



# NOTES

## RECOVERY OF MARKED BIRDS.

- MEADOW-PIPITS** (*Anthus pratensis*).—B.B., No. D449, marked by Mr. T. Fenton Greenwood at Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire, on July 1st, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at M'cignac, near Bordeaux, Gironde, France, on September 17th, 1911. Reported by M. A. Doleac.
- B.B., No. D872, marked by Mr. J. D. Patterson at Gaothland, Yorkshire, on May 28th, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at St. Julien-en-Born, Landes, Nord, France, on October 9th, 1911. Reported by Miss I. Magnes.
- SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*).—B.B., No. F754, marked by Mr. J. R. B. Masefield at Harewood, near Cheadle, Staffordshire, on August 4th, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at Pouzor, Commun de Nancras, Charente-Inférieure, France, on October 3rd, 1911. Reported by MM. N. Mesureau and J. Welsch.
- HOUSE-MARTIN** (*Chelidon urbica*).—B.B., No. F190, marked by Mr. W. T. Blackwood at Hawick, Roxburghshire, on July 24th, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at Pont-de-Bigny, Cher, France, on October 12th, 1911. Reported by M. L. Nadot.
- STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*).—B.B., No. 11852, marked by Mr. N. H. Joy at Bradfield, Berkshire, on January 22nd, 1911, as an adult. Recovered at Hounslow Heath, Middlesex, on October 2nd, 1911. Reported by Mr. T. Perry.
- LAPWING** (*Vanellus vulgaris*).—B.B., No. 13623, marked by Mr. H. W. Ford-Lindsay at Pett, Sussex, on June 18th, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at the same place on September 28th, 1911.
- COMMON TERNS** (*Sterna fluviatilis*).—B.B., No. 21057, marked by Mr. H. W. Robinson at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on July 17th, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at Exmouth, Devon, on October 9th, 1911. Reported by Mr. W. H. Yeo.
- COMMON GULL** (*Larus canus*).—B.B., No. 22063, marked by Mr. W. I. Beaumont at Eil Beg, Dunstaffnage, Argyllshire, on June 29th, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at Ledaig, Argyllshire, about September 29th, 1911. Reported by Colonel F. H. S. Cruickshank.

**BLACK-HEADED GULLS** (*Larus ridibundus*).—B.B., No. 24170, marked by Mr. H. W. Robinson, at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on June 16th, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at Doncaster, Yorkshire, on September 14th, 1911.

B.B., No. 31332, marked as No. 24170 on June 10th, 1911. Recovered at Rampside, Barrow-in-Furness, on August 8th, 1911. Reported by Mr. W. H. Ashcroft.

B.B., No. 24281, marked as No. 24170 on June 19th, 1911. Recovered near Redcar, Yorkshire, on September 14th, 1911. Reported by Mr. C. Appleyard.

B.B., No. 24123, marked as No. 24170 on June 16th, 1911. Recovered at West Hartlepool, Durham, on September 27th, 1911. Reported by Mr. H. Foreman.

B.B., No. 24275, marked as No. 24170 on June 19th, 1911. Recovered at Dree, Dromara, co. Down, on October 6th, 1911. Reported by Mr. R. Heanen.

B.B., No. 23945, marked by Mr. F. Smalley at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on June 12th, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered on the Irwell, near Manchester, Lancashire, on October 17th, 1911. Reported by Mr. A. Chambers.

B.B., No. 30467, marked by Messes. Robinson and Smalley at Ravenglass, Cumberland, on June 13th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at Morecambe, Lancashire, on October 23rd, 1911. Reported by Mr. L. Wilkinson.

B.B., No. 22860, marked by Mr. J. S. T. Walton at Denton Fell, Cumberland, on June 11th, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered on the Derwent, near Cockermouth, Cumberland, on August 11th, 1911. Reported by Mr. J. Wilson.

