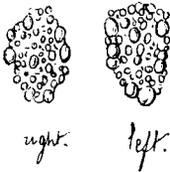


NOTES

ON THE PERSISTENCE OF THE RIGHT OVARY AND ITS DUCT IN BIRDS.

WITH reference to the notes on this subject (*cf. antea* Vol. IV., pp. 188 and 216), I think it may be worth while to put on record, that on March 19th, 1911, I received a female Lesser Kestrel (*Falco cenchris*) which had been shot the day before near Empoli (Tuscany, Italy), and on dissecting it I discovered that it had both ovaries equally well developed, but the right oviduct was not so wide as the left. This bird is in the rare



Ovaries of *Falco cenchris*,
specimen a, 18th March,
1911. (Exactly natural
size.)

stage of plumage, due to age, I think, of an old female that has (in part) acquired the plumage of the adult male. The feathers of the crown have a blue-grey central stripe becoming paler towards their margins, which are light rufous; sides of the head, of the neck, and of the upper-breast bluish-ash; rump, upper tail-coverts and tail of a bright blue-grey, this latter slightly barred and with a broad subterminal black band, and broadly tipped with white; a few narrow lines and small spots on the mantle; upper-breast narrowly streaked, the lower-breast and flanks with a few blackish spots. I am not aware of any recorded instance of the present species assuming a plumage resembling that of the adult male, as appears to be the case, not very infrequently, in very old females of *F. tinnunculus*.

In about twenty years' experience, some thousands of specimens of many species have come into my hands. I have always paid special attention to the sexual glands of the females, and have accumulated notes on this subject. The case of *F. cenchris* seems to me of a peculiar interest, because it is the first time that I have found both ovaries present in this species.

I venture to add a list of the birds which have passed through my hands with the right as well as the left ovaries present, because I can record some species that have not been mentioned in the above-mentioned notes. All the following specimens have been obtained in Italy, except when otherwise stated:—

HEN-HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*). Out of four female specimens :—

Immature, December 12th, 1892. Both ovaries nearly equal in size and development; right duct present, though not so wide as the left one.

PALLID HARRIER (*C. macrurus*). Out of four female specimens :—

a. Immature, March 27th, 1890. Both ovaries well developed and containing numerous ova of various sizes; right oviduct present, opening into the cloaca, but not so wide as the left one.

b. March 30th. Probably not fully adult, though it appears a third year's bird. Both ovaries well developed.

MARSH-HARRIER (*C. æruginosus*). Out of six female specimens :—

a. A second year's bird, December 4th, 1891. Both ovaries well developed; remains of the right oviduct appeared to be present, in the shape of a band.

b. Immature, but probably older than *a*. November 7th, 1903. Both ovaries equal in size and development.

c. Adult, August 21st, 1908. Both ovaries well developed.

d. January 22nd, 1910. A specimen of the blackish variety; apparently in a stage intermediate between the immature and fully-adult bird. Both ovaries nearly equal in size and development, and the right duct present, but certainly not functional, being reduced to a band along the kidney as far as the cloaca.

SPARROW-HAWK (*Accipiter nisus*). Out of seven female specimens :—

a. Adult, February 3rd, 1896. Both ovaries nearly equal in size and development, with remains of the distal portion of the right oviduct in the shape of a duct joined to the cloaca and about 10 mm. long.

b. A second year's bird. February 3rd, 1907. A very beautiful specimen, with light margins to the feathers of the upper wing-coverts. Both ovaries well developed

c. Young, October 18th, 1910. Probably a bird in its first winter-plumage; above it is very dark brown with rusty margins to the feathers, and below dull white, streaked, and to some extent irregularly barred, with dark brown. (This specimen was obtained in Sardinia, and belongs to the small and dark Sardinian

form, *A. n. wolterstorffi* Kleinsch.) Both ovaries equally well developed; the right oviduct was also present, and in much the same condition as the left one.

COMMON BUZZARD (*Buteo vulgaris*). Out of six female specimens :—

- a. Adult, December 9th, 1893, remains of the right ovary were present along the first lobe of the kidney, but reduced to half the size of the left one, which was well developed.
- b. Adult, February 3rd, 1905. An interesting specimen that agrees with the description by Bogdanow of *B. menetriesi*. Both ovaries nearly equal in size and development; the right oviduct also present in the shape of a band.
- c. Immature, November 30th, 1910 (Sardinia). The right as well as the left ovaries present. This specimen belongs to the small Sardinian form that is of an ashy earth-brown colour, tinged with reddish, and that I named *B. b. arrigonii* (*Avicula*, VII., 1903).

