

NOTES

RECOVERY OF MARKED BIRDS.

IN our last number I appealed for subscriptions towards the expenses of the "BRITISH BIRDS' Marking Scheme," which has now grown to such large proportions, and I have to acknowledge the receipt of generous donations from the following:—Major-General V. Hatton, Mr. R. O. Blyth, Mr. H. L. Popham, Mr. H. S. Greg and Mr. H. S. Gladstone. Further subscriptions will be welcome.—H.F.W.

HEDGE-SPARROW (*Accentor modularis*).—B.B., No. A975, marked by Mr. Norman H. Joy at Bradfield, Berkshire, on July 1st, 1910, as an adult. Recovered at the same place on November 22nd, 1910.

STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*).—B.B., No. 11,774, marked by Mr. W. E. Suggitt at Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, on September 10th, 1910. Recovered at Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire, on December 10th, 1910. Reported by Mr. M. Ormond.

TEAL (*Nettion crecca*).—B.B., No. 3939, marked by Mr. Thos. Hepburn at Old Hall Marsh, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Essex. The bird was caught up with others at Netherby, Cumberland, and was in all probability bred there. It was turned down in Essex when full grown with wing clipped. Recovered at Netherby, Cumberland, at the end of November, 1910. Reported by Sir Richard Graham, Bart. This bird has thus returned to its place of origin apparently by a cross-country journey—a most remarkable record. Another bird of the same lot was reported from the coast of Schleswig in August (*cf. antea*, p. 178).

BLACK-HEADED GULLS (*Larus ridibundus*).—B.B., No. 30,182, marked by Messrs. Robinson and Smalley at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on June 11th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered near Le Faou, rade de Brest, Finistère, France, on December 1st, 1910. Reported by Dr. L. Veillet.

B.B., No. 9583, marked by Major H. A. F. Magrath, at Loch Spynie, near Elgin, on June 4th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered on Sanday, Orkney Islands, on November 26th, 1910. Reported by Mr. T. Wilson.

B.B., No. 30,010, marked by Messrs. Robinson and Smalley at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on June 10th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at Moor Row, Cumberland, on December 6th, 1910. Reported by Mr. A. Thwaites.

B.B., No. 30,975, marked by Messrs. Robinson and Smalley at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on June 25th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at Backworth, Northumberland, on December 12th, 1910. Reported by Mr. James Laing.

A MARKED BLACK-HEADED GULL.

ON November 29th, 1910, I had brought me for inspection an adult Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*), on the right leg of which there was an aluminium ring. This latter I found to be one of those used by the Rossitten "Vogelwarte," No. 1201. The bird had been picked up dead near Lowestoft, Suffolk, that morning, it having been killed by flying into some telegraph-wires during a storm the previous night. On communicating with Dr. Thienemann, the director of the "Vogelwarte," he informs me that this bird was ringed as a nestling at the Rossitten gull-colony on July 16th, 1908. The ring had thus been on the bird two years and four months, and I may add that there was *no sign of any injury whatsoever* to the bird's leg.

Rossitten is 800 miles a little north of east from Lowestoft.

Another "Rossitten Gull," which was ringed on the same day as this one, was shot on Breydon Water, ten miles north of Lowestoft, on October 15th, 1909 (*vide* Vol. III., p. 220).

C. B. TICEHURST.

THE DOWN-PLUMAGE AND MOUTH-COLORATION OF SOME NESTLING BIRDS.

JACKDAW. *Corvus monedula*.

Down. Pale grey. Moderate in length.

Distribution. In addition to the humeral, ulnar, spinal and femoral tracts described by Mr. A. G. Leigh (Vol. III., p. 154), there are scanty inner supra-orbital tracts.

Coloration of the Mouth. Deep orange; flanges, pale lemon-yellow.

RING-OUZEL. *Turdus torquatus*.

Down. Yellowish. Moderately long. Very scanty outer supra-orbital tracts.

Distribution. Inner and outer supra-orbital, occipital, humeral, ulnar and spinal.

Coloration of the Mouth. Lemon-yellow. (*cf.* Vol. III., p. 325).

GREY WAGTAIL. *Motacilla melanope*.

Down. Dusky grey. Moderately long. Very scanty crural and ventral tracts.

Distribution. Inner and outer supra-orbital, occipital, humeral, ulnar, spinal, femoral, crural and ventral. There is also a distinct tract on the uropygium.

Coloration of the Mouth. Deep orange; flanges, lemon-yellow. (cf. Vol. II., p. 196).

CUCKOO. *Cuculus canorus.*

Down. Absent.

Coloration of the Mouth. Orange; flanges, lemon-yellow.

COLORATION OF THE MOUTH OF THE CARRION-CROW.

Corvus corone.

