

ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES FROM NORFOLK  
FOR 1918.

25TH ANNUAL REPORT.

BY

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THIS Norfolk report has suffered considerably, like its two predecessors, from the war, partly through the loss of observers and partly from military restrictions on the coast. But apart from this we cannot be blind to the fact that the zoological aspect of Norfolk and Suffolk has altered, and continues to alter, from many causes.

NORFOLK A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

The change which has taken place in the breeding of birds in the county in less than a hundred years leads to curious reflections. We have recovered the Bittern, the Cormorant and the Curlew, but there are great losses to set off against these gains. Seven species at least, which nested up to 1818 have entirely ceased to do so, viz., the Kite, Peregrine, Raven, Bustard, Avocet, Black-tailed Godwit and Black Tern, and to this list might almost certainly be added the Buzzard, and perhaps Baillon's Crake, Wood-Sandpiper, Wigeon and Ferruginous Duck, though England lies somewhat outside the breeding range of the two latter species.

That Baillon's Crake and the Black-necked Grebe nested in small numbers on the Broads until well into the nineteenth century is a surmise too probable to be rejected. Eggs attributed to Baillon's Crake, but which may possibly in two cases have been Little Crake's, for they are both said to breed in Normandy, were found in 1866 and 1889.

As to the Black-necked Grebe, Thomas Pennant distinctly says in his *British Zoology* (Vol. II., p. 500) and again in his *Tour in Scotland* (Vol. I., p. 13) that he found it breeding near Spalding in south Lincolnshire, and in the former work he gives an excellent figure, and good description.

Why this explicit statement should be either overlooked, or not credited, is hard to say. The fens round Spalding must have had much in common with the Broads of Norfolk, from which they were only separated by some seventy miles. In the seventeenth century Norfolk abounded with rivulets, "broad waters" and "plashes of water," as Sir Thomas Browne called them, extremely attractive to both Ducks and Grebes. This is more than once alluded to by Browne, and is given as a reason for the abundance of Harriers, King-

fishers and Teal, of which last there was "scarce any place more abounding" than Norfolk.

In Browne's time the Ferruginous Duck may have been an annual breeder; even as recently as 1915 there were one or two on the Broads in July, although we only class it as an early spring visitor.

#### FIVE DECENNIAL PERIODS.

The annexed table does not go back a hundred years, but it takes five more recent decennial periods, and essays a computation of the number of broods brought off by eight representative Norfolk birds: the figures are guesses, but they are guesses made with considerable care.

	1878.	1888.	1898.	1908.	1918.
Montagu's Harrier	.. 6	5	4	3	3
Marsh-Harrier ..	.. 3	2	0	1	0
Hobby .. ..	.. 8	4	2	1	0
Short-eared Owl ..	.. 4	3	2	1	1
Quail .. ..	..12	8	6	4	2
Spotted Crake ..	.. 9	6	4	3	3
Ruff .. ..	.. 3	1	0	0	0
Garganey .. ..	..10	9	8	7	8

The decrease of the Spotted Crake is probably to be explained by the eagerness with which these birds are hunted and shot in the south of France during March, while the diminution of Quails is the natural sequence of the trade in these delicacies.

#### THE SPRING MIGRATION OF 1918.

Turning now to the year under consideration, the vernal migration calls for no special remark. On February 28th the Rev. M. C. Bird notes Water-Rails noisy all the day, and two Bitterns booming, On March 20th he heard the Lapwing's breeding note for the first time, and the same evening Tawny Owls were calling and Grey Crows passing overhead. The month of May was marked by an unprecedented plague of small green caterpillars, stated to be largely larvæ of the Antler-moth, but whatever they were few trees were immune from their ravages. Oaks perhaps suffered most, but horse-chestnut, sycamore, elm, cherry, apple and even rose trees did not fare much better.

In some counties Black-headed Gulls did their duty and attacked the caterpillars bravely, but that was not reported of Norfolk. At Sheringham Mr. Upcher proved that Wood-Pigeons were feeding freely on them, by opening their crops

for examination. Sparrows were also supposed to eat them, but half a dozen dissected at Keswick had only empty crops.

All through the summer of 1918 Miss E. L. Turner has been paying special attention to the Bittern, which resulted in some admirable notes collected for the Norwich Naturalists' Society.

Miss Turner is of opinion that no less than six pairs of Bitterns bred in Norfolk during the spring and summer of 1918—a noble record!