SERPENT-EAGLE (*Circus gallicus*). Out of three female specimens :—

- a. Adult, March 29th, 1890. The right ovary was present, but appeared atrophied, being about half the size of the left one, and containing very few ova, while in the left ovary they were numerous and well developed.

MERLIN (*Falco aesalon*). Out of four female specimens :—

- a. Immature, December 12th, 1897. Showed remains of the right ovary along the first lobe of the kidney.
- b. Adult, December 27th, 1909. Both ovaries nearly equal in size and development.

RED-FOOTED FALCON (*Falco vespertinus*). Out of eight female specimens :—

- a. Adult, April 30th, 1894. Both ovaries well developed; the right duct present, but reduced to a ligamentous strand.
- b.* Adult, but probably it had not attained its fully mature plumage, having a rufous hue on its mantle, and below being paler and more spotted than fully adult females. Both ovaries and their ducts nearly equal in size, and with ova well developed.
- c.* A second year's bird. Throat and sides of the neck white, washed with yellowish; breast, flanks, and upper abdomen of a pale yellowish-red streaked with dusky; rest of the under-parts like the throat, and unstreaked.

It shows the left ovary and its duct functional and developing ova, and it retains remains of the right ovary, which is reduced to one half the size of the left one.

- d.** A second year's bird. Differs from *c.* in being a little more striped below, and with the streaks becoming drop-shaped towards the tip of the feathers. Ovaries as in *c.*, but it shows also remains of the right oviduct, in the shape of a band from the ovary to the cloaca (see figure).



Ovaries of *Falco vespertinus*, specimen *d.*, May, 5th, 1908. (Exactly natural size.)

- e.** This appears younger than *d.*, and was probably a "last year's" bird. Crown of a dark greyish-brown with an admixture of rusty-red and black shaft-streaks; mantle brownish-grey, with the feathers edged with rusty-red or greyish-white; some feathers recently moulted are ashy-grey, barred with darker grey; four outside tail-feathers with large reddish-white spots, and the four central ones (recently moulted) blackish, barred with ashy-grey; below it is of a cream-colour, washed with light reddish on the breast, and much paler on the rest; breast, abdomen, and flanks with blackish stripes and spots larger than in *d.* Ovaries as in *d.*, but the right oviduct is almost as wide as the left one.

KESTREL (*F. tinnunculus*). Out of six female specimens:—

- a.* Immature, March 3rd, 1890. Both ovaries well developed and nearly equal in size.
- b.* Adult, October 6th, 1899. Shows remains of the right ovary, which is reduced to about two-thirds of the size of the left one.

SHORT-EARED OWL (*Asio accipitrinus*). Out of five female specimens:—

- a.* Adult, May 27th, 1892. The right ovary is present, but atrophied, being about half the size of the left one.

ROOK (*Corvus frugilegus*). Out of six female specimens:—

- a.* Adult, December 10th, 1893. Both ovaries present, but the right one less developed, and containing very small ova.

* *b. c. d.* and *e.* were obtained on May 5th, 1908, from a flock of several other specimens of both sexes; two more adult females were secured, but they showed only single left ovaries.

On September 20th, 1892, I received a female Hobby (*F. subbuteo*), which very probably showed an atrophied right ovary, but it was not easy to be sure, because the bird had been dead several days.

Lastly, I may record having found in two Mallard (*Anas boscas*) something like a duct joined to the right side of the cloaca, and about 10 or 12 mm. long; I think that this might have been the remains of a right oviduct. In both these birds only the left ovary was present.

While not wishing to draw any conclusion from so small a series as to the proportion of double-ovaryed birds in the above species, I have thought it useful, as material for further investigation, to state the number of female specimens of each species in my collection. Previous observations would seem to show that a double ovary was most often found in the Sparrow-Hawk, but from the small series in my collection it would appear to be more frequent in the Red-footed Falcon; but before any conclusion can be drawn, many more observations must be recorded.

CECILIA PICCHI.

RARE BIRDS IN SUSSEX.

MARSH-SANDPIPER.