It is stated in various works on British birds that the mouth of the Carrion-Crow is flesh-coloured at all ages. For instance, Howard Saunders in his *Manual* says—“The inside of the mouth is always pale flesh-colour; whereas in the young Rook it is dark flesh-colour, soon turning livid and afterwards slate colour.”

This is not a fact, for old Carrion-Crows have the whole of the interior of the mouth several shades darker than the adult Rook. I have shot several with the whole of the mouth blackish, and many in intermediate stages with the flesh-colour streaked with black. The posterior portion of the mouth is the last to turn dark. The Hooded Crow does not differ from the Carrion-Crow, undergoing a similar change.

ERIC B. DUNLOP.

LAND-BIRDS SEEN ON BOARD-SHIP BETWEEN LONDON AND PORT SAID.

THE following brief record of British land-birds which came on board or were seen from the P. & O. liner, in which I sailed for India from London on the 21st October, 1910, may be of interest to readers of BRITISH BIRDS.

We got under way from Tilbury about 2.30 p.m. The sky was overcast and there was a fresh easterly breeze blowing. The first bird-passenger noted was a male Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*), which appeared on the decks towards dusk just as we cleared the mouth of the Thames. This bird must have been very tired as it allowed itself to be caught without much effort. On being released, however, it fluttered about and eventually disappeared to leeward.

Next morning we were well down Channel, the wind being still in the east, and several birds were to be seen flying about the ship. These consisted principally of Chaffinches (*Fringilla cœlebs*), and Sky-larks (*Alauda arvensis*), but I also noted one or two Goldcrests (*Regulus cristatus*). Later in the

day, additions in the shape of a few Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), alighted on the boat deck amidship, and towards nightfall as we were entering the Bay a Song-Thrush (*Turdus musicus*), was observed flying around.

On the morning of the 23rd October we were well in the centre of the Bay on a line between Ushant and Cape Finisterre, and the wind which was still in the east had freshened considerably during the night. I did not expect to see many birds this day as we were rather to the west of the main autumn route of migrants. What was my astonishment therefore on coming on deck to see birds on every hand flying round us out at sea and perched about on and 'tween decks. At one time there must have been well over fifty small birds on the ship. Some of these were no doubt passengers from the day before which had clung to the ship—notably the Chaffinches. One of these, a handsome cock, found his way into the saloon companion, where I fed him on crumbs.

The following species were noted during the day. Robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) several; Chaffinches, a few; Redstarts (*Ruticilla phœnicurus*) several; a Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*); Willow-Warblers (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) several; Wood-Warblers (*P. sibilatrix*) a few; a Reed-Warbler (*Acrocephalus streperus*); Sky-Larks, a few; Starlings, a few; a Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*). This latter was observed by a passenger, an officer in the Indian Army, who has a good knowledge of birds. These birds all alighted on the ship, taking now and then short flights to sea and returning. All seemed tired and hungry. About mid-day the wind veered round to the west and blew a strong breeze. Those birds which now took to wing found it hard to regain the ship. The Reed-Warbler allowed me to catch it. It was plainly in the last stages of exhaustion and its death could only have been a matter of a few hours at most. By sundown the birds gradually disappeared, and next morning off the coasts of Portugal I noted no birds on board. Although I did not actually see any birds die I think it probable that the majority of our feathered passengers to date perished on board or in the sea. Doubtless, in most cases it is severe exhaustion or the sensation of approaching death which compels migrants to take refuge on ships. They can rarely pick up sustenance thereon to enable them to recoup their energies and continue their journeys, and as often as not are, while clinging to the ship, carried hopelessly beyond their capacity for making the land. Besides what bird in full possession of all its activities would face the unusual (and

terrifying to it) sights, sounds and disturbances of a steamship's decks ?

Next day, the 25th, only one Chaffinch was observed.

No more land-birds were observed till the 30th October with the exception of a solitary Goldfinch which flew round the ship and disappeared as we were steaming along the S.E. coast of Spain and heading for Marseilles. From Marseilles to the Straits of Messina we had a strong head wind. On the 30th when S.E. of the Straits about Lat. 36.50 N. Long. 18.27 E. the following birds were noted on board :—A Song-Thrush ; a Robin ; a White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba*) ; a Quail (*Coturnix communis*) and a young Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). The Peregrine was desperately hungry and did not take long to select a victim from this list. His choice rested on the Quail. I did not see the actual kill, but have no doubt that the stoop was made when the unfortunate Quail was flying round the ship. The Falcon was very shy and kept to the mast and shroud-heads. He perched with difficulty and proceeded to break up his kill on the wooden fore-cross-stay of the Marconi wires running between the masts, but the wobbling of this unsteady perch very nearly made him drop his prey, so he shifted to a steadier perch on a block near the crosstrees, where he had his meal in comfort. After this, and evidently refreshed for his onward journey to the African coast, he disappeared towards sundown.

