

NOTES

“ BRITISH BIRDS ” MARKING SCHEME.

“ RINGERS ” are requested to send in to the Editor, not later than November 30th, their schedules, together with a list showing the number of each species ringed.

BIRDS' USE OF LAND-MARKS AS GUIDES TO NEST.

IN connection with Mr. Jourdain's interesting note (*antea*, p. 98) on birds making use of prominent land-marks, I may perhaps record an experience at Ravenglass. Having photographed a Ringed Plover (*Charadrius h. hiaticula*), a Little Tern (*Sterna a. albifrons*) and a Common Tern (*Sterna h. hirundo*) all I wished to, I emerged from the tent and removed to a distance of a few feet the most prominent adjacent land-mark—a branch in one case and the largest stone in others—to find that the birds on each occasion of their next few visits to the nest, returned to the land-mark ; and only located the eggs with some degree of difficulty. JASPER ATKINSON.

JUNE MIGRATION IN THE BAY OF BISCAY.

ON June 13th, 1925, 4 p.m., in the Bay of Biscay, Lat. 45° 50' N. Long. 7° 10' west, we observed at the same time a Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*), probably female, and a Turtle Dove (*Turtur turtur*) on board the R.M.S.P. “ Andes.” A light northerly breeze was blowing and no strong off-shore wind had blown for a week.

Allowing for errors, this position is at least 150 miles from the nearest 'land.

A. H. N. WILSON.

CHARLES E. BAKER.

RAVEN NESTING IN HERONRY.

IN 1924 a pair of Ravens (*Corvus c. corax*) nested in the middle of a Devonshire heronry which shall be nameless. The nest was in a stout pine at no great height, but the tree is a difficult one to negotiate.

On April 3rd I watched from a hide which I built in full view of the birds on the ground, and at this date one or both of the birds came again and again to the tree and stayed for intervals of half a minute to three or four minutes. Many Herons' nests were only a few yards away, and usually all birds returning to them were sorely worried by the Ravens in the air, but when once they had perched the persecution

stopped. I discovered one fresh Heron's egg with a big hole and sucked, but, judging from the number of young birds later on, the Heronry in general appeared to suffer very little. Some years back a Carrion-Crow (*C. c. corone*) nested very close to this spot and was probably a more dangerous neighbour. Once I watched a Raven mount slowly up a very tall pine to a nest at the extreme top; just as he reached the edge, a gaunt grey figure arose in a formidable crouching position, and the Raven started back with a most comical ejaculation.

The young Ravens were still in the nest and very noisy on May 6th, and four were reported safely fledged. But at this stage they are a very easy prey to the gunner, and a fortnight later I found two of their corpses at the foot of a neighbouring tree.

This year (1925) the same nest was again used, and a brood got off undisturbed, but I fear that they must have come to grief once more. In the second week of July the owner of the property told me that he had put the birds out of the same tree and asked me if it was possible they had an occupied nest at that date. I thought this interesting enough to investigate, and visited the tree a day or two later with a friend. Though we saw and heard nothing of the Ravens, he had come prepared for a climb, and with a rope he made the ascent. Strangely enough, when he was half way up, both Ravens suddenly appeared and made a hostile demonstration, flying almost at him. They sheered off almost as quickly as they had come and we saw no more of them. The nest proved to be quite empty. It was flattened out and much more "white washed" than when it contained the Ravens. I have no doubt that Herons had used it for a second brood, and my impression is that there used to be a nest there before the advent of the Ravens. A curious feature of the nest was that about three feet above it there was a slight platform of sticks which, when the young were in the very exposed nest, undoubtedly sheltered them from the sun for several hours in the day. I have been informed of another nest in a tree, only about a mile distant from this, which was occupied by Ravens this season. There is at least one good inland cliff in the vicinity which seems to offer facilities.

A. H. MACHELL COX.

HOODED CROW IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.

A HOODED CROW (*Corvus c. cornix*) was shot on October 12th, 1925, near Undy, a hamlet on the right or north bank of the

Severn. It was feeding with some Rooks (*Corvus f. frugilegus*), and was the only one of its kind seen.

The estuary of the Severn at this point is about five miles wide, and subject to very high tides, which leave large expanses of mud and sand at low water—good feeding ground for Hooded Crows.

I have been looking out for this bird for many years, and have made many enquiries, but this is the first I have come across, and I do not know of any previous record for the county.

R. C. BANKS.

GREENFINCH MIGRATING BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

On August 30th, 1925, while *en route* between Wellington, New Zealand, and Sydney, Australia, and 500 nautical miles from the latter place, a Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*) came on board at 4.10 p.m.

The Greenfinch is firmly established in both countries, but is commoner in New Zealand, and the period is, of course, early spring.

