

NOTES

RECOVERY OF MARKED BIRDS.

SONG-THRUSHES (*Turdus musicus*).—B.B., No. 11,488, marked by Mr. T. C. Hobbs at Gosforth, Northumberland, on July 14th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered near Easington, Castle Eden, Durham, on November 5th, 1910. Reported by Mr. J. Frankland.

B.B., No. 6656, marked by Mr. N. H. Joy at Bradfield, Berkshire, on April 26th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at Swainsthorpe, near Norwich, on November 6th, 1910. Reported by Mr. H. R. Cunningham.

GREAT TIT (*Parus major*).—B.B., No. 1479, marked by Mrs. Patteson at Limpsfield, Surrey, on June 19th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at the same place on October 31st, 1910. Reported by Mr. Horace Barry.

GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis elegans*).—B.B., No. B907, marked by Mr. H. W. Ford-Lindsay at Pett, Sussex, on July 31st, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered in St. Helen's Wood, near Hastings, on October 26th, 1910.

PINTAIL (*Dafla acuta*).—B.B., No. 8457, marked by the Rev. J. R. Hale in the Orkney Islands, on June 6th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered in the same place on October 5th, 1910. Reported by Mr. T. P. Aldworth.

COMMON SNIPE (*Gallinago caelestis*).—B.B., No. 5599, marked by the Rev. J. R. Hale in the Orkney Islands on June 6th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered in the same place on August 15th, 1910. Reported by Mr. T. P. Aldworth.

B.B., No. 5585, marked by the Rev. J. R. Hale in the Orkney Islands on June 6th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered in the same place on October 4th, 1910. Reported by Mr. T. P. Aldworth.

BLACK-HEADED GULLS (*Larus ridibundus*).—B.B., No. 31100, marked by Messrs. Robinson and Smalley at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on June 25th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at St. Bees, Cumberland, about June 28th, 1910. Reported by Miss M. Garnett.

B.B., No. 30032, marked by Messrs. Robinson and Smalley at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on June 10th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered on the River Severn, near Sharpness, Gloucestershire, on October 10th, 1910. Reported by Mr. S. Baker.

COMMON GULL (*Larus canus*).—B.B., No. 9803, marked by Mr. W. I. Beaumont at Stirk Island, off Lismore, Lynn of Lorn, Argyllshire, on July 8th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at Port Stewart, co. Londonderry, on November 22nd, 1910. Reported by Mr. W. J. McGirgan.

BARRED WARBLER IN NORFOLK.

ON September 27th, 1910, an immature Barred Warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*) was shot in east Norfolk. Mr. E. C. Arnold states (*Zool.*, 1910, p. 393) that he noticed a Barred Warbler on September 20th at the identical spot. I have communicated with Mr. F. I. Richards, who considers it unlikely that this was the individual that he was fortunate enough subsequently to obtain. I exhibited the specimen on behalf of Mr. Richards at the October meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club (*cf. Bull. B.O.C.*, XXVII., p. 16).

CLIFFORD BORRER.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

ON October 3rd, 1910, I shot a Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus superciliosus*) in the bottom of a thick hedge near the sea-bank at North Cotes, Lincolnshire. The bird was a male and very fat. There was no migration in progress at the time as a heavy westerly gale was blowing, but there was a light east wind on the night of the 1st. This is the fourth Lincolnshire example of this little warbler. I obtained it for the first time on October 7th, 1892, and from that time I saw no more of the species for sixteen years, when I found one dead on the coast on October 19th, 1908, and shot a third on October 12th of the following year, all four examples having been killed within a mile of the same spot.

G. H. CATON HAIGH.

THREE OR FOUR LONG-TAILED TITS TO ONE NEST.

IN connection with the observation of Mr. Smith Whiting on the above subject in the August number of *BRITISH BIRDS* (p. 78) and the previously recorded cases of Mr. Bonhote and Mr. Cerva (*BRITISH BIRDS*, Vol. I., pp. 32 and 62), it is interesting to recall what is probably the earliest published instance of the kind. A. G. C. Tucker, in his *Ornithologia Danmoniensis* (1809), of which the unfinished Introduction was the only part that ever saw the light, states (p. xlvi.) that the Long-tailed Titmouse is the only exception known to him to the rule that but one pair of birds joins in nidification and incubation; and in a footnote he gives his proof of this statement:—"In the year 1798 the author, in taking a walk

with a friend, discovered a Long-tailed Titmouse's nest, in which were thirteen eggs, and on which were then sitting three old birds; the fourth was seated in a neighbouring bush." J. WIGLESWORTH.