By 10 a.m. the next morning, the 31st, we were off the S.E. corner of Crete, and during the day the following birds were noted :—A White Wagtail ; a Robin (by a passenger) ; a Sky-Lark ; a Chaffinch (by a passenger) ; a Song-Thrush ; and a Sparrow-Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*). As in the case of the Peregrine, the Sparrow-Hawk was not long to take advantage of the food-supply to hand, and after a short rest on the davit-stays and awnings proceeded to give chase to the Sky-Lark. The quarry in this case after being chased round the ship took refuge under the feet of a lady sitting on the deck, but the Hawk was not to be denied and following close snatched up the unfortunate Lark before the lady could rescue it, and much to her indignation and that of several other ladies close by who witnessed the deed, and whose sympathies were very naturally all with the victim, the Hawk retired with and devoured its prey on the edge of the awning, where I was able to get within a yard of and watch it. Later and towards dusk I saw it stoop at another small bird near the ship, which as I subsequently learnt it also secured.

Next day, the 31st, when in the vicinity of the mouth of the Nile, I saw two Nightjars (*Caprimulgus europæus*) on the

awnings and also some Warblers, which would not settle to enable me to identify them. A Linnet was also noted by a passenger.

About mid-day we steamed into Port Said, and my subsequent observations, therefore, lie outside the scope of the present notes.

H. A. F. MAGRATH.

[The importance of studying geographical races in connection with migration-observations does not yet seem to be fully realized. Major Magrath's most interesting observations would have been far more valuable had he preserved a few of the specimens which came on board, so that we might have known, for example, whether the Goldcrests and Song-Thrushes were of the British or Continental race.—EDS.]

REMOVAL OF FÆCES BY BIRDS.

REFERRING to Mr. H. W. Ford-Lindsay's notes on this subject (*supra*, p. 210), I have observed the removal of the *fæces* by the following birds: Swallow, Starling, and Spotted Flycatcher. Mr. R. Kearton's moving pictures of birds distinctly show that the Song-Thrush *swallows* the *fæces*, and he tells me that other films prove that the Wryneck *removes* and the Mistle-Thrush *swallows* the *fæces*.

JOHN R. B. MASEFIELD.

NOTES ON HAMPSHIRE BIRDS.

SPOONBILL (*Platalea leucorodia*).—Two out of a party of three were shot at Beaulieu on November 5th, 1906.

SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*).—Since the publication of the *Birds of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* by the Rev. J. E. Kelsall and P. W. Munn, nests of this species have frequently been found at Beaulieu, and the fact that at least two pairs regularly breed there is well established.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa belgica*).—In the *Birds of Hampshire* the Black-tailed Godwit is referred to as an occasional visitor to the Hampshire coast, but at Beaulieu I think we should class it as a regular autumn-migrant. I have myself seen it there almost every year. I recollect the late John Penn shooting a Black-tailed and a Bar-tailed Godwit at one shot at Beaulieu in October, 1898.

THOMAS H. C. TROUBRIDGE.

CONTINENTAL ROBINS, SONG-THRUSHES, AND GOLDCRESTS IN EAST ANGLIA, YORKSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

ON September 14th, 1910, with a rush of Redstarts, Pied Flycatchers, Garden-Warblers and Blackcaps, some Continental Robins (*Erithacus r. rubecula*) arrived at Lowestoft,

Suffolk; probably also with this migration came some Blue-throats, but they (two) were not detected till the 16th. These Robins were seen up till the 16th, after which there were none till November 1st, when a few more had arrived with large numbers of the Continental Song-Thrush (*Turdus m. musicus*); in a day or so these had gone. From about October 28th to November 4th Robins were said to be plentiful in the gardens on the Yarmouth Denes, Norfolk, and specimens which I examined belonged to the continental form. In the field the paleness of the breast of this form, as compared with our birds, is quite noticeable, if one is fortunate enough to see its breast, for it is one of the most skulking and shy birds when seen on our coast—very different in habit from the resident Robins seen in the same spot.

During the last fortnight of October there were four days on which there were arrivals of Song-Thrushes, culminating in a big rush on November 1st. The great majority of these birds belonged to the continental form, and all those which I saw on the last day certainly did. They remained on the coast only a day or two. Here, again, this form is distinguishable in the field, to the practised eye, from our form by the more olivaceous coloured upper-parts.

Although both the Continental Robin and Song-Thrush doubtless occur on the coast of East Anglia every autumn, and probably have been obtained before, I do not think that there has been any previous definite record of the fact.

The advantage of studying and recognising geographical forms in connection with migration will, I think, be obvious to the greatest sceptic.

