

NOTES

UNUSUAL LINING IN JAY'S NEST.

SOME notes have been published in Vol. XV. (p. 187 and 206) on the subject of Jays' nests (*Garrulus g. rufitergum*) being lined with horsehair. Mr. J. M. Goodall mentioned that he had one in his possession found by Mr. C. H. Roper. I am sending you a similar nest found in company with Mr. Roper on May 20th, 1922, in Epping Forest, which you will see is copiously lined with black horsehair. The nest was deserted and contained four eggs. C. E. BAKER.

SERIN IN NORFOLK.

ON May 1st, 1922, a female Serin (*Serinus c. serinus*) was netted in a garden in Yarmouth and taken to Mr. E. C. Saunders, through whose courtesy I was enabled to see it a few days later. If one admits the authenticity of two specimens purchased by the Rev. H. A. McPherson in April, 1877, said to have been captured at Yarmouth (Southwell, *Birds of Norfolk*, Vol. III., Appendix p. 379) which, in view of its subsequent occurrences at this place, I see no reason for not doing, this makes the eighth record for Norfolk, all of these having occurred at Yarmouth, and all in the first half of the year. B. B. RIVIERE.

WOOD-LARK NESTING IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

I WISH to record the nesting of the Wood-Lark (*Lullula a. arborea*) in north-west Lincolnshire. I found the nest on May 28th, 1922; it contained four young birds about a week old. I had searched systematically for the nesting of this bird for some years in this neighbourhood without result up to now. W. S. MEDLICOTT.

[cf. Mr. Medlicott's notes, Vol. XIII., p. 26; Vol. XV., p. 57. The last nesting record for Lincolnshire appears to be from Sleaford in 1902 (Vol. IX., p. 78).—Eds.]

UNMARKED EGGS OF TREE-PIPIT.

ON May 14th, 1922, I found the nest of a Tree-Pipit (*Anthus t. trivialis*) only just started. On the 21st this nest had two eggs which were of a uniform very pale blue. I did not examine them closely for fear of upsetting the bird. When the bird had finished laying, I took the five eggs. They were

all the same colour and rounder in shape than usual. At first sight they seemed to have suppressed purple markings, but on moving the eggs in my hand I found that these spots moved about inside the egg. On blowing the eggs, I saw that the spots were due to the presence of numerous black substances in the yolks. Some of them were in a liquid state and came out quite easily : others were more solid and were only got away with considerable difficulty. In one egg the black stuff was so large and solid that I have been unable to get it away at all. The bird must obviously have been in an unhealthy state and I shall be glad to know if any reader of *British Birds* can give any explanation of the presence and substances of the black matter in the yolks. I have previously never seen unmarked eggs of the Tree-Pipit.

J. H. OWEN.

GREY WAGTAIL BREEDING IN SURREY.

ON April 24th, 1921, I found a nest of Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla c. cinerea*) containing three eggs and two young birds, at Pyrford Lock, Surrey. A third bird eventually hatched, and one of the addled eggs I have in my possession. I caught the parent bird on the nest and ringed her and also the young birds. About the same date I saw a pair, which probably had a nest, at Weybridge and also a pair near Wisley church on April 28th, 1922.

WILLIAM P. G. TAYLOR.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

THE Rev. H. P. Reader, of Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffordshire, writes me that on April 5th, 1922, he "was able to watch a Great Grey Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) near at hand for a good quarter of an hour through a field glass. It was perched on the barest bough it could find."

This is a rare visitor to our county and previous records do not exceed a dozen in number.

JOHN R. B. MASEFIELD.

PROBABLE WOODCHAT SHRIKE SEEN IN SUSSEX.

WHILE walking over the strip of country immediately behind the shore near Climping, Sussex, in the early morning of June 5th, 1922, I was surprised to see an unfamiliar black and white bird fly into a hedge close by. I watched and presently a typical Shrike perched on the top of another part of the hedge. Its bright brown head and black eye-stripe were at once noticeable ; the back was of a dark shade and

there was a white patch on the shoulders; the under-parts were light greyish-white. It flew high in the air to catch an insect in the approved Shrike fashion, and again the impression of a small black and white bird was obtained.

It finally flew off towards the sea, and although I returned to the spot in the afternoon I could get no further sight of it.

By a coincidence I happen to have a specimen of the Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*) at home and I feel confident that the Climping bird may be identified as of this species, which I read is an occasional visitor to the south-eastern counties of England.

