

# NOTES

## ISABELLINE WHEATEAR IN SUSSEX.

THE third British example of the Isabelline Wheatear (*Saxicola isabellina*) was secured at Rye Harbour on March 28th, 1912. I examined it in the flesh the next day and upon dissection it proved to be a male. I agree with Mr. Ticehurst (Vol. V., p. 74) that this species is no doubt overlooked, which fact is substantiated by both this and the specimen recorded by himself being shot by the same man, who was on the look out for this species.

H. W. FORD-LINDSAY.

## PROBABLE NORTHERN LONG-TAILED TITS IN ESSEX.

I SAW on March 22nd, 1912, in the parish of Bradfield, Essex, a pair of white-headed Long-tailed Tits. I had them under observation for about ten minutes, sometimes within ten yards of me, using a pair of Voigtländer prism binoculars magnifying twelve diameters. One bird had an absolutely white head, the other I am not quite sure about, but if it had any stripe on the head at all it must have been very faint. The white head of the one I saw best was quite clean-cut from the back—I mean, there were no stripes where the head and neck joined the back and sides. The whole bird seemed lighter and brighter than our English birds in general; the breast and under-parts much whiter, the red on back and shoulders more vivid. The tail seemed to me longer, but it is very difficult to judge on such a point.

I have never been in northern Europe, and have no skins to refer to, but the birds were strikingly different from any Long-tailed Tits I have seen before. I may say that what attracted my attention was their note—a harsh “chissick,” something like that of a Wagtail. They were flying fairly high when I heard the note first, and dropped down into a stunted oak on the shore of the estuary (Stour). I think there can be little doubt that they were *Acredula caudata caudata*.

WALTER B. NICHOLS.

## BRITISH WILLOW-TITS IN CHESHIRE, LANCASHIRE AND WARWICKSHIRE.

ON April 17th, 1912, I watched a Willow-Tit (*Parus atricapillus kleinschmidti*) in an excellent light in a wood at Rostherne. I noticed the cap first; it was distinctly brown-black and not sooty-black. I then saw the pale edgings to

the secondaries quite distinctly, but they were not so markedly distinct as to make me imagine that the bird might be a Northern Willow-Tit. When it spread its tail as it was balancing on a slender twig of a birch, I could see the rounded shape. I recorded the species for Lancashire from a bird in the Warrington Museum, but this is the first Willow-Tit I have seen or heard of in Cheshire. There was a second Tit with it, but I did not see it clearly enough to be sure about its identity; I believe that it was another Willow-Tit.

A pair of Marsh-Tits are nesting in the same wood, and I have for some time been carefully observing every Marsh-Tit in this wood and in the neighbourhood, in the hope of identifying a Willow-Tit. I feel confident in asserting that the Marsh-Tit is by far the commoner bird of the two in Cheshire.

T. A. COWARD.

THE Willow-Tit (*Parus atricapillus kleinschmidti*) not having yet been recorded from Warwickshire, it is interesting to note that Mr. H. F. Witherby has pronounced two skins, which he has kindly examined for me, to be of this species; both are Warwickshire specimens, being respectively an adult female, Earlswood, December, 1893, and an adult male, Kenilworth, December 25th, 1911. They belonged to Mr. T. Ground, who has very kindly given me the 1911 specimen, while the other remains in his collection.

A. GEOFFREY LEIGH.

ON April 18th, 1912, in Boggart Hole Clough, one of the Manchester Public Parks, I saw two birds which I concluded were Willow-Tits (*Parus atricapillus kleinschmidti*). I watched them for some time at a distance of a few feet, feeding on the ground, and on a willow tree, and noticed that the crown of the head was unmistakably brown-black, quite different from the glossy black of the Marsh-Tit, being dull in appearance and giving the impression of being far less clear-cut along the edges of the crown than in a Marsh-Tit. The tail seemed to be rounded, and the light edges to the secondaries made a noticeable light buff or yellowish mark on the wings, when seen at close quarters. One bird seemed to have rather more brown in the crown than the other. They continually uttered a high thin note. In general appearance they looked altogether duller than Marsh-Tits.