C. B. TICEHURST.

In connection with Dr. Ticehurst's note I must record that I obtained specimens of *Erithacus r. rubecula* between September 21st and 25th, 1905, at Holkham, near Wells, Norfolk; on October 27th, 1909, on the south Yorkshire coast; and on April 1st, 1906, from St. Catherine's Lighthouse, Isle of Wight, while two were taken at the same light on the night of October 23rd, 1908, and many were reported with British Robins on the night of October 31st, 1908, and a few of the continental race only on November 3rd (*Bull. B.O.C.*, Vol. XXVI. (Mig. Rep.), p. 237). I have also identified a specimen in Mr. G. H. Caton Haigh's collection, dated North Cotes, Lincolnshire, October 6th, 1898. Of *Turdus m. musicus*, I have specimens from Holkham, obtained on September 23rd, 1905, from the south Yorkshire coast on September 22nd, 1909; and from St. Catherine's Lighthouse on April 22nd and 28th, 1906, and have examined a specimen in Mr. Caton Haigh's collection dated October 19th, 1892,

North Cotes, Lincs. Of the Continental Goldcrest (*Regulus c. cristatus*), I have specimens from Holkham on September 21st and 26th, 1905, and from the south Yorkshire coast on October 27th, 1909, and have examined specimens in Mr. Caton Haigh's collection from North Cotes, Lincs, dated September 28th, 1898; October 5th, 1897; October 18th, 19th and 20th, 1892. H. F. WITHERBY.

IMMIGRATION OF CONTINENTAL GREAT TITS IN NORFOLK, SUFFOLK, KENT AND SCILLY.

ONE of the features of the autumn-migration of 1910 on the east coast has been the great influx of Great Tits. On October 1st, I saw the first arrivals on the Lowestoft Denes; on the 12th, I shot a bird in a bush near the sea and saw others. On the 13th and 14th there was a gale from the N.E. and E. becoming less strong on the 15th and shifting to the S.E. On this latter day and on the next I picked up two Great Tits on the tide-mark and two more were also found and one brought to me. On the 17th there was a very large movement to the south of Chaffinches, Bramblings, Greenfinches and Linnets, along the Lowestoft Denes, many flocks passing between 7 and 8.30 a.m.; amongst these finches I identified Blue and Great Tits, as well as an unmixed flock of the latter birds. All these birds were in fairly compact flocks flying steadily south along the ridge of the Denes and not halting anywhere. Out of one of the flocks I secured a Great Tit. During the middle of October both Blue and Great Tits were, I am informed, unusually plentiful in the gardens round Yarmouth, and on November 1st, a flock of about twenty Great Tits was seen by Mr. Quinton, a bird-catcher, arriving over the sea from the N.E. on to the Yarmouth North Denes. On the next two days, he caught several there, and I received four from him.

On examining all these Great Tits, I find they belong to the continental form *Parus major major*. The occurrence of this sub-species in Great Britain has long been suspected and doubtless birds seen in the Shetlands (*Ann. Scot. Nat. Hist.*, 1907, p. 50) and in Caithness (*t.c.*, 1904, p. 188) belonged to this form, but, so far as I am aware, this is the first time that it has been positively proved to have occurred in the British Isles. C. B. TICEHURST.

Mr. C. D. Borrer sent me a Great Tit for examination which had been shot at Cley, Norfolk, with others on October 10th, and this proved to be an example of the Continental form. On November 20th, Mr. T. H. Nelson wrote me that there had been a great irruption of Tits and other birds on

the Yorkshire coast, but no specimens of the Tits were forthcoming. It should be mentioned that in his *Birds of Yorkshire* (Vol. 1., p. 108) Mr. Nelson states that Great and Blue Tits are frequently noted as migrants on the coast and that they have been known to alight on vessels in the North Sea. A movement of both species observed on the Yorkshire coast on October 30th, 1878, corresponded with a similar migration at Heligoland. It is most important, however, that examples of these migrants should be properly identified, and I think that Dr. C. B. Ticehurst is the first to have done so in the case of the Great Tit, while we have no actual proof, from the identification of specimens, so far as I know, of the occurrence of the Continental Blue Tit.—H.F.W.

In the *Field* of November 12th, Mr. F. W. Frohawk quoted a letter dated November 1st, 1910 from Mr. C. J. King, of St. Mary's, Isles of Scilly, that at that date St. Agnes (one of the most south-westerly islands of the group) was swarming with Great Tits and Goldcrests. In compliance with my request Mr. Frohawk very kindly procured one of these Great Tits from his correspondent, during the last week in November. The bird was accompanied by a note to the effect that the Goldcrests had left a day or two after their arrival and the Tits were then leaving. On examining this bird I find that it too belongs to the continental form.