GREAT TIT NESTING IN HEDGES.

DURING the last five years, near Croydon, Surrey, I have frequently found nests entirely built by Great Tits (*Parus major*), and containing eggs, in hawthorn hedges, on the edge of a small copse. Nesting-holes are very scarce in the immediate neighbourhood. C. W. COLTHRUP.

TAWNY PIPIT IN NORFOLK.

AT a meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, held on October 19th (*Bull. B.O.C.*, XXVII., p. 16), I exhibited on behalf of my friend, Mr. F. I. Richards, an adult specimen of the Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*) obtained by one of his collectors in east Norfolk on September 15th, 1910.

CLIFFORD BORRER.

BEHAVIOUR OF THE GREENFINCH AT THE NEST.

REGARDING the further notes by Mr. C. Kingsley Siddall on this subject (*supra*, p. 184), they are of great interest, showing how birds of the same species vary in nesting-habits. I think it worth noting that the young Greenfinches in the case reported by me were fully feathered, and after placing rings on them they refused to stay in the nest. It was owing to the fact that I had never before seen this habit on the part of the Greenfinch that I was induced to record it.

So far as my experience goes the Chaffinch does *not* remove the *fæces* at all. There is no doubt much yet to be learned by observation of this habit, and I may perhaps give the following list, which I have made this year whilst taking photographs of young being fed.

In the case of the following species the *fæces* were removed: Lesser Whitethroat, Bullfinch, Wryneck, Tree-Pipit; while in the following the *fæces* were not removed: Chaffinch, Greenfinch (except in one case, where they were swallowed), Robin, Linnet, Blackbird, Song-Thrush, Mistle-Thrush, Turtle-Dove, Spotted Flycatcher, Goldfinch, Red-backed Shrike.

These are only a few examples, and no doubt the selection of nesting-site would prove to be a matter of considerable importance on the point. As an example we should expect to find a bird nesting in a hole in a tree removing the *fæces*, but we soon find an exception in the Owls.

As a rule birds building in hedges do not remove the *fæces*, as they fall to the ground among rubbish and are not conspicuous, but even here we soon find another exception in the Bullfinch, which, as far as my experience goes, always removes them.

Again in the case of the Sparrow-Hawk, which builds a large nest, we find other means used for keeping it clean. If the young ventured near the edge of the nest (composed of loose sticks) they would soon fall to the ground, so they have the power of ejecting the *fæces* for a distance of several feet.

The theory that the *fæces* are removed in order that all traces of the young should so far as possible be obliterated, does not seem to me satisfactory, as we find in the case of a bird like the Starling often sufficient evidence of a nest of young at a great distance. H. W. FORD-LINDSAY.

[The Blackbird, Song-Thrush and Mistle-Thrush have been recorded as swallowing the *fæces* of the young.—H.F.W.]

NORTHERN BULLFINCH IN SHETLAND.

ON October 23rd, 1910, I had the good fortune to see three Northern Bullfinches (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) in the garden at Leog, Lerwick. They flew out of a shrub and lighting on the ground at once began feeding within about twenty yards of where I was standing. I watched them with my naked eye and also with my glass for some time, but they were apparently too intent on feeding, as they paid no attention to me. All three birds were cocks, and, strange to say, when I first saw them, they were practically in the same place as the ones seen by me in November, 1905 (*Annals Scot. Nat. Hist.*, 1906, pp. 50, 115, and BRITISH BIRDS, I., p., 246). I left them feeding, but on looking for them next morning they were gone. Two cocks and a hen were reported as having been seen at Helendale, near Lerwick on the same day. JOHN S. TULLOCH.

CROSSBILLS NESTING IN ENGLAND.

[PLATE 3.]

THE coloured plate of the Crossbills which appears in this number is from a very careful drawing by Sergeant C. G. Davies (Cape Mounted Rifles). The material Mr. Davies worked from was collected in England during the spring of 1910, and I must here express my indebtedness to Sir Thomas H. C. Troubridge, Bart., who sent me a nest from which the young had flown, together with part of the tree in which the

nest was placed, and to Mr. Heatley Noble, who very kindly sent me the nestling, which was obtained in Norfolk on January 12th, 1910.—H.F.W.

IN KENT.

