

The Orkney Naturalist



BULLETIN OF THE ORKNEY FIELD CLUB 2006

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ORKNEY FIELD CLUB OFFICE HOLDERS & MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Founded in 1959

Aim: To encourage the study and conservation of the natural and culture heritage of the County



OFC OFFICE HOLDERS - 2006

President:	Elaine R Bullard	
Vice-presidents:	Mildred Cuthbert	Ted Kellock
Officers	John Crossley	Chairman
	Sally Hallam	Vice-chairman
	Dick Matson	Secretary
	Dennis Paice	Treasurer/Membership Secretary
Committee:	Peter Ford	Gil Stevens
	Simon Treasure	David Peppitt
	Ray Hallam	Chris Booth
	Sydney Gauld	

Bulletin: David Peppitt

Walks & Talks: Dick Matson

SUBSCRIPTIONS (2006): Adults £10, Family £15, Concessionary £6, Student £3. Non-members of the public attending outdoor meetings shall pay for temporary membership at the rate of £2 for individuals (adults only) and £3 for families.

Membership Secretary: Dennis Paice, Ardleigh, Dounby, tel. 771535, who can also provide copies of the Club Constitution.

CLUB NIGHTS are usually held in Kirkwall on the third Friday of the month, with talks, slides, demonstrations and discussions. All are welcome. Meetings are advertised in the Orcadian under Club/Society notices and on Radio Orkney.

FIELD MEETINGS are held approximately monthly to a wide range of locations, including the outer isles.

Orkney Field Club was a partner of the Orkney Biodiversity Records Centre (OBRC), which enters records of Orkney species, sites, habitats, etc., into its database. This valuable data is available to all interested parties. The Biological Recording Sub-committee, made up of the Orkney County Recorders, welcomes and encourages amateurs to participate in the collection of data. The Club promotes, and is actively involved in, conservation by means of native trees plantation, reserves, study and fieldwork.

NEWSLETTERS: normally sent out three per year, free to members. These give Club news, information, and programmes for activities and Junior's notes.

RESOURCES: these include the Library Folder in the County Library Reference Room. This contains copies of wildlife publications and OFC committee meeting minutes. The Archives include slides, equipment and textbooks. Members also have access to a comprehensive range of reference books, and equipment, including microscopes, in the Orkney Biodiversity Records Centre, also situated in the Library.

PRESIDENTS LETTER

Since my spell in Hospital in March 2005 I seem to have been quite useless, doing virtually nothing at all. The highlight was of course the wonderful birthday party you all put on for my 90th and I do hope I managed to thank you properly if not for the elaborate fibs and evasions to prevent me knowing what was happening. But I believe that if Club members feed together and enjoy themselves in doing so, it is very good for the health of the Club as a whole. Then there was the Science Festival honouring biological recording and although I was made the object of this, the honour was for all of you. I hope I can share my “free” admission to lectures with some of you this coming year. But unless I can be more or less carried to the spot and able to sit or kneel my days of active field work are over although so far I can still cope with the computer and Map Mate and always hope to be able to help with identifications. Do drop in any time, I do enjoy having people come in.

For various reasons I have been going through a lot of back numbers of OFC Bulletins and am still amazed at the quality of many of the contributions. If you have not done so I do recommend this - Full set in the Library. We really ought to think about re-printing some of the best and hope someone would feel willing to write up a small history of the Club. It is so easy to forget, especially why we did certain things. How many of you know we used to own an old house in Sanday? And had hoped to get a similar old house for our use in Hoy. Although many individual members are carrying out excellent research projects the Club has not undertaken any really long term research such as the 16 years spent on the *Primula scotica* project. Dear knows there are plenty of things we could do jointly and have a lot of fun in the process. Think about it and let your Secretary or Chairman know.

Elaine R Bullard

EDITORIAL.

I would like to thank all contributors to this Bulletin. Especial thanks are due to all the County Recorders for the many hours of collating data from many sources. A plea to future contributors to Orkney Recording: please lodge your observations, in the first instance, with the County Recorder, if known, otherwise with the Orkney Biodiversity Records Centre.

Sydney Gauld Orkney Library & Archive
44 Junction Road
Kirkwall
Orkney
KW15 1AG
Tel: 01856 873166
Fax: 01856 875260
Email: biodiversity@orkneylibrary.org.uk

We hope you find this edition as exciting to read as the Editor has had in putting it together. Due to unforeseen circumstances, this edition is later than usual in going to press. I apologise for this.

Thank you to Sunniva Green for the front cover illustration.

D J Peppitt, Editor

BEETLES FOUND IN AND AROUND STROMNESS IN 2005¹

LINDA J LOSITO

In response to a call for articles in the last OFC newsletter, I offer these observations made during recent visits.

Most of the specimens were already dead when found (drowned or road-kill) because I did not have any collecting equipment with me. I have checked them against the available records from the OBRC, Kirkwall, and the only ones not matched were three found in our house in Graham Place, Stromness, *i.e.* *Niptus hololeucus*, *Ptinus tectus* and *Lithostygnus serripennis*. The first two are spider beetles, relatively common in untreated old houses, but the *Lithostygnus* was the first I have ever seen. It was verified using the collection at the Oxford University Museum, where it caused some excitement.

A description can be found in *The Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* (1972) 108: 186-189, and is listed in *New British Beetles* (1995), Hodge and Jones, British Entomological and Natural History Society.

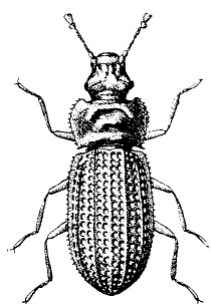


Illustration of *Lithostygnus serripennis* from "The New Zealand Entomologist, 1975, Vol. 6, No. 1.

It was originally found in an old house in Reigate, Surrey in 1928 and there have only been a few records since. It's less than 2 mm long so most people would miss it, I expect. I found it trundling about in the vegetable basket in the kitchen and felt that it might be interesting.

Coleoptera		Site	Ref.	Date
Carabidae:				
<i>Amara aulica</i>	(Panzer)	Stromness	HY 265 103	14-08-05
		Stromness	HY 253 089	21-08-05
<i>Cychrus caraboides</i>	(L.)	Stromness	HY 263 098	14-08-05
<i>Calathus melanocephalus</i>	(L.)	Stromness	HY 265 103	14-08-05
		Wyre	HY 448 264	06-08-05
<i>Calathus fuscipes</i>	(Goeze)	Rousay	HY371305	19-08-05
		Shapinsay	HY486169	16-08-05
<i>Nebria brevicollis</i>	(F.)	Wyre	HY 444 262	06-08-05
<i>Notiophilus biguttatus</i>	(F.)	Wyre	HY 448 264	06-08-05
<i>Pterostichus niger</i>	(Schall.)	Hoy	HY 242 008	09-08-05
		Shapinsay	HY486169	16-08-05
		Stromness	HY 267 104	14-08-05
<i>Pterostichus melanarius</i>	(F.)	Rousay Ferry	HY4327	19-08-04
		Stromness	HY 267 104	14-08-05
		Stromness	HY 272 093	07-08-05
<i>Pterostichus strenuus</i>	(Panzer)	Wyre	HY 448 264	06-08-05

¹ Editor's Note: on going to press, the beetles in this article are undergoing verification with the County Coleoptera Recorder, Brian Ribbands.

Coleoptera		Site	Ref.	Date
Staphylinidae		Papa		
Staphylinus olens	Muller	Westray Farm Museum	HY4851	27-08-05
		Rousay	HY371305	19-08-05
Elateridae				
Atous hirtus	(Herbst.)	Stromness	HY 265 103	14-08-05
		Stromness	HY 263 098	07-08-05
		Stromness	HY 263 098	14-08-05
Silphilidae				
Thanatophilus rugosus	(L.)	Hoy	HY 242 008	09-08-05
Chrysomelidae				
Gastrophysa viridula	(Degeer)	Marwick Head	HY233251	31-05-04
		Stromness	HY 263 098	09-08-05
Scarabaeidae				
Aphodius rufipes	(L.)	Yesnaby	HY 240 152	22-08-05
Anobiidae				
Anobium punctatum	(Degeer)	Stromness	HY 253 089	20-12-04
Ptinidae				
Niptus hololeucus	(Falder-mann)	Stromness	HY 253 089	20-12-04
		Stromness	HY 253 089	16-08-05
Ptinus tectus	Boieldieu	Stromness	HY 253 089	21-12-04
		Stromness	HY 253 089	15-08-05
Lathridiidae				
Lithostygnus serripennis	Broun	Stromness	HY 253 089	15-08-05
Curculionidae				
Euophryum confine	Broun	Stromness	HY 253 089	23-12-04
		Stromness	HY 253 089	08-08-05
Otiorhynchus sulcatus	(F.)	Stromness	HY 253 089	15-08-05
Endomychidae				
Mycetaea hirta	(Marsham)	Stromness	HY 253 089	15-08-05

A CENTENARY PLANT

HUGO SHEARER

Out of interest this plant was recorded and a specimen collected in the East Mainland of Orkney a hundred years ago. A remnant of the colony may still exist at the present time.

This plant and another of the same genus, plus an all together different specimen share, one characteristic in common for survival: they are insectivorous.

Can you guess what this particular species is likely to be?

It is commonly known as the Great Sundew; *Drosera longifolia*, which was formally thought to be called *D. anglica* Huds.

A brief description of how it was discovered may be of interest to some readers.

INTRODUCTION

The plants at this site were first recorded in print by the late Mr. Magnus Spence F.E.I.S. in his book "Flora Croadensis", published 1914.

I Quote

"D. anglica Huds., Great English Sundew. This is fairly common. It is found in the bogs of Hoy; peat moss, Hillside, Birsay and very plentifully in White Moss, St. Andrews. *D. longifolia* is not found further north than 62 degs. N. latitude, whilst *anglica* extends as far north as the White Sea. *Longifolia* is found in Caithness"

So wrote Spence No. 46, p8.

Some years after Spence's death his herbarium was set up by Col. Henry Halcro Johnston and is in the Orkney Natural History Museum, Stromness.

Johnston's herbarium label for this one specimen of this plant, though somewhat brief does give its name as *D. anglica* Huds.; Place: White Moss, Holm. Collector, Magnus Spence. Date: 1906. By way of comment there may have been some discrepancy of parish boundaries between the two botanists Spence p.Llx.

FIELD TRIPS

The first step was to try to locate the best way into White Moss. Of several field tracks I found one which, after leaving the car and crossing one field and fence, I could be at White Moss in quarter hour. After local enquiry for access to land, the owner was located and permission granted.

My first visit to White Moss took place on 08 07 1997. I could see that a fairly extended area to the east, south east side area, had been peat extracted in the not so distant past. It would hopefully be a good starting point. A short number of paces west from one square of peat cutting among one of the red sphagnum mosses surrounded by numerous *D. rotundifolia* plants, I saw but one plant of *D. longifolia* of which I took a photograph. However time and deteriorating weather was not on my side. After a short somewhat hurried survey, which revealed three more widely separated plants I ended my first visit.

Quite a considerable time was to elapse before I eventually revisited. Realising this survey could take a considerable time to accomplish, a good weather forecast, an early start, pencil and notepaper, and with some food for the day, I set out on 25 07 2003.

The question arose, "What was the most practical method to count the plants?" My approach was from the north east and just west of the first square of peat extractions, walking in a fairly close zig zag fashion on a southerly direction. The survey count consisted of single and also many scattered groups of plants. What can safely be assumed, is one fairly widespread community of *D. longifolia* with an estimated count of 128 plants. On reflection that my main objective had been accomplished and that this somewhat isolated heath has seldom been mentioned it occurred to me to collect and press a number of moss species.

The names of these were subsequently verified by our expert, Rosemary, who was also keen to see the *Drosera* plants.

There was a further visit with Neil and Rosemary who brought their GPS in order to check my grid reference. A final visit seemed necessary, and Rosemary accompanied by a friend who wanted to see the plants joined me. Some other moss samples were taken and the sundew species was confirmed as *D. longifolia*. No *D. intermedia* plants were located.

BSBI FIELD MEETING, JULY 2005

CONTRIBUTORS:

JOHN CROSSLEY,
EFFY EVERISS, ERIC MEEK,
AND JENNY TAYLOR

The Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) held a field meeting in Orkney over the weekend of 1-4th July. We have 10 local members of the BSBI who were joined by 15 visiting members and 4 guests. The summer of 2005 was memorable for its failure to materialise but, magically the group was blessed with three days of glorious sunshine with only one rather penetrating shower at the end of the first day



On Saturday 2nd July we all gathered in Stromess to catch the ferry and spend the day exploring North Hoy.

Having made the crossing to the Moness Pier, our party split up, the slightly more intrepid members opting for the terrors of the Ward Hill! Before even leaving the road, however, we were rewarded with a fine colony of Small White Orchids *Pseudorchis albida* near the cattle grid above the Hoy Lodge marsh. Then, striking out across moorland, we began the ascent of the hill by way of the Glen of Gear. This gully and the steep slopes on either side of it produced an array of interesting plants such as Mountain Sorrel *Oxyria digyna*, Purple Saxifrage *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, Limestone Bedstraw *Galium sternerii*, Bog Bilberry *Vaccinium uliginosum* and Alpine Saw-wort *Saussurea alpina*.

However, the main goal was to check out Orkney's only surviving specimen of Whortle-leaved Willow *Salix myrsinites*. Expertly guided by Barry Jones, we were soon teetering on the vertiginous western slope of the Glen and admiring this survivor from a cooler era. The upper reaches of the gully produced several specimens of Mountain Male Fern *Dryopteris oreades* which is now known to be much commoner and widespread on the Ward Hill than

previously believed. We could not, however, locate any examples of Northern Buckler Fern *D. expansa* which certainly occurs in the Burn of Red Glen, a little over a kilometre away to the south-west.

Panting out of the head of the Glen we began the long haul up the shoulder to the Ward Hill summit stopping to admire Dwarf Willow *Salix herbacea* en route and engaging in long discussions about sedge identification as we attempted to locate Stiff Sedge *Carex bigelowii*. The summit achieved, the party then headed north-eastwards, downslope towards the Glen of the Horn where we broke for lunch perched high on the crags with a stupendous view north over Hoy Sound to Stromness. Thence we traversed around the foot of the crags towards the corrie of Quoyawa, Barry eventually managing to relocate two patches of Mountain Avens, *Dryas octopetala* in magnificent bloom. Other finds along the crags included Brittle Bladder Fern, *Cystopteris fragilis* and Moss Campion *Silene acaulis*. A very nice bonus of this hard walking was the finding of a Pill Beetle *Byrrhus pilula*, only the second record of this species for Orkney. At this point, several members began to find the going rather tough and opted for heading off the hill. Those who remained completed the traverse into Quoyawa just as the heavens opened and rain poured down. Despite this, they persevered and were rewarded with finds of Wilson's Film Fern *Hymenophyllum wilsonii*, Holly Fern *Polystichum lonchitis*, Alpine Bistort *Persicaria vivipara* and Alpine Meadow-grass *Poa alpina*. In fact, more spikes of the *Poa* were found than have been seen for many years.

As the rain continued to pour down, it was a very bedraggled crew who finally collapsed into the Hoy Inn for a much-needed glass of beer!

The folks who were looking forward to a more sedate day took advantage of Albert Clarke's excellent taxi service to the bridge at Rackwick, where again the group divided to visit two very contrasting sites, Berriedale and the Rackwick dune system.

Jenny Taylor led a party along the Rackwick-Moness footpath, striking off to take the enjoyable walk across to Berriedale, our renowned remnant native woodland. Once in the shelter of the trees, the rich biodiversity of the wood became apparent and the group wandered through the wood discussing the two remaining Hazel *Corylus avellana* trees, the extremely diverse appearance of the grey willows and, at the waterfall, looking, without success, for Wilson's Filmy Fern *Hymenophyllum wilsonii*, which was going through one of its elusive phases. Ambling back along the path, we rejoined the other 'lowland' group who had scattered throughout the Rackwick dunes and beyond.

This area yielded the typical rich flora of an unexploited sand dune system with a good area of dune slack. Curved Sedge *Carex maritima*, Autumn Gentian *Gentianella amarella* ssp. *septentrionalis*, Field Gentian *G. campestris*, Grass-of-Parnassus *Parnassia palustris*, Lesser Clubmoss *Selaginella selaginoides*, Delicate Stonewort *Chara virgata*. There is a large colony of Ophioglossum to the north of the dune slack. It is probably *O. vulgatum* (Adder's Tongue) but the plants have some characteristics of *O. azoricum* (Lesser Adder's Tongue). This Adder's Tongue has been puzzling local botanists for some time so, a specimen was collected and sent to the Natural History Museum- and we await identification with interest. A dedicated group of the visiting botanists spent a lot of time pacing out and counting both the *C. maritima* and Ophioglossum. The rest of the party spread out at leisure to explore the splendid storm beach, the inundated slack and dune system with the species rich heathland beyond. The group eventually gathered together once again to take advantage of Albert's taxi to make a quick visit to the roadside vegetation at the Nowt Bield. Yellow Saxifrage *Saxifraga aizoides* was flowering prolifically in the Schoenus flushes and Beech Fern *Phegopteris connectilis* poked out cheekily from the verge, its only known site in Orkney. A

quick dash to the pub ensured that the lowland party missed the downpour and smugly greeted the bedraggled hill party as they filtered in, gasping for revitalising refreshment. Glims Moss has the reputation of being one of the finest wetland sites for plants in Orkney, with some known rarities, yet not all of it has been well recorded. Having gathered in the Dounby car park, members were given a choice of two venues for the Sunday morning excursions. Some, under the leadership of John Crossley, headed for Glims Moss via Beaquoy, a deep peat site that shows some of the characteristics of a raised bog. Others headed for the Durkadale area, a more alkaline site lower down the same valley and oft quoted as being the most northerly calcareous valley mire in Britain.