In every case the old birds were protected, and as far as we know five broods out of six were reared. Other birds besides the Bittern are spreading in a satisfactory manner, notably the Great Crested Grebe, the Shoveler and the Gadwall, and with some limitations the Bearded Tit—in all cases the result of protection.

#### THE AUTUMN MIGRATION.

The autumnal migration was imperfectly noted owing to a lack of observers; the only movement of consequence detected was on or about October 18th, a date which quite coincided with Mr. Caton-Haigh's observations made in north Lincolnshire. Both then and later Lincolnshire and Norfolk, and I believe the north of Suffolk too, received very great numbers of Lapwings, which attracted the attention of several people, as they are not usually seen in such strength. On the other hand several of the usually expected species were absent. Waxwings did not come, and Little Auks were no more in evidence than they had been in 1916 and 1917, the Glaucous Gull—occasionally rather abundant—was represented by one example (November 19th, James Vincent), the Rough-legged Buzzard by a single example (Nov. 26th, Vincent), the Great Grey Shrike by one only (Nov. 24th) and the Little Gull by one (Vincent). The list of rarities for the year is not very imposing, a brace of Caspian Terns and two Avocets were seen by Mr. Vincent in May, and the Yellow-browed Warbler and Richard's Pipit by the same observer in October, all near Yarmouth, where another Avocet turned up in August.

The rainfall for the year was 28.28, the greatest amount for any one month being 4.74 in September (E. Knight).

#### CLASSIFIED NOTES.

JAY (*Garrulus glandarius rufitergum*).

(*G. g. glandarius*.)

The unusual number of Jays during the autumn attracted the notice of several of our field workers, and was remarked

in Lincolnshire as well (Caton-Haigh). Dr. Riviere is of opinion that some of these migrants belonged to the Continental race, see *British Birds*, XI., p. 259.

BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula p. pileata*).

It is difficult not to give this handsome Finch a bad name. As early as March they get to work on the black currants, and in May their strong beaks strip the buds off gooseberry bushes to such an extent that the twigs appear as if dead. Then they turn their attention to apple blossoms, and the exasperated gardener sees his supply of fruit fail; while plums are denuded of their white buds, until hardly one is left.

In this county there has been a prejudice against Bullfinches for a great many years. As long ago as the sixteenth century we find churchwardens not infrequently paying money for their heads, along with those of other "vermin." Churchwardens' accounts contain many sixteenth and seventeenth century references to birds, but nothing earlier than 1512. Fortunately the "Blood-Olph," as it is called in Norfolk—a Saxon name sometimes converted into Alp—is nowhere very common.

RICHARD'S PIPIT (*Anthus r. richardi*).

An example of this fine Pipit—first recorded by my father on November 22nd, 1841—was identified by Mr. Vincent on Yarmouth South Denes, October 24th (wind N.E., 2), several Goldfinches were also flitting about. In all cases when Richard's Pipit has occurred, it has been on the coast.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER (*Phylloscopus s. superciliosus*).

On October 21st Mr. Vincent identified one on Yarmouth South Denes, and at the same time a Black Redstart, three Redstarts, a Pied Flycatcher, and a number of Robins. There had been a high wind the preceding evening (north-east, force 5), which had evidently brought birds from the Continent, and as there was rain and mist they settled on the first land they came to.

Of the Yellow-browed Warbler there have been four previous occurrences—

October 1st, 1894, wind N.E., force 4 (N.N.E., 3 the previous evening).

October 29th, 1907, wind S.E., 5 (S., 4 the previous evening).

October 2nd, 1908, wind S.E., 2 (S.E., 2 the previous evening).

September 16th, 1910, wind N.E., 5.

These five records make it pretty clear therefore that an east wind is what is needed to bring them to Norfolk.

RING-OUZEL (*Turdus t. torquatus*).

Dr. Riviere has already placed on record the fact of about a dozen being seen on February 13th (*Brit. Birds*, XII., p. 91), and this appears to be the only recorded occurrence of the Ring-Ouzel in February in Norfolk. There was a mist at the time, which perhaps caused them to descend, when passing over. A Ring-Ouzel was picked up at Cromer on June 10th, by Mr. Barclay.

SWIFT (*Apus a. apus*).

