

throughout the breeding season. This would appear to be a fresh colony. All chicks had left the ledges by the second week in August and there are only a few later records, all of odd birds seen in shore.

Uria aalge. **Guillemot.** (122)

First seen on ledges in large numbers 7th April. First chicks seen 29th June; most birds gone from the cliffs by the end of July but odd birds seen in shore until the end of September.

Fratercula arctica. **Puffin.** (2)

No estimate of entire breeding population but that of Puffin Slope probably less than 400 pairs. First seen on land 1st April; all had left by the end of July and there is only one later record, of a single bird seen 26th September off the East Coast.

Alle alle. **Little Auk.**

The remains of one found above Pilot's Quay, 30th June.

Crex crex. **Corn Crake.**

One seen 17th, 18th and 30th April, one 4th June, two birds that were probably of this species 16th August.

Rallus aquaticus. **Water-Rail.**

No spring records. One 23rd September; then seen almost daily from 9th October to end of season with five on 29th October and four on 1st November the most.

Gallinula chloropus. **Moorhen.**

One seen by Pondsburry, 14th June.

Phasianus colchicus. **Pheasant.**

Three broods of young seen. Largest number noted, seven 6th, 15th and 19th October, but the actual population is probably well in excess of this figure.

SHORT NOTES ON SELECTED SPECIES

Tawny Pipit. The bird seen on 6th and 7th October first drew attention to itself by its clear and distinctive flight note. When seen at fairly close quarters the sandy upperparts and almost unstreaked underparts were clearly seen and the general resemblance in shape to a Wagtail was very striking. This species has rarely been recorded outside Sussex.

Tree-Creeper. The bird seen on 27th July was on an overhanging cliff-face to the north of the Devil's Slide. It was behaving in a typical manner ascending the cliff in a series of short jerks then flying down to the bottom and ascending again. As far as could be ascertained it appeared to be feeding on *Petrobius* which is to be found on the cliffs in considerable abundance. This habitat preference is somewhat surprising as the bird seen on the 18th was amongst the trees in Millcombe and may well have been the same bird.

Spotted Flycatcher. The autumn migration of this species continued until comparatively late in the season this year and records were obtained of two seen 6th October and of single birds on the 8th, 11th, 14th, 15th and 16th (these last three probably the same bird). There are only two dates after the 16th recorded in the Handbook.

Pied Flycatcher. The migration of this species also continued until late in the autumn and the following October records were made; one 5th, two 6th, one 8th, two 12th, one 13th, two 15th, one 16th, one 21st and two 22nd. It is not clear to what extent these records refer to the same birds but one seen on the 15th, 16th and 21st was believed to be the same bird whereas the two recorded on the 22nd were almost certainly 'new arrivals'. As in the last species there are only two later records in the Handbook.

Blackbird. During October and November there were considerable influxes of migrant Blackbirds. Some of these were trapped and measured at the Old Light and, in a number of specimens examined, the measurements were outside the range given in the Handbook. The table below, which gives the measurements (in mms.) of all birds trapped between 23rd October and 8th November, will serve to indicate the extent of the variation.

	Wing		Tarsus	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Measurements in Handbook	117-134	118-128	32-34	32-34
Measurements of trapped birds	129-140	123-132	34-36	32-35
Mean measurements of trapped birds	134.1	128.7	34.9	34.0
No. of specimens examined	7	12	7	12

It will of course be necessary to examine larger numbers before any conclusions could be drawn. No plumage differences were detected but, should there be any, it would be necessary to have a series of skins for comparison before they became apparent.

Swallow. A bird seen on 1st September had practically all-white plumage apart from some rather indistinct brown or fawn colouration on the wings and mantle. It proved very conspicuous and could be picked out from the normal birds at a considerable range.

Balearic Shearwater. The two birds on September 6th were seen from the *Lerina* on the crossing to Bideford by O. D. Hunt. At first sight they appeared dark all over and were taken for Sooty Shearwaters, but the size was too small, being similar to that of a Manx Shearwater and, as the birds canted over, it was noted that there was a light patch on the belly, though the extent of this patch was ill-defined and nothing like that of the typical Manx. 6th September was a very rough day and at the time of the observation the wind was south-west and strong but later increased to a full gale.

American Pectoral Sandpiper. The bird seen on 12th October was unexpectedly tame and allowed approach to within seven to eight yards. It was feeding at the edge of a small pond on the air-field and, when alarmed, would run up onto the grass returning to feed after a few seconds. What was probably the same bird was seen at the Lighthouse Field Pond earlier in the day but was not then identified.

COUNTS OF NESTING SEA-BIRDS

Work this year was devoted to three main tasks: (1) a census of the birds in the sample area at the south-west corner, (2) a census of the breeding population of the Kittiwake, (3) a census of the breeding population of the Shag. In addition to this several samples of Guillemots were examined for 'Bridled' individuals.

1. The sample area in the south-west extends from the Rattles to Goat Island and there are available for comparison counts made in 1939 by Perry, in 1942 by Alexander and others and in 1948 and 1949 by Hugh Boyd. This year's counts were made on the mornings of 14th June and 4th July, the writer being assisted on the latter date by Hugh Boyd. The figures given in the table below under 1949 and 1950 are the maxima of all the counts made.

	June 14th	July 4th	1950	1949	1948	1942	1939
Cormorant	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
Shag	30	30	30	50	32	43	72
Oyster-Catcher	2	0	2	4	2	2	4
Herring Gull	332	262	332	348	171	464	1000
Lesser Black-Back	12	10	12	21	14	1	2
Great Black-Back	27	22	27	27	20	16	26
Kittiwake	0	0	32*	0	0	84	80
Razorbill	167	408	408	415	290	364	1390
Guillemot	68	46	68	137	116	265	1010
Puffin	0	0	0	5	0	0	0

Remarks. *The gully in which the Kittiwakes bred was not visited until the middle of July owing to its being rather difficult to approach. Sixteen occupied nests were then seen and the figure given under 1950 is based on this observation. The status of the Kittiwake is discussed in more detail below.

The decline of the Razorbill appears to have been checked, at least in this area; indeed the figures for 1949 and 1950 would tend to indicate a slight increase since 1942 but whether this is really so is a matter of some conjecture. The figures for the Guillemot, however, indicate a continued decrease but it would be desirable to have a greater number of counts over the period before one could assess the accuracy of the figures given above when discussing the actual breeding population. The Gull populations would appear to be relatively stable.