THE following details of the nesting of Crossbills in the neighbourhood of Maidstone, Kent, may be of interest. On January 11th, 1910, a small flock, about ten birds, was observed. On February 9th and 10th this flock was again seen, but on the 14th it had increased in numbers, while on the 18th we found about fifteen pairs and also saw small flocks flying overhead. On February 28th we found a Crossbill's nest ready for eggs at the extreme top of a lofty Scotch fir, close to a main road. On March 1st we found another nest containing two fresh eggs in a similar position. The nest of February 28th contained three eggs on March 7th, and the bird was sitting very close. At this time small flocks were flying about, from which one might have gathered that the birds were not yet nesting. We noticed the cock bird of this nest join these small flocks and then return to the nest. On March 8th we found three more nests, all high up on the *lateral* branches of Scotch fir, almost impossible to get at. At this time birds were in pairs and in flocks. On March 10th we discovered two more Crossbills' nests, one with three eggs and one with four eggs, one of these nests being placed at the extreme top of a spruce tree.

On March 16th we noted a new influx of birds in large flocks, and on the same day found two more nests, at which the birds were building very rapidly. These nests were more conspicuous and lower down.

We continued to find nests up to April 19th, when we had counted nineteen nests in all for certain. The birds were always to be seen around their nesting-places up to the end of June; during July they seemed gradually to disappear from their usual haunts; we noticed a small flock on August 1st and a few birds on August 7th, but since that date we have not seen them.

The nests contained three or four eggs, three being the rule, and, as far as one could judge, where there were three eggs *all three* hatched, while where there were four usually one or two were infertile. We *very rarely* saw the cock bird building. We noted that they were very thirsty birds and were drinking continually out of holes in trees where water had collected.

The nests always had a foundation of spruce fir and then strips of the inner bark of Spanish chestnut or birch, but

the lining was varied, wool, grass, string, feathers, and hair of cows being utilized. All the nests were near main roads. We should estimate the number of Crossbills in the district at about two hundred, but only a small proportion of these was breeding.

JAMES R. HALE.

T. P. ALDWORTH.

INCREASE OF STARLINGS IN CORNWALL AND DEVON.

SOME forty-five years ago, at a meeting of the Exeter Naturalists' Club, I called attention to the great increase of the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) in Devon and Cornwall, and elicited some interesting information on the subject from various persons. According to Mr. J. R. Collins, it was not till the spring of 1855 that the Starling was known to breed in Cornwall, and then only one pair nested at Trewardale, near Bodmin, increasing to five pairs in 1864. Even up to 1878 Mr. Rodd stated he had not succeeded in marking it as a resident west of Truro. Before 1892, however, the Starling had become a resident throughout Cornwall.

A few years since Starlings decreased considerably in the neighbourhood of Exeter, probably owing to the great droughts we experienced, but they have been gradually increasing again, and their numbers this year exceed anything I have ever seen before. I noticed the first large flocks as early as June 16th this year. All through August very large flocks assembled here every evening. Some tall elms near the River Exe serve as a rendezvous, and small flocks may be seen arriving from all parts until gradually the main body has assumed enormous dimensions. They fly about the river for an hour or so, making excursions over the marshes for a mile or more returning to the trees to rest. As darkness comes on they leave the trees and sweep low over the reed-beds in the middle of the river, and after a few evolutions suddenly drop *en masse* into the reeds, where they roost.

W. S. M. D'URBAN.

THE CONTINENTAL JAY IN KENT AND SUSSEX.

IN my *History of the Birds of Kent* (p. 196), I referred to the probability that the continental Jay (*Garrulus g. glandarius*) occurred in the county sometimes (? regularly) as a migrant in autumn. At that time the records, though suggestive, were few, and no specimens were available for examination. This autumn accordingly I wrote to Mr. H. S. D. Byron, to whom I am indebted for so much information with regard

to Thanet, asking him to keep a look-out for the arrival of migrant Jays, and if possible to procure me specimens. I may add that our native Jay (*G. g. rufitergum*) is a scarce species in that district. In due course he wrote me that two had been seen to arrive and fly into Dumpton Park on October 16th [1910], and that numbers were there on the 18th; five that were shot there on the 17th and 18th he sent to me, and later a sixth that he had himself shot on the 19th from a straggling flock of about thirty flying, high up, from north to south. One of the birds shot on the 17th proved to belong to the British race (*G. g. rufitergum*), and was presumably one of the few resident birds of the district; all the others belonged to the continental race (*G. g. glandarius*), and were, by the greyer tint of their backs, easily separable from the single bird sent with them and the other British examples in my possession.