The departure of the Swift has been already chronicled; to their tireless wings time and distance matter little. Here let me ask, do these birds ever settle except for the purposes of nidification? In the south of France, where Swifts are very abundant, their endless gyrations seem to go on all night, unless there be a fall of temperature, and then they move off; feeding takes place entirely in the air, as well as copulation and presumably also sleep.

HOOPOE (*Upupa e. epops*).

On October 17th a Hoopoe was seen by Mrs. Barclay in a garden at Sidestrand, where it remained several days.

CUCKOO (*Cuculus c. canorus*).

On June 14th a garden boy at Keswick saw a Cuckoo fly out of a gooseberry bush, in which was a Brown Linnet's nest, containing one Linnet's egg, and also one Cuckoo's egg, still warm. The Cuckoo settled on an adjacent wall, and "cuckooed" more than once, but did not descend again to the nest. As the egg was not yet cold, it had presumably just been deposited. The use of the "cuckoo" call is interesting, as this note is frequently ascribed to the male alone. The Linnet's eggs soon increased from one to five, on which the hen Linnet sat steadily. On June 22nd at about 7 a.m. the boy saw two Cuckoos by the garden wall, within about twenty yards of the Linnet's nest. One "cuckooed" as it flew away, but the other, which may have been a female, merely made an odd noise. The construction put upon their behaviour was that they were waiting for the Linnet to leave her eggs voluntarily, being loath to frighten her for fear of desertion. At 10.20 a.m. I ventured to disturb the Linnet for examination, and found that the eggs were then intact, one Cuckoo's and five Linnet's. After this the hen Linnet continued incubating, and sat tight; she was kept under observation, but nothing more happened until the 27th, when a Cuckoo was seen not far from the nest at about 4 p.m.

Either then, or early the next morning, some bird or beast—

possibly a field mouse, but the Cuckoo is suspected—must have had access to the nest. At 10 a.m. on the 28th the empty shell of the Cuckoo's egg, or rather half of it, was lying on the ground, a red streak on the lining showing it to have been incubated. A quarter of a mile or so from the Linnet's bush was a Pied Wagtail's nest, in which another Cuckoo had laid, and strange to say this egg was also thrown out by some mysterious agency.

LITTLE OWL (*Athene n. noctua*).

The Little Owl continues to extend its area, in spite of persecution. One which I dissected contained nothing but beetles, and an experienced bird-stuffer, who has skinned a good many, tells me that beetles are invariably their food in this district. It is rather curious that this Owl should not have been always resident in England, considering its distribution in the north of France. Mr. Witherby says he saw several at Dunkerque (*Brit. Birds*, p. 199), and I can speak to its being at Boulogne and neighbourhood. At Hopton a Little Owl got down the chimney of a farmhouse (F. Smalley).

LONG-EARED OWL (*Asio o. otus*).

On March 31st a nest was again found on the ground by the head keeper, in all probability the property of the same Owl, whose portrait by Miss Turner appeared in Volume IX. of *Brit. Birds* (p. 61), as it was in the same plantation. The nest contained only one egg, but four days later it was perceived that there were three, and on April 5th a fourth. On April 6th Mr. Vincent found a second nest with seven eggs, also built on the ground, and on the 11th a third in a similar situation. On May 7th a fourth nest was discovered by Mr. R. Gurney, but on a different Broad, which like the others was on the ground, and held four young ones; so terrestrial habits seem to have become the custom with Long-eared Owls in this flat district.

BARN-OWL (*Tyto a. alba*).

The Barn-Owl, in spite of its unclean abode, is a favourite with nearly everybody. Some ill-informed gamekeepers hate and destroy it, but to all farmers it is a welcome guest at any time. In the many nests got up to, I have never found game but once, and then I believe it was not game, but the remains of a very young chicken. Owls sometimes give trouble by getting into the belfries of churches, and not being able to get out again. Mr. R. Gurney informs me that this has been the case at Ingham, but it is no new charge, for as

long ago as 1711 these tiresome habits are complained of in the churchwardens' accounts at Redenhall. Whether the disease which was rife in Ireland (*Brit. Birds*, XI., p. 21) has spread to Norfolk I cannot say, but on the last day of December, two Barn-Owls, in a moribund condition were lying in a field at Reepham (J. Owen).

TAWNY OWL (*Strix a. aluco*).