Much of Durkadale is a RSPB reserve, part of which has been leased to the Orkney Field Club who manage the site, in part, for the growing of native trees. The walk down from the road is characterised by common, weedy species such as Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense* and Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris* but the boundary ditch yielded some interesting examples of Male Ferns *Dryopteris filix-mas* and Scaly Male Ferns *Dryopteris affinis* for folk to get their teeth into. Around the plantation the ground becomes wetter and the vegetation more interesting and one of the finds was Hairy Woodrush *Luzula pilosa*. Orchids abound in this general area with Heath Spotted *Dactylorhiza maculata* ssp *ericteorum* and Northern Marsh *D. purpurella* very common and the hybrid between the two, *D. x formosa*, being tentatively identified on several occasions.

An extended search of the Durkadale Burn finally produced Lesser Water Parsnip *Berula erecta*, here at one of its only two sites in Orkney. Nearby on the banks of the burn Bristle Club-rush *Isolepis setacea* was found, this inconspicuous species being not very well known in the islands either. Bog Pimpernel *Anagallis tenella* was common while on drier mounds, Mountain Everlasting *Antennaria dioica* was found in a couple of places.

Both parties were well rewarded with a variety of sedges scarce or even unknown elsewhere in Orkney. The selection found on our visit included White Sedge *Carex curta*, Lesser Tussock-sedge *C. diandra*, Dioecious Sedge *C. dioica*, Star Sedge *C. echinata*, Glaucous Sedge *C. flacca*, Tawny Sedge *C. hostiana*, Common Sedge *C. nigra*, Oval Sedge *C. ovalis*, Carnation Sedge *C. panicea*, Greater Tussock-sedge *C. paniculata*, Flea Sedge *C. pulicaris*, Yellow Sedge *C. viridula*, Bog Sedge *C. limosa* and Bottle Sedge *C. rostrata*. The Durkadale party examined a luxuriant stand of the known hybrid rarity *C. rostrata* x *riparia*, at possibly its sole location in the UK, while the Glims party thinking to do the same gathered a flowering stem not far away, only to find this was Greater Pond-sedge *C. riparia*, at once solving the mystery of one of the hybrid's missing parents and recording this species for the first time on the Orkney Mainland! A specimen was sent to Clive Jermy for confirmation. The only other Greater Pond-sedge site in Orkney is on Stronsay.

Glims Moss has something of a reputation as a dangerous quagmire, so it was with some nervousness that the party explored a soggy depression within the main peat mass, looking for Many-stemmed Spike-rush *Eleocharis multicaulis* and hoping for unexpected rarities. They were not disappointed, for as one member bent to examine a spike-rush his companion exclaimed at the presence a hand's breadth away of some tiny specimens of Bog Orchid *Hammarbya paludosa*, another first for the Orkney Mainland though the species has recently been rediscovered in Hoy. Threading its way through the bog near here is a tiny burn, and in it plenty of Floating Club-rush *Eleogiton fluitans*, another uncommon species in Orkney.

Time was short as we had other places to go that day, but it was with reluctance that the party dragged themselves away from this fascinating area. We had parked at Harold Esson's house and we now took the opportunity to view his fascinating collection of cars, farm machinery and other artefacts of bygone days. The next stop was Aikerness and the aeolianite site where Elaine Bullard, the county recorder joined the group for lunch.

Aeolianite is blown sand cemented by calcium carbonate derived from dissolved shell and sub-surface water. Rare and unique to Scotland in the UK the Aikerness site is outstanding. Aeolianite supports a sparse but highly characteristic vascular plant and moss flora which included Stiff Sand Grass *Catapodium marinum*, Moonwort *Botrychium lunaria*, Wild Thyme *Thymus polytrichus* and Eyebright. *Euphrasia spp.*

Finally the group spread over the species rich Hill of Dwarmo which has a well developed calcicole flora that included Maidenhair Spleenwort *Asplenium trichomanes*, Black Spleenwort *Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*, Thale Cress *Arabidopsis thaliana*, Hoary Whitlowgrass *Draba incana*, Limestone Bedstraw *Galium sternerii*, Black Bog-rush *Schoenus nigricans*, Wild Thyme *T. polytrichus* and Common Stonewort *Chara vulgaris v. papillata*

No botanical expedition to Orkney would be complete without a close examination of some maritime heath, preferably with Scottish Primrose *Primula scotica*! The Brings area of Rousay is a fine example, on base-rich Rousay flagstones and with full exposure to Atlantic winds. On yet another superb sunny day, we entered the area by the way of an old track to the ruined croft of Moan, stopped on the way at the Loch of Moan to admire the carpet of Bog Pimpernel *Anagallis tenella* with short sedges and *Sphagna spp.* along the loch margin. Then up past the crumbling walls of Moan to the great expanse of short wind-clipped heath and grassland of Brings and Horse Brae, with stunning views over a calm blue sea to the Westray hills.

On the way we viewed some lichen-rich heath, and saw how the lichens needed some shelter from the worst of the salt-laden winds in order to thrive. On the rounded hilltop above, the little jewels of *Primula scotica* were on display in the bare sedge-rich heath. Lynn Farrell was so moved as to take command of the many pairs of eyes and organise an instant survey, the result being a count of no fewer than 3739 plants. Meantime Alison Skene was looking curiously at a rather pale *Viola* flower, which some of us had assumed was just another, if slightly faded, Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*. But no! – expert eyes not influenced by local assumptions identified Heath Dog-violet *Viola canina*, a first definite record for Orkney of a plant increasingly scarce in Britain. Then a nearby wind-and-water eroded hollow proved to be full of Common Adder's-tongue *Ophioglossum vulgatum*, though in dwarf form that caused heads to be scratched and the possibility of Small Adder's-tongue *O. azoricum* to be aired again.

Most of the rest of the day was spent in a ramble over the expansive coastal grassland, dotted with base-rich flushes and patches of heath and bog, and along the cliffs, returning by way of the farm of Furse to the Loch of Wasbister.

The Loch of Wasbister is a species-rich eutrophic loch with no fewer than six Pondweed *Potamogeton spp.* and three Stonewort *Chara spp.* and both Glaucous Club-rush *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani* and Common Club-rush *S. lacustris*. The strand line provided specimens of Various-leaved Pondweed *Potamogeton gramineus*, Fennel Pondweed *P. pectinatus* and Rough Stonewort *Chara aspera*. The more accessible marginal vegetation was well recorded and included Lemon-scented Fern *Oreopteris limbosperma*, Tall Fescue *Festuca arundinacea* and Brackish Water-crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii*. Adjacent fields provided some nice weeds of cultivation including White Mustard *Sinapsis alba* and Sun Spurge *Euphorbia helioscopia*.

As the various parties reconvened towards the end of our day on Rousay, it was realised that there was just enough time before the ferry to try a quick visit to the summit of Kierfea, the 235 metre hill situated in the north-east of Rousay's central moorland area. Kierfea has long been known as the only Orkney site outside Hoy for Alpine Saw-wort *Saussurea alpina* but the plant had not been re-located for some years.

Three hardy souls set off from the roadside disused quarry to climb the very steep northern slopes of the hill as fast as possible in order to maximise searching time with the ferry deadline looming. Extended exploration of the summit produced findings of Dwarf Willow *Salix herbacea* and Alpine Bistort *Persicaria vivipara* but no signs of the saw-wort. Then attention turned to the low north-facing rock outcrops to the north-west of the summit and some fine examples of Heath Pearlwort *Sagina subulata* were located before, eventually, a call from Brian Ribbands announced what had been hoped for – a rosette of *Saussurea alpina*, albeit non-flowering! With the search-image now well-established the hunt continued and some 20 plants were finally located before time forced us down the hill and rapidly around the island to the pier. Meanwhile the rest of the party dispersed to quickly explore some of the more accessible cairns for which Rousay excels

Once again good timing by the leaders allowed time for everyone to meet up at the pierside hostelry and enjoy a pint of the local brew whilst waiting for the ferry at the close of the day.

In the evening most of the party met up for a farewell meal in the Royal Hotel Stromness. The feasting was further enhanced as various specimens gradually emerged onto the table and were passed around stimulating much discussion and debate. This was complimented by an endless supply of digital photographs prompting many a quip to entertain the revellers and remind them of the excellent botany and companionship of the weekend

There were several excursions by both the visiting and local botanists before and after the 'official' field meeting. The meeting was well attended and over 1716 records were taken, one new for the county and two new for the Orkney Mainland. The records were very rapidly entered into Mapmate by Eric Meek and Brian Ribbands and are now available from the OBRC. The success of the weekend was very much a team effort and we would also like to thank the Orkney RSPB staff for their expertise and help over the weekend. The local BSBI members really appreciated this rare opportunity to be out in the field with the visiting botanists many of whom had travelled a very long way to join us. We very much look forward to doing so again in the near future.



TYSTIES ON AUSKERRY

CHRIS BOOTH & BOB ADAM

INTRODUCTION

The Tystie or Black guillemot *Cepphus grylle* is the rarest of the 4 species of auk to breed in the British Isles and the only one to usually lay 2 eggs. It is found mainly in the northern part of Britain with more than half of the breeding population in Orkney and Shetland. The Seabird 2000 survey counted over 5,500 individual birds in Orkney (Churchill 2004). Islands with no mammalian predators, such as rats and cats, hold the largest numbers of breeding Tysties. The birds feed close inshore in relatively shallow water.

The island of Auskerry is situated 5km south of Stronsay. Just 1.5km x 1km it is low lying with a rocky shoreline, boulder and shingle beaches and low cliffs. The island is inhabited by one family from spring through to autumn, and is used for grazing sheep, the majority of which are now of the North Ronaldsay breed.

The purpose of this paper is to present some of the findings from a study of Tysties on Auskerry with particular reference to the thirteen years from 1993 to 2005.



METHODS

During the period 1993 to 2005 the authors made annual visits of about three days duration to monitor the breeding seabirds. These visits took place between 3rd and 17th July.

Each year the whole of the shoreline was searched for nesting Tysties, with special attention being paid to the boulder beaches. The presence of a nest site could often be detected from the accumulation of white droppings at the entrance. The contents of each nest were noted and, when possible, any young were ringed.

RESULTS

Nests were found mainly under rock slabs, either on the boulder beaches or on top of low grassy cliffs. A few nests were in rock crevices and 2 pairs nested under iron sheeting, which was part of a boiler from a shipwreck. Many nest sites were occupied on a regular basis from year to year.

The number of nests located annually and the number of nests with eggs and young is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Number of Tystie nests found annually - 1993-2005

	Year	No of nests found	No of nests with young	No of nests with eggs	No of nests contents unknown	No of nests failed
	1993	26	15	8	2	1
	1994	26	21	2		3
	1995	31	22	4	1	4
	1996	28	21	5		2
	1997	31	18	4	1	8
	1998	25	18	2	2	3
	1999	35	27	2	1	5
	2000	32	26	3		3
	2001	35	31	3		1
	2002	36	27	1	2	6
	2003	35	30	1	2	2
	2004	33	29	1		3
	2005	27	18	6	1	2
	Totals	400	303	42	12	43

At the times of our visits, 43 (10.75%) of nests had already failed and for 12 nests we were unable to see the contents.

In 1998, when only 25 nests were found, several potential nest sites were flooded by run-off from heavy rain. In 2005 there was a loss of nest sites on the west side caused by displacement of rock slabs in the severe gale of January 2005.

Table 2 Tystie brood sizes - 1993-2005

Number of nests with young	Number of nests with brood/1	Number of nests with brood/2
303	156	147

The young varied considerably in age, ranging from newly hatched to 3 to 4 weeks old. Although the majority of nests (75.75%) held young, 42 nests still had eggs and one nest had a newly hatched chick and 1 egg. Details of nests with eggs are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Clutch sizes - 1993-2005

Number of nests with eggs	Number of nests with clutch/1	Number of nests with clutch/2
42	23	19

DISCUSSION

The number of breeding pairs of Tysties on Auskerry has declined since 1976, when 74 nests were found (Ramsay 1978) but has remained fairly stable since 1988, when 38 pairs were counted (Adam & Booth 1999).

As can be seen from Table 1 the annual number of pairs breeding during the study period has ranged between 25 and 36. The Tystie does not appear to have suffered the recent dramatic decline in numbers and breeding success that has occurred with some other species of seabirds. This may in part be due to it favouring different prey species of fish, such as

Butterfish *Pholis gunnellus*, found close inshore, rather than being reliant on Sandeels. It will be interesting to see how it fares in the next few years.

MOVEMENTS

As well as ringing carried out by the authors, Andrew Ramsay made a number of visits to Auskerry in the 1970's and 1980's to ring seabirds, including Tysties. The resulting recoveries show the sedentary nature of the Tystie, the furthest movement of a ringed chick is to Castletown in Caithness, just 67 km. Although a number of young birds ringed on the island have been found to be breeding there in later years, two recoveries indicate that there is some interchange of birds between colonies on other islands of the Orkney archipelago. One young from Auskerry was found 4 years later, probably breeding, on Switha and a young ringed on North Ronaldsay was found 5 years later on a nest in Auskerry. The oldest Tystie recorded on the island so far had been ringed there as a chick in 1976 and was found breeding 19 years later in 1995.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful to the Brogan family, Simon, Teresa, Rory, Owen and Hamish for their hospitality and help during our stays on the island. Our thanks also to the boatmen, in particular to Smith Foubister, who have transported us to and from the island in a variety of weather conditions.

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THE ORKNEY FIELD CLUB / RSPB BIRD RACE – 2006

DICK MATSON

After two weeks of near perfect bird-watching weather the morning of Sunday 5th Feb dawned grey, wet and very windy for the eight teams of four who set off by car at 9am to see how many bird species they could find on Mainland before 4pm. This year many teams headed off early to East Mainland for waders, sea ducks and divers and this paid off as later in the day the roughening seas made observation nigh impossible. They were rewarded with 3 species of scoter including the rare surf scoter which was wintering off Tankerness for the 9th successive year; and good numbers of great northern diver and slavonian grebe. Inland, mixed in with greylags were several hundred pink-footed geese and a single European white-front. St. Peter's Pool yielded dunlin, ringed plover, bar-tailed godwit, golden plover, sanderling and more common waders while Mill Sand had shelduck and knot. In the sea off Graemshall were red-throated divers, tysties and guillemots, and on the loch was a little grebe.

Finstown proved popular for finding garden birds such as song thrush, dunnock, robin, chaffinch, greenfinch, wren, goldcrest and collared dove, and one team managed to locate a pair of brambling. Out in the countryside small farmland birds were more difficult in the

strong wind; some teams struggled to find twite, linnet and reed bunting, although some were encountered near winter bird crops.

Single pied wagtails were located near Lynn Park and the Peedie Sea in Kirkwall but none of the small wintering flock sometimes seen near the lorry park in Stromness was in evidence.

Most raptor species were difficult to come by although teams scanning woodland found sparrowhawk and common buzzard; but the rough-legged buzzard which had been seen regularly in the Redland - Lyde Road area in the previous ten days failed to materialise. It was gratifying to hear of numerous hen harrier sightings. While a couple of peregrines were observed, no merlin was recorded.

The Loch of Banks and the Loons were rewarding as usual. Heron, pintail and most of the common ducks were present at both locations, while 90-100 Greenland white-front, a pair of barnacles and a good flock of 20 shoveler were at the Loons. The single ruddy duck which was first seen on the roadside pool at the Quooyloo Brewery in early autumn was still there. Regrettably the little egret which had been present at Banks for several weeks seemed to have moved on or succumbed to the recent cold spell; similarly the handsome drake smew was no longer in evidence on Skail. The wintering scaup flock was found on Harray near Brodgar with several hundred coot nearby.

The "icing on the cake" for the lucky ones took the form of single glaucous gulls at Birsay Links and Highland Park, a black-tailed godwit at Widewall Bay, a pale-bellied brent goose in Stenness and a black-throated diver in Echnaloch Bay. At the end of the day we retired to the Merkister to compare notes and enjoy a very welcome bar meal. Congratulations to the Williams/Russell/Clouston team who found 90 species and the Higson family team, second with 87. Meanwhile our fellow bird-watchers on Sanday braved the elements and recorded 50 species over a much shorter time period, the wind and rain combined with lack of shelter on the island making it even more difficult to pick up the smaller species.

Interesting comparisons were drawn with previous bird races: slavonian grebe were more numerous; pink-feet seemed to be wintering in ever increasing numbers; there were more waders feeding in the fields this time, thus golden plover sometimes confined to just a few locations at this time of year were widely distributed; of woodcock, often a difficult bird, several were seen; more harriers were in evidence, one team seeing 7 including 4 males; a surprise was the apparent absence of Iceland gulls although 2 different glaucous were recorded; goldcrest were more easily picked up; twite and linnet were seen in fewer numbers and in only 3 locations and brambling were very scarce. No wintering warblers or waxwings could be located. But it was good to see large flocks of redwings and fieldfares in the countryside; it is often difficult to find the latter in early February, - yet another indicator of global warming? Roll on February 2007!

HOUSE MARTIN NESTING IN ORKNEY IN 2005

DICK MATSON

There seemed to be a fair number of migrant warblers and finches on the move in the last few days of April and early May so it seemed that spring was very much in the air and it was no surprise to find a pair of house martins nest-building on top of an artificial nest on the gable end of a house at Netherbutton, Holm on 11th May. More nesting records came in from Dounby, Scapa and Stromness during the month and prospects looked good. But yet again house sparrows had other ideas and seriously disrupted breeding by taking over 4 nests

in Dounby and 6 in Stromness while preventing nesting at another regularly used site in Stromness.

A further disappointment was the collapse of 3 out of 4 nests built at the new houses in Scapa where 6 pairs had nested in 2004. The weather had not been particularly bad and it is possible that the mud supply used by the martins was not of the right quality. Fortunately 3 nests built on houses on the west side of Scapa were successful.

There was a brighter picture from Netherbutton. The artificial nest which yielded 2 broods in 2004 did so again, while the artificial nest on top of which a pair was building on 11th May (see above) was itself occupied. The pair above registered their disapproval by repeatedly pinching nest material from the lower nest while that pair were away catching insects for their young. Occasionally the raiders were caught in the act and some lively skirmishes ensued. In all, 5 nests at Netherbutton produced at least 8 broods.

