

The activities of Bullfinches are not the only reason for crop reduction. The fruit is attacked later in the growing season by other birds such as tits, thrushes, Blackbirds and Starlings. Also, pears are made unfit for marketing by the activities of wasps and other insects, and by bad weather during the growing season; autumnal gales especially can cause significant losses. These factors result in an immediate and irretrievable loss of crop, in direct contrast to Bullfinch damage that may have little or no effect, even at high levels.

Bullfinches are a serious problem to tree and bush fruit growers. However, our work indicated that they may not have the exclusively bad influence that is often suggested. They are active in orchards at a time when they are easily seen and blamed for crop losses, because there are no leaves on the trees. On the other hand, the damage they cause is only one of a number of factors that reduce the final harvest.

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## First record of the Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus* for Arabia

by P. R. Colston and M. D. Gallagher

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The mostly intact skeletal remains of a medium sized *Puffinus* shearwater were discovered amongst debris on a tideline of a shelving beach near Azaiba, Batinah, Sultanate of Oman, on the Gulf of Oman, at 23°36'N, 58°20'E, on 23 June 1982 by Wg. Cdr. D. Foster. The specimen was passed to MDG who realised that it was unusual and took it to the British Museum (Natural History) (BMNH) where it is now lodged as a skeleton (BM S/1982-115-1) and where we identified it as a Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*. Although one wing was missing and the head detached, the rest of the corpse was apparently complete, still retaining the feathers of the tail and parts of the body. The dark blackish-brown wing showed the silvery-white under-wing pattern characteristic of *griseus*, and the long slender black bill matched other specimens in the BM. Measurements were: wing 298 mm; tail, strongly rounded with 12 tail feathers, 90 mm; bill (from skull) 52 mm; tarsus 55 mm; length of middle toe 62 mm. The primaries were abraded and the rest of the plumage also showed some degree of wear, so it was therefore probably a full grown adult.

This migratory, cold-water species breeds in the sub-antarctic around South America, New Zealand and Tasmania, departing between mid-March and May, mostly migrating rapidly northward across the equatorial Pacific and Atlantic Oceans to winter in the northern temperate zones – Bourne (1956) *Sea Swallow* 9:23-25; Phillips (1963) *Ibis* 105: 340-353; Cramp & Simmons (1977) *Birds of the Western Palearctic* 1:143-5. Sooty Shearwaters occur at sea south of Kerguelen I. in the southern Indian Ocean (Bourne 1956) and though there had been no records from further north, Bourne pointed out that there had been 2 records of the Short-tailed Shearwater *P. tenuirostris* accidentally migrating north in the "wrong" (Indian) ocean and that the Sooty Shearwater seemed equally likely to do the same thing (Bourne (1960) *Sea Swallow* 13:20; (1967) *Ibis* 109:152). A sighting of a total of 15 Sooty Shearwaters was subsequently reported from the east coast of Sri Lanka in November 1974 "when the size, colour, mode of flight and silvery wing linings allowed positive identification" (Sinclair 1977) *J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc.* 74: 354). However it is surprising that Sinclair does



not appear to have identified the Wedge-tailed and Flesh-Footed Shearwaters *Puffinus pacificus* and *P. carneipes* which normally pass through Sri Lanka waters at that season, and it may be wondered whether there was some mistake.

The present record appears to be the first from Arabia. The specimen's condition and its position on the beach indicates arrival after the winter storms, in spring, at which time the strong, contrary, northeast monsoon winds of winter would have begun to decline, and when other species which breed in the southern hemisphere, such as Pale-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes* and Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*, begin to move northwards towards the cool waters of the upwelling off the Kuria Muria islands of Oman.

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## Notes on the birds of southwestern Banks Island, Northwest Territories, Canada

by D. T. Holyoak

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The southwestern area of Banks Island, (c. 72°N, 125°W) arctic Canada, was visited from 30 June to 9 August 1981 with an expedition carrying out geological research. There were frequent opportunities to make ornithological observations. Two of the bird species seen have not previously been recorded from Banks Island, 2 others are little known there and one had not previously been found nesting. This note records these, along with a list of the breeding birds found in the region around Sachs Harbour.

### PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

On 1 July a female was flushed from a nest containing 5 eggs, on a tundra slope above a small marsh with a pool, c. 2 km east of Sachs Harbour. The only other record of Pintail was of 2 males and 5 females seen together near the Kellett River on 3 July.

Although there are other summer observations of Pintail on Banks Island this is the first record of breeding; the only other breeding records from the Canadian Arctic Archipelago are from southern Victoria Island (A.O.U. 1957, Godfrey 1966).

### WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

On 27 July one was seen flying east along the shore west of Sachs Harbour. There are a few other breeding season records from Banks Island but no proof of breeding (Manning *et al.* 1956, Godfrey 1966).

### BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

On 28 July a flock of about 65 (with c. 40 adults and c. 25 first-year birds)



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