

TABLE 2 Overall Totals (Study Plots 1-7)

1980						
	16/6	17/6	19/6	20/6	22/6	\bar{X}
GUILLEMOT	615	628	606	631	605	617.0
RAZORBILL	118	119	104	94	97	106.4
PUFFIN	17	24	29	17	11	19.6
KITTIWAKE	58	55	56	55	57	56.2
SHAG	5	4	4	7	6	5.2
FULMAR	4	4	3	4	3	3.6
1981						
	9/6	11/6	16/6	18/6	19/6	\bar{X}
GUILLEMOT	603	622	580	634	643	614.4
RAZORBILL	105	134	116	124	157	127.2
PUFFIN	11	25	16	12	32	19.2
KITTIWAKE	54	54	54	52	51	53.0
SHAG	7	5	5	5	6	5.6
FULMAR	6	6	6	6	6	6.0

(N.B. See Note below)

N.B. All figures for Guillemots, Razorbills and Puffins are for Individual Birds. All figures for Kittiwakes, Fulmars and Shags are for apparently occupied Nests.

CELIA FIENNES AND THE BIRD OF LUNDY

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In September 1698 Celia Fiennes, riding through Cornwall and Devon wrote: "I saw Hartly Poynt . . . and just by I saw the Isle of Lundy which formerly belonged to my Grandfather Willian Lord Viscount Say and Seale which does abound with fish and rabbets and all sorts of fowles: one bird that lives partly in the water and partly out and so may be called an amphibious creature, its true that one foote is like a turky the other a gooses foote, it lays its eggs in a place the sun shines on and sets it so exactly upright on the small end, and there it remains till taken up and all the art and skill of persons cannot set it up soe againe to abide".

The existence of a bird with such asymmetrical feet was an old tradition referred to 500 years earlier by Giralduus Cambrensis in his *Topographica Hibernica*, 1188. There he mentions the 'aurifrisius', with one foot clawed and the other webbed, and recognizably describes the fishing style of the osprey. Alexander Neckham, *De Naturis Rerum*, c.1200, cites the same bird, which 'has one foot armed with hooked claws, and the other suitably webbed for swimming'. About fifty years later Bartholomew Anglicus in *De Proprietatibus Rerum* notes: "The sea eagle hath one fote close and hoole as the fote of a gandar and therewith she ruleth herself in the water, when she cometh downe by cause of her praye. And her other fote is a clove fote with full sharp clawes with the which she taketh her pray". (Raven, 1947, 27, 7, 15). This description seems to lapse for nearly 300 years. Then William Turner in *De Historia Avium*, 1544, writes of: "Haliaetus, in English and osprey . . . known to Englishmen because it empties their fishponds". (Evans, 1903, 35, 37). He says nothing about its feet, and Pierre Belon, *De La Nature des Oiseaux*, 1555, gives a picture of haleaetus with two clawed feet. A little later Conrad Gesner of Zurich, *Historia Animalium*, 1570, writes that aurifrisius is ossifrage, and he had heard the story about its odd feet from 'certain Englishmen'. (Raven, 1947, 143, 7, 194). But in *De Animalium* published the same year, John Caius says "Haliaetus is that kind of eagle which seeks its prey from the sea and lakes . . . yet it is cloven on each foot, not webbed on one as the vulgar think . . . They are abundant with us on the sea coasts and in the Isle of Wight: our people call it an osprey". (Evans 1903, 191, 193).

The description reappears, but without conviction, when William Harrison, *Description of England*, 1587, repeats of the osprey: 'I heare that it hath one foot like an hawk to catch hold withall, and another resembling a goose wherewith to swim, but whether it be so or not so, I refer the further search and triall thereof unto some other'. And Leonard Mascall's *Booke of Fishing*, 1590, has: 'They say he hath one foote like a Ducke and the other like a Hawke'. (Raven, 1947, 194, 231).

Writers are also uncertain of the species. Throughout, 'eagle' and 'osprey' have been interchanged, leading to confusion with the white-tailed sea eagle, which one would think was more of a bone-breaker (ossifraga) than the smaller osprey. Latin ossifraga, Old French orfraie, re-Latinised into aurifrisius, becomes English osprey. Haliaetus, taken from Aristotle and Pliny, was probably the white-tailed sea eagle, though Alfred Newton, *Dictionary of Birds*, 1896, thought it could be the lammergeier. John Ray wrote to Martin Lister in 1667 about the Haliaetus or Bald Buzzard, and Lister replied: "The bald Buzzard of the English is certainly no other than the Osprey". (Raven 1950, 314). What decides the description of odd feet for the modern ornithologist must be the photographs now extant of the osprey flying with a fish in one foot and the other clenched so that detail of its claws is lost: when ospreys were more common, probably a fairly familiar sight.

But the osprey is only marginally amphibious, nor would Celia Fiennes' further description of the laying place and egg apply to it. A bird with a fixed egg is mentioned by Dr. William Harvey of blood circulation fame in *De Generatione Animalium*, 1651. He had visited the Bass Rock ten years earlier. "Among the many different kinds of birds . . . one was pointed out to me which lays but one egg, and this it places upon the point of a rock, with nothing like a nest or bed beneath it, yet so firmly that the mother can go and return without injury to it: but if anyone moves it from its place, by no art can it be fixed and balanced again: left at liberty it straightway falls off and falls into the sea. The place . . . is crusted over with a white cement, and the egg when laid is bedewed with a thick and viscid moisture, which setting speedily, the egg is soldered as it were, or agglutinated to the subjacent rock". He does not name the gannet, for which the Bass had long been famous: the guillemot has also been suggested, and seems just as likely. Johan Blaeu, *Geographia Blavanae*, 1662, repeats substantially the same story, but explicitly applies it to the Goose (of the Bass, i.e. gannet). (Gurney, 1913, 200, 210). finally, Defoe, in his *Tour through Great Britian*, 1726, probably like Blaeu relying on Harvey writes of the Solan Goose on the Bass Rock that "they lay but one egg at a time, which they so dexterously fix by one end to a Point of the Rock, in the middle of the Nest, that it be pulled off, it is difficult to fix it so any more". All agree in this detail with Celia Fiennes.

Even the great auk has been suggested, relying on a letter of 1865 of the Rev. H. G. Heaven credibly recounting the finding of a possible egg, implying an earlier presence. (Loyd 1925, 208). Whatever the bird, tales of the odd-footed osprey and the egg-on-end gannet or auk species have evidently been conflated. The story sounds a belated piece of hearsay or local folklore told to Celia Fiennes by a credulous countryman or a deliberate teller of travellers' tales, it surely could not have been believed on Lundy itself. Since her grandfather had lived on the island for some time about 1650, she could also have heard it from some old retainer of his when she was younger. She was a practical, observant, and 'modern' person, now 36 years old. Though she was more interested in the works of man than of nature, it seems strange that she should have believed in the existence of this unnatural and unlikely bird, and survival of medieval misapprehension, or of heraldic fantasy.

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