The unpredictable nature of the birds was demonstrated in Dounby. At a house where 4 pairs had raised young in 2004 only one pair nested in 2005 while not far away at Dounby surgery there was a cluster of 3 successful nests under one gable where there had only been one the previous year. The Dounby martins raised at least 8 broods in spite of the sparrows. One pair was seen feeding a newly fledged chick on the unusually late date of 21st September and it is possible that this chick was from a third brood. Single nests at previously occupied sites in Harray, Twatt and Finstown each yielded a brood.

A new nest site was discovered in a remote area west of the Loch of Stenness.

Unfortunately the house owner thought the birds were starlings and had the 2 nests "sorted"! Building works at Sanday school prevented any nesting there in 2005 and no other nests were recorded on the island. The house on Westray which had 3 nests in both 2003 and 2004 was ignored by the birds in 2005. However an extraordinarily late nesting attempt did occur at a new site on Westray; but with the owner spending a great deal of time out of Orkney the details are not clear. The birds had hatched young at least 10 days before the owners went on holiday on 7th October, but when the owners returned a fortnight later the nest had come down in bad weather. If the brood did in fact fledge which is a possibility this would be by far the latest successful breeding record for Orkney.

Two of the artificial nests installed by the Club in 2001 have now been used and it will be interesting to see how many years it takes before the other 38 are occupied! The great thing is that the artificial nests are weather- and sparrow-proof. There have, of course, been many instances of successful nesting on top of our artificial nests.

The loss of the nests at the promising new site at Scapa, the losses to sparrows in Dounby and Stromness and the failure of the birds to build at the previously productive house on Westray were a great disappointment. However the summer weather in Orkney in 2005 was by and large atrocious and house martins did well to bring off 26 broods.

Please remember that help is always needed with recording breeding progress and resiting unpromising artificial nests. If interested please contact me on 751426.

HOUSE MARTIN BROODS RAISED IN ORKNEY FROM 2001 TO 2005

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Dounby/Twatt	1	7	12	5	8
Harray	-	-	-	1	1
Finstown	-	-	-	1	1
Stromness	1	3	4	7	4
Holm	3	3	5	3	8

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Burray	2	-	-	-	-
Orphir	2	-	-	-	-
Scapa	-	-	-	6	4
Westray	-	-	6	5	-
Sanday	-	-	3	2	-
Total Broods	9	13	30	30	26
Total Nests Completed / Reoccupied	9	13	30	30	35

(It is coincidence that in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 the number of broods was the same as the number of nests. This was because the number of nests lost to sparrows and weather was exactly compensated for by the fledging of 2 or in one case 3 broods.)

BIRD BEHAVIOUR IN SEVERE WEATHER AT DALE, COSTA

DICK MATSON

The cold weather of early March 2006 was the most severe and life-threatening for birds in Orkney for many years. Extremely heavy and violent showers of hail and snow were often accompanied by near-gale force gusts. Nearly all grassland, stubbles, hill land and loch margins, feeding areas for seed- and invertebrate-eaters, were covered by a thick blanket of snow. The only area remaining open was the inter-tidal zone of the seashore and many wading birds, ducks and corvids moved there to feed.

The perceived wisdom is that a bird's feeding behaviour is governed to a large extent by its actual body weight in relation to its optimum weight. If it has become "over-weight" it will in normal circumstances tend to reduce its food intake until it achieves the optimum weight. Feeding behaviour also depends on the bird's perception of how reliable the food supply is in the immediate future and whether there is any threat to its ability to find food, e.g., severe weather. If the supply is threatened it will attempt to consume what food is still available all the more rapidly.

Falconers keep regular records of the body weight of their birds of prey. If the weight of one of their hawks, falcons or eagles is above the optimum its effectiveness as a hunter is impaired and the falconer reduces its rations until the bird's weight is back in the optimum bracket. Similarly, in the wild, raptors that have just consumed a sizeable kill or some carrion will sit around for long periods to allow their weight to reduce.

There is a parallel as regards body weight with prey species. If a finch, bunting, pipit, skylark, rock dove, etc, is "over-weight" its ability to manoeuvre to evade attacks by raptors can be reduced with fatal consequences. On the other hand a bird that is "under-weight" may not have the energy to out-fly a pursuing raptor. Thus control of body weight is more important to these prey species than it is to figure-conscious teenage specimens of *homo sapiens*!

The feeding behaviour of the small passerines on the bird-crop and around the seed-feeders at Dale in this and previous freeze-ups very much supported the above theories. With the onset of severe weather bird numbers increased significantly and they started to feed ravenously, losing much of their innate caution; they even came to food placed on window-

sills. If the weather improved, even only temporarily, the feeding intensity reduced markedly. The arrival of the next snow squall triggered another bout of furious feeding. Thus it is that bird-ringers who record the weights of the birds they ring will tell you that contrary to expectations they find significant increases in body weight in severe weather, provided of course that the birds can still find food. Once the spell of bad weather is over and a thaw sets in feeding effort tails off dramatically. Now the birds perceive that their food supply is no longer under threat and their main priority is to allow their weight to reduce in order to achieve maximum manoeuvrability to avoid raptors.

While the behaviour of the twite, linnets, redpolls, reed buntings, skylarks and common garden birds observed at Dale conformed to these theories that of the rock and feral doves was more difficult to fathom. In the cold spell 200 to 300 doves would arrive in the adjacent fields an hour or so after sunrise and all but a few sit around in a torpid state for 1 to 2 hours, the worse the weather the longer the waiting period. Then the flock would descend like locusts on the bird-crop and the seed-feeders and feed ravenously until 3 hours or so before sunset when they would return to the nearby fields and re-enter an apparently comatose state. After about an hour they would disappear to their night time roosts. What was baffling was their reluctance to start feeding as soon as they arrived. Is their metabolism so sluggish that it requires a “kick-start” from any solar warming? – And why the mid-afternoon snooze?

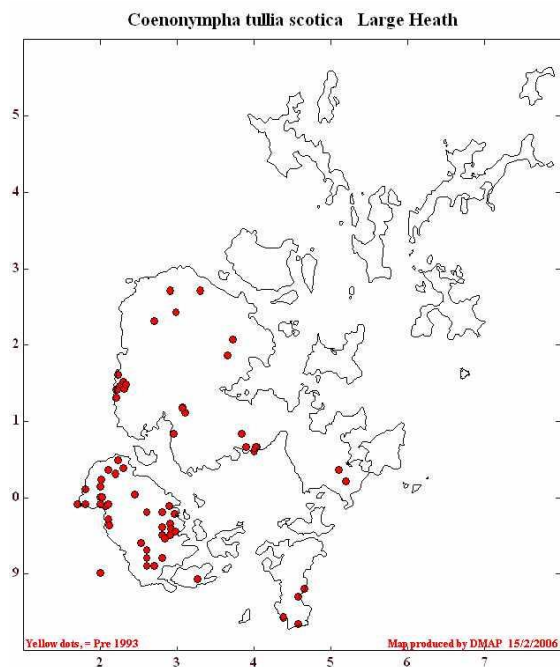
After blackbirds, reed buntings were generally the first on the scene in the mornings followed by linnets and a little later twite. Some reed buntings would often feed until it was almost dark. Skylarks, one of the hardiest birds of the open fields and normally able to exist on minute wind-blown seeds gleaned from on top of the snow, were driven into gardens by the severity of the weather. Twenty-two were gathered round the bird-feeders on the lawn at Dale on one occasion.

The urge to find food, probably coupled with the difficulty of navigating in “white-out” or snow-glare conditions led to some bizarre behaviour. Late one afternoon a wigeon arrived in the vegetable enclosure just behind the kitchen and was reluctant or too exhausted to take off. The gate to the enclosure was removed and the bird had disappeared by next morning. The next day 2 teal landed on the lawn, contemplated having a go at the bird seed, thought better of it and took off again. Frequently snipe fluttered over the garden looking for feeding areas, one spending several minutes probing the lawn with its bill in an area just cleared of snow. Occasionally oystercatchers would circle round looking lost with no clear intention evident. What was puzzling was why these wading birds which rely on searching soft ground or loch shores for invertebrates did not depart en masse for the seashore. A possibility is that with the breeding season imminent they still had a strong instinct to stay inland to prospect for nesting territory.

It was a great relief when on 7th March a thaw set in earnest and the geese and waders which were clearly suffering were able to gain access to their normal food supplies. Once again it had been most rewarding to be able to observe at close quarters scores of birds coming to the bird crop and bird-feeders at Dale.

LARGE HEATH FACT SHEET

EFFY EVERISS AND SYDNEY GAULD



COENONYMPHA TULLIA SCOTICA *STAUDINGER*

UK STATUS AND RANGE: RESIDENT RANGE DECLINING.

CONSERVATION STATUS

- UKBAP: Species of Conservation Concern.
- Butterfly conservation priority: medium.
- European threat status: vulnerable Protected in Great Britain for sale only.
- LBAP: Species of local importance.

EUROPEAN/WORLD RANGE

Occurs across Europe and Asia, and in Canada and western USA. It has declined seriously in many European countries.

GENERAL NOTES

The Large Heath is restricted to wet boggy habitats in northern Britain, Ireland, and a few isolated sites in Wales and central England. It is one of the UK's most variable butterflies and has been the subject of several studies on its phenology.

The adults always sit with their wings closed and can fly even in quite dull weather provided the air temperature is higher than 14°C. The size of the underwing spots varies across its range; a heavily spotted form (*davus*) is found in lowland England, a virtually spotless race (*scotica*) in northern Scotland, and a range of intermediate races elsewhere (referred to as *polydama*). In Orkney the *scotica* form is found. This is the largest and most uniform form with few spots and is considered a separate sub-species. The Large Heath has a deceptively weak flight but can be blown large distances and may be found quite high to 800metres in the mountains. It may have a two year life cycle in northern areas (Thomson 1980) a response to the short growth period and/or unpredictable weather during the flight period.

The butterfly has declined seriously in England and Wales, but is still widespread in parts of Ireland and Scotland.

BIOLOGY

- **Habitat**

The butterflies breed in open, wet areas where the food plant grows: lowland raised bogs, upland blanket bogs; and damp acidic moorland. Sites are usually below around 500m (600m in the far north) and have a base of *Sphagnum* moss, interspersed with dense tussocks of Hare's-tail Cottongrass and abundant Cross-leaved Heath, the main adult nectar source. The species requires large tussocky clumps of Hare's-tail Cottongrass in wet conditions. Where grazing pressure or burning frequency is too high this tussocky structure is damaged and there is a subsequent reduction in Large Heath populations. The species therefore is very dependant on the careful maintenance and management of wet bogs.
- **Flight**

June-August. One brood per year. Slow erratic flight, highly manoeuvrable when pursued. Active in dull and sunny weather, but forced down by strong winds. Can sometimes be coaxed into flying by walking through vegetation in cold weather. Life expectancy of the adult has been calculated at 3-5 days although some individuals may survive for as long as 21 days.
- **Food Plant**

The main food plant is Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*) but larvae have been found occasionally on Common Cottongrass (*E. angustifolium*) and Jointed Rush (*Juncus articulatus*). Adults seek nectar from Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*)
- **Egg**

July-August, Pale pearly yellow at first with rusty blotches appearing after about 7 days and becoming completely dark before hatching at about 15 days. They are laid singly on Hare's tail Cotton Grass, particularly on dead leaves at the base of the tussock.
- **Larva**

July to May. Head and body with longitudinal pale stripes. Largely nocturnal. Feed from late July to Late September and hibernates as the third instar. In late March there are two further instars before pupating in late May or early June. The larvae feed amongst the cottongrass retreating deep into the tussock when not feeding or the weather poor. In the far north a small proportion of each population (approx. 5%), have a two year life cycle, with third instar larvae not feeding, but entering a second diapause in the summer before emerging to feed normally the following spring. There are four species of parasitoids known to attack Large Heath larvae in Britain, all are endoparasitic Ichneumonidae. Larvae can survive both submergence and freezing for a limited length of time. They survive inundation by moving up the vegetation.
- **Pupa**

May to July: Matt bright green at first becoming yellow and then orange on wings. Suspended from vegetation/food plant the adults emerging after 3-4 weeks from mid-June.

ORKNEY NOTES:

Resident, wingspan 35-40mm, local on moors widely seen especially to the south and west. They were first recorded in Orkney in 1871, without locality. On the wing from late June to late July. Common and well distributed over much of Hoy, scattered throughout the West

Mainland in the moorland areas, with a few records from the east end of Tankerness. Also seen on South Ronaldsay. Although the Hoy population is secure, past reclamation of moorland on mainland has greatly reduced the habitat with a resulting decline in populations.

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PELAGE CHANGE IN THE MOUNTAIN HARES OF HOY

CHRIS VASEY

Mountain hares were re-introduced to Hoy about a hundred years ago¹; a population present in the Middle Ages having died out.² The introduced hares were presumably of the endemic Scottish race, *Lepus timidus scoticus*, which moult to a predominantly white coat in winter. Although the *scoticus* subspecies often has a grey area on the back in the winter coat this is not particularly noticeable in the Hoy population. The hares are widespread over a large part of Hoy, and have been described as common above the 100m contour³. This zone also coincides with the presence of ling (*Calluna vulgaris*), the main diet of mountain hares. Recent records for mountain hares show that they have not spread to low or farmed ground, and appear to be entirely absent from South Walls, Fig 1.

Individual hares appear to moult at different times, resulting in a wide spread of appearance at any given point in both autumn and spring moults. Over the last three years data has been collected to determine the progress of the autumn and spring moults. Assessment of this change has been by visual estimation of the progress of the moult on a ten-point scale. Although this is inevitably subjective it does enable to the overall progress of the moult to be followed, Fig 2.

The Sorby Natural History Society conducted observations on the progress of the moult in the years 1971-4 on the Peak District population of *Lepus timidus scoticus* introduced about a century ago from Perthshire.⁵ The general moult was from the lower parts to the head, reversing in spring. Although this may be generally true there are variations. In a minority of the hares on Hoy the moult begins on the legs and this produces the startling sight of a hare with white stockings.

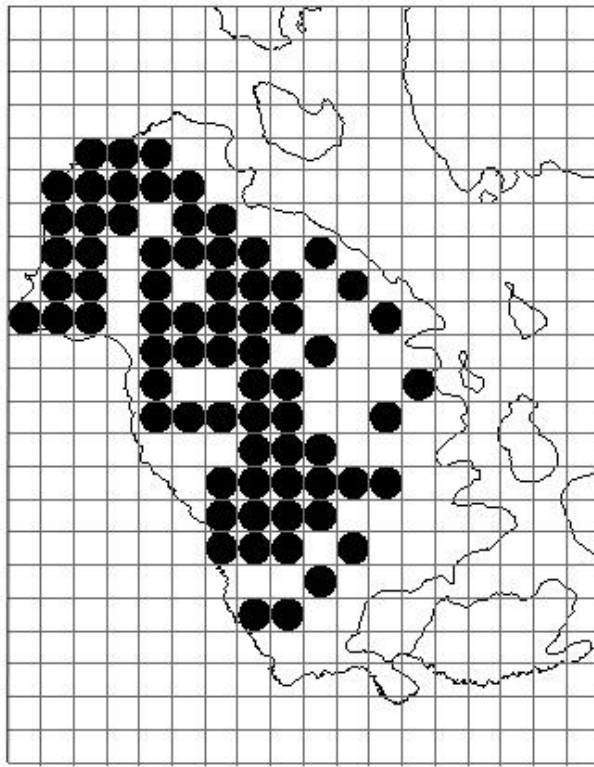


Figure 1. The distribution of mountain hares on Hoy.⁴

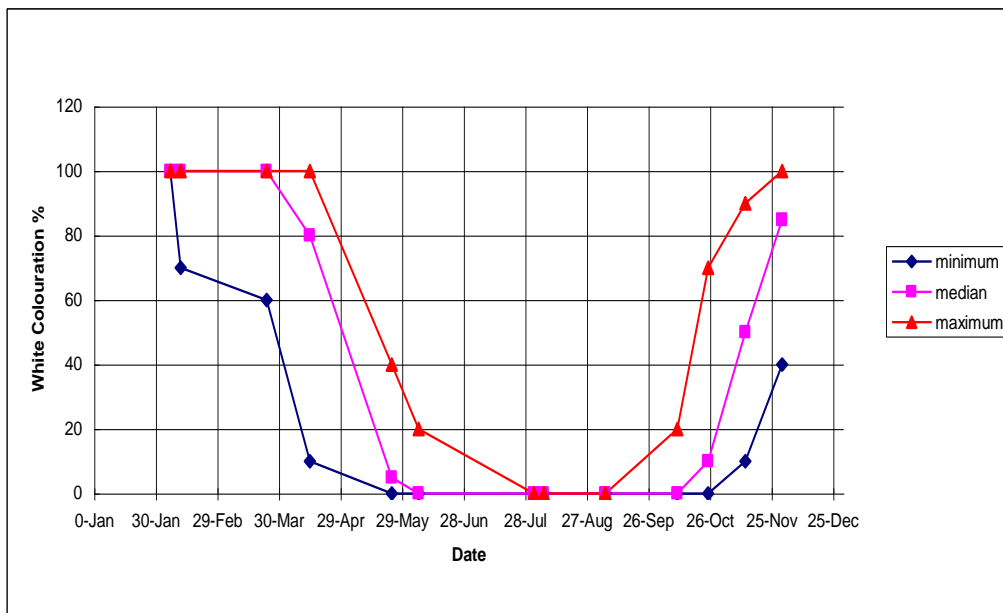


Figure 2. Progress of moult change in mountain hares on Hoy.

The change to the winter coat appears to begin in mid-October, with the halfway point in the transition in mid-November, and fully white hares not frequent until the beginning of December. The transition to the summer coat begins early in February, with the halfway point about the end of March, although some hares may be partially white until the beginning of June, entirely in accord with the description in the Handbook of British Mammals⁶.