A. W. BOYD.

#### THE GREEN WOODPECKER'S METHOD OF EXTRACTING LARVÆ FROM WILLOWS.

THE occupation of a basket-maker in north Norfolk has made it necessary to acquaint myself with the production and cutting of osiers in all their stages. The pursuit of this work

has given me many opportunities for noticing a circumstance in the life of the Green Woodpecker (*Gecinus viridis*) which hitherto I have not seen noticed. It is the method by which this bird extracts the larvæ of some kind of moth from growing osiers or willows. I have never known these larvæ to be found in willows less than two years old and in plants of that age the larvæ are small, whereas in willows of three and four years



TOP, APERTURE MADE BY WOODPECKER; BOTTOM, EXIT  
BORED BY GRUB.—*Natural size.*

old they are as large as in those of eight years old. Above this age I have had no experience. How the grub gets to the inside of the growing willow I could never ascertain, but as many of the shoots spring from stumps that are partly decayed, it is highly probable that the egg from which the grub is hatched is deposited in a decayed part of the stump, from which position the grub could easily work its way beneath the growing willow and take up the position in which I have invariably found it, namely in the centre. I have

always found that the grub is situated in a soft kind of willow, the hard ones being avoided, apparently for several reasons ; first, the hardness of the wood ; second, the soft willows are probably nicer to the taste, and more easily gnawed ; thirdly, there is much more pith in the soft than the hard willows, and as this is always gnawed out it may form the principal food of the grub. I am strongly inclined to think that the grub belongs to the hornet moth (*Trochilium apiformis*). It is a rather sickly yellowish-white colour, varying slightly with the age and quality of the wood in which it is found, the head being of a rich chestnut-brown. I have always found them head upwards, which has led me to think that they cannot turn in their holes, and in this position they avoid their own droppings which accumulate in the abandoned part of their tunnels. As stated, the grub's method of ingress can only be assumed by me, but of its egress I can with certainty mention two ways. In one, the insect gnaws its own way out ; in the other, it is assisted by the Woodpecker.

How the Woodpecker locates the grub is somewhat of a mystery, but this it does with unflinching certainty, and often effects the capture of the grub with a single perforation ; sometimes two are necessary, and on very rare occasions three are found—one, however, being most frequent. When two or three perforations are made, I am inclined to think that the grub inside the willow is alarmed at the hammering of the bird outside, and moves to escape capture, rather than attribute two or three punctures to the inability of the bird to find the exact spot which the grub occupies. The holes made in the willows by the Woodpecker vary according to the thickness of the wood through which the bird chips its way to the grub ; thick pieces making larger holes necessary to enable the bird to work. As already stated, I do not know how the bird finds the situation of the grub, but I have never seen holes chipped in the wood by the bird without evidence of the grub having been there, and its removal has been just as certain. The holes made by the bird are all similar in shape, the long way of the hole being always vertical, and the wood removed in making it is chipped and splintered from its sides in small pieces, which run with the grain, and then broken off at top or bottom, whilst those made by the grub are all round, and about the same size. What has been written thus far applies to shoots of willow that are growing, but old and decayed stumps often hold several grubs at one time. There, of course, they cannot gnaw or feed on the pith of the wood as when the wood is small and only one grub is

found in a shoot, but in both cases the bird's method of procedure is the same, although its object seems more easily attained where the wood is decayed.

The grub does not seem to affect the growth of the shoots, and I could never find external evidence as to whether a grub was inside or not, and to me it is a complete puzzle how the bird ascertains which shoots contain grubs when thousands of the unaffected shoots are growing side by side and many of them so much alike that it is impossible for a man to find any difference in them. I have occasionally found traces of two grubs in one hole, one grub having been removed by the bird whilst the other has gnawed its way out. In this case it seems that grub number one has been assisted from his lodgings, whilst number two appears to have eaten his way through the wooden walls. My reasons for supposing this are that if left entirely to itself the grub always eats its way out at the very top of the central burrow, quite horizontally; it is there, too, that the grub is mostly taken by the bird, and its career as a living entity ceases. The second grub, finding itself in the tunnel already made, gnaws its way out much lower down. It also seems to me that the bird searches for the chrysalis with even greater success, as this is invariably lodged near the bark. Here I have never seen more than one hole made by the Woodpecker, and that a comparatively small one, as in this stage the insect appears more easily extracted, but the character of the hole made by the bird is unmistakeable.