Through the kindness of Mr. H. S. D. Byron I have also had the opportunity of examining another of these Continental Great Tits; it was shot by him at St. Peters, in Thanet (E. Kent) on October 26th, 1910, and he informs me that Great Tits were very (and unusually) plentiful in that district during the latter part of October, which corresponds fairly exactly with Dr. C. B. Ticehurst's account of the immigration on the east coast further north. It is fortunate that Mr. Byron procured one of these birds, for it was owing to his being unaware of their possible origin that he made no exact observations on their date of arrival and departure.—N.F.T.

THE BRITISH WILLOW-TIT IN SUFFOLK.

ON October 17th, 1910, I shot an example of the British Willow-Tit (*P. atricapillus kleinschmidti*) in a hedge close to the sea, near Lowestoft, Suffolk. This bird, which was with some Great Tits was the only one of its kind seen, and I believe it to have been a migrant, though how far it had travelled it is impossible to say; the nearest woods would be two or three miles distant. So far as I know this is the first time this bird has been recognised in Suffolk or in East Anglia. I am indebted to Dr. Hartert for confirming my identification.

C. B. TICEHURST.

NUMBERS OF YOUNG IN THE BROODS OF SWALLOWS AND HOUSE-MARTINS IN 1910.

HAVING marked nearly two hundred of these birds during the summer of 1910, perhaps the numbers in each brood may be of interest, as showing the small proportion of full broods in north Lancashire, where all these were marked; indeed all but six broods were within a mile of the town of Lancaster.

Twenty-five nests of Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) were visited during June and July, and of these eleven were full broods of five, nine of four, and five of three. During August out of twenty broods, only four were of five, eight were of four, three of three, and no less than five of two only; while during September two broods of three were marked. One brood of four in June contained a dead young one in addition, and the same applies to two broods of three and four in August.

Small broods were, however, more noticeable in the case of House-Martins, in which I failed to find a full brood during the whole summer. Of ten nests visited during June and July, four contained four young, four contained three, and two only two; and the only two nests visited in August contained four and three respectively. In a certain cart-shed at one farm there were over a dozen Martins' nests, in all of which (except one, which contained two healthy young) the young were dead in the nest, although no old birds had been shot there, and there were plenty flying about.

Bad as the past summer was, it was far eclipsed by that of 1909, which was the worst year I ever remember. True I was not marking in June, but in July I could only find six broods of Swallows—three of four and three of three, two in August of four and three respectively, and three in September of four, three and one. House-Martins were worse off still, the only two broods I could find in July containing but two young each, and the only two in August two and three young each.

I also noticed in 1910 that the eggs took longer to deposit than usual, and I also found a number of forsaken eggs, for which I can find no reason.

H. W. ROBINSON.

ALBINISTIC VARIETY OF GREENFINCH.

ON October 15th, 1910, I shot in South Holderness, Yorkshire, an apparently pure white bird among a flock of Sparrows. On handling it, however, the whole of the plumage, with the exception of the nape and tips of the remiges, which were white, was found to be suffused with sulphur-yellow; the beak, feet and legs were pale horn-colour.

Mr. Stanley Duncan and I came to the conclusion, after careful comparison, that the bird was a variety of *Ligurinus chloris*.

The coloration of the Greenfinch is, I suppose, produced by the combination of a yellow with a darker (perhaps black) pigment, modified by the overlying structural peculiarities of the feather. One might suppose then that the loss of the darker pigment (a partial albinism), with or without modification of the feather-structure, might produce a result not unlike the specimen in question. M. WINZAR COMPTON.

NORTHERN BULLFINCH IN YORKSHIRE.

MR. T. H. NELSON informed me that in November Bullfinches were reported to him from one or two places on the Yorkshire coast, but specimens were not forthcoming. On December 4th, 1910, however, I received from a correspondent on the south Yorkshire coast a typical male of the Northern Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula p. pyrrhula*) which had been shot there on the previous day. Only two examples have been previously recorded from Yorkshire (November, 1894), but I think it probable that the immigrations noted in the *Birds of Yorkshire* (Vol. I., pp. 194, 195) under "*Pyrrhula europæa*" in various years, and notably in November, 1880, and October and November, 1884, 1886 and 1887, were referable to *P. p. pyrrhula*. No British specimen of the continental *P. p. europæa* has as yet, I believe, been identified.

H. F. WITHERBY.

THE CROSSBILL IRRUPTION.

A LARGE number of correspondents have very kindly sent information in answer to my questions on p. 186 with regard to the departure or continued presence of the Crossbills. I hope my correspondents will accept my thanks here expressed and will forgive me if I do not acknowledge their letters individually. In a future number I hope to summarize all the observations published and unpublished.—H.F.W.