A. H. N. WILSON.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE'S LARDER.

My friend, Mr. H. A. Greatorex of Witton, near Norwich, found an unusually large larder of a Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius c. collurio*) this summer. It was situated in a large, wild garden. A lot of small thorn trees had been cut down and thrown in a heap on the ground. The heap extended for several yards and was about two feet high. Fixed on thorns on the top of the heap and scattered in small groups all over it were the following:—5 shrew mice; 1 large frog; 2 small birds (apparently young Whitethroats); 2 bumble bees; 1 small beetle.

Mr. Greatorex kept a watch on the larder, nearly all of which was consumed, with the exception of one or two dried up remains.

N. TRACY.

GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER NESTING IN NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE.

IN a certain locality in North Lincolnshire I have for some years past heard or seen a Grasshopper-Warbler (*Locustella n. naevia*) occasionally.

On May 17th, 1925, at 6 p.m., I saw a small bird flit over the heather for a few yards and drop into a thick bush. I watched and in a minute it crept out and sat, still and silent, in the bottom branches watching me. It then dropped into

long heather under the bush and I had to beat it out in order to identify it for certain. It had run in the heather four yards and was undoubtedly a Grasshopper-Warbler.

I returned the next day and tapped the low bushes near the spot and heard a slight rustle from one ; looking right into the bottom I saw a small thing like a brown mouse running on the bottom and the well-hidden nest containing five eggs.

W. S. MEDLICOTT.

UNLINED NEST OF WILLOW-WARBLER.

IN 1925 I watched a Willow-Warbler (*Phylloscopus t. trochilus*) building its nest in a much frequented spot. It brought off a brood. The nest had not a single feather in it, though I examined it minutely. Perhaps this is not really so uncommon as it is in my experience ? A. H. MACHELL COX.

[Out of hundreds of nests of this species examined, only one lacked the feather lining. This was in a wood in S.W. Derbyshire and was built of bracken without a single feather, but other nests in the same wood were normally built.—F.C.R.J.]

EARLY ARRIVAL OF REDWINGS IN DEVON.

ON August 30th, 1925, near Budleigh Salterton, I saw a party of eight Redwings (*Turdus musicus*) flying overhead in a south-westerly direction. They flew low and the evening sun shone on their red flanks, so there was no mistake. This is a very unusual date for South Devon.

W. WALMESLEY WHITE.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER AND NUTHATCH IN SAME TREE.

IN 1924 I discovered a Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dryobates major anglicus*) and a Nuthatch (*Sitta europæa affinis*) nesting in the same tree, the holes being in different boughs but only about fifteen feet apart ; a Blue Tit (*Parus cæruleus obscurus*) also occupied an old Woodpecker's hole between these.

In 1925 both Woodpecker and Nuthatch again brought off broods from the same holes, and it will be interesting to see if Mr. Owen's experience of the habits of the Woodpecker will be confirmed next year. The tree is an oak.

A. H. MACHELL COX.

SHARE OF SEXES IN INCUBATION OF THE GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER.

WITH reference to Mr. J. H. Owen's article (*antea*, p. 125) on the nesting of the Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dryobates major*

anglicus), I see that he says that he does not know if the male bird takes any part in incubation. A few years ago, in Hampshire, I spent some time watching a Great Spotted Woodpecker's nest, and on several occasions I saw one of the birds fly up to the tree and settle on the opposite side to the hole and tap loudly two or three times, when the sitting bird flew out of the hole and the new arrival worked round the tree and slipped in and remained for some considerable time.

N. TRACY.

THE INCUBATION- AND FLEDGING-PERIODS OF THE SPARROW-HAWK.

Two nests of the Sparrow-Hawk (*Accipiter n. nisus*) were found when the birds were building them, and as the eggs were laid, with one exception on alternate days, they were marked with the date of laying in order to discover in what order they hatched. Each clutch consisted of four eggs, but in one the fourth was infertile; in each the first egg laid was the third to hatch, in one nest about forty-six hours, in the other about twenty-six hours, after the second and third eggs laid had hatched. The second and third eggs hatched on the same day, but unfortunately it was not discovered which egg hatched first.

PAIR NO. 1. INCUBATION BEGAN ON MAY 18TH.

| Egg No. | Laid. | Chipped. | Hatched. | Incubation Period. Days. | Young left the nest. | Fledging-Period. Days. |
|---------|--------|----------|-----------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | May 13 | June 22 | June 24 | 37 | July 21 | 27 |
| 2 | " 15 | " 20 | " 22 | 35 | " 21 | 29 |
| 3 | " 17 | " 20 | " 22 | 35 | " 21 | 29 |
| 4 | " 20 | | Infertile | | | |

Some information was obtained regarding the chipping-period of these eggs, but it was only determined approximately, as in every case when the nest was visited the eggs had been chipped a few hours and the nestlings hatched two or three hours. On June 20th at 6 p.m. eggs Nos. 2 and 3 were chipped, eggs Nos. 1 and 4 unchipped. At 10.45 a.m. on June 22nd both these nestlings were out, the down on one still wet; the chipping-period was about forty hours. Egg No. 1 was chipped at 10.45 a.m. on June 22nd and hatched on June 24th at 9.15 a.m., chipping-period under forty-six hours.