J. W. SMALLS.

#### DOES THE MALE OR FEMALE WOODPECKER BORE THE NESTING-HOLE?

CAN any of the readers of *BRITISH BIRDS* inform me whether it is only the female Woodpecker which bores the hole for the nest, or whether both sexes take a share in this operation?

F. TAPSELL.

[Reliable modern observations on the share of boring by the sexes of the British Woodpeckers seem to be very scanty, which is the more remarkable as they can be distinguished without difficulty. Naumann implies that both sexes of Green Woodpecker bore, though he does not definitely state the fact. Boring in the case of the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker is said to be performed by both sexes (Messrs. Walpole Bond, C. Dixon, etc.), but fresh observations on this point are much needed. Mr. Harting quotes an anonymous observer who saw both sexes of Green Woodpecker working hard at a hole, the first piece of bark being removed by the hen, and the

hole completed after two days work. Possibly this case was exceptional, and the bird may have been ejected from a hole when about to lay. The male of the Continental Green Woodpecker, which probably does not differ in its habits from the English bird, has been observed in the act of boring by Herr C. Loos, and most Continental observers ascribe the greater share of the work of nest-boring to the male Woodpeckers in other species.—F. C. R. JOURDAIN.]

#### ACTIONS OF A KINGFISHER ON THE WATER.

WHILE fishing in Ynisfro Reservoir, near Newport, Monmouthshire, on March 20th, 1912, I noticed a bird on the water about one hundred yards from land. It was making its way rapidly to the side by a series of hops—something like a stone thrown along the surface—striking the water and bounding up again with the aid of its wings. After about a dozen such hops it would sit on the water to rest. I thought it was a starling, and watched carefully, to see if it could swim, but am certain that it made no attempt to do so. Upon reaching the place where it landed, I found it was a Kingfisher (*Alcedo ispida*). Its neck and one wing were injured—I think by flying against a telephone wire that runs near the pond—and it could not fly. Its feathers were hardly wet.

R. C. BANKS.

[On one occasion a young Kingfisher, not long out of the nest, came flying round a corner where I was standing. It turned away rapidly, but flying low struck the water, and was unable to recover itself, flapping along the surface and half turning itself in the water with each stroke. It was only with the greatest difficulty that it managed to reach the opposite bank. As far as I could see it appeared to be very wet, but as it was able to fly away before I could reach it, I had no opportunity of handling it. No attempt whatever was made to swim, the bird sitting half submerged in the water, when it paused for a moment from exhaustion.—F. C. R. JOURDAIN.]

#### LITTLE OWL IN SOUTH DEVON.

I WAS informed by Lieut. H. Wells, R.N., that while he was shooting in November, 1911, along the cliff at Thurlstone, south Devon, a Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) flew out right at his feet. He refrained from shooting it, but had not the slightest doubt about the identification, having often come across the bird out of England.

A. H. MACHELL COX.

SUPPOSED FORMER ABUNDANCE OF THE  
GLOSSY IBIS

IN connexion with the note in last month's BRITISH BIRDS (p. 307) on the above subject by Mr. Gurney, the following may be of interest:—

On September 13th, 1906, I was following otter-hounds at Wangford in Suffolk, and while hounds were drawing a piece of marshy swamp, four of these birds were seen. They rose and flew round, coming quite close over members of the Field, several times. At the time I was standing near an old yokel, and I turned to him and asked him what he called them, and without a moment's hesitation he replied: "Well, we used to call 'em black curloo," and he went on to tell me that he "minded" a time when they were common. The next day I happened to be at a place on the Aldeburgh river, about twenty-one miles from Wangford, and I was informed that somewhere about a fortnight before a couple of these birds had been shot out of a flock of six; in all probability the same lot as I saw at Wangford. This old man's remark about the name seems to go to prove that the idea of the local name of "black curlew" is not so unlikely as Mr. Gurney suggests.

E. FRASER STANFORD.

MOVEMENTS OF BRENT GEESE ON THE COAST OF  
NORTHUMBERLAND.

THE following notes on the movements of Brent Geese (*Bernicla brenta*) during the recent cold weather on the south-east coast of Northumberland may be of some interest, as so little appears to be recorded concerning the movements of Geese:—

Jan. 23rd, 1912. Very fine. Wind N.E. up to 3 p.m., then heavy gale from east with much rain and sleet. Cullercoats, 3.15 p.m. Gale increasing. Flock of twelve—fifteen Brent passing north, close to shore. 3.30. Gale subsided, rain continuing.