I have in former years chronicled one or two accidents to Tawny Owls, and Mr. Saunders has now a fresh one to relate. On December 28th one of these birds was lying dead on the footboard of the engine of the night train when it arrived at Southtown station, having, as is supposed, come in contact with one of the white headlights; such a misadventure might easily happen in a mist and, in fact, it has occurred before.

MERLIN (*Falco c. aesalon*).

October 25th. A Merlin at Swardeston.—Being exclusively an autumn and winter visitant, the Merlin, unlike the Hobby, is seldom molested by gamekeepers in this county, yet its numbers do not increase. Formerly used for hawking Sky-Larks, the Merlin is capable of taking much bigger birds than that; indeed an instance of a wild Merlin successfully flying at a Curlew, which it simply doubled up, occurred some years ago at Wells (*Trans. Norwich Nat. Soc.*, III., p. 576). Sir Thomas Browne, with his usual powers of observation, correctly notes the Hobby as being a bird of the spring passage, and the Merlin as arriving in autumn.

MARSH-HARRIER (*Circus æruginosus*).

MONTAGU'S HARRIER (*C. pygargus*).

There was again no evidence of the Marsh-Harrier having bred, or even attempting to nest, in the county; but with Montagu's Harrier, it was different, for on May 19th our principal observer discovered a nest in its old quarters with two eggs, and on June 2nd he found, or was shown, another nest with one egg. Both clutches hatched out, and in each case there were ultimately four young ones, which my informant considers exceedingly good, never having known more than three to be brought off before. These nests were also verified by Dr. Riviere, although no doubt could be entertained of their identity.

HEN-HARRIER (*C. cyaneus*).

The Hen-Harrier is now considered much rarer as a breeder than Montagu's, and the question is whether it was not

always so in Norfolk and Suffolk. The same observer identified a pair of Hen-Harriers on April 12th, a date suggestive of breeding. On October 27th he saw two more, one by the water, and the other hunting a second-crop field, as well as a single bird on November 25th, but these merely represent autumn migrants. On November 16th Mr. Saunders regrets having to report the death of a fine male in grey plumage, near Yarmouth, in which state it is rare.

OSPREY (*Pandion h. haliaetus*).

At Scoulton on May 23rd (S. H. Long, *Brit. Birds*, p. 47).

HERON (*Ardea cinerea*).

From Reedham to Yarmouth there extends a great tract of grass land, intersected with dykes, most of which in the time of the Romans must have been under salt water. At Reedham the high ground begins, and here the Herons, which use this level for a feeding ground, have long possessed their heronry. On May 16th the settlement numbered, by Mr. Robert Gurney's counting, about eighty-three nests, which is just about what it was in 1901 and 1903; but although there has been no increase, it is probably the largest heronry in Norfolk. Eighty-three nests, however, is no more than Pennant relates having seen on a single tree in Lincolnshire (*British Zoology*, II., p. 412). Beneath one tree lay a large perch (9¼ inches), perhaps rejected as too prickly. Some of the young Herons had fallen out of their nests, or had died and been thrown out, but one was alive, and made off as fast as his legs could carry him. This is supposed to be the spot where Spoonbills nested in 1600, referred to by Sir Thomas Browne.

SPOONBILL (*Platalea l. leucorodia*).

In the last twenty-six summers there have been registered on different dates 221 Spoonbills on Breydon Broad, which is the tidal estuary of the Yare and the Waveney. In former days Spoonbills bred in seven places in Norfolk, and there is no reason why with protection they should not do so again, but unfortunately a certain section of the community still desires to shoot them.

In 1918 the month of April, as usual, saw the first-comers—four, which put in on the 22nd under a pretty high north-east wind (N.N.E., force 4). With customary spring restlessness, they would not settle and left the Broad on the 25th, the wind being again north-east. On May 24th, after a gale, this time from the south-west (W.S.W., 6) another came, which remained until the 29th. On June 1st three arrived,

on a still day, with no wind. On the 6th (S.E., 3) there were six Spoonbills on the muds, which were seen off and on by the watcher until July 1st, although it is hardly likely that they were actually there the whole time. On July 3rd, with a strong north-east wind (force 5) the six Spoonbills were joined by another, and all the seven were contented with their quarters and a diet of sand-prawns until July 7th, when something may have disturbed them, for the watcher thinks that they moved on. On July 11th, after a gale from the south-west (force 6), there were three on the muds, and the watcher judged that they might be fresh ones. These found the flats to their liking until the end of the month, when his notes for the year end. Looking back on past records, which extend over a long period, it may be said that although the first Spoonbills always turn up in April, their favourite months are May and June. Whatever country they come from, it is a north-east wind which generally brings them.