The Scottish subspecies differs from the Irish endemic *Lepus timidus hibernicus* in that the latter only partially or rarely turns white in winter. *L. t. hibernicus* also inhabits both low and high ground suggesting that the evolutionary pressures of milder climate and ground predation has resulted in a significant change in response to the onset of winter. A white coat provides better insulation, but not better camouflage where snow is patchy or absent. The conditions on the Hoy hills are very severe in winter, despite the tendency in recent times for snow to be of limited duration, and this factor is probably the main evolutionary pressure on this population. Severe winters have been known to decrease the Peak District population sharply. Climate change resulting in warmer winters and reduced snow lie may be expected to influence the evolution of pelage change, and this may result in a divergence of the isolated populations of *L. t. scoticus*.

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BEETLE RECORDS 2005

BRIAN RIBBANDS

I have given way to pressure from Keith Fairclough and taken over from him as beetle recorder. I now have Vincent Lorimer's reference collection. I'm no expert but I will attempt to identify any specimens sent to me, or to get them identified by experts, however it will take time to build up contacts.

About 130 records have been received for 2005. All records will be entered into the OBRC database.

About 30 records were from Linda Losito (see separate article), including some from islands which have very few previous beetle records, these are particularly welcome. She recorded three species which she thought were additions to the Orkney list, *Lithostygnus serripennis* is undoubtedly new but *Niptus hololeucus* and *Ptinus tectus* each have one previous record in the OBRC database. However there are two others which I cannot find listed for Orkney, *Euophryum confine* and *Mycetaea hirta*. This anomaly probably arises because, as with most invertebrates, the most recent published Orkney beetle list is in the "New Naturalist" (Berry 1985), now over 20 years old. The only identification keys to some beetle groups are over 70 years old and inevitably there have been many name changes since, so much confusion prevails! I will be attempting to update the Orkney Coleoptera list, but this is quite a task as there are nearly 500 species listed, and it will require searching through the 4000 odd taxa on the British list checking for name changes and synonyms.

Magnus Sinclair has sent 64 records from his trip to Orkney in late May. He comments that the records are not very numerous, he thinks probably due to the cold and windy weather at the time and the very wet conditions earlier. He recorded 54 species five of which he thinks may be additions to the Orkney list: *Agonum thoreyi*, *Cercyon lateralis*, *Autalia rivularis*, *Atheta brunneipennis* and *Nephus redtenbacheri*. He recorded three other species which I cannot find listed, *Bisnius fimetarius*, *Mocyta amplicollis* and *Thinobaena vestita*. The last of these he found at two separate sites, Brig O' Waith and Yesnaby, so it is unlikely to be a

recent arrival. He also found *Bembidion guttula* which has only been recorded once before, in 2003.

Magnus regularly checks a colony of *Chrysolina intermedia* near Yesnaby. Chris Booth has also sent me records of this beetle, from two other sites on the West Mainland coast. This species seems to be rare elsewhere in Britain. It looks like a large ladybird, black with an orange border around the outer edge of the elytra. It feeds only on sea plantain.

During the BSBI meeting in early July, one of the visiting botanists found a pill beetle *Byrrhus pilula* on Ward Hill, Hoy. When disturbed this beetle can withdraw its head and legs neatly into hollows in its underside and it appeared to be headless when I first saw it! There is only one previous Orkney record, in Orphir in 2004.

Another possible first for Orkney is *Lasioderma serricorne*, the cigarette beetle, which was found at Moaness pier, Hoy, presumably it came out of a parcel off the ferry. It is a mainly tropical species which can live in stores and eats cigarettes among many other things.

There were the usual records of some of the larger and more conspicuous species. Though these are better recorded than the majority of beetles, more records are always welcome as they may indicate future changes in numbers and distribution.

Cicindela campestris, Green Tiger Beetle was recorded on the Rackwick footpath in Hoy. All recent records seem to be near Rackwick or Sandy Loch, but there are two 1979 records from The Berry. Records at the edges of, or outside the "usual" area would be particularly valuable to establish the distribution of this distinctive beetle.

Nicrophorus sexton or burying beetles, which are attracted to moth traps and other lights were the most frequently reported beetles. Three species are found in Orkney. *N. vespilloides* is the smaller of the two which have orange bands across the elytra and is the only British species with all black antennae. *N. investigator* has light tips to its antennae, as do other British species not recorded in Orkney. *N. humator* is the largest and is all black except for its antennae.

Some of the recent additions to the Orkney list live indoors in Britain. These have probably been accidentally imported rather than arrived naturally. Further records, or lack of them, will tell whether they establish themselves here.

<i>Carabus arvensis</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	1	18-Aug-05
<i>Carabus problematicus</i>	Birsay, Burn of Rusht	HY344209	1	04-Jun-05
<i>Cychrus caraboides</i>	Rousay, Brings	HY3834	1	04-Jul-05
<i>Cicindela campestris</i>	Hoy, track near Sandy Loch	HY213023	6	30-Apr-05
<i>Cicindela campestris</i>	Hoy, track near Sandy Loch	HY213023	5	18-May-05
<i>Cicindela campestris</i>	Hoy, track near Sandy Loch	HY213023	3	06-Jul-05
<i>Cicindela campestris</i>	Hoy, track near Sandy Loch	HY213023	1	09-Sep-05
<i>Trechus obtusus</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Bembidion aeneum</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Bembidion guttula</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Bembidion mannerheimii</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Pterostichus niger</i>	Orphir Waulkmill Bay	HY376066	0	31-May-05
<i>Pterostichus diligens</i>	Orphir Waulkmill Bay	HY376066	0	31-May-05
<i>Pterostichus strenuus</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05

<i>Calathus melanocephalus</i>	Orphir Waulkmill Bay	HY376066	0	31-May-05
<i>Paranchus albipes</i>	Sandwick, Bay of Skail	HY236195	0	24-May-05
<i>Agonum thoreyi</i>	Orphir Waulkmill Bay	HY376066	0	31-May-05
<i>Amara plebeja</i>	Sandwick, Bay of Skail	HY236195	0	24-May-05
<i>Harpalus latus</i>	Orphir Waulkmill Bay	HY376066	0	31-May-05
<i>Dicheirotichus gustavii</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Cercyon littoralis</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Cercyon littoralis</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Cercyon depressus</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Cercyon haemorrhoidalis</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Cercyon lateralis</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Cercyon melanocephalus</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Ptenidium punctatum</i>	Orphir Waulkmill Bay	HY376066	0	31-May-05
<i>Ptenidium pusillum</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Catops fuliginosus</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Catops morio</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Stenichnus collaris</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Silpha atrata</i>	Sandwick Yesnaby	HY223158	0	31-May-05
<i>Nicrophorus humator</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	1	30-Aug-05
<i>Nicrophorus humator</i>	St Ola, Crantit, Northolme	HY440097	1	30-Aug-05
<i>Nicrophorus humator</i>	St Ola, Crantit, Northolme	HY440097	1	05-Sep-05
<i>Nicrophorus humator</i>	Stenness, Nether Bigging	HY300117	1	10-Sep-05
<i>Nicrophorus humator</i>	St Ola, Quoyberstane	HY464121	1	09-Oct-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	4	11-Aug-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	4	16-Aug-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	Harray, Knowe of Bosquoy	HY311187	1	28-Aug-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	Birsay, Hundasaeter	HY297256	1	29-Aug-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	10	30-Aug-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	3	03-Sep-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	8	05-Sep-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	St Ola, Crantit, Northolme	HY440097	11	05-Sep-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	Birsay, Hundasaeter	HY297256	1	06-Sep-05
<i>Nicrophorus investigator</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	1	22-Sep-05
<i>Nicrophorus vespilloides</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	1	26-Jul-05
<i>Nicrophorus vespilloides</i>	Birsay, Lower Lobady	HY3124	1	29-Aug-05
<i>Nicrophorus vespilloides</i>	Birsay, Lower Lobady	HY3124	2	06-Sep-05
<i>Omalium laeviusculum</i>	Sandwick Yesnaby	HY223158	0	31-May-05

<i>Omalius rivulare</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Sepedophilus nigripennis</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Amischa analis</i>	Sandwick, Bay of Skail	HY236195	0	22-May-05
<i>Amischa bifoveolata</i>	Sandwick, Bay of Skail	HY236195	0	24-May-05
<i>Amischa bifoveolata</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Mocyta amplicollis</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Atheta brunneipennis</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Chaetida longicornis</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Thinobaena vestita</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Thinobaena vestita</i>	Sandwick Yesnaby	HY223158	0	31-May-05
<i>Acrotona aterrima</i>	Orphir Waulkmill Bay	HY376066	0	31-May-05
<i>Aleochara brevipennis</i>	Orphir Waulkmill Bay	HY376066	0	31-May-05
<i>Autalia rivularis</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Stenus clavicornis</i>	Sandwick, Bay of Skail	HY236195	0	24-May-05
<i>Stenus brunripes</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Stenus nitidiusculus</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Stenus ossium</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Philonthus marginatus</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Philonthus marginatus</i>	Sandwick Yesnaby	HY223158	0	31-May-05
<i>Philonthus succicola</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Philonthus varians</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Bisnius fimetarius</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Staphylinus erythropterus</i>	Orphir Waulkmill Bay	HY376066	0	31-May-05
<i>Staphylinus erythropterus</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	1	17-Jun-05
<i>Ocypus olens</i>	Hoy, Bay of Quoys	HY243033	1	30-Apr-05
<i>Ocypus olens</i>	Sandwick, Bay of Skail	HY236195	0	24-May-05
<i>Ocypus olens</i>	St Ola, Kirkwall Strynd	HY449109	1	02-Aug-05
<i>Ocypus olens</i>	St Ola, Crantit, Northolme	HY440097	1	25-Sep-05
<i>Creophilus maxillosus</i>	Sanday Lady Scuthvie Bay	HY770439	1	26-Mar-05
<i>Aphodius depressus</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Aphodius rufus</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	1	04-Oct-05
<i>Byrrhus pilula</i>	Hoy, Ward Hill	HY230030	1	02-Jul-05
<i>Hypnoidus riparius</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Lasioderma serricorne</i>	Hoy, Mo'ness	HY2403	1	08-May-05
<i>Atomaria nitidula</i>	Stenness, Brig of Waith	HY282114	0	24-May-05
<i>Atomaria nitidula</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Atomaria nitidula</i>	Sandwick Yesnaby	HY223158	0	31-May-05

<i>Nephus redtenbacheri</i>	Sandwick, Bay of Skail	HY236195	0	24-May-05
<i>Corticaria impressa</i>	Orphir, Waulkmill Bay	HY377066	0	31-May-05
<i>Chrysolina intermedia</i>	Stromness, near Black Craig	HY220114	1	23-Mar-05
<i>Chrysolina intermedia</i>	Sandwick Row Head	HY224187	1	24-Apr-05
<i>Chrysolina intermedia</i>	Sandwick, near Yesnaby	HY221152	0	27-May-05
<i>Gastrophysa viridula</i>	Sandwick Yesnaby	HY223158	0	31-May-05
<i>Protapion fulvipes</i>	Sandwick, Bay of Skail	HY236195	0	24-May-05
<i>Otiorhynchus singularis</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	1	15-Jun-05
<i>Otiorhynchus sulcatus</i>	Rendall Queenamidda	HY372206	1	05-Apr-05
<i>Otiorhynchus sulcatus</i>	Birsay, Dale, Costa, Evie	HY319276	1	14-Apr-05

0 = present but no count

This list does not include records from Linda Losito, included in separate article.

Other contributors of records and specimens (some of which I'm still trying to identify): Chris Booth, Bob Adam, Lee Shields, Chris Vasey, Effy Everiss, Sydney Gauld, Ian Whitmore, Karen Walker, Magnus Sinclair.

2004 GRASSHOPPER RECORDS (AND ADDITIONS TO 2003).

KEITH FAIRCLOUGH

Meadow Grasshopper: *Chorthippus paralellus*.

Hoy: In Orkney, this species is only known from the island of Hoy. Only one record was received in 2004, from Chris Booth, who examined a 30m wide vertical strip of hillside on the south side of Cuilags on 8th September. He heard about 10 hoppers, saw three and caught one to confirm identification. Although this species is already known to inhabit this particular hill, this record was from a new 1Km square: HY2002 i.e. east of Segal Burn and adjacent to the formerly known site at HY2102.

I received a record from 2003 after I had written my bulletin entry which turned out to be from another new 1Km square: ND2996, Mill Burn. Effy Everiss and Sydney Gauld found two insects on 26th July, one of which was photographed to confirm identification.

EE thought she heard stridulating insects on 27th July along the Summer Burn. Although not confirmed, this is a known breeding site for these insects and so this would constitute the first record since 2000.

To date, this species has now been recorded from twelve 1-Km squares on the island of Hoy.

2004 DRAGONFLY Records

2004 DRAGONFLY Records

Keith Fairclough

In terms of the weather, this was a relatively poor year for dragonflies, it being a dreadful year with hardly any spells of warm, settled weather. Having said this, the remarkable spread of the Black Darter continues, the continued presence of the 4-Spotted Chaser was confirmed on Hoy and there were several new 1 Km squares in which flies of a number of species were recorded.

4-Spotted Chaser, *Libellula quadrimaculata*.

A single insect seen on 28th May at the usual site on Hoy, between the Stany Hamars and the Moss of Whitestanes.

Golden-Ringed Dragonfly, *Cordulegaster boltonii*.

Singles seen at three sites on Hoy: White Glen plantation; Trowieglen and the Stany Hamars. These are all sites close to where this far-ranging species is known to breed: along fast-flowing burns.

Common Hawker, *Aeshna juncea*

Hoy: 1-5 were recorded from nine sites between 15th Jul and 29th Aug. There was one new 1-Km square, at Moi Fea (ND2795) but the record was of a single fly and so this is not a confirmed, new breeding site.

W. Mainland: A single fly was seen on one day, 14th Aug, at Button, Stenness (HY2908). It was good news that there was at least one record from this site where this species has bred in the past.

A female was seen at Tufa, Harray (HY3318) on 22nd Aug. This is a new square but breeding was not proven, so it may have simply been a wide-ranging individual from a distant breeding site.

Black Darter, *Sympetrum danae*

Hoy: Disappointingly, recorded from only two known sites, Burn of Ore and Rackwick Road pool with maxima of 3 and 2 respectively.

W.MAINLAND:

The Loons RSPB Reserve	HY256243	02-Sep	2	ACK	New Site. In tandem & egg-laying
Button , Stenness	HY295082	15-Jul	2	R&PC	First date hatched. On wing to late Sep.
Button , Stenness	HY295082	season	20+	R&PC	Prob' c10+ prs in tandem
Button , Stenness	HY295082	11-Sep	8	R&PC	Still 4 prs in tandem
Queenamidda, Rendall	HY3720	Season	max 5	BR	On wing 19 Jul to 17 Sep. 3 pools. Still emerging 24 Aug
Brookfield, Rendall	HY3819	Season	max 8	BR	14 Aug to 6 Sep. 2 prs in tandem.
Hatamo quarry,	HY394222	22-Aug	1	BR	male

Rendall					
Tufa, Harray	HY334163	Season	22	BR	22 Aug to 6 Sep. Most mm, 3 newly emerged
Griffyelt pools, Hobbister	HY402065	06-Sep	5	BR	males

Apart from at Button, these are all new sites and it was even more pleasing to note that breeding was proved at most of them.

S. Ronaldsay: Once again recorded at pools at Hoxa, ND4193 (LH)

Blue-Tailed Damselfly, *Ischnura elegans*

W.Mainland: Recorded on the wing from 6th June (at Button, Stenness) to 14th August. The largest count was of just 6 flies at the Russadale quarry, Stenness on 27th June. Besides these sites, insects were seen at Brookfield, Queenamidda and Lyron, all in Rendall and at The Knowe, Harray. The first two sites are new sites.

E.Mainland: Recorded at three sites, two of which were new: Graemeshall Loch (HY4801) and the quarry pond at Kirkwall Golf Course (HY4311). The other site was at the now regular Crantit pools (HY4409).

S. Ronaldsay: Max of three at three known sites at Hoxa: Rinnibar pool and quarry and Linegar pond (HY4193)

Sunday: Three at the Loch of Riv (HY6848) on 1st August may have been Common Blue Damsels but in either case, this is a new site.

Common Blue Damselfly, *Enallagma cyathigerum*

Recorded from only two sites with a max of seven on Sandy Loch, Hoy on 28th July and a male on the Griffyelt pools, Hobbister on 22nd August.

Large Red Damselfly, *Pyrrhosoma nymphula*

Hoy: Despite this being their stronghold, records were received for just 1-2 insects at three sites.

W.Mainland: At Button, Stenness, this species first appeared on the wing on the very early date of 11th May and continued to 14th Aug. The last date however was 24th Aug at Queenamidda, Rendall but they didn't first appear until 30th May. This site also had the highest count of the season with 20 in August.

This species was recorded at several new sites: Brookfield and Lyon, Rendall (HY3819) 1-2 at each pool; Burn brae, Evie (HY3825) pair in tandem; Dale, Costa (HY3127) max 4 ovipositing at 3 pools.

E.Mainland: A max count of 15 with 5 pairs ovipositing at the regularly-used pools on the Wideford Burn was a decent count on 10th June.

Contributors: Many thanks to the following for their records:-

ACK=Andy Knight; BR=Brian Ribbands; R&PC=Rob and Pam Crichton; Dick Matson; Lee Shields; Chris Booth; Effy Everiss; Eric Meek; Lister Hogarth; Bob Adam; Sydney Gauld.

2004 ANT RECORDS.

KEITH FAIRCLOUGH

1. THE RED ANT: *Myrmica ruginodis*.

This year, I received records from nine 1Km squares and remarkably, eight of those squares had not previously held any ant records. For completeness, and to enable any avid ant hunters to update their location list, I include below the full details with comments.

