

NOTES

INTERVAL BETWEEN BROODS OF DOUBLE-BROODED BIRDS.

WITH reference to Mr. Astley's letter on the above (*antea*, p. 72), I see from my note book that on May 26th, 1923, I found in a wood near Ipswich the nest of a Redstart (*Phœnicurus ph. phœnicurus*) in which the eggs were just hatching. On June 11th I visited the nest again and found the young ones had gone, the nest had been "tidied up," and contained one fresh egg.

T. G. POWELL.

[This is a very interesting case as it furnishes indisputable proof that the Redstart is, sometimes at any rate, double-brooded.—F.R.C.J.]

NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF SCILLY.

THE following details of two short visits to the Isles of Scilly (September 21st to 30th, 1920, and June 21st to July 4th, 1924) may be of interest in view of Mr. H. M. Wallis's notes in *British Birds* (Vol. XVII., p. 55; XVIII., p. 73), where a comparison was made with Clark and Rodd's article in the *Zoologist* of 1906.

Greenfinch (*Chloris c. chloris*).—Many in the Tresco gardens on June 30th, 1924; doubtless family parties.

Linnet (*Carduelis c. cannabina*).—In great abundance; a nest found on St. Mary's on June 21st, 1924, contained four eggs on July 3rd.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla c. œlebs*).—Several on Tresco, June 30th, 1924; one singing.

Corn-Bunting (*Emberiza c. calandra*).—Fairly common in almost all parts of St. Mary's in 1924.

Skylark (*Alauda a. arvensis*).—Fairly common in September, 1920; in 1924 quite abundant on St. Mary's and also singing on Bryher.

Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla c. cinerea*).—One or two in September, 1920, on St. Mary's.

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*).—Recorded by Clark and Rodd as "common all the year round," but I saw only one or two on St. Mary's in September, 1920, and none at all on any island in 1924.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla a. alba*).—In 1920 a fair number in September on St. Mary's. A few days earlier—on September 20th, in the same year—I saw fully fifty on Marazion Marsh, near Penzance, on the mainland.

Great Tit (*Parus major newtoni*).—Seen twice in September, 1920; in 1924 not uncommon on St. Mary's and Tresco, and also seen on Bryher.

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*).—On Tresco and St. Martin's in September, 1920, and in some numbers on June 30th, 1924, in the Abbey Gardens, Tresco, where they had evidently bred.

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus c. collybita*).—Two or three singing among the large trees on Tresco on July 2nd, 1924, where we watched two for some time; not recorded previously during the summer months.

Sedge-Warbler (*Acrocephalus schænobæenus*).—In 1924 quite common on St. Mary's in two suitable areas, where we saw many pairs; a nest found on June 27th was just ready for eggs and contained four on July 2nd.

A number on Tresco in marshy ground on July 2nd.

Whinchat (*Saxicola r. rubetra*).—One on St. Mary's on September 22nd, 1920. Recorded by Clark and Rodd in autumn as a casual only.

Swallow (*Hirundo r. rustica*).—Nesting in 1924 on St. Mary's, Tresco and Tean; I saw five nests with eggs and young.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis isipida*).—Seen half-a-dozen times in September, 1920, flying along the coast of St. Mary's and in the harbour; one was flying between St. Mary's and Tresco on September 25th. Clark and Rodd record it as a casual autumn and winter visitor.

Great Northern Diver (*Colymbus immer*).—Mr. H. W. Robinson tells me that on May 30th, 1924, he saw four between St. Mary's and Tresco and that one was still in winter plumage or immature—the first of the many he has seen in Scilly in May to be in this plumage.

Grey Plover (*Squatarola s. squatarola*).—Two or three on St. Martin's, September 28th, 1920.

Turnstone (*Arenaria i. interpres*).—Abundant during both visits; in flocks of twenty at the end of June.

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*).—In 1920 two on September 24th and one on September 29th by a freshwater pool on Bryher. Three previous records only, given by Clark and Rodd—the latest in 1885.

