

# NOTES

## SOME ABNORMAL EGG MEASUREMENTS.

THE following are the measurements of a few unusual eggs, taken in West Cornwall. To facilitate comparison I have in each case appended the average measurements as given in *The Practical Handbook*.

CARRION-CROW (*Corvus c. corone*).—In a nest found on April 16th, 1921, were two normal eggs and an unusually small one, measuring only  $35.5 \times 26$ . A Magpie built in the same clump in 1922, but in 1923 a Crow again built there and laid two eggs, the first of which was laid on April 13th, and measured  $49.1 \times 27.5$ , while the second was normal. The length of the first egg, though not so great as in the one recorded in *British Birds*, XVIII., p. 108, yet being coupled with width considerably below the average, gives it a peculiar cigar-shaped appearance (Average  $43.5 \times 30.1$ ).

MAGPIE (*Pica p. pica*).—On May 5th, 1919, I took an egg measuring  $40 \times 26.3$  from a nest containing also six normal eggs (Average  $32.9 \times 23$ ).

CHAFFINCH (*Fringilla c. caelebs*).—Two eggs from different nests measure  $23.2 \times 13$  and  $22 \times 14$  respectively (Average  $19.3 \times 14.6$ ).

SONG-THRUSH (*Turdus philomelus clarkei*).—An egg found on April 14th, 1922, in a nest with two normal eggs, measured only  $17 \times 12.8$  (less than the average Linnet). This egg was normal in colour (Average  $28.7 \times 20.9$ ).

BLACKBIRD (*Turdus m. merula*).—A deserted egg taken on May 22nd, 1923, measured  $35.5 \times 22$  (Average  $29.4 \times 21.6$ ).

ROBIN (*Erithacus rubecula melophilus*).—On April 4th, 1923, I found a nest containing a normal egg and one measuring only  $16.7 \times 13$ . Three other normal eggs were subsequently laid (Average  $19.8 \times 15.5$ ).

G. H. HARVEY.

## CHIFFCHAFFS IN WINTER IN PEMBROKESHIRE.

WHEN I was in Pembrokeshire, from December 19th, 1924, to January 6th, 1925, I was rather surprised to see quite a number of Chiffchaffs (*Phylloscopus collybita*) in the woods along the shore, particularly along the Carew river and the Pembroke river. The Chiffchaff is more common round Pembroke in April than in any other locality I have visited. and it seems quite possible that in a really mild winter a number should not migrate.

J. H. OWEN.

## HEN-HARRIER IN ESSEX.

WITH reference to Mr. Glegg's note (*antea*, p. 242) on the Hen-Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) in Essex, it may be worth recording that Mr. King shot one at Great Canfield soon after the war, but unfortunately has not the exact date. It was late in the year and was an adult female in beautiful plumage. It was set up for the late Mr. Frankham, who gave it to Mr. King and it is still in his possession.

J. H. OWEN.

## WHITE-FRONTED GEESE INLAND IN CHESHIRE.

ON January 17th, 1925, I saw, flying in the Bollin Valley, over Prestbury sewage farm, two White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons*). They flew straight towards me at a fairly low altitude, and I was able, through my binoculars, to see quite clearly the white round the base of the bill and dark bars across the lower breast. I can find no record for inland Cheshire in Mr. Coward's "Fauna," nor does Mr. Henty mention the species in his paper on "Birds of Alderley Edge."

Thinking they might be "escapes" from some local park I wrote to the *Manchester Guardian* asking if anyone could throw any light on the matter, but I have received no replies.

R. M. GARNETT.

## SHELD-DUCK IN BEDFORDSHIRE.

As the Sheld-Duck (*Tadorna tadorna*) is an infrequent visitor to the inland counties, it may be worth recording that a bird of this species spent the day (February 22nd, 1925) on one of the Woburn Park ponds.

M. BEDFORD.

## FERRUGINOUS AND LONG-TAILED DUCKS IN SOMERSET.

ON November 4th, 1922, a Ferruginous Duck (*Nyroca n. nyroca*) was killed during a shoot at Blagdon Reservoir, north Somerset, and was recorded by Mr. Donald Carr, the ranger of the reservoir, in the *Report of the Wells Natural History and Archaeological Society* for 1922. We have lately had an opportunity of examining this bird and confirming the identification. It is an immature specimen with mottled underparts. This is the first and only conclusive record of the occurrence of this duck in Somerset, though curiously enough a probable second record was obtained by Mr. Stanley Lewis at Barrow Gurney at about the same season of the following year (*Brit. Birds*, Vol. XVII., p. 188).