Feb. 2nd. St. Mary's Island. Last night extremely cold with much snow. 2 a.m. Wind N.E. increasing to gale. Severe blizzard at daylight. 9.45 a.m. Flock of twelve Brent passed north, battling hard against the wind, and went over the island. H. V. Charlton shot one, an adult male of the light-breasted form (*B. b. glaucogastra*). 10.15 a.m. Another flock of ten-twelve flying in exact track of former. Both skeins flew some six yards from the surface of the water, but on passing over the island they rose to height of forty-five feet. They followed the trend of the coast-line, as much as possible, making no direct course. My brother procured an

immature male of the light-breasted form from the last flock.

Feb. 3rd. Wind N.E. by E. Very heavy gale, worse than yesterday. Frost  $13^{\circ}$  last night. More snow. 10.45 a.m. Skein of fifteen Brent hard pressed by weather and forced back. They circled round high up twice, then attempted to face the wind again and passed to the north. 10.50. St. Mary's Island. Two shot from flock of ten-twelve. 10.55-11.10. Several small parties of five to fifteen going north passed close to the breakers. 11.45. Flock of fifteen. 11.55. Two passed over; one shot by my brother, an adult female of the light-breasted form. 12.10 p.m. Flock twelve-fifteen. Storm abating and consequently the Geese keep farther from land, passing close over the sea. Many hundreds passed all the rest of day, out to sea.

Feb. 4th. 9 a.m. Wind W. Foggy. Two Brent passing south. 9.50. Flock going north close by shore.

Feb. 5th. Twenty to twenty-five passing north. Mild and foggy. Wind S.E. None of the flocks seen had more than twenty-five birds in them.

Brent have been exceedingly numerous this winter at Holy Island, and shoulder-guns have probably done better than ever known before. A friend of mine got six in two days' shooting during the heavy south-easterly gale of January 16th and 17th. A notice in the *Newcastle Daily Journal*, February 7th, states: "Brent Geese are here (Holy Island) in large numbers, and are more easily captured than I have known for several years. There has been quite a harvest for the local sportsmen." This has reference of course to the punt-gunners.

In the *Shooting Times* it is stated that it is some four winters since there was even a fair show of Brent at Holy Island, and the luck of shoulder-gunners this year is also mentioned, one man having got as many as twenty in a few days. Thus it appears that the Brent have been there in record numbers this year. From the records I can obtain for my own district it is about twenty-seven years since a migration in any numbers was observed there: one of the years in which the abundance of this species was noted at Holy Island by Mr. Abel Chapman.

I am of opinion that migration does not take place close up this coast except under abnormal conditions. It is probable that the birds pass north several miles out to sea, or possibly when the weather is settled they make a line from their quarters on the Continent and cross directly to Holy Island (undoubtedly the destination of the flocks seen by us).

J. M. CHARLTON.

## EARLY NESTING OF COMMON SNIPE IN WILTSHIRE.

THE Snipe (*Gallinago caelestis*) began their spring call and to "drum" at Downton on February 16th, 1912—at least, that was the first time I heard them. I have noted the call, but never, I think, the "drumming" earlier in the year. On March 15th my man reported to me that he had flushed a Snipe off three eggs, and on April 2nd two young ones were hatched. This seems to be a very early date.

F. G. PENROSE.

[Dr. Penrose's date is early, but not unprecedented. In Mr. Abel Chapman's *Bird-Life of the Borders*, 2nd ed., p. 51, he states that he has known of a nest (presumably with eggs) as early as March 19th, and of young Snipe on the wing by the end of April. This is the more remarkable, as unlike Dr. Penrose's record, it comes from a northern county. In Dorset Mr. A. G. Cowie recorded a nest with four eggs on March 31st, 1911 (*Field*, May 6th, 1911).—F. C. R. JOURDAIN.]

## SALE OF TWO EGGS OF THE GREAT AUK.

ON April 17th, 1912, Mr. J. C. Stevens sold at 38, King Street, Covent Garden, two eggs of the Great Auk (*Alca impennis* Linn.), both of them the property of Lady Greville Smyth, of Ashton Court, Somerset.