Sanderling (*Crocethia alba*).—On St. Mary's and St. Martin's in 1920—not more than fifteen together.

Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*).—Mr. H. W. Robinson and I saw one by the Abbey Pool, Tresco, on June 30th, 1924; not previously recorded in summer.

Redshank (*Tringa t. totanus*).—Several on Samson and Tresco among the Turnstones on June 23rd, 1924. Clark

and Rodd record it in autumn and winter only, and in September, 1920, I found it fairly common.

Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*).—Single birds several times and once two together seen on St. Mary's and St. Martin's in September, 1920.

Whimbrel (*Numenius p. phaeopus*).—Several on Bryher on the last day of June, 1924.

Common Tern (*Sterna h. hirundo*).—Breeding on at least four islands in 1924, though one old haunt was deserted. Mr. Robinson and I ringed 191 youngsters on one island and there were many eggs still unhatched.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna macrura*).—Mr. Robinson saw a single bird on June 26th, 1924, and possibly one pair was nesting among the Common Terns, but I never identified the bird satisfactorily at the nest, nor heard its call.

Roseate Tern (*Sterna d. dougallii*).—On June 26th, 1924, we found a pair in a colony of Common Terns and four days later watched them through a telescope and saw the bird sitting on its nest; one egg was chipped and one youngster hatched, which was easily distinguished from the young Common Terns on the same island. Mr. Robinson saw this nest with me.

Black-headed Gull (*Larus r. ridibundus*).—As this bird has not been known to nest in Scilly since 1845, it is perhaps worth noting that we saw it twice in June by the freshwater pool on Bryher, and on July 4th, 1924, in St. Mary's Harbour. It was not common in September, 1920.

Quail (*Coturnix c. coturnix*).—On September 30th, 1920, at noon, one came on board the S.S. "Peninnis" half way between Scilly and the mainland, and I released it next day at Penzance.

A. W. BOYD.

ABNORMAL EGG OF CARRION-CROW.

I TOOK a nest of Carrion-Crow (*Corvus c. corone*) at Coat, Martock, Somerset, on May 14th, 1924, with three eggs. Of these two were normal, but the third was the largest I have ever handled, measuring 54×31.8 mm. As compared with the average Raven's egg, it is considerably longer, though, of course, not so bulky.

JOSEPH H. SYMES.

[Extremely elongated eggs of the Carrion-Crow are occasionally met with, and I have examined specimens measuring 49.4×32.1 and 49×32.5 mm., but the above recorded egg is longer than any of which I have notes.—F. C. R. JOURDAIN.]

UNUSUAL SITUATION OF CHAFFINCH'S NEST.

WITH reference to Mr. R. H. Brown's note (*antea*, p. 72) on the brooding of a Chaffinch (*Fringilla c. caelebs*) the following observations are taken from my notes for 1923. They are from a district of Midlothian about 1,000 feet above sea level where the resident smaller birds are late in nesting.



On June 2nd, the first really warm day of the season, every Chaffinch seemed to be occupied with building and work was proceeding at a great pace. One nest found was in the top of a partly rotten and hollowed out fence post alongside a rather straggling hedge of hawthorn. By the 17th of the month this nest was complete with a lining of feathers, and in the morning the hen bird was sitting although no eggs were laid when I visited the nest later on in the day. A week later the nest was still quite in order and still no eggs had been laid, although the birds were still frequenting the hedge. By June 30th the nest was ruffled up and

apparently deserted, but there was another nest in the hedge a few yards away which may have been the work of the same pair. As the nest in the fence post was in a fairly unusual position I enclose a photograph. I can remember seeing one in a somewhat similar position when at school, and in that case the post was not hollowed out, but the nest was partially supported by branches of the hedge growing against the fence.

CHARLES G. CONNELL.

SCARCITY OF YELLOW WAGTAIL.