**HERRING-GULL** (*Larus argentatus*).—B.B., No. 32052, marked by Miss A. C. Jackson at Cromarty Firth, Ross-shire, on July 1st, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at Campbeltown, Argyllshire, on October 21st, 1911. Reported by Mr. T. F. Broom.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULLS** (*Larus fuscus*).—B.B., No. 31386, marked by Mr. H. W. Robinson at Foulshaw, Westmorland, on July 1st, 1911, as a nestling. Recovered at Fleetwood, Lancashire, on September 11th, 1911. Reported by Mr. T. Crewdson.

B.B., No. 9070, marked by Lord William Percy at the Farne Islands, Northumberland, on August 6th, 1910, as a nestling. Recovered at Hartlepool, Durham, on October 1st, 1911. Reported by Mr. James Lander.

### RETURN OF MARKED SWIFTS TO THEIR BREEDING PLACES.

SOME interesting results of the "ringing" of Swifts have recently appeared in the *Ornithologische Monatsberichte*, 1911, pp. 156, 168. Dr. Thienemann writes that on July 4th and 15th, 1910, Herr A. Gundlach of Neustrelitz, Mecklenburg, marked with rings two old Swifts (*Cypselus apus*) which were breeding in a Starling's nesting-box. At the beginning of July, 1911, the same birds were again found breeding in the same box. Ritter von Tschusi zu Schmidhoffen also states that in 1909 he succeeded in "ringing" a female Swift which was breeding under the eaves of a Starling's box, but failed to mark the male bird. In 1910 the "ringed" hen returned to the nesting place, and this time the male bird was also marked. On capturing the birds this season (1911), it was found that both male and female were the birds which had been marked in 1909 and 1910 respectively. One result of these observations is to show clearly that the rings have no injurious effect on the birds, for the female Swift "ringed" by Ritter von Tschusi has now worn the ring for three seasons without any ill effect. It would seem from these records that the Swift is a life-paired bird, returning to the same nesting place year after year.

F. C. R. JOURDAIN.

### THREE BROODS OF BLACKBIRDS REARED IN ONE NEST.

IN the October number of *BRITISH BIRDS* (*antea*, p. 143) appears a note of a pair of Blackbirds (*Turdus merula*) rearing three broods of young in the same nest, from which it seems that there is only a single record known of such an occurrence having taken place in England. It will be of interest, therefore, to note that in the spring of 1907 I knew of a case at Troutsdale Mill, near Scarborough, Yorkshire, where a pair of Blackbirds reared three broods of five, four, and three respectively from the same nest. The last brood left the nest on July 28th, and the old birds immediately set about repairing and re-lining it, presumably with a view to a fourth family, but unfortunately the nest was discovered and destroyed by some lads before the eggs were deposited.

W. J. CLARKE.

### NESTING OF THE GREY WAGTAIL FAR FROM WATER.

REFERRING to the Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain's note (*antea*, p. 133) on the nesting of the Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla melanope*), I found, on June 15th, 1911, at Sandymount, Tipperary, Ireland,

a nest of this species built in ivy near the top of a wall and about seven feet from the ground ; the wall formed the back of a stable yard, and would be 350 to 400 yards from the nearest water. The nest contained seven eggs.

HERBERT MASSEY.

#### A PAIR OF ROBINS BUILDING MANY NESTS.

THE incident described and illustrated by Mr. J. H. Owen (*antea*, p. 132) is almost paralleled by another which occurred also near Oswestry at the same time. In the workshop of Mr. W. D. Dovaston at West Felton, near Oswestry, is a double row of pigeon-holes for nails, etc., eight in each row. A pair of Robins (*Erithacus rubecula*) began to build in these pigeon-holes early in March, and continued at work for over a month. They occupied twelve out of the sixteen pigeon-holes, six in each row, with more or less complete nests, as if uncertain which to use. Finally they selected the second from the right in the lower row, completing and lining the nest, laying eggs, and successfully rearing a brood in it.