IN BRITISH BIRDS, Vol. III., p. 386, Mr. M. J. Nicoll recorded two Marsh-Sandpipers (*Totanus stagnatilis*) killed near Rye, Sussex, on June 16th and 18th, 1909. I wish to place on record that a third specimen was shot on Bodiam Marsh on July 1st, 1910. It is a female, rather darker on the back than the one killed on June 16th, 1909. It was examined in the flesh by Mr. Ruskin Butterfield. All three specimens are in my possession.

IVORY-GULLS.

On February 7th, 1910, an immature female Ivory-Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) was shot at Ecclesbourne, Hastings, and examined in the flesh by Mr. Ruskin Butterfield, and on February 11th, 1910, a male, also immature, was killed at the same place. This bird was examined in the flesh by Mr. L. Curtis Edwards. More than half the specimens obtained in Great Britain have been adult. The female killed on February 7th is especially noticeable, being spotted more or less all over with greyish-black spots, while the male has comparatively few.

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING.

A young male Rose-coloured Starling (*Pastor roseus*) was caught in clap-nets by a Starling-catcher at Rottingdean, near Brighton, on November 18th, 1910. This is an interesting

bird as being in the immature plumage. Most British specimens are in adult plumage. A casual observer would take it for a young Starling. It is beginning to change its plumage.

MEADOW-BUNTINGS.

Two male Meadow-Buntings (*Emberiza cia*) were shot at Ninfield on April 1st, 1910, and were examined in the flesh by Mr. Ruskin Butterfield and the late G. Knight respectively. I believe these are the fourth and fifth British specimens.

LONG-TAILED DUCK.

A Long-tailed Duck (*Harelda glacialis*) was shot at Rye on March 31st, 1911, in transition plumage from autumn to spring. Was not that very late for it to be on the south coast ?

CREAM-COLOURED COURSERS.

A couple of Cream-coloured Coursers (*Cursorius gallicus*), a male and female, were shot in Pevensy Marshes, near Wartling, on May 5th, 1911, and were examined in the flesh by Mr. Ruskin Butterfield.

J. B. NICHOLS.

BLACK-THROATED THRUSH IN KENT.

THE fifth British specimen of the Black-throated Thrush (*Turdus atrigularis*) and the second for Kent, was shot at Wittersham on March 15th, 1911. It was forwarded to Mr. Bristow, of St. Leonard's, for preservation, and he kindly brought it to my house in the flesh. I carefully examined it and found that it was quite fresh, and without doubt a recently killed bird. On dissection it proved to be a male. I afterwards had the pleasure of exhibiting it at the May meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club (*vide Bull B.O.C.*, XXVII., p. 94).

The Black-throated Thrush is one of those eastern species that may be expected to turn up from time to time in these islands at migration time, since it has wandered more than once to Heligoland and Denmark, and has occurred with some frequency in Central Europe, while further east it naturally occurs more often still.

Ten days prior to the shooting of the present specimen, a more than usually heavy migration of Mistle-Thrushes, etc., was recorded at Dungeness Lighthouse, which is only some ten or fifteen miles to the south of Wittersham ; although no evidence exists to connect the two, it at least suggests that this bird may have arrived with our returning Mistle-Thrushes. The previously recorded examples of this bird were given in full at p. 379 of Vol. II. of this Magazine. N. F. TICEHURST.

NIGHTINGALE NESTING IN HEREFORDSHIRE.

A PAIR of Nightingales (*Daulias luscinia*) have just (June 13th, 1911) got their young off safely in Herefordshire—in the valley of the Teme—about midway between Knighton and Ludlow, on the Downton Castle Estate. I think this is the only pair near here. This is in the very north of Herefordshire.

W. S. MEDLICOTT.

LITTLE OWLS IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

THE Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) must be greatly on the increase in this county, at any rate in the district between Peterborough and Grantham, for during the first week of May this year (1911) I found four nests with four eggs in each; in each case the nest was in an ash tree, one nest being in an old hole of the Green Woodpecker. In addition to finding these four nests, I saw two or three Little Owls out in the open, one of them about mid-day and the others about 5 p.m. Probably there were several other nests in the immediate neighbourhood for each one that I met with, which tends to show that the Little Owl is not only fairly common, but plentiful in the above-mentioned district.