CROSSBILLS NESTING IN BEDFORDSHIRE.

Mr. J. Steele Elliott records (*Zool.*, 1910, p. 472) that he found an overthrown nest, apparently belonging to a Crossbill, on May 6th, 1910, at Sutton, Bedfordshire, and that he saw recently fledged young being fed by old birds at Sandy on May 8th.

EGG-DAUBING BY THE JACKDAW.

WITH reference to the notes on this subject (*antea*, pp. 176 and 214) I may record that some twelve years ago Mr. John Palmer

of Ludlow showed me a clutch of Jackdaw's eggs taken from a hole in a tree, all of which were completely coated with mud when found in the nest. A second clutch taken from the same nest subsequently were daubed over in a similar way.

The respective dates were April 29th, 1897, and April 30th, 1898. On May 4th, 1899, Mr. Palmer found in a colony of Jackdaws, twenty miles away from the first site, two other clutches of eggs partially coated with clay. In no case were the eggs exposed to view, but were placed well within dark holes in hollow trees, whilst the nests themselves were dry. All four clutches are still in his collection. The second clutch was subsequently cleaned, when three of the four eggs were found to be of peculiar colouring, approaching in type those of the Chough.

H. E. FORREST.

HOOPOE AND SPOONBILL IN MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

ON a recent visit to Newtown I saw at the house of Mr. Ford, watchmaker, a case containing a Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) and a Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*). Both of them were obtained at Aberhafesp, near Newtown, about 1870. The Spoonbill was shot by a keeper at the edge of a large pool, and Mr. Ford remembers its being brought in the flesh to his father, who was known to take an interest in ornithology. No note was taken of the date, but from other circumstances it is known that it was a little prior to 1873. Both birds are adults in fine plumage. Neither species has been previously recorded in the county of Montgomery, though both have occurred near the western sea-board, the Spoonbill indeed being not uncommon on the Dovey Estuary (*cf. Vert. Fauna N. Wales.* pp. 203, 261).

H. E. FORREST.

ICELAND FALCONS IN SHROPSHIRE—AN EARLY RECORD.

ON a former page (BRITISH BIRDS, III., 165) I recorded two of these birds obtained near Leebotwood, Salop, in April, 1853. Recently, when turning over the pages of Pennant's *British Zoology* (1776 edition) I came across a description and plate of a species which he calls the "Spotted Falcon," but which is, without a doubt, the bird now known as the Iceland Falcon (*F. islandus*). The only discrepancy is as to the colour of the irides, which he says were pale yellow; but no importance attaches to this, as he probably had only the stuffed specimens before him, and in those days taxidermists were not careful about such trifles as colour of eyes, feet, etc. ! Pennant states that "Two of these birds have been shot near Longnor, Shropshire." No date is mentioned; but it would

be about 1770. It is indeed a singular coincidence in the case of so rare a species that the only known Shropshire examples should have been obtained in the same place (Longnor and Leebotwood are in the same parish), and that on each occasion there were two birds. H. E. FORREST.

[Although nearly all the records of this species are from maritime counties, it is interesting to note that James Pilkington, in his *View of the Present State of Derbyshire* (1789) notes the occurrence of a pair of "Spotted Falcons" at Spondon in November [1788?]. From the description of the plumage of one of these birds which was shot there is little doubt that this was also *Falco islandus*. Pilkington was evidently acquainted with Pennant's work.—F.C.R.J.]

SQUACCO HERON IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

AN immature example of the Squacco Heron (*Ardea ralloides*) was shot on the Humber Bank, in the parish of Great Cotes, on September 29th, 1910, by Mr. R. J. Pearson of Grimsby. This is, I believe, only the second occurrence of this species in the county. G. H. CATON HAIGH.

AMERICAN BLUE-WINGED TEAL IN IRELAND.

AN immature female of the American Blue-winged Teal (*Querquedula discors*) shot by Mr. B. W. Wise on the bogs at Ballycotton, co. Cork, Ireland, in September, 1910, and presented to the Dublin Museum, was exhibited by Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant at the October meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club (*Bull. B.O.C.*, Vol. XXVII., p. 15). Mr. Ogilvie-Grant stated that it was quite possible that the bird had escaped from Woburn, but the Duchess of Bedford very kindly informs me that there is only the barest possibility of this, and Her Grace knows of no one else who has this species in captivity. Sir Richard Graham and Mr. W. H. St. Quintin also inform me that they do not think there are any in captivity elsewhere in England. Mr. R. J. Ussher tells me that it is extremely unlikely that such a bird had escaped from captivity in Ireland. It seems, therefore, very probable that this bird was a genuine straggler. The only records for Europe appear to be:—one in Dumfriesshire in 1858, one in Cheshire about fifty years ago, and one in Denmark in 1886. H. F. WITHERBY.