West Mainland	Grimeston	HY332153	Nest	03-May	EE	New 1km square. Nest under stone
South Ronaldsay	Blows Moss	ND459862	Nest	17-Jul	JC	New 1km square. Nest in sphagnum hummock. S.subnitens
Burray	Hunda	ND442971	2	29-Jun	RGA	New 1km square. Heather, under Arctic Tern head!
Burray	Moss Bank	ND456966	Nest	01-Jul	JC	New 1km square. Sphagnum. Specimens collected for ID.
Hoy	Bakinstone Hill	ND262932	Few	06-Sep	EE	New 1km square. Foraging
Hoy	Heldale	ND266918	Nest	06-Sep	EE	New 1km square. Nest under stone.
Hoy	Too of the Head	ND1899	100s	07-Sep	CJB	Many swarms of winged ants along footpath from
Hoy	Old Man footpath	ND1800	100s	07-Sep	CJB	New 1Km square Too of the Head to Old Man and also at
Hoy	Rora Head	ND1799	100s	07-Sep	CJB	New 1km square Rora Head.

Of nine records received were from new squares: This illustrates just how widespread this species is likely to be and how much more we need to do to complete the picture of distribution throughout the islands.

This now brings to 57, the total number of 1-km squares known to hold breeding colonies of this cosmopolitan red ant.

Including Mainland, the species has been recorded on 10 different islands (See 2003 OFC Bulletin for details).

Details of the four new sites are given below:

Little Rackwick	Hoy	ND2393	Nest under stone	CV
Burn of Forse	Hoy	ND2294	Nest in heather roots	CV
Aith Hope	South Walls	ND2988	Colony on cliff edge Many winged females	BR & EE
Bay of Lopness	Sanday	HY7444	Beach behind bay	SG

CONTRIBUTORS:

BR=Brian Ribbands; CV=Chris Vasey; EE=Effy Everiss; SG=Sydney Gauld.



ORKNEY ODONATA 2005: DRAGONFLIES AND DAMSELFLIES

KEITH FAIRCLOUGH

2005 was not a good year for dragonflies, being generally cold and windy. Such conditions curtail activity in every way. Early in the season, fewer nymphs would emerge. Later on, warm, sunny and calm days, which are preferred for courtship displays, pairing and egg-laying, were in short supply. A lack of summer warmth will have hindered flying and reduced prey, and a poor end to the season weatherwise, will have resulted in reduced egg-laying and survival, especially for late-emergent species such as Black Darter. Nevertheless, this species continued its remarkable expansion. In fact, there were records from 15 new 1-km squares involving five species. Having said that, breeding was proven at only four of these 15 sites, although breeding probably took place on at least another four. Details of all of these sites are given below.

Common Hawker.	Lower Russadale	West Mainland	HY3309	Breeding NOT proved	Eric Meek
	Cupwillow, Naversdale	West mainland	HY3409	Breeding NOT proved	Eric Meek
	Herston	South Ronaldsay	ND4291	Breeding NOT proved	Eric Meek
	Heldale Burn	Hoy	ND2891	PROVED BREEDING	Lee Shields
Black Darter	Loch of Banks	West Mainland	HY2723	Probable Breeding Site	Andy Knight
	Low Fiold, Dounby	West Mainland	HY3220	Possible Breeding Site	Chris Booth
	Costa Head	West mainland	HY3129	Breeding NOT proved	Chris Booth
	Sands Water	Hoy	ND2493	Probable Breeding Site	Lee Shields
Blue-tailed Damselfly	Inganess, St.Ola	West Mainland	HY4708	Probable Breeding Site	Eric Meek
	Nowt Bield Burn	Hoy	HY2301	Breeding NOT proven	Lee Shields
Common Blue Damselfly	Loch of Banks	West Mainland	HY2723	Probable Breeding Site	Andy Knight
	Mill Burn pools	Hoy	ND2995	PROVED BREEDING	Lee Shields
Large Red Damselfly	Burn of Rusht, Birsay	West Mainland	HY3520	Breeding NOT proven	Brian Ribbands
	Nowt Bield Burn	Hoy	HY2301	Breeding NOT proven	Lee Shields
	Whaness Burn	Hoy	HY2402	PROVED BREEDING	Lee Shields
	Sands Water	Hoy	ND2493	PROVED	Effy

				BREEDING	Everiss
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I finally found time to update all Odonata records (by 1-km square), which I had not done since 1999!

The details are tabulated on the next page:

LEGEND FOR FOLLOWING TABLE

CB = Confirmed Breeding. The BDS (British Dragonfly Society) will only accept CBs on the atlas maps, because these insects are powerful fliers and can be found hunting considerable distances from their breeding sites. Some dragonflies are also migrants.

X? = These represent unconfirmed breeding records. In some cases, flies were recorded on suitable breeding pools and very likely did breed, but unless egg-laying is witnessed or exuvia found, then the BDS will not accept sightings as breeding records. Nor will they accept two flies in tandem as a confirmed breeding record, because coupled flies can move well away from their breeding site. It is hoped that in the future, some of these records will be converted to CBs. Some records involve flies well away from suitable breeding sites, e.g. the large and powerful Common Hawker, *Aeshna juncea* hunting over heather banks.

Having said that, as these figures represent records from 1-km squares, it is often likely that in most cases, the square will have held the breeding waters.

Of the 307 1-km squares in Orkney in which dragons or damsels have been recorded, only 222 have had breeding confirmed. However, I would surmise that most of the other 85 squares will indeed hold the breeding sites and hopefully, proof will be eventually obtained. There is no doubt that we can still add more confirmed breeding squares for some, if not all of our seven breeding species.

TABLE 1: Number of 1-km squares, island-by-island, in which breeding has/has not been confirmed for the seven breeding species and one migrant species recorded in Orkney.

Species	C.bolt'		A.junc'		L.quad'		S.danae		A.part'		I.eleg		E.cyath'		P.nymph'		Totals	
	CB	X?	CB	X?	CB	X?	CB	X?	CB	X?	CB	X?	CB	X?	CB	X?	CB	X?
Hoy	7	3	39	7	1	4	9	10	-	-	3	5	32	3	48	3	139	35
South Walls	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	-	-	-	-	2	0
West Mainland	0	1	1	7	-	-	7	9	-	-	10	5	1	5	29	6	48	33
East Mainland	-	-	0	2	-	-	1	0	-	-	2	4	-	-	8	3	11	9
Burray	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	0	1
South Ronaldsay	-	-	0	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	3	0	1	0	-	-	6	3
Rousay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	0	6	0	11	0
Egilsay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0	1	0	-	-	3	0
Sanday	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1	1	1	0	1	-	-	1	3
Papa Stronsay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	-	-	-	-	1	0
Flotta	-	-	0	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	1
TOTALS	7	4	40	19	1	4	19	20	0	1	24	15	40	9	91	13	222	85

C.bolt' Cordulegaster boltonii

L.quad' Libellula quadrimaculata

A.pen' Anax parthenope

E.cyath' Enallagma cyathigerum

Golden-ringed Dragonfly

Four-spotted Chaser

Lesser Emperor (migrant: 1 record for Orkney, 2000)

Common Blue Damselfly

A.junc'

S.danae

I.eleg'

P.nymph'

Aeshna juncea

Sympetrum danae

Ischnura elegans

Pyrrhosoma nymphula

Common Hawker

Black Darter

Blue-tailed Damselfly

Large Red Damselfly

2005 GRASSHOPPER RECORDS

KEITH FAIRCLOUGH

Meadow Grasshopper. *Chorthippus parallelus*

Records were received from an OFC field trip to Hoy on 25th June.

Only one site was covered, a known breeding site on Broadi Face, near Rackwick (HY2100). Several late instars were located in short heather on this south-facing slope above the Rackwick Road.

In August, Chris Booth hunted the grassy slopes north of Rackwick but found no hoppers. (This was the only known site of the Common Green Grasshopper, *Omocestus viridulus* which has been extinct for nearly two decades.)

PLANT RECORDING

ELAINE R BULLARD

The year 2005 produced a massive 9774 records entered into the Hub Map Mate and now forwarded to Orkney Biological Records Centre and to the BSBI (and from thence to the NBN). This is quite the largest number of records entered in anyone year. It was partly due to the visiting members of the BSBI during their field meeting in Orkney and also to one or two local individuals who put in a very large number of records. Apart from the BSBI, the actual number of individuals submitting botanical records was about the lowest since OFC started. This is rather a shame. Is there any reason why? Once upon a time - see old Bulletins, some 15 - 20 local members would have contributed records. Is it felt that with so many records coming in anyway, there is no point in adding any more? Or are new Individual Record Cards required? Do say. Plants are not permanent and we do need to keep recording.



Ray's
Knotgrass

In addition to these numbers of records, 2005 was also outstanding in records for new species. The most exciting being the hybrid between the Baltic Rush, *Juncus balticus*, and the common Soft Rush, *Juncus effusus*. This, when fully confirmed, may be a new record for Scotland. Another record, not yet fully confirmed, was of Ray's Knotgrass, *Polygonum oxyspermum*. Both found by Eric Meek. Although both are fully confirmed. Anything new for the Scotland must undergo rigorous checking. The Knotgrass was indeed reported many years ago by the late Col Henry Halcro Johnston but the specimen was immature and never confirmed. The 2005 plant had ripe fruits and seemed unmistakable.

Another plant for which there have been previous unconfirmed records but which was now found in the course of the BSBI meeting was the Dog Violet, *Viola canina*. When the, as yet unpublished, record for the extremely rare hybrid sedge, *Carex riparia* x *rostrata* was found a few years ago it was a puzzle as it was found in Birsay where only the one parent, *Carex rostrata* was known, the other parent, *Carex riparia*, being only known from Stronsay. *Carex riparia* has now been found at the Birsay site, one more puzzle cleared up!

In spite of all these excellent records and new County species there are many anomalies in our plant recording. For example, at least 20 of the species we recorded reliably up to 1999, for Atlas 2000 have not been, as yet, entered into Map Mate. As you will all remember the Atlas records were generally based on Hectad (10 x 10kl squares) and we are trying to give all records going to OBRC at least a four-figure, preferably six-figure Grid Reference, so these missing records need to be refound and localised properly.

They include almost all dandelion, hawkweed, rosa and eyebright ssp and hybrids. Do please make an effort to get these on our local map!. Some of the missing 20 were old historical records of what were probably one off or “casual” records, especially garden throwouts and some planted trees. Anything that has the capability of naturalising itself, especially if it can increase by seeds or stolons, will!. There is some sort of michaelmas daisy fairly well naturalised on various verges which needs proper identification and recording. Please try. In addition to these 2 discrepancies there are more than 100 species in our Map Mate database which have not been updated for at least 20 years. Some are plants I am sure we would hate to lose. I will try and put out a few in the coming Newsletters this year or could supply a list via e-mail.

Naturally with a total of 27,330 Orkney records in Map Mate we are getting a better cover of the County but there are still many gaps. There are worrying differences between the total lists for some islands and Parishes as given in Atlas 2000 and held for the same areas in Map Mate. I had hoped to print out two lists, one Atlas 2000 and one Map Mate 2005 but unfortunately have not had time but again can supply to anyone interested via e-mail. The list of the top 20 most widespread species has changed since 2004 so I give that below. I suspect it may show a slight bias to recorder’s preferences!

Meantime, thanks must go to the following for their records and time. The BSBI visiting members, Eric Meek, John Crossley, Brian Ribbands, David Leather, Jenny Taylor and (jointly) Kathy Fallowfield and Effy Everiss.

Here are the updated “20 most widely distributed species” with the number of Hectads in which they have been recorded.

Taxon	Vernacular	10km Records
<i>Taraxacum aggregate</i>	Dandelion	30
<i>Plantago maritima</i>	Sea Plantain	35
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	35
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Thrift / Sea Pink	34
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Common Sorrel	33
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	33
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort Plantain	32
<i>Carex nigra</i>	Common Sedge	32
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping Bent / Fiorin	32
<i>Sagina procumbens</i>	Procumbent Pearlwort	31
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed	31
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed	31
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping Buttercup	31

Hydrocotyle vulgaris	Marsh Pennywort / White-rot	31
Ranunculus acris	Meadow Buttercup	31
Ranunculus flammula	Lesser Spearwort	31
Cochlearia officinalis	Common Scurvygrass	31
Taxon	Vernacular	10km Records
Bellis perennis	Daisy	31
Poa humilis	Spreading Meadow-grass	31
Deschampsia cespitosa	Tufted Hair-grass	30

MAMMALS REPORT - 2005

RAY HALLAM

Erinaceus europaeus (Hedgehog)	Recorded on Orkney Mainland and Hoy. Most records were of road casualties.
Sorex minutus (Pygmy Shrew)	Seven records were received with a single animal found dead on Hoy and 2 found dead on Burray. The rest being seen on Orkney Mainland.
Lepus capensis (Brown Hare)	Thirty-nine records were received with a maximum of 8 animals seen at Hundsater, Birsay on the 10 th March. All sightings were on Orkney Mainland.
Lepus timidus (Mountain Hare)	Fifty-two records were received, the majority from Chris Booth and Chris Vasey. The maximum number seen was 11 animals on the Cuilags, Hoy on the 15 th April 2005.
Microtus arvalis (Orkney Vole)	Two records were received. One animal was trapped at Queenamidda Rendall on the 23 rd July, the other was found alive but disorientated at Mull Head, Deerness on the 27 th July.
Apodemus sylvaticus (Wood Mouse)	Three records were received. All sightings were on Orkney Mainland.
Mus musculus (House Mouse)	The only record was of one found dead at Pierowall, Westray on the 2 nd July.
Lutra lutra (Otter)	Sixteen records were received with animals being seen on Orkney Mainland (Birsay, Sandwick, Stenness, Rendall, St. Ola and Tankerness), Barriers 1 & 2, Burray, Stronsay, Sanday and Graemsay.

Additionally, otter spraint was recorded at 3 sites on Orkney Mainland.

Monthly sightings:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	1	4			1	2	1		3	3	2

My thanks to the following observers:

Chris Booth	Jean Booth	Sydney Gauld	Brian Ribbands
Chris Vasey	Neil McCance	Effy Everiss	Steve Sankey
Malcolm Russell	R.G. Adam	D. Kent	A.K. & J.H. Johnson
G. Rosie	Keith Hague	H. McKenzie	R. Philby
B. Flett	W. Shearer	J. Irvine	N. & M. Mowat

JELLYFISH REPORT FOR 2005

RAY HALLAM

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| <i>Aurelia aurita</i> | Moon jellyfish | Seen around Orkney from mid June to early August with thousands being reported in the Pentland Firth (mid June) and West of Eday (early July). Other locations where this species was seen were Eday (Bay of Backaland and Castle Beach), Sanday (Loth); Westray (Bay of Pierowall), Papa Westray (Bay of Mocklett and South Wick) and Orkney Mainland (Brough of Birsay, Sands of Evie, Scapa Beach, Kirkwall Harbour and Stromness Harbour). |
| <i>Cyanea capillata</i> | Lion's mane jellyfish | Seen around Orkney from mid June to early August with thousands being reported in the Pentland Firth (mid June) and West of Eday (early July). Other locations where this species was seen were Wyre (Bay of Welkmulli) and Orkney Mainland (Brough of Birsay and Scapa Beach). |
| <i>Cyanea lamarckii</i> | Blue jellyfish | Seen at the Brough of Birsay from mid July to late August. A maximum of 17 were recorded in a state of decay on the 19 th July. |

My thanks to the following observers: Malcolm Russell, Sydney Gauld, Gail Churchill.

STONEWORT REPORT 2005

EFFY EVERISS

It has been a peculiar year for stonewort recording. This was mainly due to the weather, high water levels and drizzly biting winds not being very conducive to happy stoneworting. Needless to say we do have 12 records of which 4 are from new sites: Graemsay provided a specimen of *Nitella flexilis* agg. in an old bell pit, and the Hill of Dwarmo, *Chara vulgaris* v. *papillata*. On a delightful day in September I found a pretty miserable specimen of *C. vulgaris* in a very heavily grazed field at Houton Head in Orphir. This head is very interesting for many reasons. From the Lookout at the top of the head there is easy access to the WWII batteries and numerous buildings with their connecting dugout passages all of which are in very good condition. There are steep winding steps cut into the cliffs leading down to the shore batteries that give commanding views over Scapa Flow. The cliff top walk has good botanical interest and I was lucky enough to be stalked by a basking shark, feeding very close to the shore for most of the day. It is possible to walk all the way round the shore at the base of the cliffs, clambering over the boulders gives access to nice nooks and crannies and a richly appointed strandline. The heathy fields to the west of the head

have numerous calcareous flushes and this is where the stonewort was found. Witter Quarry, Brims, Hoy has a drainage ditch in the lower quarry oozing with *C. vulgaris v. longibracteata*. This species seems to grow so energetically, it emerges out of the water, the younger newer growth beneath pushing the older strands before it forming an erupting flow of degrading stinky stonewort. This is easily seen in the dune slacks of Bu Sands in Burray where the same species performs identically despite frequent disturbance to the site.

RECORDS FOR 2005

Nitella flexilis agg.	Windywalls, Graemsay	HY25079 05931	06.03.05	EE & EM	EM-Ethel Mowat, Old bell pit
Chara vulgaris v. papillata	Hill of Dwarmo, Evie	HY393 252	29.07.05	EE & KF	KF- Kathy Fallowfield
Chara virgata	Yesnaby	HY235 155	15.06.06	EE	Pools N. of road/Burn of Cruland
Chara vulgaris	Brae of Moan, Rousay	HY3773 33640	04.07.05	BSBI Field Meeting	Specimen degraded
Chara virgata	Hill of the White Hammars, South Walls	ND3158 8852	07.08.05	EE	Burn of Barkquoy
Chara vulgaris	Hill of the White Hammars, South Walls	ND31973 88836	07.08.05	EE	Snellsetter area
Chara vulgaris v. longibracteata	Witter Quarry, Brims, Hoy.	ND2803 3920	07.08.05	EE	Drain/ditch at side
Chara aspera	Loch of Tankerness, Tankerness	HY524094	26.08.05	EE & BR	BR-Brian Ribbands
Chara vulgaris	Brae of Moan, Rousay	HY3777 3353	04.07.05	BSBI Field Meeting	Better specimen in flush
Chara virgata	Rackwick, Burnmouth, Hoy	ND204987	02.07.05	BSBI Field Meeting	
Chara aspera	Peerie Water, Evie	HY334272	15.08.05	ERM	Eric Meek
Chara vulgaris	Houton Head	HY3049 0399	10.09.05	EE	In shoenus ditch
No Chara	Sands Water, Hoy	ND2462 9380	08.08.05	EE	No stoneworts, thorough search

A thorough survey of Sands Water, Hoy, was carried out in August. This oligotrophic loch was seriously devoid of plant life and no stoneworts or pondweeds were found. The submerged rocks were clothed in liverworts *Scapania undulata* and *Jungermannia spp.* Compensation for the lack of aquatic plants was in the form of many hundreds of Common Blue, *Enallagma cyathigerum* and Large Red, *Pyrrhosoma nymphula* damselflies, at least one patrolling every metre around the lochside with the occasional Black Darter, *Sympetrum*

danae away from the bank. The chara are an excellent group to record their absence. Recording of absence is a useful tool for monitoring habitat change, indicating habitat quality and type and may save many a recorder from lugging waders and the full tackle over miles of desperate moorland to no avail.