C. E. STRACEY CLITHEROW.

RED GROUSE IN BERKSHIRE.

A SPECIMEN of the Red Grouse (*Lagopus scoticus*) was brought to me for identification on March 2nd, 1911. It was obtained alive by an agricultural labourer within 200 yards of an iron-foundry in the small town of Wantage, in excellent condition, but apparently much exhausted. I am well acquainted with all the big shoots in the neighbourhood, and for ornithological purposes am in constant communication with the game-keepers: as far as I can ascertain, no Red Grouse have been turned down anywhere within twenty miles. The wind at the time of the procuring of the specimen had been blowing persistently from the south-west for several days. I must leave your readers to form their own opinion as to the starting point of the bird before it reached its destination here. I am certain (after careful inquiries) that it could not have possibly come from anywhere in the immediate neighbourhood.

W. M. WOODHOUSE.

[We believe that the Grouse Disease Commission have lately sold off the stock of Red Grouse kept at the Experimental Farm in Surrey, and it seems quite possible that one of these birds has escaped from captivity, or has been turned down. It is very unlikely that a truly wild bird would have strayed so far from its nearest breeding-haunts as Wantage.—EDS.]

CRANES IN SHROPSHIRE.

ABOUT 7.30 p.m. on May 6th, 1911, two Cranes (*Grus communis*) appeared over a farm at Longden Common, about six miles south-west of Shrewsbury. They were flying low down, and passed close over the heads of a man named Carswell and his two sons, alighting in the next field, where they commenced to feed on the grass. The men, who had never seen or heard of such birds before, and curious to ascertain what they were, crept up to the hedge and watched them for about an hour walking to and fro and grazing, at a distance of less than fifty yards. About 8.30 a neighbour named Corfield joined the watchers, and one of the sons then went into the field where the birds were, to try to get a closer view. They took alarm and flew to the next field, where they spent the night. Soon after 9 o'clock next morning, Corfield went to look after the sheep in this field, and found the birds grazing with the animals. On catching sight of him they took wing, and after flying round in circles till they attained such a height that they looked no bigger than pigeons, they flew right away in an easterly direction. The incident was first reported to me by a local clergyman, who thought that the birds were Great Bustards, but upon investigation I concluded that they were Cranes. The general behaviour of the birds—especially their soaring aloft before departure—supports this view, whilst the full description of the plumage and shape, which I obtained from Carswell and Corfield, confirms it beyond a doubt. They specially emphasize the fact that the birds had a red patch on the head, and that the feathers above the tail had a "crumpled" appearance. The legs and neck were very long, and the feet not webbed. On being shown pictures of the Bustard and Crane, Corfield was positive that the birds were not the former but the latter. This is the first recorded occurrence of the Crane in Shropshire, though in my *Fauna of Shropshire* mention is made of an example obtained in 1868 at Trippleton-on-Teme—just over the border in Herefordshire. The farmer who shot it, ascertaining from a natural-history book that it was only a "Common" Crane, gave the bird to his waggoner, who cooked and ate it!

H. E. FORREST.

[With regard to the above note the Duchess of Bedford kindly writes to us, under date June 23rd, 1911, as follows: "I think it more than likely that the Cranes came from Woburn, as both Common and White-necked Cranes (bred at Woburn last year and in 1909) have left us during the last few months. The description might apply to either, and the behaviour of

the birds is exactly that of our birds, which have been bred in the open park. The fact that there were two together also rather points to their being our birds, and if they are shot I think they will probably be found to be White-necked Cranes."—EDS.]

RINGED PLOVER BREEDING INLAND IN NORTHUMBERLAND.

MR. ABEL CHAPMAN, in his *Bird-Life of the Borders* (2nd ed., p. 33) says: "The Ringed Plover (*Ægialitis hiaticola*) is strictly marine in its haunts, and there is no local evidence of its breeding inland. Yet we have observed it frequenting the wide haughs of the Upper Coquet (twenty-five miles from the sea) at the end of March." Mr. Howard Saunders, in his *Manual of British Birds* (2nd ed., p. 539) says: "Throughout the British Isles the Ringed Plover is generally distributed along the flat portions of the coast, as well as on sandy warrens and inland lakes at some distance from the sea, and on migration it is also found by the banks of rivers."

