

was dropped and retrieved successfully six times in succession; the seventh attempt failed and the stick landed on the hillside. The eagle landed and tossed it about with sharp movements of its bill. It then took off and repeated the procedure as before. I watched ten successive successful stoops before I left.

RICHARD COOMBER

Staffa Cottages Guest House, Tobermory, Isle of Mull, Strathclyde PA75 6PL

Temminck's Stints with black legs From 7th April to 12th May 1974, two Temminck's Stints *Calidris temminckii* with black legs frequented an experimental scrape on the Sandwich Bay marshes, Kent (M. Sutherland, 1975, *Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Rep.* 1974: 45-46). In 1975, two Temminck's Stints with black legs were again present, from 31st May to 2nd June, on both the Sandwich Bay marshes and the Pegwell Bay side of the River Stour. These were studied in detail, particularly on 31st May, by M. A. Allen, J. Colombé, D. Weaver and me at distances down to about 25 m in good sunlight. Through binoculars, the legs always looked black or greyish-black in the varying light, but once, when viewing through a telescope, I detected a faint greenish tinge. The plumage and behaviour were in all respects typical of Temminck's Stints. It is interesting to note that M. R. Lawn observed of the 1974 birds: 'Legs looked almost black but close to a very slight greenish-brown tint could be seen.' Temminck's Stints with black legs appear to be unknown, this leg colour being given in some field guides as an identification feature of the Little Stint *C. minuta*. It seems likely, therefore, that the same two aberrant individuals were involved in both years.

A. T. M. RUCK

West House, Wrotham, Kent TN15 7AA

Mr Ruck's conclusion, with which we agree, is consistent with the contention that recurring individuals are a regular feature of the passage of this species through Britain and Ireland (J. T. R. Sharrock, 1974, *Scarce Migrant Birds in Britain and Ireland*, page 68). One may also speculate that these two birds were from the same brood. EDS

Food-piracy by Iceland Gull on Oystercatchers On 19th January 1975, at New Brighton, Merseyside, I watched an adult Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides* persistently stealing food from Oystercatchers *Haematopus ostralegus*. As soon as one of the waders had food in its bill, it was attacked by the gull and forced to drop the food, which the gull then consumed. The method of attack was a simple, straight dive at the Oystercatcher, which offered no resistance. The process was repeated at least ten times during my hour-long observations.

KENNETH A. DUMMIGAN

14 Alexandra Drive, Aigburth, Liverpool L17 8TD

Many species indulge in such behaviour at times, but this is an interesting account of a successful method involving a less well-known gull. EDS

Attempted food-piracy by Gull-billed Terns On 20th October 1975, at Lake Magadi, a highly alkaline Rift Valley lake in Kenya, I spent several hours observing the different strategies used by Little