The first specimen offered (Lot A) was one of the two eggs purchased at an auction in Kent, and exhibited by me at the meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club on April 18th of that year, and whose history, so far as I could trace it, was given in the *Ibis* for 1894, pp. 422-3. It was the second of the two eggs sold on April the 24th, 1894, and was purchased by Mr. Henry Munt for £183 15s. On June 20th, 1900, it was again put up for sale at these rooms, and purchased by Mr. James Gardner for the late Sir Greville Smyth, Bart., the price paid being £189. On this its third appearance it was purchased for £157 10s. by Messrs. Rowland Ward, Limited.

I much regret that in some of the accounts of this auction this egg has been confused with the other specimen sold on April 24th, 1894, which was bought by Mr. Herbert Massey, of Didsbury, for £273, in whose collection it still remains—an error which I fear may give great trouble to future historians of the remains of this extinct bird.

The second egg (Lot B) was exhibited by me at the meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club on March 13th, 1912. Very little of its history is known. Many years ago Sir Greville Smyth purchased a box of seabirds' eggs from Mann, a Natural History dealer at Clifton, and on

unpacking them found this egg. He placed it on one side for further examination, but omitted to do so, and the egg was overlooked until 1900. In the *Ibis* for that year I described it, *vide* p. 694, but was under the impression at the time that it belonged to Mr. Gardner, who showed it to me and kindly allowed me to have it photographed. It also was purchased on April 17th, 1912, by Messrs. Rowland Ward, Limited, but only realised £147. EDWARD BIDWELL.

#### THE 1912 "WRECK" OF THE LITTLE AUK.

SCOTLAND.—An excellent general account of the visitation as it affected Scotland is given in the April issue of the *Scottish Naturalist* (pp. 77-81). The bulk of the records are stated to have occurred during and immediately after the fierce easterly gale of January 15-18th, while by February the majority had disappeared. Further south, however, it will be remembered that even greater numbers occurred in the first week of February than in January, and this was apparent even as far north as Northumberland (*cf. supra*, pp. 309-10), while the majority of inland English records were early in February. Even as early as the middle of November and onwards until the January gale Little Auks were noted in the Orkneys and Shetlands as being present in "great numbers," and in December and January a good many were recorded on the coasts of the mainland down to the Clyde and the Forth, but chiefly on the east side. The gale in the middle of January brought hundreds to grief on the east coast from Shetlands to Berwick, and they seem to have been in greatest numbers in the Firth of Forth, where on January 18th—the last day of the gale—hundreds were seen about the May and around the Bass, while during the next few days the tide washed them up in "dozens" on the shores of the Forth. On the 19th three or four hundred appearing to be very tired arrived at the Bell Rock. Many single birds were driven inland, and indeed right across the country, records coming from Perth, Stirling, Dumbarton, Renfrew, Lanark, Wigtown and other counties, between January 20th and 27th.

As compared to the visitation of 1894-5 it is stated that fewer records have come from districts north of Forth and Clyde, but they have extended further south-west. Almost all the birds examined were in an emaciated state, and contained no food.

It seems probable that the January gale in Scotland drove the bulk of the birds south, for large numbers were passing south on January 18th, on the Northumberland coast (*supra*, p. 309), and they were first noticed in Yorkshire and Norfolk

on the 20th (pp. 283, 285). Then came the blizzard of February 1st and 2nd which swept great numbers on to the English coasts, while during the week or so following they were picked up, as our records witness, in all parts of the country, including, and north and east of, the counties of Sussex, Surrey, Buckingham, Gloucester, Worcester, Shropshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire.—H.F.W.

WESTMORLAND.—On February 8th a male just dead was found on the moor at Kirkby Lonsdale. On February 7th a keeper saw about thirty flying across the moor in a S.S.E. direction. They passed quite close to him (Hulme Wilson).

DERBYSHIRE.—One at Sawley Common on January 25th and one at Shardlow on February 18th. At least a dozen were taken in the county between January 25th and February 18th (F. C. R. Jourdain).

STAFFORDSHIRE.—One at Freeford Hall, Lichfield, on January 20th (J. R. B. Masefield).

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.—Seventeen picked up in the county, all on the high roads (J. Whitaker, *Field*, 30.III.1912, p. 647).