It may be of interest to record that I found two nests on the Upper Coquet, more than thirty miles, as the crow flies, from the sea, on April 25th and 26th, 1911. In 1909, at about the same date, the birds were in the same district, but appeared not to have laid, while in 1910 there were no traces of them.

GEORGE T. ATCHISON.

[With reference to the above note, Mr. G. Bolam kindly sends us the following extract from his promised book on the *Birds of Northumberland and the Eastern Borders*: "The Ringed Plover breeds numerously on the shores of Northumberland, as also in East Lothian, and follows the course of many of our larger rivers far inland. Thus it nests on gravel beds on the Tweed, at the Lees, above Coldstream (where it was noticed so long ago as 4th May, 1842—*Hist. Berwickshire Nat. Club*, Vol. II., p. 4—and where I myself found it nesting in 1879 and have seen it frequently at short intervals since), and at Carham and Kelso (noticed there in 1868—*op. cit.*, Vol. VII., p. 305—and many times since), on the Teviot (*op. cit.*, Vol. VIII., p. 260, and frequently since); and on several of the tributary streams, as the Leader and Allan Water (*op. cit.*, Vol. VII., p. 305, etc), while I have seen it also in summer on the Lyne above Peebles, and on Gala Water. In Northumberland it breeds in several places on the Coquet above Rothbury, where I first found it, in the neighbourhood of Thropton, in 1887, and have since seen it at Holy Stone, and as high up as Alwinton; at Bromlee Lough, where I

came upon a pair with young on June 27th, 1897; and at Sweethope, where at least two pairs nested in the like year; on the Breamish I first noticed a single pair breeding near Beanley in 1886; but it had begun to outnumber the Common Sandpiper there by 1902, threatening indeed to supplant it, and now exceeds it in numbers on all the haughs as far up as Ingram, and is even penetrating still further into the heart of the Cheviots. Several of these stations are more than five and twenty miles from the sea as the crow flies, and they are particularly referred to here, as it has sometimes been stated in print that this species was confined to the coast, on the Borders, in the breeding season, although Selby had long ago observed the contrary." For some previous records of inland nesting, compare Vol. II., p. 150; Vol. III., p. 415.—EDS.]

BLACK TERN IN BEDFORDSHIRE.

ON June 9th, 1911, I saw a Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra*) on the lake at Battlesden near Woburn.

LAWRENCE FLEET.

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERNS IN SUSSEX.

A SMALL flock of seven White-winged Black Terns (*Hydrochelidon leucoptera*) arrived between Winchelsea and Rye on May 29th, 1911. Three were shot, two males and one female, and these I examined in the flesh on May 31st. It is a curious fact that on precisely the same date (May 29th, 1904) a small flock appeared at the Hoppen Pits in Kent, of which five specimens were obtained. There have been two previous records for Sussex.

H. W. FORD-LINDSAY.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER IN CARNARVONSHIRE.

IN Vol. IV., p. 26, of this Magazine, I recorded the first occurrence of the Black-throated Diver (*Colymbus arcticus*) in Carnarvonshire, but I little thought at the time when the observation was made, that the second occurrence would so closely follow. My friend Mr. Owen Griffiths, in whom I have confidence, informs me that on April 30th, 1911—curiously the same month and date on which I saw my example in 1910—he saw an individual of this species on the water at the foot of a cliff on the northern side of the Great Orme's Head, and his description and sketch, taken at the time when the observation was made, showing the distribution of black, grey, and white feathers on its body, neck, and head, free my mind from

the possibility of any doubt arising as to the accuracy of his identification. He was favoured with a good opportunity for watching the bird, and not only was it close in shore, but "it spent most of its time preening and rising to shake itself." With his glasses he could see clearly the half-collar of white streaks, as well as the very dark, almost black feathers on its chin and throat. We had previously been together watching the passage of Red-throated Divers (*C. septentrionalis*), with which species he is quite familiar. It is possible that Black-throated Divers pass along the Welsh coast in April much more often than is commonly assumed. R. W. JONES.

SLAUGHTER OF MANX SHEARWATERS BY BLACK-BACKED GULLS.