BLACK-WINGED STILT IN SUSSEX.

AT the beginning of October, 1910, a Stilt (*Himantopus candidus*) arrived in the marshes on the western outskirts of St. Leonards, locally known as "the Salts." On the

3rd it was seen by Mr. M. J. Nicoll from the top of a tram on which he was travelling from Bexhill. The bird, he told me, was feeding in a field by the roadside in company with four Lapwings, and was so close to the passing tram that he had no difficulty in identifying it and could make out that it was an immature bird. I daily expected to hear that it had been shot, but, though constantly pursued, it was not until October 9th that it finally met its inevitable fate about a mile inland from where it first appeared. It proved to be a male and, as Mr. Nicoll stated, it was a bird of the year, with a dusky stripe down the back of its neck, and yellowish legs.

It is perhaps a little surprising that the Stilt is such a rare straggler to the south-east of England, and it is hardly likely that such a striking bird would escape notice, nevertheless there appear to be only three previous records from Sussex (the last on May 6th, 1880, near Eastbourne) and only a single one from Kent.

N. F. TICEHURST.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE IN NORFOLK.

IN the last week of August, 1910, a Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus hyperboreus*), presumably a female in its first plumage, frequented a duck-pond in a farm-yard at Sidestrand, near Cromer. As I was staying at the farm at the time, I had good opportunities of daily watching the bird; it was still on the pond when I left on September 1st, and I hope eventually escaped the collector's gun. The occurrence of this species in Norfolk has apparently seldom been recorded in recent years. A few remarks on its actions and habits may perhaps be of some interest.

As appears to be the case at all times of the year, this Phalarope was extremely tame, and on no occasion did it take wing when watched. Its movements when feeding—by continually picking insects off the surface of the water—were very quick and incessant as it swam about, in fact it was never still a moment; occasionally it would fly up a few inches and catch gnats on the wing.

During a very heavy rain-storm which churned up the water, the bird continued feeding unconcernedly for a few minutes, but at last apparently getting wetter than it liked, it waded ashore with evident reluctance. It then sheltered under the herbage out of sight for a few seconds, and on emerging, sat on the bank for a while and finally took to the water again; the rain still continuing, it rose from the pond, flying to a considerable height round about the farm with great

rapidity until the storm subsided. Its mode of progression on land was slow, awkward and uncertain.

Several times I saw it bathe, which it proceeded to do by swimming into shallower water, then raising itself in an upright position on the water, it rapidly and repeatedly threw its body forwards and backwards as on a pivot, and from side to side in a most ludicrous manner. The water was very green and stagnant, which perhaps accounted for the bird's frequent ablutions. Once, on an alarm being raised by sparrows and other small birds, it swam alongside a small stone in the water, where it crouched motionless beside it with one eye skywards.

S. G. CUMMINGS.

GREAT SKUA IN SUSSEX.

ON October 24th, 1910, a fine specimen of the Great Skua (*Megalestris catarrhactes*) was shot off the Sussex coast, and forwarded for preservation to Mr. Bristow, who very kindly sent it in the flesh for my examination the same day. On dissection it proved to be a male, and an adult bird.

H. W. FORD-LINDSAY.

MANX SHEARWATER IN SHROPSHIRE.

ON October 10th, 1910, an adult Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus anglorum*) was caught alive and uninjured in Ludlow. It seemed tired out, but was quite fearless and would follow its captor about fluttering along the ground and even going down two or three steps. In captivity it slept during the daytime with its head under its scapulars, but if disturbed it showed anger and bit at its owner. It did not feed well, though it picked up and swallowed some pieces of raw herring offered to it. Four days after its capture the bird was liberated and flew away. The late Mr. W. E. Beckwith wrote regarding the Shearwaters taken in Shropshire that none ever recovered the power of flight, even when they reached fresh water and were apparently uninjured. The above is the first instance to my knowledge, of one doing so.

H. E. FORREST.

INFLUX OF NORTHERN BIRDS.—An immigration of northern birds of rather unusual dimensions occurred at the end of October and the first part of November, 1910. In addition to the Northern Bullfinches reported in a previous page, a very large number of Mealy Redpolls (all those examined from the localities mentioned below being typical *L. linaria*) have been reported to me:—Yorkshire coast, between October 26th and 30th, “in larger numbers than I have ever known” (T. H. Nelson *in litt.*); large numbers in

Norfolk at Cley (C. D. Borrer *in litt.*); at Yarmouth (C. B. Ticehurst *in litt.*); at the end of October in Thanet, Kent (N.F.T. *vide* H. S. D. Byron) and two specimens obtained in Skye on November 7th by Mr. T. P. Aldworth were submitted to me for examination. Several small flocks are also reported from Ayr, Lanark and Renfrew, where the bird is little known, in the early part of November (*Glasgow Nat.*, Vol. III., pp. 34, 35).