Glims Moss and Durkadale continues to be a Charophyte desert despite the fact that it is the perfect habitat for them with many indicator species that would support their presence. There is a 1992 record from Durkadale, near the plantation that I have yet to update and although the area is regularly visited by local botanists and this year the BSBI, we have not managed to add to the area list. A bottle of wine is offered as a reward for the first person to find any there! In April all the Stronsay stonewort sites were looked at but once again the levels were too high and not a single stonewort was found, intermittent blizzard conditions did not contribute much to the day.

THE TAXONOMIC STATUS OF *CHARA CURTA* AND *CHARA ASPERA*

I was contacted early in the year by Clare O'Reilly who was carrying out taxonomic research on *Chara curta* and *C. aspera* in the UK. Orkney and Shetland are well endowed with sites for these two taxa, where the two species are found both growing in individual stands as well as intermixed. They are two morphologically very similar dioecious species with *C. curta* having two morphotypes: 'good' spiny morphs and 'intermediate' morphs with poorly developed, sparse spine cells. *C. curta* is near-endemic to the British Isles and it is designated a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species, resolving its relationship to *C. aspera* is a priority for plant conservation in Britain and Ireland. Clare used Amplified Fragment Length Polymorphism (AFLP), a multi-locus fingerprinting technique to identify genetic variation between and within populations and generates. She also carried out a morphological study using rehydrated herbarium accessions i.e. those with AFLP results. One individual from each batch was scored for 52 characters.

Collection was attempted from every extant locality for *C. curta* in Britain. As the 'expert charologist' for the Northern Isles I was in for a very busy time! We had a very cold wet spring and stonewort growth was delayed. Clare required at least 25 strands of c.20mm new growth of each species from each site in April/May. This was very difficult to achieve so far north so early in the season. The best specimen found was that of *Chara aspera* growing in the atypical habitat of a small burn in Yesnaby. This proved to be the easiest sample I managed to collect. The other known sites in Orkney had poor growth, were too deep to harvest by hand and too short to be picked up by the grapnel. A very long handled garden rake proved the best, but slow way of harvesting the plants. Samples were eventually collected from a wide variety of sites from both Orkney and Shetland and sent south to Clare for analysis. (Clare then told me that they had dived for them further south!). Many thanks to SNH in Shetland and Orkney who provided travel expenses for all my sampling and my son, George Tateson who acted as my 'buddy'.

The statistical analysis of the AFLP data indicated that it is appropriate to treat the study taxa as conspecific. *C. curta* does not form a genetically distinct group within the *Chara curta/C. aspera* species complex therefore it is not appropriate to recognise *C. curta* at any infraspecific rank of *C. aspera*. In contrast the morphological data did show a weak differentiation between the study taxa. The study, showing no significant correlation

between genetics and morphology, supports the hypothesis that some genetic variability in *Chara* represents developmental stages and/or is environmentally induced.

Therefore it can be deduced that the BAP species status of *Chara curta* can no longer be justified using the current BAP priority species selection criteria (UK Biodiversity Steering Group, 1994). The conservation status of *Chara aspera sensu lato* in Britain should be reviewed and this taxon independently considered for BAP status and other conservation designations.

O'Reilly, Clare. 2005 What is *Chara curta* Nolte ex Kütz. Plant Life International
Stewart N.F. 2003. Species Dossier: Lesser Bearded Stonewort *Chara curta* in Scotland. SNH

Many thanks to: BSBI Field meeting, John Crossley, Kathy Fallowfield, Barry Jones, Rosemary and Neil McCance, Eric Meek, Ethel Mowat, George Tateson.

ORKNEY FUNGAL RECORDS 2001-2004

T.W. EGGELING

INTRODUCTION

When he visited Orkney early in September 2001, Roy Watling found over one hundred species of fungi (Watling, 2002a). Many had already been recorded, some from sites where they had previously been found but some from new sites. In addition, he added nineteen new species of fungi (Watling, 2002b) to the 1,513 species listed in the Fungus Flora of Orkney (Watling *et al.*, 1999).

This paper makes reference to various fungal records submitted by visiting friends and mycologists, as well as by local people and Orkney Field Club members between the time of Watling's visit and the 31st December 2004. In particular, it provides details of another eleven species of fungi not previously recorded from the Islands, which if confirmed will bring the number of species found in the archipelago to 1,543.

FUNGAL RECORDS

GENERAL

Judging from the number of records submitted each year for different species of fungi some, like the St George's Mushroom *Calocybe gambosa*, seem to have been particularly abundant in 2002. It has now been recorded growing in eighteen 1km squares and from Papa Westray. Others such as the Rose-gilled Grisette *Volvariella speciosa* and the crumbly, creamy-yellow myxomycetes *Mucilago crustacean* appear to have been more fruitful in 2003. The former has now been recorded from six and the latter from nineteen 1km squares across Orkney.

SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

Previously only recorded from North Hoy and Eday, the Pink Ballerina *Hygrocybe calyptraeformis*, a U.K. Priority Species for Conservation, was found growing in Finstown Cemetery on 15th October 2003 and again from the same site on 17th September 2004.

In the Local Biodiversity Plan for Orkney, the Giant Puffball *Calvatia gigantean* and the Shaggy Ink-cap *Coprinus comatus* are considered to be of Local Conservation Interest because of their popular appeal.

The former was found growing in nettles at Lowlands, Evie on 26th September 2002 and at Feolquoy, Evie on 14th June 2003. It has now been recorded from nine 1km squares across the Orkney Mainland and North Isles. It is probably widespread and not uncommon in the archipelago.

The Shaggy Ink-cap was reported from nine new sites and has now been reported from fourteen 1km squares across the Orkney Mainland and North Isles. It is probably widespread and fairly common on wasteland and grassland in the Islands.

HABITAT AND SUBSTRATE SEARCHES

Searching particular habitats or substrates has shown that the Velvet Shank *Flammulina velutipes*, the Yellow Brain Fungus *Tremella mesenterica* and the orange to salmon-pink resupinate *Peniophora incarnata* are widespread and common on gorse. The first of these species has now been reported from twenty-seven, the second from thirty-three and the third from thirty-four 1km squares spread over the Islands.

The ergot stage of *Claviceps purpurea* was recorded on Marram Grass *Ammophila arenaria*, Lyme Grass *Leymus arenarius* and on Reed Canary-grass *Phalaris arundinaceae*. This fungus has now been reported from twenty 1km squares across the archipelago and appears to be widespread and common. It is likely to be found wherever these species of grass occur.

The honey-scented rust *Puccinia punctiformis* was reported from several new sites, growing on the leaves of the Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*. There were also several records of another rust *Puccinia obscura*. In every case this second rust was found growing on the leaves of the Common Daisy *Bellis perennis*, one of its known hosts. Both species of fungi appear to be widespread and common.

One of the brown-gilled mushrooms *Cortinarius trivialis* was recorded from a few new localities, in each case growing in damp conditions under willows. It has now been recorded from eight 1km squares in Orkney. Two other species of fungi not previously recorded from the Islands were also discovered, this time growing on native willows:

<i>Hymenoscyphus subferrugineus</i>	Recorded growing on willow in the valley below Heddle Hill, Firth on 30 th September 2003. The species was identified by Roy Watling.
<i>Hemimycena tortuosa</i>	This fungus was also found growing on willow in the valley below the Hill of Heddle, Firth on 30 th September 2003. Although thought to be this species, the voucher specimen was incomplete when seen by Roy Watling and another needs to be collected to confirm his tentative identification.

Scarlet New Zealand Truffle

The ongoing search for the scarlet New Zealand truffle *Paurocotylis pila* on waste ground, roadside verges and garden ground, especially where nettles and umbels are present, has been rewarded. The truffle was re-recorded from a known site on the outskirts of Finstown and from new sites within three of the 1km squares around Stromness from which it had previously been recorded (Eggeling, 2004).

More importantly, it has been found growing in five new 1km squares in the West Mainland: on a spoil heap at Queenamidda, Rendall on 7th November; in garden ground at Quoyloo and on a roadside verge at Scarwell, Sandwick on 13th December; in a nettle patch at Deepdale, Stromness on 16 December; and in rough grassland at Dale, Evie on 22nd December 2004.

The truffle, which appears to be rare elsewhere in the U.K., has now been recorded from sixty 1km squares spread across the Orkney Mainland and linked South Isles. It is clear that the archipelago holds a core population of this introduced species, which was first recorded from Britain in 1973 (Pegler *et al.*, 1993).

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS

An unexpected spin-off from the search for *Paurocotylis pila* has been the discovery that the Wood Blewit *Lepista nuda*, previously recorded from some of the most exposed cliff-tops in the Islands, was also quite likely to be found in the habitats favoured by the scarlet New Zealand truffle. The Wood Blewit has now been recorded from twenty 1km squares across the Orkney Mainland and linked South Isles. It appears to be widespread and quite common.

Four species of fungi not previously reported from the archipelago were also discovered in these same habitats whilst searching for the truffle:

- Callorina neglecta* The minute orange-red discs of this species was recorded from late autumn to early spring in 2003 and 2004 clustered on dead nettle stems at Downie's Lane, Fletts, Howe and Warebeth, Stromness; at Marwick Head and Northside, Birsay; at Houton, Orphir; and at Brogar, Stenness. Roy Watling confirmed the original identification. It is surprising that this fungus had not previously been recorded because it is probably widespread and common, and can be expected wherever nettles are present.
- Lepiota friesii* Reported from waste ground beside the road at the north end of Swannay Loch, Birsay on 14th October 2003, Roy Watling confirmed the identification of this fungus.
- Clitocybe inversa* Found growing beside nettles in the farmyard at Quoyer, Stenness on 29th October 2003, the voucher specimen was identified by Roy Watling.
- Ossicaulis lignatilis* This fungus was recorded as tufted on, or growing through, a wooden plank on a waste tip by the Sands of Wright, South Ronaldsay on 20 November 2003. Although considered likely to be this, the voucher specimen was in poor condition when seen by Roy Watling and another needs to be collected to confirm his tentative identification.

OTHER NEW RECORDS

Reported from other habitats and substrates were several other species of fungi not previously recorded from the archipelago:

- Anthrocobia maurilabra* A small disc fungus was found growing on burnt ground under the conifers *Picea sitchensis* and *Pinus contorta* by members of the Orkney Field Club on a visit to the White Glen Plantation, North Hoy on 28 September 2002. Roy Watling identified the voucher specimens.
- Cortinarius cinnamomeoluteus* Discovered growing on farmland near Crook, South Ronaldsay on 9th March 2003. This fungus was identified by the recorder, Anne Andrews.

<i>Clavaria fumosa</i>	This club fungus was recorded growing in short grass at Finstown Cemetery on 16 th September 2004 and was identified by the recorder, Tom Eggeling.
<i>Phragmidium fusiforme</i>	Found growing on the living wood and foliage of the rose <i>Rosa rubrifolia</i> at Toftwood, St Ola on 24 th May 2002, this rust was thought likely to be this species by Roy Watling. He commented that, whilst the host was significant, the fungus was in the uredo stage and one cannot be absolutely certain of the determination. It needs to be found again at a different stage to confirm the identification.

Another species of fungi was reported growing through a puncture hole on the outside of a mouldy bag of silage at North Flaws, South Ronaldsay on 21st March 2002. It was polyporaceous in form but had no fertile surface and could not be identified by Roy Watling. It will be referred to Hubert Fuller, who has worked on silage, for possible determination.

CONCLUSIONS

The number of fungal species listed in the Fungus Flora of Orkney (Watling *et al.*, 1999) has been increased by seven species not previously reported from the Islands. Three other new species need to be found again to confirm preliminary findings, whilst a fourth has been referred to another expert for possible determination.

Many other records have been submitted for species of fungi already known from the archipelago and are also of great interest because they have increased our knowledge of the abundance and distribution of the species concerned.

The scarlet New Zealand truffle *Paurocotylis pila* has continued to spread across the Orkney Mainland and linked South Isles and has now been reported from sixty 1km squares, whilst the Pink Ballerina *Hygrocybe calyptraeformis*, a UK Priority Species for Conservation, has been found growing at a third site in the Islands.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Anne Andrews, Lindsay Baird, Elaine Bullard, John Crossley, Megan and Tom Eggeling, Sidney Gauld, Norman Henning, Barry Jones, Mina Leitch, Lidda Luxton, Rosemary McCance, Jean MacLachlan, Pat Matson, Gunnie Moberg, Brian Ribbands, Barbara Robertson, Jamie Wild, Catherine Zawadski and the Members of the Orkney Field Club who visited Hoy on 28th September 2002 provided records. Roy Watling, Anne Andrews and Tom Eggeling made determinations.

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Another cool, wet year seemed very unfavourable for bees and wasps, but fine weather in autumn provided excellent conditions for new queens emerging at the end of the breeding cycle, so it will be interesting to see if numbers are higher in 2006. First sighting of the year were white-tailed bumblebees *Bombus lucorum s.l.* (*sensu lato* = in the wide sense) from Herston and Widewall, South Ronaldsay on 23 March (B & JM), (LC), then several from elsewhere by the end of the month. At the end of the year this species was unusually common throughout October and there was a very late last record on 22 November, at Dale, Costa (RM).

B lucorum s.l. is our most abundant and widespread bee and I have written in previous Bulletins of differences in opinion among bumblebee experts about the taxonomy, some regarding it one species *B lucorum* in varying colour patterns and by others as at least two distinct species including *B lucorum s.s.* (*sensu stricto* = in the narrow sense) and *B magnus*. The situation has moved decisively in favour of a number of real species hiding under the name of *B lucorum*, in fact three: *B lucorum s.s.*, *B magnus* and *B cryptarum*. This is based on exhaustive work carried out mainly by Professor Andreas Bertsch (2004), principally on the chemistry of male bumblebees' labial gland secretions, which are key recognition signals between individuals of the same and different species. These distinctions are correlated to slight differences in morphology that can be seen consistently in queens only. Bertsch has also studied the behaviour of captive colonies in controlled environments. He has studied these species and other related ones all over the world, including Orkney. The conclusion as far as Orkney goes is that by the far the commonest is *B cryptarum*. There appear to be records of *B magnus* but these now require confirmation. There appear to be no certain records of *B lucorum s.s.*

So, how to record these species in future? In the field, recognition of the separate species is usually difficult, and it can remain so with some captured specimens: the visible difference relates almost entirely to the precise shape of the yellow band or collar on the thorax. However there are some experts who remain unconvinced by Bertsch's findings. In the meantime therefore the convention will be to record these three species as *B lucorum s.l.*, while noting the 'real' species in the case of independently determined specimens. One might ask how much all this matters. I think the greatest interest is in the autecology and distribution of the three species. For instance *B cryptarum* appears to be a common generalist species which emerges very early in the year (and continues very late), while *B magnus* appears to be a late emerger and more of a heathland specialist.

OTHER RECORDS OF NOTE

All species of bumblebee known to occur in Orkney were recorded in 2005. Records of the great yellow bumblebee *Bombus distinguendus* were most widespread, reflecting the continuing interest in this species: there was a new 10 km square record from Lady, Sanday HY693413 on 10 August (JC). With seven individuals, this site also had the highest count. The heath bumblebee *B jonellus* was least frequently recorded, in Holm, Rousay and Orphir (RGA) and Hoy (JC)

SOCIAL WASPS AND SOLITARIES WERE LESS COMMONLY RECORDED, AS FOLLOWS.

Red wasp	<i>Vespula rufa.</i>	Herston, South Ronaldsay ND4291 on 30 May (B & JM)
Wood wasp	<i>Dolichovespula</i>	Herston, South Ronaldsay ND4291 on 19 May (B & JM);

	<i>sylvestris</i> .	St Ola HY440097 on 12 May, 10 June and 23 August (RGA); Queenamidda, Rendall HY3720 on 26 August and 23 September (BR).
Norwegian wasp	<i>Dolichovespula norvegica</i>	Herston, South Ronaldsay ND4291 on 17 and 23 August (B & J M) (taken at UV light); St Ola HY440097 on 14 September (RGA); Dale, Costa HY319277 on 28 May (RM); Queenamidda, Rendall HY3720 on 23 July and 20 August (BR).
Common wasp	<i>Vespula vulgari</i>	Multiple records in St Ola and Kirkwall from August to October (RGA & CJB).
Mason wasp	<i>Ancistrocerus scoticu</i>	Liddle, South Ronaldsay N457833 on 2 August (JC); Gloup, Deerness HY592078 on 22 August – new for 10 km square (JC).

There have been no records of any species of bee or wasp from the Stromness area for some years.