Curiously enough, about the same time I had an opportunity of examining a Jay that was shot at Northiam, in Sussex, on October 16th, 1910, and this also belonged to the continental race.

Although there cannot be any doubt that the continental Jay has occurred many times in England (Dr. Hartert states that it occurs sporadically), I am not aware of any previously published records of fully identified examples, so that perhaps the publication of this note may draw others—which I hope it may—for besides confirming the suspected occurrence of this race in Kent (and Sussex), it emphasizes once more the importance of the study and recognition of geographical races in connection with the study of migration.

N. F. TICEHURST.

SUPPOSED EGG-DAUBING BY THE JACKDAW.

WITH reference to Dr. Wigglesworth's article (*supra*, p. 176), I took, some years ago, a clutch of Jackdaw's eggs from a hole in a tree near Reading which were bedaubed with *fresh, wet* cow-dung. (It was a dry afternoon.) As far as I can recollect all the eggs had been about equally treated. They were not otherwise remarkable, and were not exposed to the view of passing birds.

H. M. WALLIS.

ON May 3rd, 1901, when investigating the nests of a colony of Jackdaws which inhabited the hollow limbs of a large walnut tree in Kent, I discovered a nest, *placed deeply in a crevice*, containing four eggs, all of which were completely covered with a thin coating of argillaceous loam, interspersed

with rabbit-fur. The rabbit-fur was no doubt derived accidentally from the lining of the nest, but the eggs were so thoroughly and evenly daubed with clay that it is difficult to imagine that the coating was not applied intentionally by the parent bird. The weather immediately preceding the day on which I found the eggs had been fine; the nest itself was clean; the eggs, so far as could be seen through the clay covering, were of a normal type and had been incubated probably for less than a week. On the day that these eggs were found, I examined three or four other nests in the same tree, but in none of these were the eggs in any way peculiar.

Considered as a method of rendering the eggs inconspicuous, daubing them with clay appears to be superior to the alternative method sometimes adopted by the Jackdaw (that of covering them with fragments of nesting-material) since at the time of greatest danger the bird might be forced to leave the nest before she had sufficiently covered up the eggs. On the other hand, an almost impervious covering of clay might have an adverse effect on the development of the egg.

If the habit of egg-daubing be of advantage to Jackdaws as a race, I cannot see that it would necessarily show, as Dr. Wigglesworth suggests (p. 177), "a remarkable degree of intelligence on the part of the bird." Rather it appears probable that the habit was developed by the usual process of natural selection.

The fact that clay-daubed eggs have been recorded from widely separated parts of England appears to point to the conclusion that egg-daubing is not a new habit that is being acquired, but an old habit that is being lost. Further, it is possible that the precaution of concealing its eggs with nesting-material is also being abandoned as unnecessary, for this practice is by no means universal amongst Jackdaws, as it is amongst Blue Tits, Grebes and many other birds.

EDWARD EARLE.

SHORE-LARK IN IRELAND.

THE increasing frequency of the Shore-Lark (*Otocorys alpestris*) in Great Britain since 1830 led me to expect that it would ultimately visit Ireland.

One has just been received, perfectly fresh, but much damaged by shot, from Wicklow Head, where it was killed on November 4th, 1910, by Mr. John M. Trant, who did not know the bird was rare and new to this country.

RICHARD M. BARRINGTON.

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE RIGHT OVARY AND
ITS DUCT IN THE SPARROW-HAWK.

WITH regard to Dr. C. B. Ticehurst's note on this subject (*supra*, p. 188), I should like to say that so long ago as 1892 my attention was drawn to this matter by Mr. T. E. Gunn, the taxidermist of Norwich, with whom I have had intimate business relations for the past thirty years. He dissected an immature female Sparrow-Hawk shot on January 9th, 1892, and found both ovaries equally developed.

I do not know whether this was his first observation on the sexual glands of the female Sparrow-Hawk, but since then he has paid especial attention to these organs in the *Falconidæ*, and has accumulated a mass of valuable notes on the subject. I must have scores of letters from him, written during the last eighteen years bearing on the point with regard to raptorial birds that came into his hands for my collection or from other sources.