On January 6th, 1925, also at Blagdon Reservoir, we had an excellent view, at very close range, of a pair of immature Long-tailed Ducks (*Clangula hyemalis*). There appears to be only one other record of this species for the county, that of an immature specimen shot near Weston-super-Mare on December 16th, 1890 (*Zoologist*, 1891, p. 66). We learn with regret that one of these birds was subsequently shot, while the other was wounded and is at the time of writing (February 16th) still on the water.

F. L. BLATHWAYT.

B. W. TUCKER.

*The Irish Naturalist*.—We greatly regret to learn that, owing to present-day high costs of production and a narrowing circle of supporters, this magazine, which for thirty-three years has recorded so much of interest to Irish naturalists, has now come to an end.

RARE BIRDS IN IRELAND.—In the *Irish Naturalist* (1924, pp. 101–108) Dr. F. W. Rogers Brambell gives details of some rare mounted birds from the Blake Knox collection which have come into his possession. Unfortunately, the only data available are written on the stands on which the birds were mounted, except in those cases where the birds can be connected with published records. The more important of those previously unrecorded are as follow: KITE (*Milvus milvus*) “found dead on beach at Kilcool, co. Wicklow, and probably shot by self some days before at sea in a fog. November. Fired at for an Eagle representative.” These words written on the stand by Blake Knox himself provide all the known information about this bird, which he seems never to have recorded. Ussher, in his *List of Irish Birds*, could not substantiate any recorded Irish occurrence. DOTTEREL (*Charadrius morinellus*), co. Mayo, February 9th, 1889, is an unusual date and probably the first reported occurrence for Connaught. GREAT SKUA (*Stercorarius skua*), specimens from co. Wicklow, September 1864; co. Mayo, October; Dublin Sea, October. SOOTY SHEARWATER (*Puffinus griseus*), co. Mayo, October.

HOODED CROW IN LONDON DISTRICT.—Captain H. F. S. Stoneham writes us that he observed on February 20th, 1925, a *Cornus c. cornix* on Wimbledon Common.

SUBALPINE WARBLER AT ISLE OF MAY.—A third British occurrence of the Subalpine Warbler (*Sylvia c. cantillans*) is recorded by the Misses L. J. Rintoul and E. V. Baxter (*Sect. Nat.*, 1924, p. 126) as having appeared on the Isle of

May on May 30th, 1924. It is curious that the only three examples of this southern warbler recorded for Great Britain should have been found in Scottish islands.

LITTLE OWLS IN NORTH YORKSHIRE AND NORTHUMBERLAND.

—Mr. H. B. Booth records (*Nat.*, 1924, p. 348) that he inspected a specimen of *Athene noctua* which was shot on the Halnaby estate, near Darlington, in 1923. There was a pair and the birds were believed to be breeding, but after the one was shot the other disappeared. Mr. R. Fortune records (*t.c.*, 1925, p. 86) that he obtained a Little Owl from near Harrogate on January 9th, 1925. Mr. V. Pape records (*Field*, 28th August, 1924, p. 357) that he saw an Owl which appeared to be of this species on August 17th, 1924, near Newcastle.

FULMAR PETRELS IN CO. CLARE.—Mr. A. W. Steffox records (*Irish Nat.*, 1924, p. 123) that he saw Fulmars (*Fulmarus glacialis*) on the cliffs of Moher, co. Clare, in the first week of July, 1924, and that they appeared to be breeding. No details are given of numbers. This appears to be a new locality for the Fulmar.

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE BREEDING IN CO. DONEGAL.—

Mr. C. V. Stoney announced (*Brit. Birds*, XVI., p. 295) that in June, 1916, he saw a pair of *Phalaropus lobatus* in a hitherto unknown breeding locality, but did not find the nest. He now states (*Irish Nat.*, 1924, p. 109, ) that on July 3rd, 1924, accompanied by Messrs. G. H. Lings and G. Tomkinson, he revisited the spot, not far from the coast in co. Donegal, when again a pair of these birds was seen and this time a nest with an addled egg was found, and subsequently two chicks with their parents were seen.

COMMON SANDPIPER IN KENT IN WINTER.—

Miss A. V. Stone informs us that on January 16th and again on the 26th, 1925, she saw a *Tringa hypoleucos* at the same spot on the Stour Estuary at Sandwich. (*Cf.* Vol. XVII., p. 248.)