PAIR NO. 2. INCUBATION BEGAN ON JUNE 4TH.

| Egg No. | Laid. | Chipped. | Hatched. | Incubation Period. Days. | Young left the nest. | Fledging-Period. Days. |
|---------|--------|----------|----------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | May 31 | July 6 | July 7 | 33 | August 4 | 28 |
| 2 | June 2 | ? | " 6 | 32 | " 4 | 29 |
| 3 | " 4 | ? | " 6 | 32 | " 4 | 29 |
| 4 | " 6 | July 7 | " 8 | 32 | " 4 | 27 |

On July 6th at 9 a.m. eggs Nos. 2 and 3 were almost hatched and egg No. 1 had been chipped for several hours ; six hours later the two nestlings were out. At noon on July 7th the nestling had just emerged from egg No. 1, the chipping-period being considerably over twenty-seven hours ; also egg No. 4 was well chipped, and hatched the next day.

Another nest was found when it held one egg ; other four eggs were laid but unfortunately none were marked with the date of laying. One nestling was hatched a day before the next two, and in the table below it is assumed this nestling hatched from egg No. 4 and that eggs Nos. 2 and 3 hatched on the same day, followed by eggs Nos. 1 and 5. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that when incubation began on May 14th egg No. 1 was six days old and egg No. 2 four days old.

PAIR NO. 3. INCUBATION BEGAN ON MAY 14TH.

| Egg No. | Laid. | Chipped. | Hatched. | Incubation Period. Days. | Young left the nest. | Fledging-Period. Days. |
|---------|-------|----------|----------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | May 8 | June 16 | June 18 | 35 | July 12 | 24 |
| 2 | " 10 | ? | " 16 | 33 | " 12 | 26 |
| 3 | " 12 | ? | " 16 | 33 | " 12 | 26 |
| 4 | " 14 | ? | " 15 | 32 | " 12 | 27 |
| 5 | " 16 | June 18 | " 20 | 35 | Disappeared 29th | by June |

The exact chipping-period of egg No. 5 was discovered. On June 18th at 10 p.m. it was just beginning to chip, and at 12.45 p.m. on June 20th the nestling emerged from the egg, the chipping-period being thirty-eight and three-quarter hours.

With regard to the fledging-period, in each case the whole brood flew from the nest-tree on the dates mentioned, and although one or two young in each brood were not fully feathered it was not possible to differentiate these from the

rest, hence the fledging-period is based on the dates when the eggs hatched and when the brood left the nest-tree.

R. H. BROWN.

[For previous notes on incubation-period see *Zoologist* 1894, p. 341; 1910, p. 11, and *B.B.* VIII., p. 193; XV., p. 74, etc. For fledging period see *Zoologist* 1909, p. 466; 1910, p. 11.—F.C.R.J.]

PUFFIN IN BEDFORDSHIRE.

THE remains of a young Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) which had been partially eaten by rats were found in Woburn Park on September 23rd, 1925. The weather had been very stormy.

M. BEDFORD.

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING IN HAMPSHIRE.—Mr. A. P. Martin states (*Field*, Aug. 20th, 1925, p. 338) that he watched a *Pastor roseus* in Hampshire (locality not mentioned) on August 9th, 1925.

GOLDEN ORIOLE IN KIRCUDBRIGHTSHIRE.—Mr. R. L. Tait states (*Scot. Nat.*, 1925, p. 100) that a dead *Oriolus oriolus* was picked up at Gatehouse on May 6th, 1925.

HAWFINCH IN SCOTLAND.—In an article on this subject (*Scot. Nat.*, 1925, pp. 39–45) Mr. J. Kirke Nash traces the history of the Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes c. coccothraustes*) in Scotland, and in this we note some omissions, notably the breeding records from Dumfriesshire (see H. S. Gladstone, *Birds of Dumfriesshire* and *Notes on the Birds of Dumfriesshire*). At the end of the article Mr. Kirke Nash describes his experiences in 1921 in East Lothian, where he found the Hawfinch breeding.

BLACK-HEADED WAGTAIL SEEN IN DUMFRIESHIRE.—Mr. W. Stewart records (*Scot. Nat.*, 1925, p. 107) that a Wagtail with a jet-black head and brilliant yellow breast was watched by him and his son in good light and at short distance with the assistance of powerful binoculars on June 14th, 1925, in Upper Nithsdale, a short distance up the Spango Water. That this was an adult example of *Motacilla flava feldegg* there can be no reasonable doubt. The bird has never been recorded for Scotland before and only four or five times in England.