JOHN E. S. DALLAS.

WAXWINGS IN SURREY.

Two Waxwings (*Bombycilla garrulus*) were watched in a garden at Woodham, on January 24th, 1921.

WILLIAM P. G. TAYLOR.

UNUSUAL TAMENESS OF BROODING BLACKBIRD.

ON April 5th, 1922, on asking a patient to show me any young birds he might have in his garden he took me to a nest of a Blackbird (*Turdus m. merula*). This was in a hedge and the hen bird was brooding three half-fledged young, whose heads were just visible. My patient told me that his son had touched the old bird on the nest, so I put out my hand and stroked her back twice without disturbing her in the slightest. I was told that there had never been a tame Blackbird about the place, which was an isolated farmhouse in Oxfordshire.

NORMAN H. JOY.

BLACK REDSTART IN SHROPSHIRE AND SURREY.

I HAD under observation from March 20th to April 1st, 1922, at Hengoed, near Oswestry, Salop, an immature male Black Redstart (*Phœnicurus o. gibraltariensis*). I saw it each morning at the same place using the posts of a wire fence, from which it frequently took flights down to the rough pasture. I did not hear it utter any note. T. ROBINSON.

ON March 19th, 1922, a fine male Black Redstart (*Phœnicurus o. gibraltariensis*) appeared near my house at Tadworth, and remained in the neighbourhood until March 25th, paying frequent visits to my own and the adjoining gardens. The bird was by no means shy, frequently alighting on the fence rails within a few yards of the windows, and taking short excursions after passing insects, returning to a favourite perch after the manner of a Spotted Flycatcher. It also

spent a good deal of its time upon the ground, giving particular attention to a newly dug patch, where its actions closely resembled those of a Robin.

On May 20th, shortly after dawn, I heard a Black Redstart singing near my garden, and it continued to do so at frequent intervals until about 9.30 a.m., and soon after this apparently took its departure, but not before I had satisfied myself as to its identity. The bird was not quite so dark in appearance as the one observed in March, and there was little or no white visible on the secondaries, from which I infer that the bird was a young male. This would appear to be a late date for the bird to be observed in the British Isles.

HOWARD BENTHAM.

SIZE OF CLUTCHES OF EGGS OF WREN.

I THINK Mr. A. H. Machell Cox in his notes in the May number rather under-estimates the normal clutch when he says 5 to 6. My experience for this part of the country (near Didsbury) points to 6 to 8, and we never find anything like 3, 4 or 5. My own series at present is represented by 2/7, 2/8, 1/10, 1/14. Two pairs generally use my nesting-boxes and though these have movable lids, the nest is always domed, and I am not able to see the number of eggs without destroying the nest, but I generally find one or two addled eggs when the boxes are cleaned out.

HERBERT MASSEY.

PEREGRINE FALCON ATTACKING A WOMAN.

AT the end of April 1922 a woman living near Yealmpton, Devon, seeing a large hawk attacking, as she thought, one of her fowls, went to the rescue. The hawk, instead of flying off, turned on her, tore her apron, and finally fixed its claws so firmly in her dress that it was unable to extricate them, and had to be killed. The bird proved to be a Peregrine (*Falco p. peregrinus*) and its victim not a fowl but a Kestrel (*F. t. tinnunculus*). Both birds are now in the possession of my brother, and are being set up by Mr. Chalkley, taxidermist, of Winchester. I would be very glad to know if such behaviour is common on the part of Peregrines or similar hawks. The Kestrel would seem to be an odd prey for a hawk of a different species.

P. E. A. MORSHEAD.

[Mr. John Yonge, of Puslinch, Yealmpton, has kindly forwarded the following more detailed account: "The incident occurred on April 28th, 1922. Mrs. Furzland, a woman aged about seventy, lives in a cottage near Puslinch

Bridge on the river Yealm. She saw a large hawk on the ground apparently eating another bird, and thinking its prey was one of her chickens, she went to the rescue and tried to drive it away. When she got near, it flew at her, and clawed her apron and finally got its claws so firmly fixed in the stuff that she could not shake it off. She was somewhat frightened, thinking it would attack her face, so called to her grandson (a small boy) to bring his grandfather's walking stick, and with this weapon she killed the hawk. The bird it was mauling was a Kestrel. Whether it was really eating it I cannot say—but all the skin and flesh had been torn from the head—the rest of the body was uninjured. When Mrs. Furzland picked up the Kestrel it was dead and had only just been killed, but she did not actually see the Peregrine strike it down. She related the story to me herself, and I am quite sure there is no reason to doubt any part of it. She gave me the two birds and I sent them to Capt. R. Y. A. Morshead.