BITTERN (*Botaurus s. stellaris*).

On May 5th Dr. Long and I were taken by Mr. R. Gurney to see a new heronry on a small Broad near the coast, which had not been visited. While counting the nests, which numbered twelve, the boom of a Bittern fell on our ears, and distant as it was, there was no mistaking the sound, which is as weird as it is ventriloquial. Securing a boat and using the pole, or "quant" as it is called, with as little noise as possible, my companions silently drew near to the musician, eventually reaching the very spot whence the booming—three reiterated gasps—proceeded. Here two Bitterns rose together, but search failed to discover any nest. At this I was not surprised, for we had learnt before that the booming of the male, however constant, although it betrays their whereabouts, does not necessarily mean nidification. It was on another Broad, not very distant from Catfield, that a visit was paid on April 4th to the only nest which I had the good fortune to see in 1918. It had been found nine days before, namely on March 26th by our best observer, who only confided its whereabouts to one or two reliable friends. There were already four eggs, which in March, implies early breeding, but the weather, which had been warm with only one frosty night, may have had some influence. This nest, which was smaller than might have been expected from so large a bird, was nevertheless substantially built, being composed of interlaced stems, and smaller pieces of the Club-rush or Bolder-reed. It was less in diameter than the nest of 1911,

so well photographed by Miss Turner (*Brit. Birds*, V., p. 96), but agreed sufficiently well with the Dutch nest (*Brit. Birds*, I., p. 331).

The fabric of our nest, which looked fairly solid, and no doubt was so, was raised some six inches above the water, and in case of rain it would have automatically risen higher. Its position was about fifteen yards from the edge of the Broad, where the water, although becoming shallow, was deep enough for wading boots to be necessary. Although we approached the nest cautiously, the Bittern was alarmed while we were still some yards away. She rose abruptly, giving us as she did so an opportunity of marking the contracted neck, which made her look smaller than she was. Her pose was very awkward as she rose, and her departure and subsequent flight slow. After a brief inspection of the Bittern's domicile we withdrew carefully without touching either nest or eggs, lest they might retain the odour of human hands. The latter were more incubated than either of us thought, for from the same friend I learn that next day there was a young one, and he has since told me that by April 10th all the eggs were hatched. He describes the amusing way in which, on a subsequent visit paid to the nest, the hungry nestlings struck at his hand, as if they supposed it was food, but they could not have been starving, for on taking one up, it immediately disgorged a three-inch roach, minus its head and tail. The quantity of small fish which Bitterns and Herons take must be very large, especially when they have a brood to supply, but the fecundity of the roach and bream is great enough to quickly make good the deficit. The last chapter in the history of these Bitterns was very tragic, for the heavy rain combined with a north-east wind on April 16th caused flooding, and two of the young ones were drowned, not being old enough to climb up the reeds, whereby they could have escaped.

#### BEWICK'S SWAN (*Cygnus b. bewickii*).

On November 12th Mr. Vincent detected a flock of about fifty at no great distance from Yarmouth, migrating west, and on November 20th he saw eleven more, also going west. It is noticeable how both the dates and the direction fit in with observations made by him in 1914 and 1915, and 1917, all of which indicate a regular passage of Swans on the Norfolk coast in November. If the weather is normal, they pass on high in air, without alighting, and the same observation applies to the Whooper, which can be distinguished by its larger size. It is likely that the destination of some of these

Swans is Ireland, where by all accounts they are abundant in winter.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE (*Anser brachyrhynchus*).

From Mr. Dye I learn that it is long since so many Geese have been known to frequent the great tract of rich meadowland which spreads out between the rivers Waveney and Bure. Here they came under the observation of Mr. J. Vincent, who on different occasions laid up for a shot. On November 20th\* while waiting, he saw about six hundred of them feeding, and ascertained that they were Pink-footed Geese, together with a little flock of seven White-fronted Geese. Every morning all this great band went out to sea, and returned during the night to the meadows, or at daylight next day.

