

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIETARY SPECIALISATION AND PRODUCTIVITY IN GREAT SKUAS, *STECORARIUS SKUA*, ON HANDA ISLAND**

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Our study examines the diet of the great skua (*Stecorarius skua*) on Handa Island, Scotland, to investigate a possible relationship between diet type and productivity. Analysis of pellets since 2004 has shown that some individuals within this population have specialised diets, and that breeding pairs use proportionately more fish prey than bird, compared with non-breeding pairs. Fledging success varies, with a mean of 35.5% from 2003 to 2006. In 2008 we examined individual differences in the diet between breeding pairs and how this might influence their reproductive success. 20 pairs were monitored during the breeding season from June to August. Pellets were collected weekly from all territories and chicks measured approximately every 5 days. Data were also collected on egg lay date, clutch size, egg volume, hatching success and fledging success. In the context of our results we discuss the importance of the great skua population on Handa, as well as their impact on the local seabird population and their use of fish and fish discards.