, Shiela Anderson, Dick Hansford. Full census and ringing.

This was the first trip and the Treshnish Isles were included in a "mopping up" of islands not fully covered during the 1969/70 "Operation Seafarer" National Seabird Census.

1972 Barry Lawson, Geoff Ward, Bevan Craddock.

Part census and ringing

Forced to leave after three days due to bad weather.

1973 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, John Hodson, Geoff Cope. Trip abandoned – unable to land due to rough seas

1974 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, Geoff Ward, John Hodson, Geoff Cope, Tom Pool. Census of Lunga and ringing

An RAF Helicopter landed a photographer onto Harp Rock, causing many bird casualties.

1976 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, Geoff Ward, John Hodson, Geoff Cope, Tony Kilgallen. Full census Lunga – Fladda and ringing. Very hot summer.

1977 Barry Lawson, John Hodson.

Ringing only.

Called in on "Corrywreckan" boat cruise.

1978 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, John Hodson, Simon Walker. Full census Lunga and Chaisteil and ringing.

1980 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, John Hodson, Simon Walker, David Lawson. Ringing only

1981 Geoff Ward, Geoff Cope. Part census and photography

1982 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, John Hodson, Simon Walker, Andrew Lawson. Ringing only.

1984 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, John Hodson, Simon Walker. Ringing only.

1986 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, Geoff Ward, John Hodson, Simon Walker, Andrew Lawson.
Full census with ringing

1989 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, John Hodson, Simon Walker. Ringing only.

1991 Barry Lawson, Peter Deans, Simon Walker, David & Andrew Lawson, Jan Densham. Ringing only.

1993 Roger Broad *et al.* (Scottish Natural Heritage charter) Full census of The Dutchman's, Lunga, Chaisteil and Fladda. Chris Redfern *et al.*

Storm Petrel ringing.

THE EXPEDITIONS 1971 – 2003 (con't)

- 1994 Simon Walker, Mike Smith, Dennis Cooper, Jan Densham, Danny Lenain. Full census Lunga and Chaisteil and ringing.
- 1995 Simon Walker, Mike Smith, Dennis Cooper, Jan Densham, Fergus Henderson. Full census Lunga and Chaisteil and ringing.
- 1996 Simon Walker, Mike Smith, Dennis Cooper, Danny Lenain, Robin Ward Full census of Lunga and Chaisteil and ringing.
- 1997 Simon Walker, Dennis Cooper, Robin Ward, Damian Offer, Steve Willis, Chris Spray Full census of Lunga Fladda and ringing.
- 1998 Simon Walker, John Hodson, Dennis Cooper, Robin Ward, Damian Offer, Steve Willis, Steve Worwood
 Full census of Lunga Fladda and ringing.

1999

- Week 1 Simon Walker, Dennis Cooper, Steve Willis, John Osbourne.
- Week 2 Simon Walker, John Hodson, Dennis Cooper, Robin Ward, Damian Offer, Jan Densham

Full census of the Treshnish Isles for Seabird 2000 and ringing

2000

- Week 1 John Hodson, Dennis Cooper, Damian Offer
 - Full census of Manx Shearwater on Lunga for Seabird 2000. Limited passerine ringing.
- Week 2 Simon Walker, John Hodson, Dennis Cooper, Robin Ward, Steve Willis, Andrew Carter, Steve Woodward
 - Full census of Lunga, Chaisteil and the islands between Lunga Fladda. Tern census for *Seabird 2000*. Ringing.
- 2001 Simon Walker, John Hodson, Dennis Cooper, Robin Ward, Damian Offer, Andrew Carter
 - Completion of census for *Seabird 2000*. Full census of Lunga, Chaisteil and the islands between Lunga Fladda. Ringing.
- 2002 Simon Walker, Robin Ward, Andrew Carter, Phil Bone, Sara Brown, Jackie Hay. Full census of Lunga, Chaisteil and the islands between Lunga Fladda. Ringing.
- 2003 Simon Walker, John Hodson, Dennis Cooper, Robin Ward, Andrew Carter, Jackie Hay, Matt Smith.

Full census of Lunga, Chaisteil and the islands between Lunga – Fladda. Ringing.

RINGS USED ON THE TRESHNISH ISLES SINCE 1927

SHAG RINGS	A2 RINGS	E RINGS	F RINGS	G RINGS	H RINGS	RAZORBILL RINGS	RAZORBILL GUILLEMOTS MISC. RINGS RINGS	MISC. RINGS
1080101 - 110 1087111 - 120 1105561 - 570 1123541 - 550 1123671 - 690 1123671 - 700 1159651 - 700 1168001 - 100 1170601 - 700 1187901 - 950 1328481 - 490 132851 - 960 1350801 - 900 1350801 - 900 1350801 - 8000 1350801 - 7000 136901 - 7000	2010581 – 583 2101991 - 2000 2121401 – 500 2167051 – 068 2170201 – 203 2238501 – 600 2284001 - 500 2309901 - 10000 2309901 - 10000 2311301 – 400 2348001 - 500 2348001 – 500 2348001 – 500 2348001 – 500 2348001 – 500 244501 – 6000 244501 – 500 2455501 - 6000 2513501 - 4000 2513501 - 800 2513501 - 800 2554001 - 500	EF75001 - 500 EG23501 - 700 EG23721 - 780 EG23801 - 999 EG61000 - 500 EG88501 - 807 EH33377 - 380 EH54501 - 55000 EH89260 EH89260 EK29501 - 900 EK29501 - 900 EK29501 - 900 EK29501 - 900 EK29501 - 300 EK91471 - 490 EK91471 - 490 EK95687 - 700 ER95688 - 612 EP85608 - 612 EP85608 - 612 EP85608 - 612 EF85608 - 612 EF85601 - 500 ER3701 - 800 ES64018 - 189 ET19501 - 700	FC52551 - 558 FC52571 FR13606 - 636 FR14401 - 500 FR56351 - 400 FS51016 - 500 FS7001 - 100 FV10641 - 620 FV10646 - 650 FV2440 - 650 FV62410 - 226 FV62410 - 226 FV62411 - 300 SS96101 - 300	GH21301 - 350 GJ35401 - 500 GJ76001 - 800 GJ99081 - 082 GK34351 - 354 GK50214 - 220 GK50551 - 570 GK90821 - 840 GK91471 - 490 GP13416 - 450 GP62201 - 207 GP62201 - 207	HT09001 - 004 HT17871 - 890 HT17931 - 940 HT34021 - 030 HT68201 - 210 HT68221 - 226 HT80301 - 400 HW05351 - 360 HW06951 - 7000 HW06994 - 09000 HW08994 - 09000 HW873361 HW87311 - 225 HW87211 - 225 HW87211 - 225	M46501 - 750 M55001 - 500 M72451 - 800 M85501 - 800 M82501 - 700	750 T14001 - 500	1F4094 - 097 C331894 - 900 E196501 - 520 JB44316 ('94) K039209 - 230 K419290 - 295 NA84296 - 299 KX83101 - 106 KX83116 - 118