ON the island of Annet in the Scilly Islands, large numbers of sea-birds breed, consisting chiefly of Greater and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Puffins, Manx Shearwaters, Herring-Gulls, Razorbills, and a few Oyster-catchers and some Shags. Large numbers of Manx Shearwaters (*Puffinus anglorum*) are slain by the two species of Black-backed Gulls, their skins, in many cases turned inside out, being found in scores on the ground frequented by these two species. Puffins are also treated in a similar manner, but many fewer of these birds are killed. All the remains I saw were dried up, but Mr. C. J. King, of St. Mary's, informs me that he has often found them freshly killed, and that they are done to death by the Gulls tearing a hole in the abdomen to devour the entrails—literally, I take it, drawing the unfortunate birds when living. The Razorbills are evidently too formidable for even the Greater Black-backed Gull to tackle, as they are left very much alone, and I do not wonder at it, judging by the adults which I handled, the thickest leather gauntlets being no protection whatsoever against their formidable beaks. The Puffins do not seem to have any fear of the Lesser Black-backed Gull, judging by the way they sit cheek by jowl on the same rock, so perhaps it is only the larger species which disembowels them. Owing to my visiting the island by day, I only saw one living Manx Shearwater, this being one which I picked up in a landing-net at sea, about two miles from the island in question, but the number nesting there is estimated locally at between a hundred and a hundred-and-fifty thousand.

H. W. ROBINSON.

[In a most interesting article on the Puffin by Mr. F. Heatherley, which appeared in *Country Life*, September 3rd,

1910, it is stated that colonies of the Lesser Black-backed Gull are always strewn with corpses of Puffins, which have been merely disembowelled and left. On the other hand the colonies of the Greater Black-backed Gulls contain no corpses, possibly because they have been swallowed by the larger birds! Mr. Heatherley has never actually seen this take place, but he quotes the evidence of Mr. J. W. Parsons, who states that before being swallowed the Puffin is shaken and ducked under water until drowned. The capacity of the larger Gulls for swallowing is certainly remarkable, and only a week or two ago I saw a Mediterranean Herring-Gull pick up a good-sized vole from the water in which it was swimming, and gulp it down alive.—F. C. R. JOURDAIN.

The "skinning" of the Manx Shearwaters, described by Mr. Robinson, is much more likely to have been the work of rats than Gulls, although the rats may have finished the carcasses and left the skins after the Gulls had partially eaten them.—EDS.]

FULMARS NESTING IN CAITHNESS.

ON May 30th, 1911, Mr. B. B. Riviere and I took a boat for the purpose of inspecting the cliffs which form Berriedale Head in Caithness. On some of the steeper faces we found that a small colony of Fulmar Petrels (*Fulmarus glacialis*) had established itself, and as this is probably the most southerly nesting-place of this species in the British Isles, it should be worthy of record. So far as we could see there were from thirty to forty birds altogether, but there may have been more, as it is difficult to distinguish this bird (except in flight) when perched high up among innumerable gulls. Dr. Kennedy, of Dunbeath—the local authority on the birds of his district—was with us, and informed us that he had never seen or heard of this bird breeding there before. There is no doubt that the Fulmar Petrel is increasing its range, as in comparatively recent years it has established new colonies on the west and north coasts of Scotland.

A. H. MEIKLEJOHN.

[The Fulmar has been recorded as breeding as far south as Barra (*cf.* Vol. II., p. 374), but Mr. Meiklejohn's interesting record is considerably more southerly than any previously known breeding-haunt on the *mainland*.—EDS.]

RECOVERY OF MARKED BIRDS.

IN addition to those already acknowledged, I have received subscriptions towards the expenses of the "marking scheme"

from Mr. R. F. M. Wood, Mr. W. I. Beaumont (second subscription), Mr. Walter Stewart, Mr. C. I. Evans, Mr. M. Winzar Compton, Mr. A. Mayall (third subscription), Mr. R. O. Blyth (second subscription), Mr. G. R. Humphreys, Mr. N. F. Richardson, Mr. W. T. Blackwood, and Mr. J. D. Patterson (second subscription).—H.F.W.

BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*).—B.B., No. 11,257, marked by Mr. N. H. Joy at Bradfield, Berkshire, on July 4th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at the same place on March 17th, 1911.

WOOD-WREN (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*).—"Country Life," No. 571, marked by Mr. J. D. Patterson at Gaothland, Yorkshire, in 1910, hen-bird caught while sitting on nest with six young ones. Found nesting within eighty yards of last year's site, on June 13th, 1911. Re-marked with a "British Birds" ring.