WITH reference to the notes (*antea*, p. 55) on the scarcity of the Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla f. rayi*), I had been particularly struck by their scarcity in N.W. Norfolk before I read the notes. There is a small heath about a quarter of a mile from my bungalow where every year three or four pairs have nested. On April 17th, 1924, I saw one Yellow Wagtail at this spot, but never saw it again and am quite sure that they did not breed there this year. I saw one other Yellow Wagtail on some grass marshes about the end of May which I think must have had a nest near by. Beyond these two I did not see any others, although I went to several places where usually they are quite common.

N. TRACY.

VARIATION IN BREEDING SEASON OF THE WHEATEAR.

WITH reference to my note on the breeding season of the Wheatear (*Enanthe æ. ænanthe*), Vol. XVII., p. 143, I now give the figures for Sea'ord, Sussex, during the last three years :—

Year.	No. of Nests.	Average date of full Clutch.	Earliest.	Latest.
1922	.. 11 ..	May 12th ..	May 4th ..	May 19th
1923	.. 13 ..	April 28th ..	April 24th ..	May 7th
1924	.. 12 ..	May 4th ..	April 27th ..	May 12th

It will be seen that 1924 was six days later on the average than 1923.

J. F. THOMAS.

REDBREAST NESTING IN WOODPECKER'S HOLE.

ON July 19th, 1924, I found the nest of a Redbreast (*Erithacus r. melophilus*) containing young in an old Woodpecker's hole twelve feet up a poplar tree at South Wooton, Norfolk. The young birds left the nest on July 25th. The site seems rather an unusual one, but I think it may be accounted for by the fact that I have had many disasters

with my ground-building birds this year through the agency of rats.
N. TRACY.

WOODPECKERS AND FIR-CONES.

WITH reference to my former note on this subject, Vol. XVII., p. 276, the Greater Spotted Woodpeckers (*Dryobates m. anglicus*) left off working on the fir-cones in N.W. Norfolk on April 13th, after which I did not hear them until August 9th, when I once more heard the old familiar sound. I had not time just then to investigate, but the next day I went round to some of their favourite feeding places and picked up about a dozen freshly worked green cones. I am rather surprised at the birds tackling the cones at this time of the year, as there cannot be any insect shortage yet; but they evidently acquired a taste for the seeds during the winter and are now varying their insect diet with a vegetarian one. After the Woodpeckers left off working on the cones in the spring, I found them tackling oak galls. These they wedged in circular cavities which they had cut in the bark of some dead fir stumps, and then split them in two to extract the grubs. In one instance they used a cleft where they had been working fir-cones. A few days ago I found on the top of one of the fir stumps some crab-apples which had been split open for the seeds, evidently by the Woodpeckers.
N. TRACY.

STOCK-DOVES BREEDING IN CO. MAYO.

I HAVE already drawn attention (Vol. XVII., p. 312) to the fact of the Stock-Dove (*Columba ænas*) having extended its range to Co. Mayo, and mentioned the possibility of its having nested in 1923. I have now proof of its nesting, having found a bird incubating on May 27th, 1924. The nest was on the top of an ivy-covered wall. There were almost certainly three other pairs nesting in the vicinity of the house, but owing to the number of suitable nesting-sites and the thick foliage of the trees, I was only able to discover definitely the whereabouts of one of these.
ROBERT F. RUTLEDGE.

LATE NESTING OF THE COMMON SNIPE IN KENT.

ON July 7th I was shown two nests of the Common Snipe (*Capella g. gallinago*) situated in a water meadow of rank grass about a quarter of a mile from the river Medway in the parish of Nettlestead, Kent. Each nest contained four eggs. That the Snipe is increasing as a regular nesting species in Kent is well known, but I have never seen *two* nests close to each other in July. Mr. Meade-Waldo tells me that Snipe

have two broods in the year and *sometimes* three nests ; this would bring the third brood well into July.

My own experience is that all "Waders" that I have observed in the British Isles will go on laying eggs and try to bring up their young, if the nests are destroyed, almost indefinitely.

Would any have *three* broods, and some two, under normal circumstances ?

JAMES R. HALE.

