

Introduction:-

During the period 30th August - 4th September, 1963, a notable fall of continental passerine immigrants occurred on the North-east Coast. The fall was very well covered for most of the Northumberland Coastline, and in consequence it has proved possible to analyse the correlation between movement and weather in some detail.

Synoptic situation:-

(1) General. Throughout the period, an extensive anticyclone, centred over Russia was giving light S.E. winds over much of Eastern Europe, where clear skies predominated, but frontal conditions with associated rain remaining fairly stationary along a belt between the eastern Baltic and the Adriatic evidently prevented many of the more easterly species from filtering through into western Europe, although Brown Flycatcher and Red-throated Pipit were recorded.

During the period under review, weather in western Europe was dominated by a vigorous depression, centred over Northern Ireland on 30th August, that moved South-east into the Channel Approaches on 31st and thence over the North Sea, filling rapidly. Throughout the period, pressure remained consistently high over Scandinavia, though subject to small fluctuations that caused significant local changes in cloud cover.

(2) Detailed. A ridge of high pressure moved slowly eastwards over the North Sea during the morning of 30th and was affecting the western Scandinavian coastline by late afternoon. Clear skies with light easterly breezes persisted throughout the night of the 30th over Norway, the Skaggeak and Denmark, but by mid-afternoon an occluded front associated with the depression over Ireland was bringing overcast conditions with rain to almost the whole of the eastern seaboard of the British Isles, while by midnight of the 30th these conditions were affecting the Low Countries and Western Germany, and at dawn, much of Germany and Denmark were experiencing part cloud cover and some fog patches. The development of these conditions during the latter part of the night evidently initiated the preliminary drift, which brought the first main fall to the East Coast during the early afternoon of the 31st, where the cloud cleared soon after mid-day, giving a sunny day, with force 2-3 E.S.E. winds and coastal haze.

Later in the day, cold conditions developed between the Russian high and another anticyclone centred to the North of the Azores, bringing a renewed clearing of skies over Norway, while fronts of the depression (then centred over Brittany) remained almost stationary over the Low Countries giving force 2-3 E.S.E. winds with low overcast, fog and heavy rain during most of the night, eventually joining the central European front in the early morning, bringing overcast conditions with some rain to Denmark by dawn on the 1st. These conditions spread slowly North-eastwards during the day, until by the night of the 1st much of Sweden and S.E. Norway was experiencing heavy overcast with showers, associated with a weak depression forming over Sweden.

Throughout the night of the 31st, and up to about 10.a.m. on the morning of the 1st, the North-east Coast was experiencing force 5-6 N.E. winds, low cloud cover, and intermittent showers associated with the ridge developing to the North, and the depression to the South-west. Immigration commenced in the early morning, and gathered way up to mid-afternoon as the frontal conditions moved northwards over the North Sea.

During the early part of the night of the 1st, the West Coast of Norway had clear skies and force 2-4 N.E. winds, again favourable to departure, but by dawn overcast conditions with showers had spread North westwards from the shallow Scandinavian depression, apparently preventing further departure, since the North-east Coast, though under the influence of force 2-4 N.E. winds throughout the period, received further immigration in the early morning only, with little new being recorded after approximately 11.a.m. Odd birds arriving in coastal dis-

tricts late in the evening of the 2nd seem more likely to have been coasting southwards during the day, under the influence of clearing skies in E. Scotland, (especially since two birds with fresh molting rings were noted!)

During the night of the 2nd, the Channel Bow, which had been filling steadily and moving north-eastwards, was centred over the North Sea, and E.N.E. winds with heavy rain were affecting the N.E. Coast. Skies were clearing to the North over Shetland, but the whole of the Norwegian Coastline was covered by low overcast. However, over Denmark, Heligoland and Western Germany, skies were clearing behind the front, and winds were force 3-4 South, backing S.E. - E. over the North Sea.

Immigration was again noted along the North-east Coast on the morning of the 3rd, and the synoptic situation suggests that this may have been the result of a redirected southerly movement from the Shetland/Fair Isle area together with renewed drift from the Low Countries, of birds continuing their migration after the passage of the front (supported by the occurrence of more Barred Warblers and a Marsh Warbler during this period).

