

ers, but still offers unanswered questions. British oystercatchers rarely, if ever, eat oysters. British oysters live in waters too deep for the bird, whereas on the east coast of America, low tides do uncover some oysters on which American oyster catchers feed. Birds of the shores of both continents have a varied diet—crabs, small mollusks, and worms. As is the case with many animals, they probably eat whatever is available. Uriel Safriel, an Israeli student at the Edward Gray Institute, is studying the ecology of Skokholm's breeding population of oyster catchers. When a nest is located, it is marked, the adults trapped and banded, and the young banded before they leave the nest. Through a telescope, Safriel watched behavior and feeding. (Worms are a major part of the diet of the Skokholm birds).

We visitors also had time to browse and explore at leisure, without the pressure to collect data. I watched lapwings feeding in the shallow ponds, and as I walked through the meadow where hundreds of gulls were nesting, they rose and circled above me crying loudly. I saw puffins perched on points of rock on the cliffs and watched grey seals cruising in the coves. Razor bills crowded the ledges of a cliff in an apparent competition for space and mates. This was a busy week "away from it all." It was leisurely and peaceful, but time did not hang heavily.

Between visits to reserves and field studies centers, the traveler can rent a car and sample other rural and natural areas: moors, fens, downs, shingle (pebble) beaches, highlands and lowlands. One could make a study

of stone walls and hedgerows to see how their patterns, uses and vegetation vary from one region to another. A delightful semi-professional holiday is available to the professional or amateur naturalist who wants to see the British Isles as few tourists see them.

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Editor's Note: E. M. Nicholson's, *Science Out of Doors* (Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., London, 1963) may be of particular interest to persons planning a similar trip. It describes the nature conservancy program and teaching programs as well as providing information on various nature preserves.

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