[Eggs of the Snipe have been recorded on several occasions in August, but in my opinion such cases are not due to second or third broods, but merely to repeated destruction of previous layings.—F.R.C.J.]

LARGE CLUTCHES OF COMMON TERNS' EGGS IN SCILLY.

THANKS to careful protection from two-legged as well as four-legged robbers of their eggs, the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) has again, this year (1924), become fairly well established as a breeding species in the Isles of Scilly. Clutches of four eggs among Terns are so unusual that it may be of interest to state that on one island there were three such clutches, one of these being still unhatched on June 30th. On another island I was astonished to find a clutch of five eggs, the fifth egg being upright with the thin end downwards. In each clutch the eggs were all of one type and evidently belonged to one bird in each case, rather than to two hens laying in one nest. The clutches this year were all large ; for instance on one rock ten out of the eleven nests contained clutches of three, and the eleventh a clutch of two.

H. W. ROBINSON.

[Nests containing four eggs are not very unusual in large colonies of Common Terns and at the Farnes I have seen four sets of four eggs each in a patch not more than five yards square, while only a few yards off were two more clutches of four. In some of the Norfolk colonies clutches of four occur annually, sometimes in considerable numbers.—F.C.R.J.]

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL NESTING IN COLONY WHERE HATCHED.

As dead Lesser Black-backed Gulls (*Larus fuscus affinis*) are very rare in the breeding colonies, one or possibly two per season being the number found in the large colonies with which I have been associated during the past fifteen years, there are no records of ringed birds of this species returning to nest in the colony in which they themselves were hatched. On July 29th, 1924, I visited the large colony in Westmorland

and found one adult dead. It was sitting in a natural attitude as if alive, with neck straight and head held high, and, although cold, the eye showed that the bird had died that day, and recently, for it was not fly-blown. On picking it up I was delighted to find B.B. ring No. 34202 upon its leg, showing that I marked it there, and in that end of the colony, as a chick on July 14th, 1916. This is, I believe, the first and only record of a British Lesser Black-backed Gull being found dead in its parent gullery. H. W. ROBINSON.

QUAIL IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

DURING the last eight years I have only three times noticed the Quail (*Coturnix c. coturnix*) near Cambridge. In 1916 I heard and saw a bird in a lucerne field beside the Fleam Dyke; and in 1918 or 1919 I heard the call-note in a clover field on the Gog Magogs. Each ensuing summer I searched this bit of country without success; but on August 9th of this year I heard a Quail calling in a weed-grown fallow field on the chalk ridge not far from Newmarket. This field was only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres in extent and surrounded by miles of cornfields in which, so far as I was able to search them, no other examples were to be heard. This predilection for leguminous or weed crops on the chalk may perhaps account for the scarcity and irregularity of the Quails' occurrence round Cambridge, where the higher ground is mostly cornland. MAUD D. BRINDLEY.

RARE BIRDS ON FAIR ISLE.—Surgeon Rear-Admiral J. H. Stenhouse, who paid a visit to Fair Isle from September 6th to October 4th, 1923, records (*Scot. Nat.*, 1923, p. 173) having observed two adult Norwegian Bluethroats (*Luscinia s. gaetkei*), at least seven Blue-headed Wagtails (*Motacilla f. flava*), five Yellow-browed Warblers (*Phylloscopus h. præmium*) and a Grasshopper-Warbler (*Locustella n. naevia*). In the same journal (1924, p. 4) it is recorded that an adult male Coues's Redpoll (*Carduelis h. exilipes*) was obtained on the island on October 22nd, 1923.

ALBINO CARRION-CROW IN WESTMORLAND.—Mr. L. E. Hope informs us that on May 3rd, 1924, an albino Carrion-Crow (*Corvus c. corone*) was caught in a rabbit trap near Appleby and was sent to the Carlisle Museum. Mr. Hope states that in general coloration the bird is a rich cream, the plumage much worn and moulting had commenced, two half-grown primaries being in each wing. The legs were pale grey, the beak grey, darker at the tip, iris pale blue.