#### Species Concerned:-

Redstarts, Wheatears and Garden Warblers (the latter in unusually large numbers) were the best represented species, but the passage was chiefly remarkable for the unprecedented numbers of Wrynecks and Icterine Warblers. Of the former, it seems likely that at least 25 separate individuals were recorded, and of the latter, at least 6 (including one caught at Wallsend Swallow Ponds on 31st, not included in the main report). During the same period, the Isle of May recorded a maximum count of 8 Wrynecks, but had no Icterines. Of the rarer species, detailed notes were obtained on the Brown Flycatcher (which actually hawked from the shelf string of a mist net!), though only seen by one observer, while the Red-throated Pipit was first heard calling and later trapped and examined in the hand. In addition, possible Aquatic Warbler (Whitley Bay, 31st August) and Bonelli's Warbler (Cresswell 2nd September) were recorded. The only predator, apart from several Red-backed Shrikes, was a Hobby, recorded at Wallsend Swallow Ponds on 29th August.

#### Conclusion:-

This was without doubt, the best covered drift migration period ever to have been recorded on the North-east Coast (both as regards counting and trapping), and I should like to express my thanks to the many contributors who have supplied the wealth of detail that follows in the main part of this report.

#### 31st August, 1963:-

##### MONKS HOUSE

At 6.a.m. a Barred Warbler and 2 Whitethroats and by 8.p.m. a Garden Warbler, a Pied Flycatcher and a Redstart.

##### SEAHOUSES

By midday, 1 Pied Flycatcher and 1 Whitethroat.

##### CRASTER WILLOWS

10.a.m. - 4.p.m. 3 Garden Warblers and 1 Pied Flycatcher.

##### SCROG HILL, CRASTER

2.p.m. - 4.p.m. 8 Spotted Flycatchers, 10 Pied Flycatchers, 1 juv. Red-backed Shrike, 20 Whinchats, 8 Redstarts, 20+ Wheatears, 3 Sedge Warblers, 1 Garden Warbler, 3 phylloscopi.

/NEWTON



#### NEWTON

10.a.m. 1 Pied Flycatcher, 2 Garden Warblers, 1 Willow Warbler.

#### CHEVINGTON BURN

10.a.m. - 2.p.m. 2 Grasshopper Warblers, ~12 Wheatears, 6 Whinchats, 5 phylloscopi, 3 Garden Warblers.

#### HAUXLEY

12.a.m. 4 Redstarts, 1 Reed Warbler, c12 Whitethroats, c70 Willow/Chiffs, c12 Spotted Flycatchers, 6 Pied Flycatchers.

#### CRESSWELL PONDS

10.a.m. 8 Wheatears, 6 Whinchats, 3 Whitethroats, 2 Sedge Warblers, 5 Reed Buntings.

3.p.m. 10 Wheatears, 40 Whinchats, 35 Whitethroats, 5 Lesser Whitethroats, 30 Willow/Chiffs, 5 Sedge Warblers, several Garden Warblers, 1 Icterine Warbler, 3 Redstarts, 5 Pied Flycatchers, several Reed Buntings.

#### CRESSWELL (thick cover)

10.a.m. 6 Wheatears, 4 Whinchats, c20 Willow/Chiffs, c2 Pied Flycatchers.

2.p.m. 12 Wheatears, 7 Whinchats, c20 Willow/Chiffs, ~14 Garden Warblers, ~20 Pied Flycatchers, ~5 Spotted Flycatchers.

#### BLYTH CEMETERY

12.a.m. 5 Wheatears, 2 Whinchats, 4 Pied Flycatchers, 1 Willow Warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroats.

#### SEATON SLUICE

2.p.m. ~8 Wheatears, 2 Whinchats, 1 phylloscopus, 1 Crossbill.

#### ST. MARY'S ISLAND

9.a.m. 6 Wheatears, 2 Whinchats, 1 Whitethroat.

6.p.m. 18 Wheatears, 5 Whinchats, 3 Garden Warblers, 2 phylloscopi, 5 Pied Flycatchers, 1 Redstart.

#### WHITLEY BAY CEMETERY

8.30.a.m. 3 Wheatears, 1 Whinchat, 1 Whitethroat, 3 phylloscopi.