GREAT TIT (*Parus major*).—B.B., No. 5512, marked by Mr. H. Noble at Henley-on-Thames on May 12th, 1910, as an adult. Found sitting on nest in May, 1911, within a hundred yards of the nest where found last year.

NUTHATCH (*Sitta caesia*).—B.B., No. 5517, marked by Mr. H. Noble at Henley-on-Thames on April 30th, 1910, as an adult. Recovered at the same place about March 29th, 1911.

B.B., No. 5516, marked by Mr. H. Noble at Henley-on-Thames on April 27th, 1910, as an adult. Found sitting on eggs in May, 1911, within a hundred yards of the nest where found last year.

GREENFINCH (*Ligurinus chloris*).—B.B., No. B57, marked by Mr. J. R. B. Masefield at Cheadle, Staffordshire, on June 20th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at Bong, par Le Catelet, Aisne, France, on April 2nd, 1911. Reported by M. Jules Vasseur.

STARLINGS (*Sturnus vulgaris*).—B.B., No. 11,824, marked by Mr. N. H. Joy at Bradfield, Berkshire, on January 24th, 1911. Recovered at Pangbourne, Berkshire, on April 18th, 1911. Reported by Mr. J. Howard.

B.B., No. C106, marked by Mr. N. H. Joy at Bradfield, Berkshire, on February 1st, 1911. Recovered at Englefield, Reading, Berkshire, on May 18th, 1911. Reported by Mr. G. H. Claydon.

MALLARD (*Anas boscas*).—B.B., No. 9143, marked by Mr. T. Hepburn at Old Hall Marshes, Tollesbury, Essex, on May 26th, 1910. The bird was hatched-out under a

domestic fowl from an egg collected on the marshes. Recovered at West Mersea, Essex, in September, 1910.

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Larus ridibundus*).—B.B., No. 30,095, marked by Messrs. Robinson and Smalley at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on June 11th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at Askam-in-Furness, Lancashire, on April 4th, 1911. Reported by Mr. Arthur Beavers.

CUCKOO IN GOLDCREST'S NEST.—In the *Field* for June 3rd, 1911, Mr. H. S. Davenport gives an interesting account of a young Cuckoo which was being reared by a pair of Goldcrests in his garden at Dunmow, Essex. The Goldcrest is one of the rarer foster-parents of the Cuckoo, and all the previous records by reliable observers appear to relate to the Continent. Professor Newton (*A History of British Birds*, 4th ed., Vol. II., p. 394), states that the Cuckoo has been known to lay in the nests of all the Sylviidæ mentioned in that work, except the Rufous, Savi's, and the Yellow-browed Warbler, and according to his classification, the Goldcrest is included among the Sylviidæ. Dresser, Bidwell, Rey, and Wells Bladen also mention it in their lists, and Herr A. Walter is said by J. A. Link to have taken three eggs twice in one week from Goldcrests' nests. Rey quotes Baldamus as his authority, but had no specimens from Goldcrests' nests in his collection; while Dresser inserts it on the authority of Thienemann. Mr. Davenport is inclined to believe that the egg is carried in the crop rather than the bill before it is regurgitated, and finally deposited in the nest of the foster-parent.—F.C.R.J.

SCOTTISH HERONRIES.—Mr. A. L. Thomson gives an account of the Heronries in the Dee area in the *Annals of Scottish Natural History*, 1911 (pp. 7-9), and Mr. H. B. Watt adds (pp. 72-75) further particulars of Scottish Heronries to his previous lists, and suggests the making of a census of Herons in Scotland.

COCK PHEASANTS ASSUMING FEMALE-LIKE PLUMAGE.—Although female Pheasants assuming male-like plumage are frequently met with, cases of the reverse are very rare. In the *Field* (25, 2, 1911, p. 384), Mr. H. Hammond Smith contributes an interesting article on three cases of males with partially hen-like plumage, these birds being sent to him by Mr. A. Gilbey in December, 1910, from Uxbridge (Middlesex). In these birds the proximal part of the tail is hen-like, while the distal half is cock-like, the head and neck are mostly hen-like, and other parts of the plumage are mixed. All the specimens had well-developed spurs. The article includes a technical

description by Mr. S. G. Shattock of the sexual glands of these birds from which it would appear that they were perfectly normal.

