

NOTES

HENRY WHITELY.

IN Mr. Gladstone's interesting paper (*antea*, Vol. XX., pp. 290-3), no mention is made of another claim to notice on the part of Henry Whitely. The Mediterranean Black-headed Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*) was added to the British List on the strength of a specimen sold by Whitely to Mr. G. R. Gray for the British Museum. It was shot by a waterman near Barking Creek in January, 1866, and brought to Whitely, who took it to Gray. At the time, some doubt was expressed by Seebohm and others as to the authenticity of the record, but since that date at least seven others have been obtained, and others reported.

F. C. R. JOURDAIN.

RAVENS BREEDING IN TREES IN DEVON.

IN 1900 in the first week in May I found Ravens (*Corvus c. corax*) breeding in a Scotch fir with nearly fully-fledged young. This nesting site was used till 1918, when a visitor to the neighbourhood shot both the old birds; since then I have had no opportunity to see whether the site is still occupied.

Ravens bred in a clump of Scotch firs within two miles of my house till two years ago, when the trees were felled.

Birds, singly and in pairs, are commonly seen; I have long ceased to record them, though we are fifty miles from the coast; and I have seen as many as six together while shooting in the autumn. So far, I have failed to find any other breeding locality in this neighbourhood.

OWEN WYNNE.

TREE-NESTING RAVENS IN SOUTH WALES AND HEREFORDSHIRE.

WITH regard to the reference concerning Ravens (*Corvus c. corax*) nesting in trees (*antea*, Vol. XX., p. 278), it is perhaps worth noting that tree-nesting Ravens are becoming comparatively common in South Wales. I know of two nests personally, both in Scots firs. I also know of a nest in a larch in Herefordshire. In addition to these I have heard of several more, none of which I have visited.

H. A. GILBERT.

HOODED CROW IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.

THE first Hooded Crow (*Corvus c. cornix*) that I had heard of in Monmouthshire was shot on October 12th, 1925

(*vide antea*, Vol. XIX., page 150), and I now have to record a second bird seen by Mr. A. W. Ecutt on February 6th, 1927.

The bird was flying up the River Usk, near the town of Newport, mobbed by three or four Rooks. Ecutt is a taxidermist in the town, and mounted the first specimen of the bird for the museum.

He tells me he was only about fifty yards from the bird, and that there can be no mistake in the identification.

R. C. BANKS.

RESTRICTED INTERVAL BETWEEN FIRST BROOD AND SECOND NESTING OF MISTLE-THRUSH.

DURING a short stay at my son's house in the Ratlinghope valley, Shropshire, I found a pair of Mistle-Thrushes (*Turdus viscivorus*) with young in a spruce-fir in the garden. In the early morning of April 18th I noticed one of the young had left the nest (an early date I considered for that altitude), but not strong enough on the wing to escape my temporary capture. By breakfast time on the morrow I was surprised to see that the hen bird had the greater part of the outer structure of a new nest built upon the overhanging branch of a poplar tree, close to the house, and it was busily shaping and adding to it at frequent intervals during the day. I could not quite satisfy myself that both the parent birds were feeding the young or if there was more than one young one in evidence. Frequent coition took place in the late afternoon of the same day.

J. S. ELLIOTT.

[This is an interesting case, but individual birds vary considerably in this respect. A nest under observation in S. Derbyshire contained five eggs on April 29th. These were safely hatched off and the young left the nest about the end of May, but the nest did not contain eggs again until June 24th. —F. C. R. JOURDAIN.]

PEREGRINE FALCONS IN BEDFORDSHIRE.

ON February 21st, 1926, a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), which from its size was evidently a female, was observed by my wife and me as it was passing in rapid flight down the Ouse Valley, at Tempsford. It was flying quite low and seemed to be but a passage bird.

On March 19th, 1927, an immature male in its first moult was killed at Shefford Hardwick. It was not preserved but its remains were sent to me for identification.

Although possibly never a year passes but that this Falcon visits Bedfordshire, its recorded occurrences are comparatively few in number and it is now-a-days apparently less frequent than in years past, though this is not to say that it was ever common. It has occurred from August to April, but more frequently from November to February.

The late Mr. A. S. Covington, whose experience as the best known of local taxidermists covered considerably upwards of half a century, told me that twenty-five county-killed specimens had been entrusted to him, three only of which were in the fully adult plumage. Mr. T. Cane, a noted bird-stuffer of Luton, had three in his collection which was dispersed at his death, and these he informed me were all locally-killed birds.