5.30.p.m. 8 Wheatears, 5 Whinchats, 5 Garden Warblers, 4 Pied Flycatchers, 2 phylloscopi, 2 Redstarts, 1 Spotted Flycatcher.

1st September, 1963:-

MONK'S HOUSE - nothing new.

#### BAMBURGH

6.p.m. c10 Redstarts, 6 Pied Flycatchers and a Garden Warbler in one hedge.

#### CRESSWELL PONDS

1.p.m. 1 Wryneck, 2 Fieldfares, c30 Blackbirds, c120 Wheatears, 2 Stonechats, 60 Whinchats, 40 Redstarts, 10 Sedge Warblers, 25 Garden Warblers, c30 Whitethroats, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 50 phylloscopi, 26 Pied Flycatchers, 2 Red-backed Shrikes, c20 Reed Buntings.

6.p.m. 3 Wrynecks, c60 Blackbirds, c230 Wheatears, 90 Whinchats,

280 Redstarts, 15 Sedge Warblers, 160 Garden Warblers, 60 Whitethroats, 5 Lesser Whitethroats, c50 Willow/Chiffs, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, c100 Pied Flycatchers, 4 Red-backed Shrikes.

#### BLYTH BAY

2.p.m. 40 Wheatears, 10 Whinchats, c45 Redstarts, 2 Whitethroats, 7 Lesser Whitethroats, c20 Garden Warblers, 2 Barred Warblers, 1 Blackcap, 15 Pied Flycatchers.

#### BLYTH CEMETERY

2.p.m. 15 Wheatears, 10 Whinchat, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 10 Garden Warblers, 145 Redstarts, 10 Pied Flycatchers.

#### SEATON SLUICE

11.30.a.m. 20 Wheatears, 4 Garden Warblers, 2 Whitethroats, c5 Willow/Chiffs, 7 Redstarts.

2.p.m. 60 Wheatears, 8 Whinchats, 8 Garden Warblers, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Barred Warbler, 4 Willow/Chiffs, 1 Crossbill, 1 "Grey" Shrike (Sp.?)

#### HARTLEY

3.p.m. 60 Wheatears, 20 Whinchats, 43 Garden Warblers, 6 Willow Warblers, 100+ Redstarts, 25+ Pied Flycatchers, 3 Spotted Flycatchers.

#### HOLYWELL DENE - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile inland

3.p.m. Cuckoo, c200 Swifts, c30 Garden Warblers, 19+ Redstarts, 14 Pied Flycatchers.

#### ST. MARY'S ISLAND

8.a.m. 2 Red-backed Shrikes, c30 Wheatears, 8 Whinchats, 1 Whitethroat, 3 Garden Warblers, 5 Pied Flycatchers, 1 Brown Flycatcher, c20 Meadow Pipits, 1 Tree Pipit.

12.a.m. 2 Lesser Whitethroats, c50 Wheatears, 5 Whitethroats, c35 Garden Warblers, 5 phylloscopi, 1 Reed Warbler, c20 Pied Flycatchers, c120 Redstarts, 3 small parties of Swifts.

4.p.m. c85 Wheatears, 60+ Garden Warblers, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Reed Warbler, c8 phylloscopi, 1 Whitethroat, 2 Red-backed Shrikes, c34 Pied Flycatchers, c65 Redstarts.

#### WHITLEY BAY CEMETERY

11.a.m. c20 Wheatears, 2 Whinchats, c30 Garden Warblers, 4 phylloscopi, 1 Icterine Warbler, 28 Pied Flycatchers, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, 1 Aquatic Warbler, c25 Redstarts, 2 Wrynecks.

#### TYNEMOUTH BOATING PARK (all cover)

6.p.m. c25 Garden Warblers, 5 phylloscopi, 1 Blackcap, 1 Barred Warbler, 22 Pied Flycatchers, 2 Spotted Flycatchers.

#### PRIOR'S PARK, TYNEMOUTH

6.p.m. 10 Wheatears, 2 Whinchats, 10 Garden Warblers, 15 Pied Flycatchers, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, 40 Redstarts.