JOHN YONGE."

In Vol. XIV., p. 158, Mr. J. F. Peters records single instances of the finding of the remains of Peregrine, Buzzard and Sparrow-Hawk in the eyrie or on the feeding-place of different Peregrines and mentions that Mr. S. P. Gordon once met with the remains of a Kestrel. An instance of a Peregrine attacking a boy under very similar circumstances to those related above is recorded by Mr. Kirke Swann in Vol. XIII, p. 31.—Eds.]

A NEW ESSEX HERONRY.

As is quite well known, Herons (*Ardea c. cinerea*) have frequented Walthamstow Reservoirs for many years in gradually increasing numbers, and it was naturally assumed that these birds came from Wanstead, which is probably correct.

In a paper published in the *Essex Naturalist* (Vol. XIX., pp. 69-71) Mr. J. Mackworth Wood states that several pairs had nested "during the last year or two," but apparently unsuccessfully on account of the egg-taking propensities of the many Carrion-Crows (*Corvus c. corone*) which frequent these reservoirs, where flocks of over thirty may be seen (see my note, *t.c.*, Vol. XX., pp. 47-48). This year and probably previously, however, the Herons have nested very successfully and on May 20th, 1922, I saw two nests both containing well-grown young birds. These nests were built on somewhat low trees on one of the islands in No. 5 Reservoir and could be seen easily from the public road. I am informed

that at least ten nests were used successfully this year on the islands on this particular reservoir and still further that no fewer than nineteen nests of the Carrion-Crow have been destroyed this year to protect the Herons and other species which nest there.

It is difficult to define how many nests constitute a heronry but it seems that the foregoing information indicates that an addition has been made to the number of Essex heronries.

WILLIAM E. GLEGG.

UNCOMMON BIRDS IN GLAMORGANSHIRE.

IN continuance of our notes published in Vol. XV. (pp. 205-6), we have now to report the following occurrences which seem worthy of record:—

GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala clangula*).—Two immature birds on the Roath Park Lake, January 1st, 1922, and one adult male on the Llanishen Reservoir, February 12th, where he was joined by a female on March 5th. The two latter birds remained on the reservoir until March 19th.

SMEW (*Mergus albellus*).—On December 18th, 1921, one was seen on the Roath Park Lake, and it remained there until February 5th, 1922, when it was joined by a second. Both appeared to be adult females. The lake being drained after the latter date, both birds apparently removed to the Llanishen Reservoir, where they were seen on February 12th. On February 19th one had left and no others were seen after that date.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER (*Colymbus immer*).—The bird mentioned in our previous notes (*British Birds*, Vol. XV., p. 205) remained on the Llanishen Reservoir until January 29th, 1922.

RED-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps griseigena*).—One appeared on the Llanishen Reservoir, February 5th, 1922. It was joined by a second on March 12th. The following week, March 19th, only one was to be seen, and this bird remained until April 2nd.

Observations made through a telescope at fairly close range on three occasions enabled us to note the following changes. On February 5th the beak was brownish-black with some yellow at the base. The head bore slight horn-like tufts, only noticeable from behind. On February 26th the base of the bill was dark yellow, and the horn-like tufts on the head were more distinct than on the 5th, while the base of neck and the shoulders had a reddish tinge. On

March 26th the yellow at the base of the beak was much more vivid, and showed as a distinct patch covering both sides of the gape. The beak was also darker with a whitish tip. The colour of the shoulders and the sides of the neck were now distinctly light reddish-brown.

On February 26th the bird was watched at a distance of less than thirty yards. It appeared quite at ease, diving and bringing up a fair sized fish once or twice, which it swallowed without any preliminary shaking or head-tossing. The prey was held in the bill and swallowed straightway without any apparent effort. A habit frequently indulged in was that of stretching the head and neck along the back, throat uppermost, and vigorously rubbing the back of the head from side to side. When suspicious it straightened its neck, holding the head very erect, and rapidly drew off shore.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps nigricollis*).—On February 5th, 1922, a single bird on the Llanishen Reservoir. It remained there until March 12th, when a second appeared. On March 19th one had gone and the other was last seen on April 16th. The bird that arrived on February 5th was particularly unsuspecting on that date, also on the 12th, and we were able to watch it at a distance of ten to twelve feet, as it swam and dived close in to the bank where we were lying.