On May 13th, 1903, Mr. Gunn read a paper before the Science Gossip Club, an abstract of which is published in their report. He there refers to the question of two persistent ovaries in some detail, and mentions the Hen-Harrier, the Sparrow-Hawk, and the Kestrel as species in which he found both right and left ovaries present; he also quotes the passage from Newton's *Dictionary of Birds*, referred to by Dr. Ticehurst.

It is said there is nothing new under the sun, and perhaps someone before Mr. Gunn had been at work on the same subject and published his findings; unless this is so, it seems to me the priority belongs to Mr. Gunn, and that he should have the credit for the observation.

My collection, unfortunately, I cannot get at, but I have some of my note-books here, and I should like to give two or three extracts bearing on this question of a persistent right ovary.

From the small series of skins in my possession, it is quite impossible to be at all positive what the proportion of double ovaries to single is in a state of nature. In the case of my skins, about one in three had both ovaries developed, but a larger number might easily show that ratio to be either too high or too low, and I lay no stress on the accuracy of the numerical proportion. What the series does show is that, while the persistence of the right ovary is quite common in the case of the Sparrow-Hawk, it is certainly not the rule.

1. *A. nisus*. ♀ imm. Shot Jan. 9, 1892. Dissected by T. E. Gunn. Both ovaries equally developed.
2. *A. nisus*. ♀ imm. Apr. 11, 1892. Dissected by F. M. O. Both ovaries well developed, and contained numerous ova of various sizes. I think the forward condition of the ova shows the bird would have bred this season, though it was certainly only a last year's bird.
3. *A. nisus*. ♂ and ♀. Nest of 4 eggs. May 24, 1894. ♂ probably fully 4 years old; a very beautiful specimen, with deep red breast and underparts. ♀ probably a 2nd year's birds, with light margins to the feathers of the upper wing-coverts. (This and the previous specimen show another fact, namely, that the female Sparrow-Hawk frequently breeds before attaining mature plumage.) "Both ovaries equally developed. This is the second instance of equal development of the sexual organs in the female bird I have *recently* come across" (T. E. G., *in litt.*, 2/6/94). This seems to me a particularly interesting example, as the pair were certainly breeding, and four eggs had been laid at the time the female was shot. The rough sketch of the ovaries shows, I think, clearly enough that the right ovary is at least as large as the left, and that both are developing ova.
4. *A. nisus*. ♀ imm. Jan. 31, 1907. "It shows 2 ovaries nearly equal in size and development."



I have intentionally confined myself in this brief note to the sexual glands of the female Sparrow-Hawk. This species is still common in Great Britain and is rigorously and legitimately persecuted by the game-preserved whenever and wherever it is met with, so that there should be no difficulty in any naturalist obtaining a large supply of material to work upon, if he wishes to investigate this point.

But the occasional persistence of both ovaries is not confined to the Sparrow-Hawk. It may even be that this persistence is no more uncommon in the Sparrow-Hawk than in some other raptorial groups, the genus *Circus*, for example. But the material for examination is so much more scanty that it is hard to deduce any reliable *data* as to the frequency of the occurrence.

I have in my collection in all four female Hen-Harriers (*C. cyaneus*); and of these four, two had both ovaries equally developed and two only the single ovary on the left-hand side.

Mr. Gunn has, I think, notes of other Harriers that have passed through his hands with both ovaries persistent. He also found a Kestrel with right as well as left ovaries present.

This latter instance must, I imagine, be a very unusual occurrence. The Kestrel is far the commonest of our Hawks, and numbers of specimens are killed by gamekeepers every

year, so that in the case of this bird, as with the Sparrow-Hawk, ample material is readily available. Among my own skins I do not think I have one female that showed a right ovary on dissection.

F. MENTEITH OGILVIE.

SOME additional information will be found in the introductory section to the *Naturgeschichte der Vogel Mitteleuropas*, Vol. I. (1905), p. 60 (Der Bau des Vogelkörpers). In this article, by Professor O. Taschenberg, after stating that as a rule the female sexual organs are not symmetrically developed and that the left ovary and oviduct are alone functional, the writer goes on to state that, "it happens not very rarely that remains of the right ovary are retained, especially in the Sparrow-Hawk and Buzzard, much more irregularly in other *Accipitres*, and still more rarely in the Owls; isolated cases have been observed in the Pigeons, Parrots (*e.g.*, in *Sittace macaruanna*), in *Corvus corone*, *Ciconia ciconia* and *nigra*. Remains of the right oviduct have also been occasionally found both in the shape of a string at the distal end as well as a duct opening into the cloaca. Examples of this are the domestic Pigeon, Duck, Goose, Whooper Swan, White Stork, Coot, Waterhen, Short-eared Owl and Sea-Eagle." (Translation.)