#### SOUTH SHIELDS

Redstarts and Pied Flycatchers present in local parks in numbers.  
2nd September, 1963:-

#### HOLY ISLAND

/HOLY ISLAND

## HOLY ISLAND

100+ Wheatears, c100 Whinchats, 50+ Garden Warblers, 10+ Willow/Chiffs, a few Whitethroats, 3 Red-backed Shrikes, 2 Wrynecks, c70 Redstarts.

## BAMBURGH CASTLE WOOD

2 Wrynecks.

## THE WYNDINGS, BAMBURGH

1 Red-backed Shrike, very few Redstarts, Pied Flycatchers, Spotted Flycatchers and Garden Warblers.

## MONK'S HOUSE

6.30.a.m. 1 Crossbill. (Barred Warbler still present).

10.a.m. 3 Garden Warblers 3/4 Redstarts, 1 Pied Flycatcher, 2 Spotted Flycatchers.

## CRASTER WILLOWS (thick cover)

Many Redstarts and Garden Warblers, numerous Pied and Spotted Flycatchers and 5 Reed Warblers.

## SCROG HILL, CRASTER

Several Redstarts and Garden Warblers. Very few Pied Flycatchers, 6+ Wrynecks, 1 juv. Red-backed Shrike, 1 Tree Pipit.

## NEWTON

1 Wryneck, a few Wheatears.

## CRESSWELL PONDS

60 Wheatears, 10 Whinchats, 50 Redstarts, 12 Sedge Warblers, several Blackbirds and Dunnocks, 1 Tree Pipit, 55 Garden Warblers, 16 Whitethroats, 17 Willow/Chiffs, 5 Wood Warblers, 7 Spotted Flycatchers, 75 Pied Flycatchers.

## BLYTH BAY

15 Wheatears, 4 Garden Warblers, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Pied Flycatcher, 1 Spotted Flycatcher, 2 Redstarts.

## BLYTH CEMETERY

9.a.m. 10 Wheatears, 5 Whinchats, 8 Garden Warblers, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, a few Willow/Chiffs, 15 Pied Flycatchers, 6 Redstarts.

11.a.m. 7 Wheatears, 2 Garden Warblers, 3 Redstarts, 6 Pied Flycatchers.

5.p.m. 4 Wheatears, 3 Garden Warblers, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Willow/Chiffs, 8 Pied Flycatchers, 7 Redstarts, 1 Wryneck.

## SEATON SLUICE

5.p.m. 5 Wheatears, 4 Redstarts, 1 Robin.

## HARTLEY

9.a.m. 1 Red-backed Shrike, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Pied Flycatcher, c6 Redstarts.

12.a.m. 15 Pied Flycatchers, 7 Garden Warblers, 1 ad. Barred Warbler, 6 Redstarts.

/6.p.m.



6.p.m. 1 ad. Bluethroat, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 15 Pied Flycatchers, 7 Garden Warblers, 25 Redstarts, 1 Barred Warbler, 1 Willow/Chiff, 4 Robins, 1 Wryneck.

#### ST. MARY'S ISLAND

9.a.m. 16 Wheatears, 4 Pied Flycatchers, 2 Garden Warblers, 4 Whinchats, 3 Spotted Flycatchers.

12.a.m. 12 Wheatears, 8 Pied Flycatchers, 4 Garden Warblers, 2 Redstarts, 4 Whinchats, 5 Spotted Flycatchers.

5.p.m. 32 Wheatears, 11 Whinchats, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 12 Garden Warblers, 14 Redstarts, 7 Spotted Flycatchers, 1 Whitethroat, 8 Pied Flycatchers.

#### WHITLEY BAY CEMETERY

12.a.m. 2 Red-backed Shrikes, c20 Wheatears, 15 Garden Warblers, 1 Icterine Warbler, 2 Willow/Chiffs, 16 Redstarts, 30 Pied Flycatchers, 4 Spotted Flycatchers, 3 Robins.

#### BOATING PARK, TYNEMOUTH

1 Red-backed Shrike, 4 Garden Warblers, 10 Pied Flycatchers, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Redstarts.