Mr. H. Pestell of Elstow, which is a locality evidently favoured by this Falcon, tells me that in the past thirty-five years he has personally seen six in all in that parish, and two in addition at Bromham and Ampthill.

Of the following, some of which are included amongst the above, I have details:—

Biddenham	-	Nov. 1851	Stevington	-	Nov. 1899
Ickwell Bury	-	Feb. 1879	Southill	-	Jan. 1900
Great Barford	-	Nov. 1879	Wilshamstead	-	Feb. 1887
„	„	Nov. 1885	Holme	-	Jan. 1892
Colmworth	-	Apr. 1880	Colesden	-	1892
Cardington	-	Oct. 1880	Wooton	-	Nov. 1893
„	-	about 1888	Tingrith	-	Dec. 1894
„	-	Jan. 1905	Broom	-	Feb. 1895
Warden Gt. Wood	Nov. 1881		Melchbourne	-	Nov. 1895
Felmersham	-	Mar. 1882	„	-	Jan. 1921
Elstow	-	Aug. 1885	Goldington	-	Dec. 1895
„	-	Dec. 1891	Ravensden	-	Dec. 1900
„	-	Nov. 1892	Renhold	-	Dec. 1907
„	-	Nov. 1897	Flitwick	-	Sept. 1913
„	-	Jan. 1898	Harrold—two	-	Feb. 1921
„	-	Dec. 1899	Tempsford	-	Apr. 1921
„	-	Nov. 1900	Cranfield	-	Nov. 1923
„	-	Nov. 1921	Marston	-	Sept. 1925

J. S. ELLIOTT.

HARRIERS AND BUZZARDS IN DEVON.

IN March, 1923, a male Hen-Harrier (*Circus c. cyaneus*) in full plumage was shot near Crediton and is now in the Exeter Museum.

On August 19th, 1925, a Harrier flew slowly up the pool I was fishing and passed within a few yards; two days later my daughter and I watched another not far from the same spot, and possibly the same bird, quartering a grass field for several minutes. Both these birds were in female plumage, the second showing a very strong rufous colouring on its underside as it turned over in the wind. These were probably Montagu's Harriers (*C. pygargus*).

In June, 1926, a friend told me he also saw a Harrier, sex not specified, in much the same locality.

On March 1st, 1927, my son and I saw nine Buzzards (*Buteo b. buteo*) in the air together; they gradually collected till the nine were circling directly over us. They were then joined by a Peregrine (*Falco p. peregrinus*) and the ten birds wheeled round together for a considerable time without disagreement of any kind; it was quite a wonderful sight.

Only once before (April, 1926) have I seen in spring time a number together approaching this and then there were eight together. On March 24th of this year there were six together over this house.

It is a pleasure to be able to record these numbers, as out of six eyries examined, over rather a wide area last spring, only two broods got away; three being plundered and one young brood destroyed, and on the whole the bird has been rather severely treated in the past few years.

OWEN WYNNE.

PROBABLE MARSH-HARRIER IN HAMPSHIRE.

ON April 4th, 1922, I saw a Harrier in the New Forest which appeared to be a female Marsh-Harrier (*Circus æ. aruginosus*). I first saw it at a distance of about sixty yards with a very good glass. It appeared bright reddish-brown all over, with paler shoulders contrasted with the dark primaries and a paler rufous patch on the upper tail-coverts. There was no barring on the tail, which was conspicuous when spread as the bird rose to pass over a telegraph wire. The date seems to be a late one.

M. C. W. DILKE.

PROBABLE GOSHAWK IN DEVON.

ON April 6th, 1927, near Lynton, north Devon, my father and I saw a bird which had every appearance of being a

Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*). It flew out of a stunted oak about twenty yards ahead of us on a steep, wooded hillside sloping down to the sea. After a short flight it turned and passed below and within fifty yards of us, so that we were able to get a good view of it through glasses before it disappeared round the hill. The bird was very large, with short, broad wings and long tail, and had a fast and regular flight. Its upper-parts appeared uniform dark brown. In both shape and flight it was like a huge Sparrow-Hawk, and this was particularly brought out as we had opportunities at Lynton for comparison with Peregrine and Buzzard as well as the commoner birds of prey. Neither of us had seen a Goshawk before, but the distinctive features I have described were clearly seen by both of us, and these are unlike any British Hawk other than the Goshawk. P. K. CHANCE.