ESSEX.—One alive on the water near Foulness Island, February 8th (F. J. Stubbs, *Zool.*, 1912, p. 157).

#### FULMARS BREEDING IN ORKNEY.

WITH reference to the notes on this subject (*antea*, pp. 198, 228, 287), I was on the west coast of the mainland (at Birsay), in 1908, and then made inquiries about the Fulmar, and from what I could learn then there were a few at Stromness, and a colony at Costa Head. I saw two flying near the Brough of Birsay. In 1910 I found a small colony on the cliffs to the north of Marwick Head, and in 1911 there was a considerable increase there.

W. J. BALFOUR KIRKE.

[Several pairs were recorded as breeding at the Black Crag near Stromness in 1907, *see* Vol. II., p. 374, but I did not see any there in 1908.—N.F.T.]

#### UNCOMMON OCCURRENCES IN WEST SOMERSET.

CHIFFCHAFF (*Phylloscopus rufus*).—One was shot at Blackford on January 16th, 1912, and another on March 4th.

CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*).—A female was picked up in Blackford in the autumn of 1897 (?). It had sustained injuries to one of its wings.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Dendrocopus major*).—A pair visited Blackford in the autumn of 1905. *D. minor* is fairly plentiful in the neighbourhood.

LITTLE OWL (*Athene noctua*).—A female was shot at East Cranmore (East Somerset), on December 14th, 1911.

HEN-HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*).—Seen in the early part of 1912, probably on two or three occasions, on Tealham Moor (Wedmore). A local gunner was about to recover a Lapwing which he had shot, when, to quote his own words, “a large hawk, nearly all white, came along and took it away.” This is probably the same bird which I saw on February 5th, and which another man saw later in pursuit of a “black and white curlew” (Tufted Duck).

MERLIN (*Falco aesalon*).—A female was shot at Blackford on January 18th, 1907. I saw another on Stoke Moor (Wedmore) in the winter of 1909.

BITTERN (*Botaurus stellaris*).—A male was shot on Wedmore Heath on December 28th, 1906. Three of these birds have been taken in this neighbourhood during the last twenty years, and one was seen on Stoke Moor (Wedmore) in the early autumn of last year.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE (*Anser brachyrhynchus*).—One was shot on Wedmore Heath on January 15th, 1905. I saw a “plump” of eight on the Moor on January 17th, 1905.

GOLDEN-EYE (*Clangula glaucion*).—A female was shot on Tealham Moor on October 27th, 1910. Two more females were shot on the moor on February 5th, 1912, and two more, probably females, were seen later.

COMMON EIDER (*Somateria mollissima*).—A female was shot on Steart Island (Burnham) on November 29th, 1911, while a male was shot a few days previously. Both were in extremely poor condition.

MEW (*Mergus albellus*).—Two females were shot on Tealham Moor (Wedmore) on January 4th, 1907. Another (a young male or adult female) was shot in the following winter.

QUAIL (*Coturnix communis*).—A female was shot on Tealham Moor on October 14th, 1911.

SPOTTED CRAKE (*Porzana maruetta*).—One was shot on Wedmore Heath on January 13th, 1905. The date of capture is interesting.

GREAT SNIFE (*Gallinago major*).—One, on Tealham Moor in the winter of 1906 (?).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*).—An immature female was shot on Wedmore Heath on January 18th, 1912.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna fluviatilis*).—An immature female was shot on the Gore Sands (Burnham) on October 21st, 1909.

LITTLE GULL (*Larus minutus*).—An immature male was shot off Burnham on October 23rd, 1903.

GREAT SKUA (*Megalestris catarrhactes*).—A female was shot on the Gore Sands on October 25th, 1909.

LITTLE AUK (*Mergulus alle*).—I saw one on the Gore Sands in the autumn of 1909.

SLAVONIAN GREBE (*Podiceps auritus*).—An immature male was shot off Burnham on February 2nd, 1912.

F. H. L. WHISH.

### RECOVERY OF MARKED BIRDS.

#### *Corrections.*

ROBINS (p. 312). No. F589, was marked and recovered on the dates recorded by Mr. J. R. B. Masefield, at Cheadle, Staffordshire, *not* by Mr. Leigh at Hampton-in-Arden.

