

NOTES

ROSE-COLOURED PASTOR IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

ON June 26th, 1925, a fine male Rose-coloured Pastor (*Pastor roseus*) was brought to me alive for identification. It was in beautiful plumage, quite unharmed, and had been captured in a garden at Bembridge under a net placed over raspberry canes.

On the next morning, prior to returning the bird to the owner of the garden where taken, I placed in the cage, in which I had accommodated it during the night, the following items of diet:—12 or 14 raisins; 5 small earth worms (washed and alive); 10 or 12 woodlice (alive); quantities (comparatively) of ripe apple and cold roast lamb—lean and fat—cut up fine; every scrap of which the bird devoured with great relish!

According to Kelsall and Munn (*Birds of Hampshire*, pp. 79-80) there are four (possibly only three) previous occurrences of the bird recorded for the Isle of Wight.

J. M. GOODALL.

WOOD-LARK IN PERTHSHIRE.

ON June 17th, 1925, I saw a Wood-Lark (*Lullula a. arborea*) near Dunkeld. There is some very suitable ground for the species to the north of the town, where I saw it; but unfortunately, being a common bird at my home in Herefordshire, I paid but little attention to it.

H. A. GILBERT.

WOOD-LARK NESTING IN NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE.

THERE is a certain district in North Lincolnshire so perfectly suited to the requirements of the Wood-Lark (*Lullula a. arborea*), that I used to search this place regularly for several years previous to 1922 on purpose for them. The only Wood-Larks I had seen in North Lincolnshire up to 1922 were at another spot some fifteen miles distant, viz. one on March 31st, 1919, and another on exactly the same spot on April 26th, 1921; both passing birds.

On May 28th, 1922, while motoring in the first-mentioned district, I saw a Wood-Lark flying some distance from the road and after watching for an hour or two found the nest containing young birds.

I had no opportunity of visiting this place again until May 18th, 1925. Very soon after arriving at the site I saw

two Wood-Larks feeding on the ground and watched them for a long time, but they apparently had no nest, though they behaved as if they might be going to have one shortly.

While watching these two another appeared and, after a few minutes' sitting on the branch of a Scots fir, dropped on to the ground. I went to the spot and flushed her off her nest containing one egg.

This locality is the most northerly in the British Isles that I know of for nesting, and it would be very interesting to know of any authentic instances of its breeding in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cumberland and the Lake district at the present time. Howard Saunders mentions these places as irregular breeding localities.

W. S. MEDLICOTT.

WATER-PIPIT IN ESSEX.

ON November 27th, 1923, I came across a Water-Pipit (*Anthus s. spinoletta*) in a muddy creek that leads out to the marshes in the vicinity of Leigh. Rock- and Meadow-Pipits were at hand for comparison if required, but to my mind there is no need for confusion with the former, or for that matter with its Scandinavian race. The eye stripe, showing up as it does the greyish-brown ear-coverts, is amply sufficient for identification. I had the bird under the glasses for the best part of a half-hour. It acted like a stranger and did not seem to settle down in search of food.

A. SMITH.

ROOSTING HABITS OF TREE-CREEPER.

WITH reference to Mr. W. H. Thorpe's note on the roosting habits of the Tree-Creeper (*Certhia familiaris britannica*) (Vol. XVIII., pp. 20-22), I think that the following notes may be of interest if only to corroborate this habit.

In the drive of Bishop's Stortford College there are two Wellingtonias (*Sequoia gigantea*), one of which, particularly, is noted for its soft bark. On March 6th, 1925, a friend drew my attention to a small cavity some eight feet from the ground in this tree. The cavity—about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ins. deep and $2\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in diameter—was quite new and slightly fouled by droppings. I was not sure whether this was a "Creeper-Hole," but on March 15th we noticed a Tree-Creeper in the cavity. I went close up to the bird and although its eyes were open it did not move; its body was closely huddled in the cavity, but its head was projecting above with the beak slightly tilted away from the bark, its tail was flattened against the bark below the cavity. Thus its back, most of the wings, the tail and head, were visible.