On December 16th Mr. Dye reported that three skeins of Geese, probably the same birds—guessed by the townsmen at about one thousand in all—passed over Yarmouth, flying in a north-easterly direction. On the 30th and 31st large flocks were again seen over the town, also going eastwards. The increase of the Pink-footed Goose in this district is satisfactory to others besides sportsmen. I have once or twice had a “tipped” one sent me, although not from these marshes, and find that they can almost support themselves where there is grass.

One lived for twelve years, and was in the best of health when a large bull-dog killed it. It laid eggs every year in April, generally five, and began to sit at the end of the month.

Its attitude when incubating was most peculiar, the long outstretched neck flat on the ground, or level with it, which gave the bird quite a reptilian appearance, as shown in Mr. Robert Gurney's snap-shot. She would frequently change her position in order to sit head to wind, and when the eggs, which were necessarily unfertile, did not hatch, she would still persevere, going without food, until poor thing, she was too weak to stand. I was very sorry when she met the usual fate of my pinioned Geese, namely to be killed by dogs.

Mr. Caton-Haigh informs me that the grey Geese passing over his part of north Lincolnshire, from October on to Christmas, were the feature of the season, but as they were generally of a great height it is impossible to say if they were Pink-footed Geese or not.

[RUDDY SHELD-DUCK (*Casarca ferruginea*).

On April 21st two were seen by Mr. Arthur Patterson on the Suffolk side of the Breydon Channel, and before many

\* Cf. *antea*, p. 239 [EDS.]

hours had passed the male was in Mr. Saunders' shop, having been shot on the marshes.]

MALLARD (*Anas p. platyrhynchos*).

A Mallard shot near Bungay on the 12th of October by Mr. G. Brighton was found to contain eleven hundred and



PINK-FOOTED GOOSE INCUBATING WITH NECK OUTSTRETCHED.

(Photographed by R. Gurney.)

fifty-one kernels of barley, but it was only shelled grain which would have been lost on the stubbles. From Mr. Cole I learn that two dead Mallards, killed by mines, were picked up on Runton Beach on September 13th and 15th: it is to be feared that other birds also met the same fate.

GADWALL (*Anas strepera*).

On Scoulton Mere, where they have for a long time been summer visitants, several Gadwalls, no doubt breeding, were seen by Dr. Long on May 23rd. The Gadwall does not seem to have been known to Sir Thomas Browne.

GARGANEY (*A. querquedula*).

I think I may say that the unfavourable report on this species in *Brit. Birds* (Vol. X., p. 241) can now be to some extent reversed, as Garganeys are coming to the fore again. Five were seen by the writer on April 4th, of which four were pronounced to be drakes, and on April 7th some more were identified by Dr. Long and Mr. R. Gurney, while subsequently others were reported.

The Garganey is one of the species, omitted in Sir Thomas Browne's list, but subsequently given in one of his letters to Ch. Merrett as a Norfolk bird, characteristically described as "a kind of teale which some fowlers call crackling teale from the noyse it maketh." This peculiar sound is not very loud, but once heard cannot be forgotten.

SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*).

On February 6th a pair appeared on our river at Cringleford, where I have never seen this duck before, and on May 5th there were eight pairs at Catfield, evidently nesting. On October 5th there were some at Hempstead, where they remained off and on until the end of December.

EIDER DUCK (*Somateria mollissima*).

A fine male caught in a fishing-net at Blakeney Point on October 26th, was, I understand, taken to Mr. Pashley. Another male was picked up alive on October 22nd on Horsey Warren, which is on the coast (M. C. Bird).

BLACK-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps n. nigricollis*).

About April 24th a male and female, already in their summer plumage, and evidently paired, were unfortunately destroyed in the "New Cut" river, at Haddiscoe (Vincent); to make it worse they were cut up for hats!

WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba p. palumbus*).

Wood-Pigeons were very scarce, and the weekly pigeon-shoots advertised in the local papers, proportionately unproductive. It is a good thing they were so, for the times have been trying for farmers, and these destructive birds bear a very bad character in Norfolk. A Wood-Pigeon shot by Mr. C. Rowe near Bungay on February 27th had five hundred and nine kernels of barley in its crop. Their crops are very

dilatable, one which contained eight hundred and thirty-eight whole grains of corn has actually been recorded, see the *Field* of October 8th, 1887.

STOCK-DOVE (*Columba oenas*).