ROOSTING HABITS OF ROOKS.—Attention may be drawn to two interesting papers on this subject in *The Scottish Naturalist*, the one referring to Bute by the Rev. J. M. McWilliam (1924, pp. 5-7) and the other to Lanarkshire by Mr. W. Stewart (1924, pp. 69-74).

WOOD-LARK IN FIFESHIRE.—The Misses L. J. Rintoul and E. V. Baxter record (*Scot. Nat.*, 1924, p. 75) that they identified a Wood-Lark (*Lullula arborea*) at Balcomie on April 7th, 1924. The bird has not previously been recorded from the mainland of Scotland.

WHITE WAGTAIL AND PIED FLYCATCHER IN NORFOLK.—Mr. N. Tracy informs us that on April 18th, 1924, he identified a *Motacilla alba alba* on a heath near South Wooton, and on May 11th in a wood near the same place he had a male *Muscicapa h. hypoleuca* under observation for three-quarters of an hour. Both appear to have been passing migrants as neither were seen again.

SIBERIAN LESSER WHITETHROAT ON FAIR ISLE.—Besides the two occurrences of *Sylvia curruca affinis*, included in the "additions" in the *Practical Handbook*, a third example is now recorded by Dr. Clarke and Admiral Stenhouse (*Scot. Nat.*, 1924, p. 4) as having been obtained on Fair Isle by Mr. J. Wilson on October 16th, 1923.

BLACK REDSTART IN MIDLOTHIAN.—Two Black Redstarts (*Phœnicurus o. gibraltariensis*) were seen by Colonel D. A. Wauchope in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, on May 1st, 1924 (*Scot. Nat.*, 1924, p. 76). One, a male, he watched for several minutes at a distance of a few feet. The bird has seldom been recorded from the mainland of Scotland.

ALPINE SWIFT IN DEVONSHIRE.—Mr. C. R. H. Edwards states (*Field*, 8.v.1924, p. 636) that he shot an Alpine Swift (*Apus melba*) on April 14th, 1924, at Start Point.

ALPINE SWIFTS SEEN IN WIGTOWNSHIRE.—The Duchess of Bedford records (*Scot. Nat.*, 1924, p. 84) that a "small party" of Alpine Swifts (*Apus melba*) appeared about the middle of September, 1923, at Corsewall Lighthouse, Stranraer. The birds stayed for several days and were many times seen about the buildings by the lightkeeper and his wife who, we are informed by the Duchess, are well known to her as reliable observers and know Common Swifts perfectly.

GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO REPORTED FROM CO. KERRY.—Prof. L. P. W. Renouf of the University College, Cork, records (*Irish Nat.*, 1924, p. 30) that he has received from Mr. Charles

O'Driscoll the "remains" of a Great Spotted Cuckoo (*Clamator glandarius*) which was found dead during February, 1918, near Caherciveen. The bird was said to have been accompanied by another for about a week. At the same time a Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*) was in a neighbouring field for a week, after which it was shot, while seven other Hoopoes were in the neighbourhood. The Editors append some further particulars from which it would appear that Mr. O'Driscoll had the Hoopoe mounted and that Messrs. Williams of Dublin state that this bird was received by them on April 10th, 1918. It would therefore seem that the date of the appearance of the Cuckoo was about the end of March, a much more likely date than February. It was not realized that the Cuckoo was a rare bird and it was not sent to be preserved, but the "remains" have been examined by the editors of the *Irish Naturalist* who state that they are undoubtedly those of a Great Spotted Cuckoo. The bird has twice previously been recorded from Ireland, once from Kerry and once from Connemara.

LITTLE OWL IN CUMBERLAND.—Mr. H. C. Gandy reports (*Field*, 5.vi.1924, p. 793) that a Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) was caught near Cumwhinton in a rabbit trap in February, 1924. The specimen has been preserved by Mr. L. E. Hope of the Carlisle Museum.