On March 21st I noticed that the cavity was slightly wider and deeper, while it was more fouled with droppings, showing that it had been used regularly. At 6.15 p.m. on the same day I saw the bird roosting again, but this time its head was almost in the cavity and its body was huddled much closer, its beak was resting on the edge of the hole.

On March 22nd the hole was distinctly elongated. That night the bird was unfortunately stroked by torchlight and after that it deserted the cavity.

I examined the trunk of this tree carefully and found three other obvious "Creeper-Holes," while in the trunk of the second *Sequoia* I found five more disused cavities, while there were several doubtful cavities—mere scrapings in rifts of the bark. The cavities are not made with any preference for one side of the tree but are made indiscriminately between four and eight feet from the ground.

It is surprising that the Tree-Creeper should trouble to make a special roosting cavity, as there are any amount of seemingly suitable crannies in other trees, and at any rate the bird could enlarge one of the rifts in the Wellingtonia's bark with less trouble, and this would include room for its head and tail.

R. W. HALE.

PIED FLYCATCHER IN EAST ROSS-SHIRE.

ON May 21st, 1924, I saw a male and female Pied Flycatcher (*Muscicapa h. hypoleuca*) in east Ross-shire. They were evidently paired, but I failed to find their nest.

H. A. GILBERT.

EARLY ARRIVAL OF FIELDFARES IN NORFOLK.

ON August 10th, 1925, I watched a flock of Fieldfares circling fairly low in the air over a field in mid-Norfolk. This is surely an early date. There were quite a number of them, and they once uttered one of their characteristic notes.

M. STUART CURTLER.

SWALLOW'S NEST ON A LANTERN.

IN June, 1925, I discovered the nest of a Swallow (*Hirundo r. rustica*) in an unusual situation. It was built on a metal lantern hanging before the front door of a house near Doncaster. The nest was perfectly round and was secured at the edge to the chain by which the lantern was suspended. The young were successfully reared. EDWARD A. ARMSTRONG.

[cf. Vol. I., p. 354 ; Vol. II., p. 208.—EDS.]

ALPINE SWIFTS IN KENT.

WHEN in Norfolk recently I came upon the record of an incursion of Alpine Swifts (*Apus m. melba*) during May, 1916.

Miss Margaret Barclay, of Hanworth Hall, Norfolk (eldest daughter of Col. H. A. Barclay, himself an ornithologist, and herself, of recent years, a keen watcher of birds), was during the war nursing at Hythe and lodged in a lofty house, the end of a row, overlooking the town and Channel. Among other lodgers was a Mr. O. B. Hake.

One evening in May, 1916, Miss Barclay on reaching her room heard a sound of scraping and fluttering against the glass of her open window, and found three very large brown Swifts with white undersides flattened against the lowest pane of glass. She gave them their liberty, noticing their "hugeness," their white undersides, how bulky they seemed in the hand, and when they flew their wide spread of wing.

Her fellow-lodger, Mr. Hake, found six of the same sort of bird in his room the same night. At my request the lady has written to Mr. Hake, who endorses her story, adding very little except that he remembers their size and brown backs and white underparts. He is not an ornithologist.

I may say that in the hall at Hanworth is a well-stuffed Alpine Swift (history unknown).

Miss Barclay was unaware of the value of her record at the time, nor knew that there was such a bird, having taken no especial notice of birds until after the war.

On her return home from nursing she recognised that the birds which had invaded her room at Hythe (Kent) were exactly like her father's Alpine Swift, having been *brown* above, not sooty, and *white* beneath. Also that their *size*, bulk and spread of wing exceeded any Swifts she had seen then, or since.

H. M. WALLIS.

WRYNECK IN DEVONSHIRE.

WITH reference to Mr. Curtler's note on the above (*antea*, p. 99)—I refrained from communicating with *British Birds* until I was in a position to offer something more definite than could be disclosed during your correspondent's visit of a few hours. I can now state definitely that there was only one pair of Wrynecks in this district and that they reared a brood in a hole formerly occupied by a Starling. I have no reason to doubt, from information received, that a pair bred last year within 100 yards of the same spot. I can find no previous record of the species having bred in Devonshire.