No. D325 was marked by Captain Seppings on January 29th, 1912, *not* June 29th, 1911.

No. C405 was recovered on December 8th, *not* November 8th, 1911.

REED-WARBLEDERS IN IRELAND.—During a stay at the Tuskar Rock off the coast of Wexford in September and October, 1911, Professor C. J. Patten obtained two specimens of *Acrocephalus streperus* out of a party of five on September 19th (*Irish Nat.*, 1912, p. 50). Professor Patten announces these as the first occurrences of the species in Ireland, but in the next issue of the same journal (p. 84) he writes that a previous record by Mr. Barrington had escaped him, but he makes a further mistake in stating that this record had not been referred to in BRITISH BIRDS, whereas it was mentioned on p. 408 of Vol. II. Professor Patten also obtained a young Wagtail, which he thinks is a specimen of *Motacilla flava*, on September 12th, 1911, and a Skylark which he considers to be *Alauda arvensis cantarella*, on October 5th, 1911, but he promises a further report on the identification of these two birds. It would seem more likely that the Skylark is an example of *A. a. cinerea*, the eastern form, which has been taken at Fair Isle (February 24th, 1906), than the very similar south European form *A. a. cantarella*.—H.F.W.

SWALLOW IN CORNWALL IN FEBRUARY.—A solitary Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) was observed at Falmouth from February 29th onwards (N. Greaves, *Field*, 23.III.1912, p. 596). This bird may have wintered somewhere in the neighbourhood.

MEALY REDPOLLS IN LANARK.—A small flock of *Linota linaria* was seen at Stepps on January 7th, 1912 (J. Paterson, *Glasgow Nat.*, 1912, p. 63).

**SHAGS IN YORKSHIRE AND DERBYSHIRE.**—In connexion with the appearance of Shags in Cheshire, Yorkshire, and Worcestershire\* already reported (*supra*, pp. 279 and 307), it is interesting to note that one was seen to go down to a mill-dam near Bradford on January 25th, and was captured two days later (H. B. Booth, *Nat.*, 1912, p. 126). Mr. Coward writes that he subsequently found the remains of a second Shag on Rostherne Mere, which he had probably missed seeing when he found the first, reported on p. 279. Mr. J. Drury informs Mr. Jourdain that a Shag was sent to Messrs. Hutchinson for preservation on January 31st, from near Bakewell.

**BITTERN IN ARGYLLSHIRE.**—An example of *Botaurus stellaris* was found dead on January 17th, 1912, at Oban (C. H. Bisshopp, *Scot. Nat.*, 1912, p. 67).

**GOOSANDERS IN DERBYSHIRE.**—A pair of *Mergus merganser* were observed for two or three weeks in March, 1911, on the ponds at Osmaston Manor near Ashburne (F. C. R. Jourdain, *Zool. Rec. for Derbyshire*, 1911).

**PLUMAGE OF THE YOUNG RED GROUSE.**—In an interesting article on the "Red Grouse in Confinement," in the *Avicultural Magazine* (Third Series, Vol. III., pp. 92-6), Mr. H. Wormald remarks that: "Young Grouse grow three tails in succession before they are five months old, i.e. their first baby-tail, which shows when the chicks are nine days old. This is retained until the birds are a fair size, and then replaced by a black tail, which they wear until after they are quite full-grown, and is dropped about the middle of September, the outer feathers on each side being the first to fall out. In about a month's time this tail is fully developed, and is black, and the feathers stronger in the quill than the feathers of the second tail were. This tail is worn until the moult of the following year."

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT IN DONEGAL IN WINTER.**—A specimen of *Limosa belgica* was shot on January 23rd, 1912, at Inch, Lough Swilly (D. C. Campbell, *Irish Nat.*, 1912, p. 64).

**BLACK-NECKED GREBE IN EAST ROSS.**—An example of *Podiceps nigricollis* is recorded by Miss A. C. Jackson (*Scot. Nat.*, 1912, p. 67) from Cromarty Firth, Jan. 2nd, 1911.

**SLAVONIAN GREBE.**—A considerable number appear to have been driven on to our shores and inland this winter, and we shall be glad to have records of occurrences.—EDS.

\* Mr. J. Steele Elliott writes that this record must be counted to Shropshire, as the Worcester boundary is half a mile from the place where the bird was obtained.