H. E. FORREST.

#### HAWFINCHES ADAPTING A NEST OF THE SONG-THRUSH.

THERE has just come under my notice an interesting instance of a pair of Hawfinches (*Coccothraustes vulgaris*) taking possession of a nest of the Song-Thrush (*Turdus musicus*). On October 4th, 1911, I received the following communication from Mr. Cecil Martin, Lindors, St. Briavels, Gloucestershire : "I am forwarding you the curious Hawfinch's nest mentioned in my last letter. This nest I took from a pear tree in an orchard here. It contained four eggs (enclosed), and I saw both the birds. The nest appears to be that of a Mistle-Thrush, or perhaps a Song-Thrush. Note, however, the black horsehairs woven into the lining by the Hawfinches. I am also sending you a normal nest."

I examined the two nests in question, and found the adapted nest was that of a Song-Thrush ; the mud-lining had been quite completed, and the owners had then either deserted it or had been driven away by the Hawfinches, which had then added a further lining to the inside of the Thrushes' nest, consisting of closely woven, fine, dry grass mixed with black horsehair, and exactly similar to the lining of the normal nest. I have not previously heard of a similar instance in the case of Hawfinches.

SYDNEY H. SMITH.

SLENDER-BILLED NUTCRACKER IN  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

ON October 7th, 1911, I had a male Nutcracker brought me in the flesh. It was killed in a horse-chestnut tree that morning at the village of Whitchurch, about four miles from Aylesbury. I was told that it was seen in the same tree on the previous day, and was very tame. It was in good condition (quite fat). I fancy this is the first recorded instance of the occurrence of a Nutcracker in this county. It is being mounted for the Bucks. County Museum, Aylesbury.

Subsequently I submitted the bird to Dr. Hartert for examination and he pronounced it to be a specimen of the Siberian race (*Nucifraga caryocatactes macrorhynchus*). Dr. Hartert informs me that by the same post as my letter he had one from a friend in Germany, who stated that Nutcrackers had arrived in his district and that we might expect them in England.

EDWIN HOLLIS.

HOOPOES IN MERIONETH AND SHROPSHIRE.

ON August 7th, 1911, a Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*) was seen at close-quarters on the hillside above Aberdovey by Mr. Wm. Beattie of London, who knows the bird well, having found it breeding in France. He also tells me that he saw another at Astley Abbots, near Bridgnorth, one day late in August, 1909. In my *Fauna of North Wales* (p. 204), only one previous record in Merioneth is given, so the above is worth publishing. Over a dozen previous examples have been noted in Shropshire.

H. E. FORREST.

LATE DATE FOR A CUCKOO'S EGG.

IT might be of some interest to record a late date for the egg of the Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) from east Norfolk, although the case has been already published in *Country Life* by Mr. S. H. Lowe, who wrote as follows: "I have been looking through the diary of a Norfolk gamekeeper, and, under the date of July 19th last, he states he found a Cuckoo's egg in a Hedge-Sparrow's nest," etc.

As I know that the keeper, F. Forsdick, is an unusually intelligent observer, I asked Mr. Lowe for definite particulars, and he has forwarded me the following letter, signed by Forsdick:—

"The Cuckoo's egg I found was perfectly" [?] almost] "fresh, and had been sat on a few days only. There were three Hedge-Sparrow's eggs and the Cuckoo's in the nest,

and another egg of the Sparrow just outside. We had young Cuckoos flying about till the last few days in August, and the old birds were with us till late July."

CLIFFORD BORRER.

[Curiously enough the date as given above coincides exactly with the latest date mentioned by Mr. G. D. Rowley in the *Ibis*, 1865 (p. 178), where he mentions a Meadow-Pipit's nest with a small Cuckoo's egg taken near Brighton on July 19th, 1864. One or two other cases of Cuckoos' eggs taken in early July are also on record.—F.C.R.J.]

#### SPOTTED CRAKE IN WARWICKSHIRE.

ON September 9th, 1911, a Spotted Crake (*Porzana maruetta*) was picked up near Hampton-in-Arden, Warwickshire, having been killed by striking the telegraph wires; it was sent for preservation to Messrs. Spicer & Sons, Birmingham, at whose shop I examined it. It proved to be a male, and judging by the dirty-white throat, was immature.