SPARROW-HAWK CAPTURING A BAT.

WHILST fishing a salmon-pool on the River Lledr, N. Wales, at 9 p.m. on May 9th, 1917, I was much interested to observe a male Sparrow-Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*) fly into an oak tree overlooking the pool, and presently dash amongst half a dozen bats that were hawking over the surface of the water, and after a number of lightning twists and turns seize one and carry it away. The remaining bats dispersed at the time of the attack, mounting high into the sky, but in a little while returned and resumed their hawking over the surface of the pool. M. V. WENNER.

DUCKS AT NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE RESERVOIRS.

It is some time since I published any records for the north Worcestershire reservoirs. The following notes may be of interest.

During the early months of 1926, a party of Goosanders (*Mergus m. merganser*) visited the Upper Bittell reservoir. Their numbers varied very much from week to week; on January 7th there were eight together, and one that for some reason kept to itself. On the 14th there were none. On the 21st, when most of the water was frozen, one bird was flying round about and settling on the ice. On the 28th there were seven together, and on February 11th twelve. A week later there were apparently not more than two; on March 4th none; on the 11th one; on the 25th none. I believe more than twelve were recorded in the *Field* by another observer as seen on some date in February, including one drake; I

saw no drakes. It would be interesting to discover how far such birds wander during the winter. Do they go backwards and forwards between these waters and some of the large pools in Staffordshire—at least thirty miles away—or is there some nearer pool that they visit?

Curiously enough a single female Goosander, the only one I have seen during the past winter, stayed for three months (January 13th to April 13th) without apparently leaving the reservoir. Twice, at least, it allowed me to approach within twenty yards; on January 20th, especially, when swarms of Pochard, Tufted Duck and Coots were crowded together in a small strip of unfrozen water, the Goosander was very tame, and made some fierce thrusts at Coots, occasionally uttering a hoarse cry.

Apart from the exceptional number of birds on January 20th, this winter the bird population of the reservoirs has remained unusually stable. The number of Pochard (*Nyroca f. ferina*) has varied a good deal, but the other ducks hardly changed at all after the middle of January until their departure. As a rule, Goldeneye (*Bucephala c. clangula*) appear in twos or threes during November and December, but after mid-January, at the latest, they disappear, though single individuals sometimes reappear in late March or April. This year was exceptional. There were single birds in various plumages until after Christmas. On January 20th there were four, one an adult drake, and these four stayed, and could usually be seen on the water together, sometimes on the Upper Bittell, sometimes on the Lower, until April 13th; on April 9th and 13th they were accompanied by a fifth bird. On February 24th, a gloomy day with cold showers and a north-east wind, they were going through the courting performance, the adult drake frequently throwing his head back on to his tail, and two others, presumably both young drakes, doing the same occasionally, and the one that appeared to be a duck also took some part in the performance, at least to the extent of stretching its neck upwards with vertical beak, and all four swam after each other, the drake usually leading. On later dates, in spite of more genial weather, I did not see the performance repeated.

Other Ducks that have been observed at the reservoir in the past two years, since the Long-tailed Duck already recorded (Vol. XIX., p. 236), were an adult drake Smew (*Mergus albellus*) seen by Messrs. F. R. Barlow and J. D. Wood on December 19th, 1925; an immature Smew seen by myself on February 18th, 1926; a Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)

seen by Messrs. Barlow and Wood on January 9th, 1926, and one seen by myself, standing on the ice amongst a crowd of Mallard and Wigeon, on January 20th, 1927, and five Common Scoters (*Oidemia n. nigra*), four of them apparently drakes, but the light was very bad, on April 9th, 1927. On November 11th, 1926, a single Diver was swimming in the middle of the Upper Bittell reservoir. It refused to come anywhere near the bank while I was watching it, but I think it was a Red-throated Diver (*Colymbus stellatus*).

H. G. ALEXANDER.

LONG-TAILED DUCKS IN CO. DONEGAL IN MAY.

FROM May 7th till 9th, 1927, I observed eight Long-tailed Ducks (*Clangula hyemalis*) feeding on the outskirts of the rocks under the Great Northern Railway Hotel at Bundoran. At least four were drakes, which displayed in courtship, erecting their tails, at times perpendicularly.

HENRY B. RATHBORNE.

WOOD-PIGEON WITH CLUTCH OF THREE.

ON April 12th, 1927, we found a nest of the Wood-Pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) about twenty feet from the ground in a Douglas fir, near Dumfries. It contained two eggs as well as one newly hatched bird.