CRESTED TIT IN LANARKSHIRE.—Mr. W. Stewart (*Scot. Nat.*, 1925, p. 46) states that a Crested Tit (*Parus cristatus*)

came several times in February, 1925, to some fat meat hung out for birds at Airdrie.

BEAN-GEESE IN OUTER HEBRIDES.—Mr. G. Beveridge states (*Scot. Nat.*, 1925, p. 58) that two Geese shot on February 28th, 1925, at Lochmaddy, North Uist, have been identified by him, as well as by Mr. P. D. Malloch of Perth, who stuffed them, as Bean-Geese (*Anser fabalis*). This is only the second authentic occurrence of this species in the Outer Hebrides.

RUDDY SHELD-DUCK AND RED-CRESTED POCHARD IN MIDLOTHIAN.—Messrs. D. Hamilton and J. K. Nash state (*Scot. Nat.*, 1925, p. 68) that a single example of *Casarca ferruginea* frequented Duddingston Loch, near Edinburgh, from October, 1924, to March 29th, 1925. The bird, which was strong in flight and wary, appeared to be a wild one. On the same loch Mr. C. G. Connell (*t.c.* p. 21) identified a Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*) on December 21st, 1924, and this was subsequently confirmed by Mr. Kirke Nash on the 28th.

RED-NECKED GREBE IN LEICESTERSHIRE.—Mr. W. H. Barrow informs us that a male *Podiceps g. griseigena* was picked up alive on the outskirts of Leicester early in March, 1924. It is now in the Leicester Museum.

ALBINISTIC LAPWING IN LEICESTERSHIRE.—Mr. W. H. Barrow writes that a *Vanellus vanellus* was picked up at Wanlip on January 2nd, 1925, having the parts normally black coloured red-brown, while the green portions of the plumage are cream. He suggests that it may be the same bird as seen by Mr. J. S. Elliott in Bedfordshire in February, 1924 (Vol. XVIII., p. 304).

GREENSHANK NESTING IN SCOTTISH LOWLANDS.—The Editors of the *Scottish Naturalist* announce (1925, p. 107) that they learn from a reliable source that the Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) nested in 1925 and probably in 1924 on high ground in the Lowlands. The 1925 nest was unfortunately deserted owing to interference by sheep or shepherds, and one of the eggs has been examined by the Editors, who state that this is the first record of the nesting of the Greenshank south of the Perthshire Highlands, though rumours of its having done so have been current for several years.

GREY PHALAROPE IN NORFOLK.—Miss F. Collins writes that she watched a *Phalaropus fulicarius* on a pond between Salthouse and Sheringham on September 19th and 20th, 1925.

FÆROE SNIPE at FAIR ISLE.—Surgeon Rear-Admiral J. H. Stenhouse records the occurrence of a specimen of this race of the Snipe (*Capella g. faeroeensis*) shot at Fair Isle on December 24th, 1923, and now in the Royal Scottish Museum (*Scot. Nat.*, 1925, p. 58).

IVORY-GULL IN YORKSHIRE.—Mr. F. Snowdon records (*Nat.*, 1925, p. 149) that a *Pagophila eburnea*, which was much emaciated and tame, was seen in Whitby Harbour on March 2nd, 1925, and watched for five days. It was eventually caught on March 7th and died in captivity. The bird proved to be a male in first winter plumage.

DEMOISELLE CRANE IN YORKSHIRE.—An adult female *Anthropoides virgo* is recorded by Mr. F. Snowdon (*Nat.*, 1925, p. 148) as having been shot at Robin Hood's Bay on July 5th, 1924. It will be remembered that Dr. B. B. Riviere watched a Demoiselle Crane in north Norfolk on June 17th, 1924 (*Brit. B.*, Vol. XVIII., p. 83), and it is of course possible that the Yorkshire bird was the same individual.

LATE NEST OF CAPERCAILLIE IN PERTHSHIRE.—Lord Scone informs us that a Capercaillie (*Tetrao u. urogallus*) hatched out a clutch of seven eggs at Lynedoch, Almondbank, 350 ft. above sea-level, during the last week of July, 1925. The eggs would have therefore been laid at the end of June. J. G. Millais states that on high ground some birds do not nest till June, but information on the subject is very scanty.

INSECT FOOD OF PTARMIGAN.—Mr. P. H. Grimshaw has found in the crops of two Ptarmigan (*Lagopus m. millaisi*), shot in Ross-shire, large numbers of the remains of a species of Crane Fly (*Tipula*). (*Scot. Nat.*, 1925, p. 69.)