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*).—On April 9th, 1922, one was seen at the Llanishen Reservoir.

GEOFFREY C. S. INGRAM.
H. MORREY SALMON.

SHOVELERS BREEDING AND OCCURRENCE OF BLACK-WINGED STILTS AND OTHER UNUSUAL BIRDS IN BERKSHIRE.

I HAVE been fortunate enough this year (1922) to have had permission to wander over a piece of marsh-land in Berkshire, where I have seen the following interesting birds :—

SHOVELER (*Spatula clypeata*).—On April 26th I saw some Shovelers, while by May 11th I became convinced that there were at least five pairs breeding. On that date one of the birds dropped an egg on some mud when flushed. Later we heard that a duck's nest with ten eggs had been cut out in a grass-meadow. It was undoubtedly a Shoveler's, both by the feathers and the size of the eggs. As the eggs had been left exposed the whole day, on account of the haymakers being about, one of my friends kindly took them, and put them in an incubator. They hatched out in fifteen days,

but unfortunately all the ducklings died. On May 25th I saw a duck Shoveler with six young ones. I think this is the first definite record of the Shoveler having nested in Berkshire.

BLACK-WINGED STILT (*Himantopus himantopus*).—On May 18th, with two friends, I had the good fortune to see four Black-winged Stilts. Two of these allowed us to approach within about fifty yards. Both had black heads, and were therefore males according to Miss Jackson (*British Birds*, Vol. XII., p. 147). The others were rather wild. One had a white head, and was therefore probably a female. The other had a few dark marks on the head, so was probably a last year's bird. They had been seen the day before and were last seen on May 21st.

Other birds seen at the same place were as follows:—

WIGEON (*Anas penelope*).—A pair on April 26th.

DUNLIN (*Erolia a. alpina*).—One shot on January 28th was brought to me for identification and a few days afterwards I heard one.

RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*).—I saw a Reeve on May 3rd with the Redshank mentioned below.

GREEN SANDPIPER (*Tringa ochropus*).—Two on April 26th and one on May 11th.

COMMON SANDPIPER (*T. hypoleuca*).—Three on May 11th.

REDSHANK (*T. totanus*).—A number on May 3rd and 12th.

GREENSHANK (*T. nebularia*).—One with the Redshanks on May 12th.

NORMAN H. JOY.

COMMON SCOTER IN DERBYSHIRE.

ON April 14th, 1922, I saw a Common Scoter (*Oidemia nigra*) on the same pond in Hardwick Park on which I saw a Red-necked Grebe in February (*British Birds*, XV., p. 272). It seemed very tired, spending most of its time with its head resting on its back, and had gone by the following day. Mr. Jourdain informs me that there have been four other occurrences of this species in Derbyshire since the publication of his list in the *Victoria History of Derbyshire*, I., p. 141.

C. B. CHAMBERS.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER IN WARWICKSHIRE.

ON December 24th, 1921, I saw a Great Northern Diver (*Colymbus immer*) in Sutton Park. It stayed till the 26th. I saw one on the same pool from November 26th to December 3rd, 1911.

BRENDA A. CARTER.

DOTTEREL IN STAFFORDSHIRE.

ON May 13th, 1922, a Dotterel (*Charadrius morinellus*) was picked up on the roadside at Draycot-le-Moors, Staffordshire. The bird when found was alive, but seriously injured through having collided with overhead wires. It came into my possession and on dissection proved to be a male. The gizzard contained remains of vegetable matter, and several particles of pebbles. The primaries and tail-feathers had moulted through, but the remainder of the plumage was undergoing moult. The last authentic record of this species in Staffordshire appears to be one shot by a keeper on the Weaver Hills, near Cheadle, in October 1895 (*Trans. North Staffs. Field Club*, 1901, p. 46.)

B. BRYAN.

HATCHING OF THE GOLDEN PLOVER.