Mr. R. F. Tomes (*Vict. Hist. Warwick.*, p. 203) says: "Though not absolutely rare in the county, this species is by no means common." I am, however, not aware of any published record of its occurrence since the publication of this statement in 1904.

A. GEOFFREY LEIGH.

#### WATER-RAILS AS MIGRANTS.

It has long been a moot point with ornithologists whether the Water-Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) is actually more numerous here in winter than in summer, or only apparently so. Many observers hold that the latter is the case, the bird being more easily seen in winter on account of the lack of "cover" at that season. Some light is shed upon the problem by certain records in the recently issued report of the British Ornithologists' Club Committee on the Migration of Birds in the spring of 1910 and autumn of 1909. The observations to which I would call special attention were made at Bardsey Island Lighthouse at the south extremity of Carnarvonshire. Water-Rails were noted here in small numbers on the nights of September 15th and 27th, 1909, but these may have been local birds, since no decided migratory movement seemed to be in progress at that time. On the night of November 4th and 5th, many birds passed the light about midnight, including six Water-Rails, travelling southwards, i.e. away from land. On the following night there was a tremendous rush of migrants going southwards, including many Water-Rails: "About 2,600 Blackbirds, Redwings, Song-Thrushes, and Starlings,

50 Water-Rails, 16 Common and Jack Snipe, 5 Fieldfares, 2 Woodcocks, a Lapwing and a Ringed Plover, were killed "by striking the lantern. This certainly seems to indicate that the Water-Rail migrates southwards in considerable numbers on the approach of winter, so that the apparent increase in numbers observed in England at that season may be real, and be due to immigration from further north.

H. E. FORREST.

[It is quite evident from the records in the different volumes of the Migration Reports that the Water-Rail, occasionally at any rate, performs its migratory movements in flocks of what must be considered for the species as considerable numbers, and sometimes, as in the instance referred to by Mr. Forrest, in really very large numbers. Without drawing any conclusions as to the movements themselves, the material at present hardly being sufficient to warrant it, it is nevertheless obvious that they are in autumn of considerable magnitude, and cover a lengthy period of time, so that it would possibly be nearer the truth to say that it is during this period, say from mid-September to early December, that the numbers in this country are at their maximum. It is unfortunate that with such a skulking species as the Water-Rail, practically the only evidence of its migratory movements is obtainable from the Lights, and consequently positive ones only are of any value, and these must be collected over a considerable number of years before anything conclusive can be deduced from them.—N.F.T.]

#### GREY PHALAROPE IN SHROPSHIRE.

AN adult male of the Grey Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) was obtained about five miles north of Shrewsbury on October 3rd, 1911. It was in full winter plumage. H. E. FORREST.

#### BLUE EGGS OF COMMON TERN.

THE Common Terns (*Sterna fluviatilis*) that breed in some numbers at a particular spot in north Norfolk, have shown a remarkable tendency to lay pale blue, unspotted eggs this year, and it would be of interest to know if the same has been noticed at other resorts. I have seen four sets of three eggs each, whilst a far larger number containing a single egg of this rather unusual type, were noticed by the local men in this one colony. The Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, to whom I wrote, suggested that continued plundering of the nests would account in some degree for the paucity of coloration; but in this case another explanation must be sought, as the Terns are carefully protected.

A few pairs of Lesser Terns breed at the same spot, and at least one instance of this same phase occurred in *Sterna minuta*.

CLIFFORD BORRER.

#### INCREASE OF GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULLS IN IRELAND.

IN connexion with the cases cited (*antea*, p. 140) in which the Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) has bred on inland lakes, I may mention that the increase of this species on the Irish coast is most remarkable. I have been twice round the Mayo coast during the past summer, and found the Great Black-backed Gull everywhere a common bird. On the Bills of Achill, Messrs. Praeger and Welch estimated last year, 1910, that they found one hundred pairs, while twenty years earlier, when I visited the Bills, I computed them at fifty pairs. Their increase on the coasts of Waterford and Wexford is also remarkable, quite a considerable number breeding on an island where about three pairs bred thirty years ago. On the sands off Dungarvan Bay I usually see several of these birds where they used to be quite scarce and remarkable.