LEWIS R. W. LOYD.

SHORT-EARED OWL NESTING IN SUFFOLK.

IN May, 1925, I found the nest of a Short-eared Owl (*Asio f. flammeus*) in Suffolk. It was situated amongst bracken in cut-down woodland and contained nine eggs. H. A. GILBERT.

HOBBY NESTING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

AFTER an interval of three years, the Hobby (*Falco s. subbuteo*) has again appeared in the same oak wood in north Buckinghamshire where they bred in 1922. On that occasion, both the old birds and one of the young family came to a violent end. In 1925 a pair were shot during the second week of May, and shortly afterwards a second pair arrived, with every indication of breeding, frequenting an oak tree in whose upper branches was a Carrion-Crow's nest from which the owners had been shot at an earlier date. Three eggs were laid in the last week of May. The tree, not a very lofty one, was situated fifty yards in from the S.W. corner of the wood, which is an extensive one, and the nest was well covered from above with the leafy foliage. It is to be regretted that these birds also came to an untimely end. The three eggs, of a uniformly yellowish-brown mottled pattern and more oval in shape than those of the Kestrel, were lying on a layer of small twigs, no attempt having been made to line the nest previous to laying, they being then about ten days' set.

It should be stated that within one hundred yards of the nesting tree, Pheasant rearing was proceeding on a large scale.

H. L. COCHRANE.

FLEDGING PERIOD OF GOLDEN EAGLE.

A GOLDEN EAGLE's nest containing two eggs was reported to myself and my friend, Arthur Brook, early in May, 1925. At our request a stalker kept the nest under observation and on May 24th he discovered—on visiting the nest—that one egg had already hatched and the other was hatching. Arthur Brook obtained photographs of the old birds and young at various stages; and was present when the first Eaglet (a cock) left the nest on August 9th. The remaining Eaglet (a hen) left the nest on August 11th. This is a period of exactly eleven weeks.

The cock Eagle was seen to brood the young and was photographed whilst so engaged.

H. A. GILBERT.

[This confirms H. B. Macpherson's observations.—EDS.]

INCREASE OF FULMARS IN CAITHNESS.

THE Fulmar Petrel (*Fulmarus g. glacialis*) has now extended its breeding area in Caithness to several other ranges of cliffs, besides Berriedale and Dunnet Head. I saw them in 1925 on Duncansby Head and St. John's Point. On the latter, young were still in the nest in the first half of August. According to local information, it was first colonized by three pairs in 1923.

H. A. GILBERT.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT IN CUMBERLAND.

ON August 20th, 1925, I saw a Black-tailed Godwit (*L. limosa*) at Workington, Cumberland. As this is the first occasion of my noting the species I give details.

It was feeding by a pond in company with Lapwings and Redshanks, its warm brown colour forming a marked contrast with the latter. Its dark wings with white bar and black tail with white base were both well observed when it took flight.

M. MCKERROW.

BLACK-HEADED GULL NESTING IN THE SCILLY ISLES.

IN Clark and Rodd's "Birds of Scilly" (*Zoologist*, July and August, 1906) it is stated that "Though it has several times been seen in the summer months, there is no record of its having nested for the last sixty years," referring to a marginal note by E. H. Rodd in Montagu's *Dictionary of Birds* that this bird, the Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*), bred in Scilly in 1845. This naturalist writes also of two nests on St. Mary's in 1841. Although I have seen an adult pair or single birds in Scilly every summer I have spent there, and with Captain A. W. Boyd, six adults together on the pool of Bryher on June 30th, 1924, there is no record of the species nesting in the islands for eighty years, *i.e.* since 1845, until this year.

On June 2nd this year I found a nest of this species containing two eggs in the midst of a colony of Common Terns; these were still there on June 29th, evidently deserted, but had gone on July 12th. I saw no trace of the parents on any of my visits to the island, although I saw a single Black-headed Gull on St. Mary's on June 24th, and another off the eastern islands on July 4th.

H. W. ROBINSON.