LITTLE OWL IN BERWICKSHIRE.—Mr. J. P. F. Bell records (*Scot. Nat.*, 1924, p. 76) that a Little Owl (*Athene noctua*) was caught in a trap in a rabbit-burrow on Lambertton Moor on April 4th, 1924. The bird has been presented to the Royal Scottish Museum. In recent years single birds have been recorded from Fife (1910), Roxburgh (1921) and Northumberland (1919).

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD IN CO. WICKLOW.—A Rough-legged Buzzard (*Buteo lagopus*), an uncommon visitor to Ireland, was caught in a trap at Ballinrush, near Lough Dan, in the second week of December (1923) and has been sent to the Dublin Zoological Gardens (*Irish Nat.*, 1924, p. 31).

SPOONBILL IN YORKSHIRE.—Mr. F. Snowdon records (*Nat.*, 1924, p. 253) that an immature example of *Platalea l. leucorodia*, in an emaciated condition, was found dead on the beach at Saltwich, near Whitby, on July 3rd, 1924.

SPOONBILL IN CO. KERRY.—Prof. L. P. W. Renouf records (*Irish Nat.*, 1924, p. 30) that a Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) was shot on September 29th (? 1923) on the Valencia Estuary.

GLOSSY IBIS IN CORK.—Mr. J. W. Brasier-Creagh reports (*Field*, 13.iii.1924, p. 346) that a Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) was shot on February 20th, 1924, near Churchtown, co. Cork, and sent to Messrs. Williams of Dublin for preservation.

SNOW-GOOSE IN OUTER HEBRIDES.—Dr. W. Eagle Clarke records (*Scot. Nat.*, 1924, p. 9) the occurrence of an example of *Anser hyperboreus hyperboreus*, which was obtained on Barra on October 9th, 1917, by Mr. W. L. MacGillivray and is now in the Royal Scottish Museum. As Dr. Clarke quite rightly points out the specimen obtained in the Solway in 1884 (not 1854 as printed in the *Practical Handbook*, Vol. II., p. 249) was not preserved and not examined by an ornithologist and may have been a Greater Snow-Goose (*A. h. nivalis*). The Barra specimen is therefore the first authenticated specimen for Scotland of the smaller form.

PRATINCOLE RECORDED AS SEEN IN MORAYSHIRE.—Major A. Stables states (*Scot. Nat.*, 1924, p. 8) that on August 17th, 1923, he watched for about an hour at Loch Spynie a bird which he identified as a Pratincole. Beyond the statement that he "suddenly saw what seemed to be a giant swallow of sorts, which when it got within range I saw was a Pratincole," the record does not give any evidence for the correctness of the identification, nor does he state if he was familiar with the species. He adds, however, that as the bird never flew "directly overhead" he could not see the under wing-coverts; but it is not necessary for the bird to fly directly overhead to enable one to see the under-wing.

THE SPREAD AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE WOODCOCK AS A BREEDING BIRD IN SCOTLAND.—Under this title the Misses E. V. Baxter and L. J. Rintoul contribute a valuable paper to the *Scottish Naturalist* (1923, pp. 177-183; 1924, pp. 13-40 and 47-51). This consists of a General Introduction, a Chronological List of Records and a List of Works referred to, while the detailed facts which form the bulk of the paper are given under counties and faunal areas. The paper itself should be consulted, but it may be remarked that the authors consider that the increase and spread of the Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) as a breeding species in Scotland has been due to the provision of more suitable nesting sites, by the much greater extent of plantations since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and to the protection of the bird in the spring.

GREAT SNIPE IN SHETLAND.—Mr. A. J. Nicolson records that a Great Snipe (*Capella media*) was shot in Fetlar on September 20th, 1923, and has been sent to the Royal Scottish Museum.

GLAUCOUS GULLS IN THE ISLANDS OF SCILLY.—CORRECTION.—Mr. H. M. Wallis writes that the date upon which he saw the three Glaucous Gulls on Tresco Pool was May 28th, 1924, and not June 1st, as stated *antea*, p. 73.