In the same work (Vol. V. (1900), p. 70), O. von Riesenthal quotes Dr. Gadow as stating that "according to Stannius the right ovary is tolerably developed in *Astur* and *Buteo*, but much less consistently in the other Raptores." (Translation.)

Probably the exceptions referred to by Newton were those mentioned by Professor Taschenberg, among which the Sparrow-Hawk is definitely recorded.

F. C. R. JOURDAIN.

PINTAILS IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

In the *Transactions of the North Staffordshire Field Club* for 1909, I reported that two immature Pintails (*Dafla acuta*) had been shot on December 11th, 1909, near Stone, by Messrs. Gilbert and Neil Harris. This year (1910) five of these ducks (all immature) have been obtained at the same place. *The Victoria History* says of this species:—"A winter visitor of which several occurrences have been recorded." W. WELLS BLADEN.

[The articles in the *Victoria History* were written about 1905, and much material has come to hand since. The Pintail, though far from common, appears to occur fairly regularly and generally in immature plumage.—Eds.]

WIGEON IN SUMMER IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

THE following dates at which I have seen Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) during 1910 on Bellfields Reservoir, Staffordshire.

may be interesting. On April 14th I saw about twenty; on July 27th I counted eight, which seemed to be mostly old drakes; and on August 5th I saw about twenty. This reservoir is a large sheet of water, so there may very possibly have been more. During September I frequently saw Wigeon, and I think their numbers increased slightly during October. Unfortunately I was unable to visit the reservoir during May and June.

F. A. MONCKTON.

LONG-TAILED DUCK IN CHESHIRE.

A LONG-TAILED Duck (*Harelda glacialis*), apparently an adult female, frequented Marbury Mere, near Northwich, from the end of July to the end of September, 1910. It was noticed, as a strange duck, by the gamekeeper on July 29th, and on August 6th, 7th and 27th it was seen by Mr. Travers Hadfield, though never clearly enough for him to identify it. On September 12th, when in company with Mr. Hadfield, I had an excellent view of it, and saw, by the absence of wing-bar, the white collar and eye-stripe, the short bill and general build of the bird, that it was undoubtedly a Long-tailed Duck. Two days later it swam to within fifty feet of my hiding place, in a covert, and I could then clearly see, even without a glass, the lead-blue bill and hazel irides.

The Long-tailed Duck is only known in Cheshire as an occasional winter-visitor to the estuaries and coasts, and its appearance on an inland water at this season is suspicious. I have made inquiries from several owners of captive wild ducks in Lancashire and Cheshire, but not one of them has ever had this species in captivity. Beyond the fact that the bird remained in one locality for two months—I saw it several times during September, and I believe it was seen at the very end of the month by the keeper—there was nothing in its behaviour to suggest that it had been in captivity; it was very shy, and flew well.

T. A. COWARD.

RINGED PLOVERS' UNUSUAL CLUTCHES.

ON May 10th, 1910, on the Crumbles at Eastbourne, I found a nest of the Ringed Plover (*Ægialitis hiaticola*), containing five eggs, all practically alike. I watched the female off and on the eggs again, the male keeping watch not far off. I saw no sign of a second female, and I have no doubt, from the great similarity of the eggs, that they were the produce of one female.

In another nest I found two out of the four eggs had the usual ground-colour of fawn replaced by blue-green at the

small end, about half an inch deep. I have also found this peculiarity in eggs of the Common Partridge.

C. W. COLTRUP.

[The presence of a cap, or more usually a zone of blue-green, has been noticed on the eggs of many Waders as well as on those of some Terns and Gulls. It is probably due to the pressure of the sphincter muscle preventing the deposit of superficial colouring matter after the shell has absorbed the first deposit of colouring matter (biliverdin) in its soft condition. This green deposit is general, as may be seen by holding the egg up to the light.—F.C.R.J.]

AVOCETS IN SUSSEX.