R. J. USSHER.

#### ARCTIC AND POMATORHINE SKUAS AND SABINE'S GULLS IN YORKSHIRE.

THE Yorkshire coast has recently been visited by one of those interesting irruptions of Skuas which occur at intervals, and are accounted for by severe storms driving the birds in-shore during their autumnal migration (*cf.*, *Birds of Yorks.*, Vol. II., p. 699). On September 30th, 1911, a gale from the north-east suddenly sprang up about six o'clock, continuing to blow strongly all the morning, and accompanied by heavy rain-squalls. Between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. numbers of Skuas, both Arctic (*Stercorarius crepidatus*) and Pomatorhine (*S. pomatorhinus*), estimated at about two hundred, in parties of from five to twelve, were observed flying north-westward, low down, along the shore, and crossing the breakwater into the Teesmouth. In the afternoon the wind veered to north-west, and although the flight continued, it was less pronounced than in the morning, and the birds kept outside the breakers. Those that were identified were all mature individuals.

During the storm on the morning of September 30th, two immature Sabine's Gulls (*Xema sabinii*) were seen sitting on the sands, and in the afternoon a Grey Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) and another Sabine's Gull were reported.

T. H. NELSON.

## FORK-TAILED PETRELS IN NORTH WALES.

ON September 30th, 1911, I saw a solitary Leach's Fork-tailed Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) pass along at the foot of one of the cliffs of the Great Orme's Head, from which, with my binoculars, I could see the forked tail, the white rump, and also the reddish-brown wing-coverts, which almost converged at a point above the rump. The wind at the time was blowing strongly from the north. Apparently this constitutes the second instance of the occurrence of this bird off the north coast of Carnarvonshire. R. W. JONES.

ON October 6th, 1911, a male Fork-tailed Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*) was picked up at Newtown, Montgomeryshire, and sent for preservation to Shrewsbury, where I examined it. A strong northerly wind was blowing, which accounts for its occurrence so far inland. This is the first example of the species obtained in Montgomeryshire, although several have been recorded close to the border in Shropshire.

H. E. FORREST.

CONTINENTAL ROBIN IN SOUTH-WEST SCOTLAND.—A specimen of *Erithacus r. rubecula* is recorded by Miss A. C. Jackson (*Ann. Scot. Nat. Hist.*, 1911, p. 245) as taken at the Mull of Galloway Lighthouse on November 2nd, 1910.

NORTHERN GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKERS IN SCOTLAND.—A specimen of *Dendrocopus m. major* is recorded by Miss A. C. Jackson (*Ann. Scot. Nat. Hist.*, 1911, p. 246) from near Dingwall in October, 1909. Another example of this form is recorded by Miss D. Hamilton (*l.c.*, p. 183) from near Sauchen, Aberdeenshire in December, 1909. With these should be compared other records for the autumn of 1909, in Volume IV., pp. 286 and 369.

WOOD-SANDPIPER IN FIFESHIRE.—Mr. W. Berry records (*Ann. Scot. Nat. Hist.*, 1911, p. 248) that he noticed, and his companion secured, a female example of *Totanus glareola* on August 1st, 1911, at the Morton Lochs near Tentsmuir, Fifeshire. The Wood-Sandpiper has seldom been noticed in Scotland, the last record being of one in Fair Isle in 1908.

BREEDING OF THE GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL INLAND IN IRELAND.—With reference to the notes published under this heading in our last issue (pp. 140-1), Mr. J. Steele Elliott announces (*Zool.*, 1911, p. 388) that he has seen nests of this species on the islands of Lough Aderry and Lough Derryduff, situated between Ardara and Naran in Donegal, and at least in one year on Lough Doon.