FORAGE CROPS

Phacelia tanacetifolia is an attractive plant for bumblebees, and it has sometimes been included in crops grown primarily for the benefit of seed-eating birds. However some doubts have been raised about its value because it appears to be a poor source of pollen, if not nectar. In 2005 Orkney College Agronomy Institute sowed some experimental crop plots for biodiversity, including borage *Borago officinalis* and a species of viper's-bugloss *Echium plantagineum*. Borage is well known as a forage plant for bumblebees, but almost entirely for short-tongued, common generalist species including *B lucorum s.l.*, and these were abundant on the College plot in July and August. However the bugloss attracted other bumblebee species in addition to *B lucorum s.l.*, in good numbers, including the longer-tongued specialist *B hortorum*, and *B distinguendus*, these clearly gathering pollen as well as nectar. The College had a second set of plots in Sanday, and results here were similar. I shall be sowing some of this bugloss in field plots this year, with borage and *Phacelia* for comparison.

Heath carder bee *B muscorum* This species is on the new 'Scottish Biodiversity List' on the basis of "decline of 25% or more in Scotland over the last 25 years or other appropriate time period". It is very patchily distributed in Orkney, with records strongly related to short, more natural grasslands along the coast, especially in the isles. I counted 77 on the bugloss plot in Sanday in August, but none on the same crop at Orkney College.

CONTRIBUTORS

Bob Adam (RGA); Chris Booth (CJB); Lindsay Campbell (LC); John Crossley (JC); Effy Everiss; Bobby and John McCutcheon (B & JM); Dick Matson (DM); Brian Ribbands (BR). Many thanks to all.

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BRYOPHYTE REPORT 2004-5

ROSEMARY MCCANCE

Things are looking up in the bryophyte world in Orkney as more people are realising how interesting mosses and liverworts can be and how they help with habitat classification.

Gordon Rothero, the National Moss Recorder visited Orkney in September 2004 and went to Aikerness, Russadale and Enegars (Hoy). The following new or updated historical records were made.

<i>Didymodon ferrugineus</i>	Aikerness	Updated moss record
<i>Brachydontium trichodes</i>	Enegars	New moss record
<i>Weissia perssonii</i>	Enegars	New moss record
<i>Gymnomitrium crenulatum</i>	Enegars	New liverwort record
<i>Harpanthus scutatus</i>	Enegars	New liverwort record
<i>Lepidozia pearsonii</i>	Enegars	New liverwort record

John Crossley had a new record for Orkney with *Sphagnum squarrosum* at Dale Moss in South Ronaldsay and I discovered *Sphagnum subsecundum* at Barswick -. Hugo Shearer and I went to the White Moss at Holm to look at the *Drosera longifolia* and while there we found a new site for *Sphagnum austinii*. Effy Everiss and I climbed up to the crags above the Dwarfie Stane and found another site for *Gymnomitrium crenulatum*. Sandy Payne, when visiting the Tomb of the Eagles, discovered a new site for the near threatened moss *Sanionia orthohecioides*.

At the BSBI meeting held here during the summer, one of the participants, (Chris Jeffings), had a few spare moments while waiting for the ferry back from Shapinsay and picked up a moss from a field margin. It was another new record - *Dicranella staphylina*.

John Crossley and I spent a most interesting (and informative) day up the Burn of Ore in Hoy with Sandy Payne and Claire Geddes. We visited the *Carex limosa* sites and with Sandy's help got new records for *Sphagnum contortum* and *Sphagnum angustifolium*. During the next week Sandy also produced new or updated records for the following:

<i>Sphagnum strictum</i>	Nowt Bield, Hoy	New moss record
<i>Sphagnum fuscum</i>	Kingie Lang, Hoy	New moss record
<i>Tortella densa</i>	Cuilags, Hoy	New moss record
<i>Anastrophyllum minutum</i>	Grut Fea, Hoy	Updated liverwort record

The British Bryological Society is visiting Orkney this year from 8th –13th July and we can look forward to many new records then.

Thanks for specimens received from John Crossley, Effy Everiss, Hugo Shearer, Sandy Payne and Jenny Taylor.

We have had a very unspectacular year with low numbers of regular migrants, such as *Cynthia cardui* Painted Lady, *Agrius convolvuli* Convolvulus Hawk-moth, *Macroglossum stellatarum* Humming-bird Hawk-moth, *Agrostis ipsilon* Dark Sword-grass and *Autographa gamma* Silver Y. The only exception was *Vanessa atlanta* Red Admiral which was seen in reasonable numbers. Even so there is one new moth to add to the Orkney list *Schrankia costaestrigalis* Pinion-streaked Snout.

Traps were run at all the regular sites during the year, with Kirston Masson running a trap for her Duke of Edinburgh award on Sanday, watched over by Clare Cawthorne. At the beginning of August, a family moth day was held by the OFC at Dale, Costa, Evie. The contents of various traps run at several locations the previous night were looked at by a large group of people.

An ongoing piece of work which is nearing completion is the computerization of Ian Lorimer's records held on index cards. This sterling work has been done by Neil McCance who has gone through all the cards and transferred the information into Excel spreadsheets for me to import into the Orkney Lepidoptera database.

NEW SPECIES TO ORKNEY

Schrankia costaestrigalis Pinion-streaked Snout (U); one taken by trap 5 Sep Queenamidda, Rendall (B Ribbands). Found across the south of Britain and up the west coast of Scotland, this moth is thought to be much over looked in the habitat in which it lives - wet woodland wet meadows, boggy heathland and marshy areas. While its food plant is not unknown, in captivity will feed on flowers of heather, wild Thyme and withered sallow leaves. It is said to be on the wing with a main flight period from late June to mid August, and a second flight period late August to mid October in the south.

MOTHS OF NOTE SEEN DURING 2005

This list uses the following abbreviations:

R	Resident	I	Immigrant	C	Recent colonist
R?	Resident Uncertain	RI	Resident + Immigrant	C	Recent colonist Uncertain
V	Vagrant	U	Status Uncertain		

<i>Depressaria pastinacella</i>	Parsnip Moth (U)	23 taken by trap between 8 Aug and 4 Sep Northolme, St Ola (R G Adam).
<i>Crambus pascuella</i> (U)	-	one taken by trap 18 Jul Northolme, St Ola (RGA).
<i>Pleuroptya ruralis</i>	Mother of Pearl (V)	one take by trap 18 Jul West End, Burray (N & R McCance).
<i>Idaea biselate</i>	Small Fan-foot Wave (V)	one taken by trap Hundaseter, Birsay (C & J Booth / A & J Johnson).
<i>Xanthorhoe designate</i>	Flame Carpet (R)	two taken by trap between 15 Jul and 8 Aug West end, Burray (N & R McC).
<i>Thera obeliscata</i>	Gray Pine Carpet (R)	two records both by trap one each 11 Aug Queenamidda, Rendall (BR) and 6 Sep Quoyberstane, St Ola (SVG).

<i>Semiothisa wauaria</i>	The V-moth (R)	two taken by trap between 3 and 8 Aug 34 High St, Kirkwall (CJ&JB).
<i>Hylaea fasciaria</i>	Barred Red (R)	three taken by trap between 9 and 20 Jul Bayview, Herston, South Ronaldsay (J & R McCutcheon).
<i>Agrius convolvul</i>	Convolvulus Hawk-moth (I)	four records two taken by trap one each 3 Sep Viewforth, Swannay (K Fairclough) and 13 Sep Rosebank, Harray (E Everiss). Two seen in the field, one each 8 Sep Burwick, South Ronaldsay (Mrs Budge) and 20 Sep Inganess, St Ola (M Sinclair).
<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	Humming-bird Hawk-moth (I)	one seen on 1 Jul North Flaws, South Ronaldsay (J Crossley).
<i>Naenia typica</i>	The Gothic (U)	one taken by trap 1 Aug Northholm, St Ola (RGA).
<i>Apamea lithoxylaea</i>	Light Arches (U)	two records by trap one each 23 Jul West End, Burray (N & R McC), and 31 Jul Northholm, St Ola (RGA).
<i>Apamea ophiogramma</i>	Double Lobed (R)	one taken by trap 5 Sep Rosebank, Harray (EE).

My thanks are given to all who gave records.

BATS - 2005

CHRIS BOOTH

Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Bats of this species were seen in the Finstown area between 14 th April and 4 th September, with the majority of sightings in July and August. Their identity was confirmed on 25 th July, using bat detectors, with the help of Peter and Viv Reynolds, when a minimum of 4 was seen. Thanks are due to James Miller and Alan Thoms for assistance and information. One was seen at 34 High Street, Kirkwall between 21.35hrs and 22.00hrs BST on 20 th August and bat detector contact was also made on 2 nd September.
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There were the following sightings of bats where it was not possible to obtain specific identification:

Bat sp		Terry Thomson reported single bats at the Bu, Hoy at the end of June and at 21.30hrs BST on 17 th August. One entered a house at West End, Burray on 5 th September (D Rouse). On North Ronaldsay, Alison Duncan reported a <i>Pipistrelle sp.</i> at Twiness on 11 th October and another bat, which had obvious ears, was seen on the island on 20 th October.
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<p>Common Toad</p>	<p><i>Bufo bufo</i></p>	<p>A minimum of 10 adults was seen on 23rd March in a pool near Rackwick, Hoy by Lee Shields and there were 200 tadpoles there on 13th May (LS) with at least 100 present on 26th June. The only other report of tadpoles was of 3 in Sandy loch, Hoy on 3rd June (LS).</p> <p>At Hundasaeter, Birsay, during the period 1st May to 28th Elsewhere, a toad, 20mms in length, was found on 3rd July by Eric Meek near the Durkadale plantation. Rather more unusual was one found in Main Street, Kirkwall on 11th September. It weighed 5gms and was 35mms in length</p> <p>Elsewhere, a toad, 20mms in length, was found on 3rd July by Eric Meek near the Durkadale plantation. Rather more unusual was one found in Main Street, Kirkwall on 11th September. It weighed 5gms and was 35mms in length.</p>
<p>Common frog</p>	<p><i>Rana temporaria</i></p>	<p>First spawn of the year was seen on 26th February at Rinibar, Hoxa, South Ronaldsay, (L Hogarth) the earliest recorded date for spawn in Orkney.</p> <p>The next report of spawn was from Eday on 9th March (M Cockram). Further batches were found at Hundasaeter, Birsay on 16th (AK&JH Johnson), Dale, Birsay (RE Matson) and Cruan Road, Finstown (S&D Walls) on 17th, Berstane Road, Kirkwall (S&DW) and West End, Burray (N&R McCance) on 19th and a flooded quarry on Kirkwall Golf Course on 28th (J Booth).</p> <p>The earliest sighting of an adult frog was on 26th January at Skaill, Eday, while a tadpole was found in the mud at the bottom of a pool at Hundasaeter, Birsay on 28th January (AK&JHJ). This suggests the possibility that some tadpoles may overwinter. The next reports of adult frogs were from Hundasaeter on 29th January and 17th February.</p> <p>Apart from the above sites, frogs and tadpoles were reported in June and July from: Brodgar, Stenness (O Tait) and Rosebank, Harray (E Everiss). An adult frog was at Durkadale on 3rd July (ER Meek).</p> <p>In August there were reports of immature frogs from gardens at Lynn Park, Kirkwall (CJ Corse) on 12th, Northolme, St Ola (RG Adam) on 14th and High Street, Kirkwall on 31st (R Sclater).</p> <p>The last reported sighting of an adult frog was from Hundasaeter, Birsay on 30th October but tadpoles with legs were seen at Heydal, Stenness on 31st October (K Bushaway and J&J Taylor).</p>

Among the cetacean highlights of the year were sightings of Humpback whale, Beluga and Striped dolphin. Good numbers of Minke whales were seen off the south and east coasts of Orkney and a pod of Risso's dolphins spent some time in Scapa Flow, close to the Barriers. On the other hand, sightings of Killer whales were fewer than in the previous 2 years.

Humpback whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	<p>One was seen to breach in Shapinsay Sound, from the Aberdeen ferry, on 4th July.</p> <p>This is the fifth sight record for Orkney and the third year in succession that this species has been seen.</p>
Minke whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	<p>The first report for the year was of 1 off Burwick, South Ronaldsay on 22nd April.</p> <p>On 22nd May, 2 were watched feeding off Rora Head, Hoy. One of these was thought to be c7m in length and the other about two-thirds this size.</p> <p>Single whales were off Copinsay on 16th June and in Hoy Sound on 25th June.</p> <p>In early July there was a remarkable series of reports. On 1st July there were over 100 sightings between Stromness and Scrabster from the MV Hamnavoe, thought to involve at least 30 individuals. On the same date 1 was found entangled in creel ropes north of Rousay and successfully released. Then on 4th July a minimum of 20 individuals was seen off the east side of Orkney from the Aberdeen to Kirkwall ferry, with up to 4 seen at one time. Also on the 4th a group of 5 whales was watched lunge feeding about a mile east of the Brough of Deerness. Single whales were reported off the Gloup, Deerness on 6th July and from the Falls of Warness, Eday on 18th and 19th July and 4 were regularly seen feeding from 10th to 17th July off Grimness, South Ronaldsay.</p> <p>In August single whales were seen in the Falls of Warness on 11th, Copinsay passage on 14th and Bay of Backaland, Eday on 19th and this latter whale was present in this area for about 2 weeks.</p> <p>September records were of 1 off Hoxa Head, South Ronaldsay on 6th and 9th and the Falls of Warness on 21st.</p> <p>In October 1 was seen off the Gloup, Deerness on 11th.</p>
STRANDINGS		<p>On 27th August 1, which had been dead for sometime, was found at Hawick, Hoy. It was 3.66m in length.</p> <p>A female, 7.8m in length, was found dead at the Bay of Semolie, Holm on 8th October.</p> <p>On 11th December 1 was discovered freshly dead, entangled in creel ropes, off Stanger Head, Flotta. Length 5.9m.</p>

Sperm whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	The only record was of a long dead male that stranded in the Bay of Lopness, Sanday on 24 th May. The length was 11.8m.
Beluga or White whale	<i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>	One was seen from an aircraft off the east side of Sanday on 15 th July. It surfaced 5 or 6 times and was estimated to be about 5m in length. This is the 3 rd recorded sighting of this species off Orkney.
Cuvier's beaked whale	<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>	The body of an immature female stranded near the Holms of Ire, Sanday on 1 st December. The length was 4.75m. The 4 th record for Orkney, all previous ones have also been of stranded whales. The skeleton is now in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.
Harbour porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	Rather more records than in 2004 but no reports in January, February and December. Sightings were mainly of 1 to 3 animals apart from in Burra Sound, the Falls of Warness, Eday and off Hoxa Head, South Ronaldsay. In Burra Sound 2 to 10 were seen regularly in July and August and there was a maximum of 20 on 18 th August. At Falls of Warness 2 to 6 were seen from July to November with a maximum of 7, including 6 adults and a calf, on 14 th July and 7 (5 adults and 2 calves) on 12 th August. A cow and calf were seen off Hoxa, South Ronaldsay on 17 th June and there was a maximum of 7 there on 9 th September.
STRANDINGS		There were 3 strandings, all of single animals: 21 st March Herston, South Ronaldsay, length 1.47m. 26 th April Houton Head, Orphir long dead, length just over 1m. 27 th October Saville Sanday, length 1.08m.
Striped dolphin	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>	One was seen from a ferry west of Shapinsay on 11 th July. Only the 4 th Orkney record.
White-beaked dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostri</i>	A maximum of 4 was seen in Warness Sound, Eday on 15 th August. Single dolphins were observed in Hoy Sound on 18 th August and Burra Sound on 19 th August.
STRANDINGS		One, long dead, Rackwick, Hoy on 27 th March, length 2m. On 3 rd December an immature stranded alive in Westray but died shortly afterwards.
Killer whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	Fewer sightings than in either 2003 or 2004. On 12 th February 5 were seen off Nouster pier, North Ronaldsay and on the same day 2 were reported off Tresness Point, Sanday. May sightings were of 5 North Ronaldsay on 12 th and between 7 and 10 off Mull Head, Deerness on 21 st . At least 6, possibly 8, were in Bay of Backaland, Eday on 8 th June. A minimum of 6, including an adult male and a juvenile, were watched moving south off Harrabrough

Long-finned pilot whale	<i>Globicephala melas</i>	<p>Head, South Ronaldsay on 11th June and 7 were seen heading north off the east coast between Grimness and Roseness on 16th June. Records from the Pentland Firth were of 8 on 20th June and 10, including 2 bulls, on 25th June.</p> <p>July reports were of 7 off the Green Holms on 4th, 2 off Hoy on 23rd and 5 were seen from the North Ronaldsay lighthouse on 26th.</p> <p>Just two sightings. One spent some time off Herston, at the entrance to Widewall Bay, South Ronaldsay on 12th February and 1 was seen south of Scapa pier on 30th July.</p>
STRANDINGS		<p>One, which had been dead sometime, was found near Viggjar, Sanday on 13th June. It had a length of 6.10m.</p> <p>An immature, which had been dead for several days, ashore near the Point of Buckquoy, Birsay on 29th September, length 3.02m.</p>
Risso's dolphin	<i>Grampus griseus</i>	<p>There were between 7 and 10 off Herston, South Ronaldsay on 28th March and a similar number were watched by many people off N^o 1 and N^o 2 Barriers on 12th and 13th May.</p> <p>On 25th June 2 to 3 were observed off Lyre Geo, Sandwick and 5 off Hoxa Head, South Ronaldsay.</p> <p>In July 5 were reported off Mull Head, Papa Westray on 26th and 28th.</p> <p>One was off Lyre Geo, Sandwick on 8th August and on the same day between 6 and 10 spent some time just outside Stromness harbour. Two were seen in Orphir Bay on 18th August and there were 3 off Hoy on 19th August.</p> <p>The only later sighting was of 2 off N^o 3 Barrier on 15th October.</p>
STRANDINGS		<p>There were 4 reported strandings, all involving single dolphins that had been dead for sometime:</p> <p>5th March - West side of Papa Westray, length 2.36m.</p> <p>4th June - Noust of Ayre, Sanday length 3.36m.</p> <p>15th June - Saviskaill, Rousay, length 3.5m.</p> <p>9th August - Rennibister Oyce, juvenile, length 2.07m.</p>

Unidentified cetaceans

There were the following reports where identification could not be made with absolute certainty:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 21 st February | Probable Minke whale off No 2 Barrier. |
| 10 th March | Whale sp., c 10m in length, off Auskerry. |
| 18 th May | Probable Common dolphin off Bendigo, Scapa Flow. |

28 th May	Probable Harbour porpoise, Cantick Head.
8 th June	Whale sp., possibly Sperm whale, Kirkhope Bay.
26 th September	Possible Pilot whale stranded, Calf of Cava.
28 th October	Dead whale, probable Minke whale, between SPM's off Flotta. Fishermen reported the presence of a whale carcass floating off Flotta for several weeks in November and December.