ON September 3rd, 1910, Mr. M. J. Nicoll, whilst walking on the Parade at St. Leonards, saw a flock of seven Avocets (*Recurvirostra avocetta*) flying in a westerly direction about fifty yards from the shore. The birds settled at Pevensey Marshes, some few miles west of St. Leonards, where one was shot the same evening. Two were shot the next day (September 4th) and one on September 5th. These four birds were sent to Mr. Bristow for preservation, where I saw them on September 16th. They were all four adult birds, in fine condition, and on dissection proved to be two cocks and two hens.

H. W. FORD-LINDSAY.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER IN WESTMORLAND.

ON February 24th, 1910, after two or three days' gale, a male Black-throated Diver (*Colymbus arcticus*) was shot on Lake Windermere by M. Brockbank. It is an adult bird in winter-plumage and is now in my possession.

D. G. GARNETT.

NOTES ON BIRDS IN ORKNEY IN 1910.

BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*).—An increasing species nesting all over the mainland (Pomona) not only where there is cultivation and in the hedges, but also on the moors on the ground in heather-banks. Average number of eggs noted five.

THE MISTLE-THRUSH (*T. viscivorus*).—At least three pairs on the mainland (Pomona), near Finstown. We saw two nests in mountain ash trees, each with four eggs on May 20th. This bird has not nested, I believe, before in Orkney, and only recently has been noticed as a regular visitor.

WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia cinerea*).—A pair were in the garden at Balfour Castle, Shapinsay, between May 30th and June 3rd, and from their behaviour had a nest close by.

BLACKCAP (*S. atricapilla*).—We saw two pairs between May 30th and June 3rd, and one pair on the Island of Shapinsay undoubtedly had a nest.

SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*).—A few pairs round Binscarth had nests in the farm-buildings, and there were a few pairs round the farm-buildings at Balfour.

SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*).—A few pairs nest in Orkney. We put rings on the young on June 6th.

PINTAIL (*Dafila acuta*).—Increasing in numbers; most probably has nested in Orkney for the last two or three years, if not longer, but this year we found several nests with eggs and also caught some ten or twelve young on June 4th, and put rings on their legs. We saw on one occasion nine Pintail drakes together (June 10th).

TUFTED DUCK (*Fuligula cristata*).—We saw several pairs on May 25th, and found two nests with eggs on June 14th. The bird is increasing as a breeding-species.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa belgica*).—We saw a single bird, which was very tame, on June 7th. JAMES R. HALE.
T. P. ALDWORTH.

NOTES ON BRITISH BIRDS IN CONFINEMENT.—MR. J. L. Bonhote, the newly-appointed editor of the *Avicultural Magazine*, contributes to that journal (Third Series, Vol. I., pp. 259-267 and pp. 299-310) some interesting notes from observations made by himself in his own aviaries. We may quote the following, referring to British species:—*Song-Thrush*.—It is noted that both the continental and British races of this bird have been kept, and that they retain their distinctive shades of colour. *Tree-Sparrow*.—One is seven years eleven months old, and is still living; the longest-lived of the author's Passerine birds of which he has note. *Snow-Bunting*.—The author states that this species does not assume adult plumage until the second year. *Starling*.—Examples with a dull white ring round the iris are females. *Scops Owl*.—Incubation-period twenty-five days. *Common Buzzard*.—Two birds kept over ten years and over four years respectively were of the dark phase, and the plumage did not alter in the least with age. *Mallard*.—Ducks choose their own drakes, and in most cases birds once paired will, if opportunity occurs, mate again every year, although they may have been separated during the winter. The drakes remain with the ducks until the young are hatched, after which they retire to moult. The assumption of the eclipse-plumage of the drakes is to a large extent dependent on the hatching of the young, and generally first shows itself about five weeks after the duck commences to incubate. *Turtle-Dove*.—Incubation-period thirteen to fourteen days. *Water-Rail*.—Moult its flight-feathers simultaneously, like the rest of the Rails.

Moor-hen.—The bill loses its bright red colour for a month or two in autumn.

FIRE-CRESTED WREN IN SUSSEX.—Mr. B. C. R. Langford reports to the *Field* (10. IX. 1910, p. 537) that a specimen of *Regulus ignicapillus* was caught at Eastbourne, brought to him for identification, and subsequently released uninjured on September 4th, 1910.

RED-BACKED SHRIKES IN IRELAND.—Mr. R. M. Barrington records (*Irish Nat.*, 1910, p. 243) that an immature example of *Lanius collurio* was taken on October 1st, 1908, at Wicklow Head Lighthouse (this has already been recorded in our pages, cf. Vol. II., p. 409), and that another immature bird was captured on September 26th, 1910, at the Fastnet Rock Lighthouse. The latter is the third occurrence of the species in Ireland.

