

THE GUILLEMOT COLONY ON THE DEVIL'S CHIMNEY

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When visiting Lundy from July 19th to August 2nd 1970, observations on the breeding Shags and Auks suggested that it was a particularly late breeding season compared to the years 1954-58. It seemed worth trying to get more evidence and also evidence from earlier in the season as possibly the loss of initial clutches might have been the cause of the apparent lateness of the 1970 season. The subject seems particularly worth pursuing as a delay in the onset of breeding, due to the disruption of a bird's calcium metabolism, is one of the known effects of poisoning from the persistent chlorinated hydro-carbon pesticides such as dieldrin and aldrin, which are finding their way into the sea.

It was decided to try and make several counts of Guillemots on the Devil's Chimney including counts of eggs and chicks as there is data for comparison on the breeding success and the breeding season of the Guillemots on the Chimney in 1957. This was possible because several members of the society assisted by doing counts and Colin Taylor kindly acted as co-ordinator on the island.

The results tabulated below show a catastrophic breeding season for this Guillemot colony. The counts of adults on June 3rd in both 1957 and 1971 shows a 35% decrease in breeding adults. But even more worrying is the fact that four was the maximum number of eggs counted in 1971. Either there is now a population of Guillemots on the Chimney which for some reason are unable to breed or they laid around the average date, the second week of May, and had lost all but three of their eggs by the first count on 31st May. Possibly the eggs were taken by one or two rogue gulls who have developed a special technique for robbing the Guillemots, or the colony has got too small for the birds to adequately protect their eggs against predators. Any further observations by members of the Field Society which could throw light on the subject would be of great interest.

<i>Date</i>	<i>No. eggs</i>	<i>No. chicks</i>	<i>No. adults</i>
3.6.57	85	3	122
23.6.57	7	67	118
2.7.57	1	24	124
8.7.57	0	0	6
22.7.70	1	13	67
3.6.71	3	0	79
10.6.71	4	0	72
2.7.71	0	2	45

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF THE LUNDY FLORA

The composite floral list which embraces the ordinary flowering plants appears impressive in its number and diversity. Within the confines of a bleak, rocky island of but 1100 acres no less than 413 species have at some time been recorded and this total excludes ferns, grasses, and sedges. At first glance the total is such as to make Lundy seem comparable with any other locality yielding the same number of species per unit area.

And this apparent richness is even more remarkable if one considers how specialised the flora must be in such a generally hostile habitat. Not only do plants have to contend with high salt-laden winds, strong ultra-violet light, and violent storms, but the peaty soil itself is thin, highly acidic, subject to great variation in water content, and poorly supplied with mineral salts and clay constituents. Moreover there are large areas covered by such species as rhododendron, heather, and bracken which dominate their own particular habitats to the