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BEARDED SEAL - 2005

BEARDED SEAL - 2005

CHRIS BOOTH

On 29th March, Ross Flett of Orkney Seal Rescue was informed that a strange seal was hauled out on The Ouse at Finstown. When he went to investigate he found that it was a Bearded seal *Erignathus barbatus*. It was about 2m in length. It allowed a close approach and appeared to be in good health. The seal stayed in the area for about 3 weeks.



This is only the 4th record of this Arctic species in Orkney and the 2nd year running that one has been seen.

FISH – 2004 & 2005

CHRIS BOOTH

There is an additional fish record for 2004:

Triggerfish *Balistes capriscus* One, 40cms in length, was found on North Wick Beach, Papa Westray on 29th September (Tim Dodman).

FISH 2005

As our knowledge of fish in Orkney waters is still very incomplete, any records would be welcome.

The following fish records were reported during the year:

Porbeagle shark	<i>Lamna nasus</i>	One was seen on 1 st September south of Rackwick, Hoy by sea anglers (per L Fettes).
Basking shark	<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>	More records than usual although some of the sightings may refer to the same individual. All reports were of single sharks The first sighting was on 22nd May in the Bay of Ayre, Holm (S Ellis), the earliest date so far recorded. There were no more until July when reported from Burra Sound on 2 nd and 13 th (Lee Shields), Burwick, South Ronaldsay on 19 th (H McKenzie) and Cantick Head on 21 st (E&G Rosie).

		In August there were sightings from Marwick Head on 1 st (R&S Hallam), Bay of Bothecan, Papa Westray on 21 st (J Rendall & T Dodman) and Tor Ness Hoy on 27 th (S Gauld & R Hallam).
		The only September records were from Houton Head, Orphir on 10 th (E Everiss) and the Falls of Warness, Eday on 21 st and 22 nd (A Black). October reports were from the Falls of Warness on 3 rd and 8 th (A Black), Hoxa Head, South Ronaldsay on 6 th (L Bain) and Backaquoy, South Ronaldsay on 29 th (T Dean).
Skate	<i>Raja batis</i>	One, weighing 70kgms, was caught in Scapa Flow, off Hobbister in mid-July (<i>The Orcadian</i> 21 st July).
Greater pipefish	<i>Syngnathus acus</i>	Two were found at Skail, Sandwick on 23 rd December (S Miller).
Grey gurnard	<i>Eutrigla gurnadius</i>	One caught off Marwick Head on 9 th August (J Hazelhurst).
Bull-rout	<i>Myoxocephalus scorpius</i>	One caught off Marwick Head on 9 th August (J Hazelhurst).
Bass	<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>	One, weighing 454gms, was caught off the east side of No 4 Barrier on 21 st June (A Brough).
Wolf fish	<i>Anarhichas lupus</i>	One caught off Marwick Head on 9 th August (J Hazelhurst).
Dab	<i>Limanda limanda</i>	One caught off Marwick Head on 9 th August (J Hazelhurst).



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE 2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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HELD AT 7.30PM ON THURSDAY 16TH MARCH, 2006, IN THE SUPPER ROOM, COMMUNITY CENTRE, KIRKWALL

- 1 The Chairman, Peter Ford opened the AGM at 7.45am
- 2 Apologies received from Alison Skene, Kate Barrett, Dennis Paice and Effy Everiss.
- 3 Minutes of the 2005 AGM proposed by Dick Matson, seconded by Mildred Cuthbert.
- 4 Matters Arising Clause 27, concerning dispersal of funds if the OFC was wound-up, will be debated at the 2007 AGM.
- 5 Adoption of Accounts On behalf of the Treasurer, Dennis Paice, Dick Matson read the Treasurer's Report (Editor's note: copy enclosed within this Bulletin). Highlighted was a loss of £654.12 out of a total expenditure of £3298.45. Loss incurred due to the timing of the launch of Eddie's book outside the summer season, and that a full year's income has not yet accrued. Report proposed for acceptance by Sally Hallam and seconded by John Crossley.
- 6 Subscription Rates No change.
- Peter Ford now called on Eileen Bullard for the Presidents Address.
- "As last year, I think that we (the OFC) are too solemn and do not have sufficient fun. I would like to thank all of you for my Birthday Party, and the OFC's 2005 year has been enlivened by social activities such as meals and treasure hunts. General outlook is gloomy, people seem to have less time, is this due to computers? Nationally, we have a shortage of money for 'compulsory' reporting and recording. Not a great deal we can do, except pressurise local councillors at election time that funding for biodiversity once is OK but it needs continual support. I suggest that everybody inputs a record to the records centre. Consider the American Carrier Pigeon, alas now extinct. It is important to record even those items we consider common, they may decline! As with many organizations today, we suffer from a reduction in membership and also from members who participate in running the OFC."
- Peter Ford thanked Miss Bullard for her address.
- Peter Ford, current Chairman, stated that ideally, change with continuity work and events continue to rest on a few people and appealed for more members to help. He offered especially thanks to John Crossley for stepping in when he was unable to attend committee meetings. Peter then stood down from the Committee.
- The President thanked Peter for a three year Chairmanship, and asked for elections for the 2006 OFC Committee.
- After elections, John Crossley was elected Chairman and Dick Matson Secretary.
- 7 AOB
- Dick Matson raised the following points:
- Durkadale Picnic – Family outing on 14th May to plant 30-40 trees and brush clearing;
 - Status of Common Hawker Dragonfly on the Mainland requires publicity;
 - Assistance from the public is required in monitoring House Martins;
 - As the RSPB have withdrawn from winter crop monitoring, we need to discuss a proposal for loose feeding around the peripheral of fields.

- Social Events – on a suitable August Friday, a visit to north Hoy from Stromness for a walk and a meal.

TREASURERS REPORT FOR 2005

INCOME –

We received £1091.00 in membership subscription, an increase of £125.00 on 2004 Club night also where higher than previous years £195.35, bank interest £154.34 was higher than 2004, as was the Charities Bazaar £235.67 and other income £77.00.

Gift Aid £124.95 was down on 2004, as it was only set up last year and we could claim back to 2000.

Eddie book £766.02.

This gave us a total income of £2644.33.

EXPENDITURE –

We spent less on advertising and room hire than last year (£84.00).

Insurance and subscription was up (£2.00)

The Bulletin and Newsletter were also up on 2004 (£101.00)

We spent a lot less on other expenses in 2005 (£173.00).

The Field Club produced a book about Eddie Balfour, Orkney's world respected ornithologist for his work as a naturalist and, on particular, Hen Harriers. Eddie was Orkney's first RSPB Warden and was carrying out his duties when he suddenly died of a heart attack after a strenuous visit to Gairsay in 1974.

The cost of producing the Eddie book was £2045.26, which included advertising the launch of the book at the Science Festival, was our highest single expense in 2005.

Total expenditure of £3298.45, resulted on us making a loss of £654.12 in 2005

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

INCOME	2005	2004	EXPENDITURE	2005	2004
Subscriptions	1091.00	966.00	Advertising	127.50	174.30
Club nights	195.35	120.00	Room Hire	135.20	172.30
Charities Bazaar	235.67	225.50	Insurance	110.00	100.00
Bank Interest	154.34	57.70	Subscriptions	57.50	53.50
Gift Aid	124.95	231.56	Bulletin & Newsletter	630.42	531.67
Grass Verge Survey (2003)		183.24	Other Expenses	192.57	371.96
Other	77.00	48.75	Eddie (publication)	2045.26	
Eddie (publication)	766.02		Total Expenditure	3298.45	
		Loss	654.12		

Bank Details

Summary

Cash in hand @ 31 st December 2004	9152.17	Premier Account	6880.06
Loss over income @ 31 st December 2005	654.12	Treasurer's Account	1617.99
	8498.05		8498.05

RECORDERS AND RECORDING, ORKNEY, VC111, 2006 UPDATE

Please read carefully for alterations since the last OFC Bulletin.

NOTES

No records should be published until verified by the appropriate Recorder. With few exceptions, Orkney County Recorders submit copies of their records to their appropriate national specialist society and to OBRC.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.Rec. = Assessment of Records	BM/NH = British Museum of Natural History
BSBI = Botanical Society of the British Isles	DL = Definitive Lists
Hb.Ab. = Aberdeen University Herbarium	Hb.Ed. = Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh
Hb.Kew = Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew	N/N = The Natural History of Orkney
OBRC = Orkney Biodiversity Records Centre	OCL = Orkney County Library
OIC = Orkney Islands Council	ONHS = Orkney Natural History Society, Museum, Stromness
Rec. = Recorder	SOC = Scottish Ornithologists Club
Up. = Update	

	RECORDER
AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES (Toads etc.)	Chris Booth, Ronas, 34 High Street, Kirkwall, Orkney). DL in <i>The Mammals of Orkney</i> , op. cit. Up. OFC <i>Bulletin</i> . A.Rec. by Recorder.
ANTS	Keith Fairclough, Viewforth, Swannay,
ARACHNIDA (spiders and OPILIONES harvestmen)	Edward Milner, 80 Weston Park, London, N8 9TB. DL, N/N.
BATS	Chris Booth, Ronas, 34 High Street, Kirkwall, Orkney. DL in Booth, C. and J. (1994), <i>The Mammals of Orkney</i> . Up. OFC <i>Bulletin</i> .
BIRDS	(SOC) Jim Williams, Fairholm, Finstown, Orkney. DL in Booth, C.J., Cuthbert, M.F. and Reynolds, P (1985), <i>The Birds of Orkney</i> , The Orkney Press. Up. <i>The Orkney Bird Report</i> (published annually). A.Rec. national rarities, The British Birds Rarities Committee; Scottish rarities, The Scottish Birds Records Committee; local rarities, The Orkney Records Committee.
BRYOPHYTE (S mosses and liverworts)	Rosemary McCance, West End House, Burray, Orkney KW17 2SS. DL, N/N.

	RECORDER
BUMBLEBEES, SOCIAL WASPS, SOLITARY BEES AND WASPS	John Crossley, North Flaws, South Ronaldsay, Orkney KW17 2RW. A.Rec. DL for social wasps: see note in OFC Bulletin No.1/1986. DL for bumblebees: see OFC <i>Bulletin</i> 2002. DL for solitaries: see OFC <i>Bulletin</i> 2004. Up. OBRC, OFC <i>Bulletin</i> .
CADDIS FLIES (adults and larvae)	R.Andrew, Millfield Cottage, Costa, Evie, Orkney and J Walker, Twargarn, Harray, Orkney. DL, N/N, BRC Monks Wood. Up. BRC Monks Wood, OFC <i>Bulletin</i> . Also MAYFLIES, adults and larvae, and HOVERFLIES, adults.
CETACEANS (whales and porpoises)	Chris Booth, Ronas, 34 High Street, Kirkwall, Orkney. DL in <i>The Mammals of Orkney</i> , op. cit. Up. OFC <i>Bulletin</i> . A.Rec. if required – National Museum of Scotland.
CHAROPHYTES (stoneworts)	Effy Everiss, Rosebank Cottage, Harray, Orkney KW17 2JA. DL, N/N. Specimens must be preserved quickly, so please rinse, press until really dry before posting.
COLEOPTERA (beetles)	Brian Ribbands, Queenamidda, Rendall KW17 2PA. DL, N/N. A.Rec by recognised experts. Brain has Vincent Lorimer's beetle collection and notes.
CRUSTACEA (mainly marine, but will attempt terrestrial (ISOPODS, slater etc))	Helen Snooks, 107 Victoria Street, Stromness, Orkney KW16 3BU
DIPTERA (true flies)	R.Andrew, Millfield Cottage, A. Rec. by comparison with names material in reference material collections; and to BM/NH. Also FLESH FLIES, BLOW FLIES and PARASITIC FLIES.
ECHINODERMATA (Sea urchins, starfish, etc.)	Duncan Clarke, 107 Victoria Street, Stromness, Orkney KW16 3BU
FISH	Chris Booth, Ronas, 34 High Street, Kirkwall, Orkney Up. OFC <i>Bulletin</i> .
FRESHWATER ALGAE.	Eileen Summers, SNH, Junction Road Kirkwall Orkney.
FUNGI including MYXOMYCETES (slime fungi)	No current Recorder DL, N/N, Up.: OFC Bulletin. A.Rec.Hb.Ed. Voucher specimens are held in Hb.Ab. Hb.Ed. and Hb.Kew. The current list is held by OBRC.

	RECORDER
HIRUDINIA (Worms leeches, etc.)	No Rec. at present. DL, N/N.
JELLYFISH	Ray Hallam, Krokrinn, 1 Belleview Park, Kirkwall KW15 1XL. DL, N/N.
LAND & FRESHWATER	No Rec. at present. DL to 1985 in OCL.
MOLLUSCS (slugs and snails)	
LEPIDOPTERA (butterflies and moths)	Sydney Gauld, Quoyberstane, St. Ola, Orkney. DL, N/N and in Lorimer, R.I. (1983), <i>The Lepidoptera of the Orkney Islands</i> , E.W. Classey Ltd, Oxford. Up. OFC <i>Bulletin</i> . Voucher specimens, The Royal Museum of Scotland.
LICHENS	Dr. D H Dalby, 2, West Park, Stanley, Perthshire. PH1 4QU. Voucher specimens and recording materials held in OFC archives.
MAMMALS (excepting seals, bats and cetaceans)	Ray Hallam, Krokrinn, 1 Belleview Park, Kirkwall KW15 1XL. DL. N/N. Up. OFC <i>Bulletin</i> and Stromness Museum. Records, including bones, etc., can be accepted, with full details.
MARINE ALGAE (seaweeds)	Dr. Martin Wilkinson, School of Life Sciences, Heriot-Watt University, Riccarton, Edinburgh EH14 4AS. DL, N/N.
MARINE MOLLUSCA (seashells)	.Rec. Alan Skene, The Mount, Stromness, Orkney. DL, N/N.
MYRIAPODS (centipedes and millipedes)	No Rec. at present.
ODONATA (dragonflies and damselflies, adults and larvae)	Keith Fairclough, Viewforth, Swannay, DL, N/N. Up. OBRC and OFC <i>Bulletin</i> . For species already on the Orkney list, a written or verbal record (to Keith), with full details will suffice. If new species, ideally a photograph, or, at least, a FULL description.
ORTHOPTERA (grasshoppers)	Keith Fairclough, Viewforth, Swannay, DL, N/N. Acceptance of records as for Odonata (above).
ROSA SPECIES	Hugo Shearer, Cromwell Road, Kirkwall, Orkney. Referees usually require specimens of fruit, mature foliage and pieces of stem showing prickles.

	RECORDER
SAWFLIES	Jenni Stockan, The Macaulay Institute, Craigiebuckler, Aberdeen AB15 8QH
SEALS	Ray Hallam, Krokrinn, 1 Belleview Park, Kirkwall KW15 1XL.
STONEFLIES	R.Andrew (as above). DL, N/N. Up. OBRC and OFC Bulletin.
VASCULAR PLANTS	(BSBI): E. R. Bullard, Toftwood, Kirkwall, Orkney KW15 1SB. DL, N/N. Records in <i>Watsonia</i> and OFC <i>Bulletin</i> . A. Rec. Voucher specimens in Hb.Ed. An Orkney <i>Flora</i> in preparation; also Threatened Plants database and local Scarce Species. Please be sparing in collecting any plant material for identification, 'critical' species require identification by national referees.

GENERAL ADVICE

All records are worthwhile. The essential four pieces of information, accompanying all records, must be:

WHAT WHERE WHEN WHO BY

Record cards for some groups can be obtained from the Recorders listed above. Records, including completed cards, should be sent to the appropriate Recorder. If no Recorder is listed, send records to OBRC, Orkney Library, Junction Rd, Kirkwall, Orkney, e-mail biodiversity@orkney.gov.uk. A stamped, addressed envelope is appreciated if you want a reply, and is necessary when specimens have to be sent for identification. Be sparing in collecting specimens. If in doubt, and you would like more information about records on a particular plant, bird, mammal or invertebrate, ask the appropriate County Recorder.

Both individual Recorders and OBRC hold details of recording schemes for a large assortment of plants and beasts. Many of the organisers welcome and help beginners, so why not 'take up' something? Details are also available of helpful textbooks and study courses

GUIDELINES FOR BULLETIN CONTRIBUTORS

All contributions should be addressed in the first instance to:

OFC Bulletin
C/O County Library & Archive
44, Junction Road
Kirkwall, KW15 1AT.

Last date for contributions: 31st. March 2007.

Contributions on all subjects relating to the natural and cultural environment of Orkney are welcomed.

PRESENTATION OF ARTICLES

All contributions are edited into the “house” format.

Source	Format
PC disc, CD, DVD	Text, html, native word processor text such as Microsoft Word, Sun OpenOffice, PDF
Macintosh format	As html or PDF.
E-Mail	As text or as an attached file as html, rich text, Windows compatible format.. If illustrations are required, please send as separate file and indicate placement in your article. E-mail addresses for editorial subcommittee members are available from the OFC Secretary, or, can be directed to the current convenor of the editorial subcommittee (currently David Peppitt) at ofcbulletin@swartland.demon.co.uk .
Hard copies	Would be scanned or typed.

The current *Bulletin* is edited collectively by the editorial subcommittee of the OFC. Any facts or opinions expressed in the *Bulletin* are the sole responsibility of the contributors. Orkney Field Club and the editors of the Bulletin cannot be held responsible for any loss sustained in reliance therein.

The editorial subcommittee would like to thank all contributors to this issue of the Bulletin and to all OFC Members who assisted in its publication.