



The Carl Zeiss Award 2001

The British Birds Rarities Committee, established in 1959, has been supported and sponsored by Carl Zeiss Ltd, the renowned German optical company, since 1983 (*Brit. Birds* 76: 475). To encourage the submission of photographs, as supporting evidence to accompany written descriptions of rarities, the Carl Zeiss Award was established in 1991 (*Brit. Birds* 84: 589). Photographs are an important, and sometimes critical, source of information, and are in many cases an integral part of record assessment by BBRC. Many photographs of rare birds are also an aesthetic delight, and frequently make the whole process of

judging records that much more enjoyable. Recognising the importance of photographic evidence, and the role of photographers who supply the images, Carl Zeiss Ltd presents each year a pair of Carl Zeiss binoculars to the individual judged to have submitted the most instructive photograph, or series of photographs, of a British rarity. Judging the entries is undoubtedly one of the most pleasurable tasks in the working year of the Committee, and this year was no exception. From several hundred photographs submitted, we managed, eventually, to arrive at a short list of six. In Voous order, the six contenders were:

Swinhoe's Storm-petrel <i>Oceanodroma monorbis</i>	Paul Baxter & Harry Scott
American Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis dominica</i>	Bryan Thomas
Pacific Golden Plover <i>P. fulva</i>	Iain H. Leach
Arctic Warbler <i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	Iain H. Leach
Collared Flycatcher <i>Ficedula albicollis</i>	Dave Hatton
Yellow-breasted Bunting <i>Emberiza aureola</i>	Gerry Owens



On this occasion, the compilation of the short list was a long and difficult task, but, once we had done this, selecting the winner was comparatively easy. As discussed last year (*Brit. Birds* 93: 496-498), there was a natural tension between choosing photographs of major rarities and choosing those which showed key identification features of more regular but difficult species. Iain Leach's photographs of an Arctic Warbler on Spurn Point, East Yorkshire, not only were beautiful, but also permitted close scrutiny of the wing formula. In contrast, the series of photographs by Paul Baxter & Harry Scott of the Swinhoe's Storm-petrel trapped at Cove, Aberdeen, did not have the same aesthetic appeal but illustrated all the identification features of an extremely elusive seabird. Gerry Owens' portrait of the Yellow-breasted Bunting at Balcomie, Fife, neatly composed and set against the backdrop of the surrounding foliage, was an attractive and skilful piece of photography. All three appeared in the BBRC Annual Report, published recently (*Brit. Birds* 94: 452-504).

Excellent though these photographs were, we chose the remaining images for our

top three this year. We were unable to decide between the photographs of the Pacific Golden Plover at Brough Haven, East Yorkshire, again by Iain Leach, and a series of photographs of a first-summer American Golden Plover on St Mary's, Scilly, by Bryan Thomas. In the end, we awarded them joint second place. The shot of the Pacific Golden Plover is technically excellent, showing this species' dusky underwing and axillaries to perfection. The series of images of the American Golden Plover is superb, in good light with the bird obviously very close; all are of particular interest because they illustrate a poorly known plumage of a relatively familiar species. Superficially, the individual portrayed here brings to mind one of the larger plovers in the genus *Charadrius*.

There were, however, no doubts about this year's winner, Dave Hatton's superb series of photographs of the female Collared Flycatcher, on North Ronaldsay, Orkney. Not only do these show many of the key plumage features with great clarity, but they were also obtained in very difficult circumstances, the bird appearing only intermittently for brief views, in overcast conditions.

Owing to delays in the submission of this record from 1999, these shots were considered as part of the complement of photographs for the 2000 report and, as such, represent a very worthy winner of the Carl Zeiss Award for 2001.

Dave Hatton becomes the tenth winner of the Carl Zeiss Award, and for his prize was able to choose either a Carl Zeiss 7×42BGAT* or one of the models from the 'Victory' range, either 8×40BT* or 10×40BT*; he selected the 10×40BT*.

Dave Hatton



Dave Hatton

Dave Hatton



Dave Hatton

298-301. Winner of THE CARL ZEISS AWARD 2001: Female Collared Flycatcher *Ficedula albicollis*, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, May 1999.

Iain H. Leach



302. Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, Brough Haven, East Yorkshire, July 2000.



Bryan Thomas



Bryan Thomas

303 & 304. First-summer American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*, St Mary's, Scilly, May/June 2000.

Colin Bradshaw, Martin Eccles and Chris Keboe
c/o 9 Tynemouth Place, North Shields, Tyne & Wear NE30 4BJ