WRYNECK IN ROXBURGH.—Mr. Harvie-Brown records (*Ann. S.N.H.*, 1910, p. 248) an example of *Iynx torquilla* as shot at Jedburgh, but no date is given.

GREENLAND FALCONS IN SUTHERLAND AND ROSS.—A male *Falco candicans* was shot at Rogart, Sutherlandshire, on March 8th, 1910, and a young female was caught on the Adross Moors, Ross-shire, on March 9th, 1910 (Annie C. Jackson, *Ann. S.N.H.*, 1910, p. 246).

KESTREL CATCHING A BAT.—During an excursion of the Glasgow Natural History Society to Cassilis, in Ayrshire, on March 26th, 1910, the members were fortunate enough to see a Kestrel (*F. tinnunculus*) capture a Pipistrelle (*V. pipistrellus*), which had been disturbed from a tree-trunk about noon and was flying about in the sunshine (*Glasgow Nat.*, Vol. II., p. 137).

PINIONED WHOOPER SWANS NESTING IN SHETLAND.—It should be put on record that a pair of Whooper Swans, which were wounded and afterwards pinioned, one in 1905 and the other in 1907, have this year mated and hatched their young in Shetland (T. Henderson, Junr., *Ann. S.N.H.*, 1910, p. 245).

RUDDY SHELD-DUCKS IN CAITHNESS.—Mr. David Bruce exhibited to the Glasgow Natural History Society on May 31st, 1910, a pair of *Tadorna casarca*, which had been shot near Scarsclet on June 27th, 1910 (*Glasgow Nat.*, Vol. II., p. 134). Whether these were genuine wild birds or not it seems impossible to say.

EGGS OF THE REEVE FROM LANCASHIRE.—At the October meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, Mr. P. F. Bunyard exhibited a clutch of eggs taken in Lancashire on April 20th,

1910, and sent to him as those of a Snipe. Mr. Bunyard, however, considered that the eggs were undoubtedly those of a Reeve (*Machetes pugnax*). (cf. *Bull. B.O.C.*, Vol. XXVII., p. 17.)

RUFFS AND SPOTTED REDSHANKS IN EAST RENFREW.—Mr. J. Robertson records (*Glasgow Nat.*, Vol. II., p. 142) that he saw a pair of *Machetes pugnax* on August 14th, 1910, and a single bird on August 21st in east Renfrew. On June 26th, 1910, he saw a single *Totanus fuscus* in the same district, and again at the same place on August 14th and 21st, while on August 27th and September 4th he saw three birds of this species, and on September 11th two and September 18th one.

SPOTTED REDSHANK NEAR ABERDEEN.—Mr. L. N. G. Ramsay records (*Ann. S.N.H.*, 1910, p. 249) that he saw an example of *Totanus fuscus* at Donmouth, near Aberdeen, on August 30th, 1910.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT IN ROSS-SHIRE.—Miss Annie C. Jackson records (*Ann. S.N.H.*, 1910, p. 247) that she saw a specimen of *Limosa belgica* at the Cromarty Firth on March 30th, 1910, and again on April 8th, but by April 14th it had departed.

BLACK TERNS IN SURREY.—Half a dozen examples of *Hydrochelidon nigra* were observed on August 15th, 1910, at Frensham Pond by Mr. E. C. Arnold (*Zool.*, 1910, p. 393).

INCREASE OF BREEDING COLONIES OF THE BLACK-HEADED GULL.—With reference to my note on this subject (*supra*, p. 182), I regret that I made a mistake with regard to the Dorset colony. Mr. A. Bankes writes me that he knows the colony well and that it is carefully protected. During the last ten or twelve years small offshoots of this colony appear to have settled in the surrounding districts, and Mr. Bankes thinks that this has been due to overcrowding in the main colony, where the available nesting-sites are limited. The colony, which had been harried was that near Hurn, five or six miles from the mouth of the Avon (Hants), as I am informed by Mrs. E. D. Leech. Mr. Thornton Mackeith writes that a new colony of some one thousand birds has been discovered in Renfrewshire.—H.F.W.

MANX SHEARWATER IN WILTSHIRE.—A specimen of *Puffinus anglorum* was picked up at Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, "after the great storm on August, 29th, 1910" (D. P. Harrison, *Field*, 13. IX. 1910, p. 498).