Little Auks (*M. alle*) have also been reported in some numbers, "a great flight" appearing on the Yorkshire coast, with a strong N.E. gale, on November 19th. "Hundreds were passing at sea and going N.W." (T. H. Nelson *in litt.*); a number were also reported a little later from Norfolk (J. H. Gurney *in litt.*) and Suffolk on the 21st (C. B. Ticehurst *in litt.*), while one was picked up as far inland as Rickmansworth (Herts) on the 21st (H. R. Leach *in litt.*), another near Harpenden on the 23rd (R. Lydekker, *Field*, 3. xii. 1910, p. 1054), and one in Romney Marsh, Kent, on the 25th.

Whooper Swans (*C. musicus*) were also reported by Mr. Nelson from the Tees (Yorks) on November 19th, and about eighty arrived at Holkham (Norfolk) on the evening of the same day and departed in a west or north-west direction the next morning (J. Beddall Smith *in litt.*), while one was obtained on November 30th in the Derwent Valley (Yorks) (Sydney H. Smith *in litt.*).—H.F.W.

FEEDING-HABITS OF THE ROOK.—An important *Report* upon this subject has been prepared by Mr. W. E. Collinge and published by the Land Agents' Society. The inquiry appears to have been undertaken in a very thorough and proper manner, the stomachs of eight hundred and thirty Rooks procured throughout the year in almost every part of England and Wales having been examined.

Mr. Collinge summarizes the results as follows:—

1. That 67.5 per cent. of the food of the Rook consists of grain; if to this we add that of roots and fruits, the percentage is raised to 71 per cent.
2. The animal food content was only 29 per cent., of which quite one-third must be reckoned against the Rook.
3. There is ample evidence to show that with the present large numbers of Rooks, a grain diet is preferred.
4. So far as the evidence of this inquiry shows, the Rook is not a particularly beneficial bird to the agriculturist, although its usefulness might be considerably increased were it fewer in numbers.

Mr. Collinge concludes that we have too many Rooks and that their numbers should be reduced and kept in check.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKERS IN SCOTLAND.—Mr. J. Paterson saw a specimen of *Dendrocopus major* on April 17th, 1910, near Glasgow, where he had previously seen borings of Woodpeckers. The same writer states that a bird of this species was identified on January 25th, 1910, in the Girvan Valley, Ayrshire (*Glasgow Nat.*, Vol. II., p. 142). Mr. J. A. Harvie-Brown states that the bird has been heard "this season" at Dunipace, Stirlingshire (*Ann. S.N.H.*, 1910, p. 249). Mr. J. G. Millais informs me (*in litt.*) that he saw one near Dunkeld, Perthshire, on August 20th, 1910.—H.F.W.

NESTING OF THE GADWALL AND WIGEON IN "FORTH."—Mr. W. Evans (*Ann. S.N.H.*, 1910, p. 249) records that he found on June 14th, 1910, a nest with ten eggs of *Anas strepera* at a loch in south-east Scotland, where he had suspected them of breeding in 1908 (*cf. antea*, Vol. II., p. 245). This is at the same loch as the nests found by the Misses Rintoul and Baxter in 1909 (Vol. III., p. 131). Mr. Evans also records that there were at least half-a-dozen pairs of *Mareca penelope* breeding on this loch in 1910.

THE AMERICAN WIGEON RECORDED FROM ANGLESEY.—With reference to Mr. C. Oldham's note (*antea*, p. 87) on an American Wigeon which he saw in Anglesey in June, 1910, the probability of its having been an "escape" was not at the time taken into serious consideration. I have recently heard from the Duchess of Bedford that American Wigeon breed every year at Woburn and that the young can go where they like. Under these circumstances I do not think, and Mr. Oldham agrees with me, that we can regard the Anglesey record as referring to an undoubted wild bird. I had thought that the bird might have escaped from Netherby, but Sir Richard Graham writes me that he has no full-winged American Wigeon.—H.F.W.

SOCIABLE PLOVERS IN SUSSEX.—At the November meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, Mr. A. F. Griffith exhibited a male and female example of *Chettusia gregaria*, which had been obtained with two others between Rye and Winchelsea between May 25th and 27th, 1910. These two specimens had been presented to the Booth Museum, Brighton, by Messrs. J. E. Hall and E. Robinson, and they had been examined in the flesh by Mr. R. Butterfield and Mr. L. C. Edwards. The two others shot at the same time are in the collection of Mr. J. B. Nichols. A fifth is said to have escaped (*cf. Bull. B.O.C.*, Vol. XXVII., p. 28).