#### PRIOR'S PARK, TYNEMOUTH

1 Red-backed Shrike, 4 Whinchats, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 6 Garden Warblers, 25 Pied Flycatchers, 5 Spotted Flycatchers.

#### SOUTH SHIELDS

Redstarts very plentiful, with Wheatears and Whinchats on open ground and Garden Warblers, Pied and Spotted Flycatchers and Willow/Chiffs in the parks.

#### SEA CROSSING - ESBURG/NEWCASTLE

7.a.m. 1 Wheatear, 1 Wood Warbler aboard. During the day 8 species of passerine came aboard, including Barred Warbler and Garden Warbler. (Reported in the Manchester Guardian "Country Diary").

3rd September, 1963:-

#### BERWICK CHURCHYARD

40 Wheatears, 3 Whinchats, 30 Redstarts, 1 Garden Warbler, 15 phylloscopi, 6 Whitethroats, 60 Pied Flycatchers, 30 Spotted Flycatchers, 1 Tree Pipit, 1 Wryneck.

#### SCREMERSTON

1 Wryneck

#### HOLY ISLAND

c50 Wheatears, c50 Whinchats, c50 Redstarts, 30 Garden Warblers, a few Whitethroats, 1 Barred Warbler, 1 Sedge Warbler, c20 Spotted Flycatchers, c10 Pied Flycatchers, (3 Red-backed Shrikes and 2 Wrynecks as previously), 3 Crossbills.

#### INNER FARNE (cover virtually nil)

c50 Wheatears, 15 Whinchats, 100+ Redstarts, 100+ Garden Warblers, 20+ Willow/Chiffs, 2 Reed Warblers, 2 Icterine Warblers, 1 Whitethroat, 2 Bluethroats, 1 Wryneck, 6 Tree Pipits, 1 Robin, 1 ad. male Ortolan Bunting.

#### HAUXLEY

/HAUXLEY

## HAUXLEY

Many Wheatears, Whinchats and Redstarts, a few Garden Warblers and Willow/Chiffs, 1 Reed Warbler, 1 Marsh Warbler, 3 Wrynecks (including albino), c50 Pied Flycatchers, c20 Spotted Flycatchers.

## WHITLEY BAY CEMETERY

4 Redstarts, 2 Red-backed Shrikes, 5 Garden Warblers, 1 Icterine Warbler, 1 juv. Wood Warbler, 2 Willow Warblers, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Whitethroat, 1 Barred Warbler, 18 Pied Flycatchers, 6 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Robins.

## MARSDEN HALL

1 Wryneck.

4th September, 1963:-

BROWNSMAN, FARNE IS.

1 Bluethroat.

5th September, 1963:-

## WHITLEY BAY CEMETERY

1 Icterine Warbler and 2 Red-backed Shrikes still present.

7th September, 1963:-

Red-backed Shrikes:- 3 on Holy Island, 1 at Craster, 5 at Howick, 2 at Chevington, 2 at Whitley Bay.

2 Wrynecks still at Hauxley, and 1 Red-throated Pipit.

8th September, 1963:-

## HAUXLEY

1 female Snow Bunting.

## SPECIES MENTIONED IN DRIFT REPORT

(Square brackets denote that record is being considered by Rarities Committee).

Hobby.  
Cuckoo.  
Swift.  
Wryneck.  
Fieldfare.  
Blackbird.  
Wheatear.  
Stonechat.  
Whinchat.  
Redstart.  
Bluethroat.  
Robin.  
Grasshopper Warbler.  
Reed Warbler.  
[Marsh Warbler.]  
Sedge Warbler.  
[Aquatic Warbler.]  
Icterine Warbler.  
Barred Warbler.

Garden Warbler.  
Whitethroat.  
Lesser Whitethroat.  
Willow/Chiff.  
[Bonelli's Warbler.]  
Wood Warbler.  
Spotted Flycatcher.  
Pied Flycatcher.  
[Brown Flycatcher.]  
Dunnock.  
Meadow Pipit.  
Tree Pipit.  
[Red-throated Pipit.]  
Grey Shrike (Sp.?).  
Red-backed Shrike.  
Crossbill.  
Reed Bunting.  
[Ortolan Bunting.]  
Snow Bunting.