At the February meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, Mr J. G. Millais exhibited (*cf. Bull. B.O.C.*, XXVII., p. 54) an adult male Pheasant which was also partly in a plumage like that of a female. The bird was shot at Alnwick Castle, Northumberland, on November 23rd, 1910, and its organs appeared to be normal, but were not examined microscopically.

The only examples previously recorded of a cock Pheasant assuming female-like plumage known to Mr. Hammond Smith are: A live bird kept under observation in 1903 by Mr. S. G. Shattock and Dr. C. G. Segliman, in which the tail-feathers, during their growth, exhibited the female character in their proximal portions, but these characters were lost, and the bird became perfectly normal after subsequent moults; a case recorded by Mr. J. G. Millais, and another by the Hon. Walter Rothschild.

BLACKCOCK ASSUMING FEMALE-LIKE PLUMAGE.—At the February meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, Mr. J. G. Millais exhibited an example of a Blackcock shot by Mr. F. Stobart at Glen Troot, Wigtownshire, on September 20th, 1910, which was partially in a female-like plumage. The sexual organs of this bird were said to be normal, but they were not examined microscopically. Like the Pheasants mentioned above, this bird was considered to be assuming the plumage of the female, but I do not think that there is proof of this in any of these cases. They can all be more reasonably explained, I think, by supposing that these birds were wanting in pigment, and this is what I suggested in exhibiting an abnormally coloured Blackcock at the April meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club. This bird was shot on the 10th of November, 1910, at Clonrae, Dumfriesshire, by Mr. H. S. Gladstone, who very kindly sent it to me. In skinning it I was able to make sure, by the condition of the skull and also by finding two unshed feathers of the juvenile plumage, that the specimen was a bird of the year. I preserved the testes, which appeared outwardly normal, and they have since very kindly been examined microscopically by Captain A. E. Hamerton, R.A.M.C., who informs me that they are, in his opinion, perfectly normal. The plumage of the bird is, however, quite abnormal, especially on the head, neck, mantle, upper-breast, and flanks, the feathers of which are barred and vermiculated with yellowish-brown. In most of the

feathers the tips are normally coloured steel-blue, a few are entirely normal, but most are marked in a varying degree with brown, some having a number of broad bars, others a single bar, and others only a thin wavy line of brown. Almost all the feathers of the chin, throat, and cheeks have whitish-buff bases and many are white-tipped. A number of the feathers of the breast are irregularly marked with white and brown, and many of the flank-feathers are vermiculated with brown, as are the middle tail-feathers, upper tail-coverts, and some of the feathers of the rump. The scapulars, secondaries, and wing-coverts are also more strongly vermiculated with brown than is usual in the first winter-plumage.

The brown markings resemble those in the plumage of the female; but in my opinion this bird is simply wanting in black pigment, and this has caused the brown markings to assert themselves in a varying degree in different feathers, according to the amount of black pigment deposited. Mr. W. P. Pycraft has very kindly examined the bird and is of the same opinion, and has pointed out to me that indications of barring are observable in certain lights in normally coloured Blackcock's feathers. An examination of a large series of Black-Game in the British Museum has convinced me that the males frequently have a few brown-barred feathers, and I have a bird in my own collection with several barred feathers on the breast, but it seems a very rare occurrence for a bird to be so freely marked with brown as the one now referred to.

H. F. WITHERBY.

MEALY REDPOLLS IN SCOTLAND IN THE AUTUMN OF 1910.—Mr. W. Evans has contributed a very useful paper on this subject to the *Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh* (Vol. XVIII., pp. 196-203). Mr. Evans traces the irruption from the north of Shetland to the south of Scotland. Enormous numbers (not less than 2,000 captured birds were brought into Edinburgh alone) occurred at the end of October and in November, but by the end of that month the numbers fell off, and a single bird on January 18th, 1911, is the latest of which the author has a definite record.* The great majority were of the typical form (*Linota l. lnaria*), but a good many examples of the supposed large form (*L. l. holboelli*) were noted, and Mr. Evans shows that these birds vary greatly in measurements of wing and bill, and we quite agree with him in doubting the validity of Hollböll's Redpoll, more especially as it appears to breed in the same area as the typical bird (*cf.* Vol. IV., p. 292).

* I may note that I saw one on the south Yorkshire coast on April 18th, 1911.—H.F.W.