LAST summer (1921) I was able to make some notes on the hatching out of the young of the Golden Plover (*Charadrius a. oreophilus*) on Tentsmuir, Fife. A nest containing four eggs was found on June 18th, and on July 4th, at 4 p.m., I noticed that one egg was chipped, and the membrane exposed. On the 5th, at 11 a.m., except for a few small cracks, there was no change in No. 1 egg, but one of the others had a hole in it through which the chick's bill was visible, while a third was slightly chipped. By 2 p.m. Nos. 2 and 3 had advanced a little, and No. 4 was chipped. When I arrived at 11.40 a.m. on July 7th I found that Nos. 2 and 3 had hatched, and the chicks with their down quite dry were lying in the nest. The top of No. 1 was very loose, and No. 4 was more chipped than before. At 12.30 p.m. the parent which was brooding was suddenly startled and dashed off the nest upsetting No. 1 and causing the chick to make a hurried entrance into the world exactly sixty-eight and a half hours after I first noticed the chip in the shell. Eighteen minutes after hatching, the new chick, still looking very bedraggled, crawled from under its parent's breast and lay for a short time in the open before returning under cover. The older chicks were more active and crept out and in several times, but did not go more than a yard from the nest. On the morning of the 8th, the chick from No. 4 egg had hatched and was still in the nest.

J. N. DOUGLAS SMITH.

ARCTIC SKUA IN ESSEX IN JUNE.

AN Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) was seen on June 10th, 1922, by me and three others at Bradfield, Essex. It was of the dark form and when first seen was circling over

the river, but apparently attracted by a terrier which I had with me, it flew up to us and circled two or three times over us at a height of about 100 feet, then made off, inland, due west.

WALTER B. NICHOLS.

INCREASE OF BLACK GROUSE IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

IN Vol. XII., p. 22, reference was made to the reappearance of the Black Grouse (*Lyrurus tetrix*) in small numbers in north-west Lincolnshire in 1918, and perhaps earlier, and I recorded their continued presence in 1920 and 1921 (Vol. XV., p. 57). They have now increased considerably. I have seen young but no nest and can always see old birds when I look for them. A keeper flushed eighteen at once last winter. Is this Black Cock note known?—a hollow dove-like cooing, the articulation reminding one of Red-legged Partridge and the whole utterance of the "gobble" of a Turkey at a distance, "Wood-a-wood-wood---wood-woroo" repeated many times, especially at sundown, and rather quickly uttered. It is very soft and rippling and when I say hollow it is the sort of note one could almost produce with the hollow wooden Wood-Pigeon calls one buys. There was a regular chorus last night (May 28th) at 9 p.m. It is not the same note as the gentle "coo-coo-coo," which I have heard the Black Cock make. That I consider a love-call. This other call is not a mating note.

W. S. MEDLICOTT.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGES ON YORKSHIRE COAST.

I NOTICE in the June number of *British Birds* (p. 27), a record of the occurrence of an apparently migratory Red-legged Partridge at Bexhill-on-Sea. A number occurred at Scarborough and Filey during the latter half of March and early April 1922, and all came in from the east as though migrating from the Continent. One was captured alive in the North Eastern Railway's Goods Station at Falsgrave, another in Vernon Place in the centre of the town. A third was seen to fall exhausted in the sea near the East Pier, and its still warm body was recovered shortly afterwards. Still another was seen to come in from over the sea and fall exhausted on the Foreshore Road, where it was picked up by a dog.

Mr. Knight Horsfield of Filey told me that six had occurred there about the same period, and all came in from oversea.

Whence do these birds come? They do not, I believe, occur on that part of the Continent opposite to the Yorkshire coast, yet almost every spring examples arrive from some

unknown place. They cannot be local birds returning from a semi-circular trip out to sea and back again, as has been suggested, for the Red-legged Partridge, although resident, is rare in our district. W. J. CLARKE.

FULMAR PETREL BREEDING IN YORKSHIRE.—Since the summer of 1919 a few Fulmar Petrels (*Fulmarus g. glacialis*) have frequented the Speeton and Bempton cliffs (*cf. B.B.*, XIII., p. 59, XV., p. 65), but apparently they did not actually breed. Mr. T. Sheppard now makes the interesting announcement (*Nat.*, 1922, p. 201) that he is informed by Mr. H. B. Booth that on May 26th, 1922, he saw a fresh unblown egg brought from the cliff-face at Bempton, while another egg was brought up on the same date. It is believed that a third pair is breeding and it is to be hoped that now breeding is proved the climbers will be content to leave any further eggs they may find. In any case one can now welcome the Fulmar as an English breeding-bird and we shall expect it to increase and spread even further.

COMMON CURLEW NESTING IN LINCOLNSHIRE.—Mr. W. S. Medicott informs us that the Curlew (*Numenius a. arquata*) nested again in Lincolnshire in 1922. For previous records see Vol. XV., p. 57.