Stock-Doves were paired at Keswick on January 23rd. In March Mr. Vincent found a pair which had met their death in a curious manner. Having gone into one of his "nesting-boxes," the entrance to which was rather small, they got jammed, possibly from both trying to leave it at the same time, and there they died. Stock-Dove's eggs can be hatched under tame Pigeons, but the young ones do not always live.

GREY PLOVER (*Squatarola squatarola*).

On May 14th Mr. Vincent saw a flock of about thirty at sea off Yarmouth, they were going north; there was a gentle wind from the west.

LAPWING (*Vanellus vanellus*).

The autumn immigration of Lapwings has been already alluded to. They become commoner every year, and there are few birds which want the protection of the law less. On November 30th Mr. Vincent describes them as being in countless numbers on the marshes between Yarmouth and Reedham, but he could only see about fifty Golden Plover. The number which breed in east Norfolk is not very great, but there are a good quantity on the west of the county, where nesting conditions are more suitable.

Mr. Upcher communicates the following. Three clutches of Lapwing's eggs on his farm were moved a few yards to avoid their being crushed by a motor plough; indeed, one clutch was shifted no less than three times. In spite of this, the old Pewits did not resent the interference, and the eggs hatched out in every case. Such instances have occurred before in Huntingdonshire (*Brit. Birds*, VI., p. 163).

SPOTTED REDSHANK (*Tringa erythropus*).

Mr. Vincent identified a good number during September, on Breydon muds, where this Redshank is an unfailing visitant.

AVOCET (*Recurvirostra avosetta*).

Avocets have again paid us a visit. On May 16th Mr. Vincent saw a pair from his motor-boat, about two hundred yards out to sea, flying parallel with the shore. Nothing more was heard of them, but about the 10th of August an Avocet turned up on Breydon muds, where, as I learn from Mr. E. C. Saunders, it was seen almost daily until the 26th, when it was thought to have left.

WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rusticola*).SNIPE (*Gallinago g. gallinago*).

Woodcock and Snipe were very scarce, such a bad season has not been known for nearly twenty years. On June 8th a Snipe was detected in the act of carrying one of her young ones at Great Melton, as I am informed by Mr. Lombe, but whether between her legs, or in her feet, was not observed; a similar incident happened four years ago, see *Zoologist*, 1915, p. 131.

CASPIAN TERN (*Sterna tschegrava*).

On May 17th, a very still day with no wind at all, a couple of Caspian Terns—no doubt paired—flew within about forty yards of Mr. Vincent's motor-boat, when he was on duty at sea, between St. Nicholas lightship and the shore. This makes the twelfth occurrence of this fine Tern at or near Great Yarmouth, but so far it has never been identified in the Blakeney district, yet both estuaries are tidal.

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Larus ridibundus*).

On May 20th Mr. R. Gurney counted about a hundred nests at Alderfen, one of the smaller Broads. Black-headed Gulls are like Herons in that they shift their breeding sites from time to time, but never go far away. There is, however, no record of Scoulton Mere, which is the oldest gullery in England, having ever been deserted.

LAND-RAIL (*Crex crex*).

These once common birds are now worth recording. About October 12th Mr. Nicholson had one from Brundall, and on September 3rd I saw another flushed. There was a fair sprinkling of Corncrakes in 1900, and again in 1901, but during the last seventeen years they have been very scarce, which may be attributable to the universal pot-hunting which goes on in France in March, when the close time is suspended for this sort of shooting until the middle of April.

COOT (*Fulica a. atra*).

Mr. Pashley reported great numbers of Coots in January and February on Salthouse marshes, usually under water about that time, but owing to military regulations they could not be shot, which was a pity, as they would have been acceptable to poor people who could not get meat. Coots keep up their numbers pretty well; for, except for the annual battue at Hickling, they are almost unmolested. There is one thing which anyone coming to a Norfolk Broad for the first time in summer can hardly fail to notice, and that is the

quantity of broken rushes floating about in short detached pieces, which have been bitten off by Coots. Swans also have the same habit, and between them the water is strewn with fragments.

PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Although no game was reared in Norfolk, there was some complaint in November of Pheasants attacking the young wheat, no doubt very aggravating to a farmer, who is apt to forget all the wireworms and seeds of knot grass and chick-weed eaten at other times of the year. But it is the spring-sown corn which suffers most from Pheasants and Partridges; even then they must be very numerous to do more harm than good, and that is the view taken by the Norfolk agriculturist, Mr. B. B. Sapwell.