W. & A. B. DUNCAN.

[About half a dozen cases are on record of three eggs or young in the nest of the Wood-Pigeon (*cf. antea*, Vol. IV., p. 155; *Field*, 19, xi., 1904; *Vict. Hist. of Rutland*, etc.); while cases of four eggs or young have been recorded about three times (*cf. Zool.*, 1889, p. 436; *antea, loc. cit.*, etc.), but the latter are probably either first and second layings of one hen in the same nest or the produce of two hens.—F. C. R. JOURDAIN.]

WOOD-PIGEON DIPHTHERIA IN PERTHSHIRE.

HEARING that many Wood-Pigeons (*Columba palumbus*) were dying at Moncreiffe, Bridge-of-Earn, in February and March, 1927, I collected several, and brought them to Perth Museum. The tongues and throats proved to be septic and greatly inflamed; in some cases inflammation had practically closed the throat, which agrees with the keepers' accounts of seeing Pigeons sitting gasping in trees, then falling dead, apparently from suffocation. A swab of the throats, when submitted to the diphtheria test at the local infirmary, gave a positive

reaction ; this, of course, would not mean that the bacillus was the same as human diphtheria, but merely of a similar nature. SCONE.

[For the nature of the disease and distribution of former epidemics see C. B. Ticehurst, Vol. I., p. 243 ; Vol. II., p. 69 ; Vol. III., p. 213 ; Vol. IV., p. 304.—EDS.]

RARE BIRDS IN FAIR ISLE.—Surgeon Rear-Admiral J. H. Stenhouse records (*Scot. Nat.*, 1927, pp. 53-4) the occurrence of the following scarce visitors to Fair Isle in the autumn of 1926 :—

SHORT-TOED LARK (*Calandrella b. brachydactyla*).—A female was obtained on October 19th.

EVERSMANN'S WARBLER (*Phylloscopus b. borealis*).—One on September 27th. This is the seventh recorded British occurrence.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER (*Ph. h. pramium*).—Three were observed between September 8th and October 6th.

LANCEOLATED WARBLER (*Locustella lanceolata*).—One on September 26th. This is the fifth recorded occurrence in Great Britain.

BARRED WARBLER (*Sylvia n. nisoria*).—A female on August 13th and males on 14th and 27th.

NESTLING PLUMAGES OF WOODCHAT SHRIKE, WESTERN BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR AND ALPINE ACCENTOR.—In a paper on "The Summer Avifauna of the Pyrénées Orientales" (*Ibis*, 1927, pp. 284-310), Dr. C. B. Ticehurst and Mr. Hugh Whistler describe the nestling plumage of the following species that are not included in *The Practical Handbook* :—

WOODCHAT SHRIKE (*Lanius s. senator*). Vol. I., p. 268. The authors state that the newly-hatched young have no down (*cf.* H. F. Witherby's remarks, *B.B.*, Vol. XIX, p. 69, and Collingwood Ingram, *Ibis*, 1920, p. 879).

WESTERN BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR (*Enanthe h. hispanica*). Vol. I., p. 435. The down-plumage described agrees with that in *The Practical Handbook*, taken from a partially feathered skin, but the coloration of the soft parts is added : gape yellow, flanges white, no tongue-spots.

ALPINE ACCENTOR (*Prunella c. collaris*). Vol. I., p. 485. Down, dark grey, long and scanty ; supra-orbital, occipital, humeral, spinal, alar and femoral tracts ; two black oval tongue-spots ; flanges white.

CONTINENTAL BLUE TIT AT FAIR ISLE.—A Blue Tit secured by Mr. G. Stout on Fair Isle on October 20th, 1926, has been determined by Rear-Admiral Stenhouse and Dr. Hartert as of the Continental form (*Parus c. cæruleus*) (*Scot. Nat.*, 1926, p. 168). This is the second identified example of this form for Scotland and the third for Great Britain.

WILLOW-TIT IN CLYDE AREA.—Mr. J. Paterson contributes a valuable article to the *Scottish Naturalist* (1927, pp. 17-23) on the distribution of *Parus a. kleinschmidti* in the Clyde area. This is supplementary to Mr. Stewart's article, to which we have already drawn attention (*antea*, Vol. XX., p. 252), about the bird in Lanarkshire.

SIBERIAN LESSER WHITETHROAT IN INNER HEBRIDES.—Mr. J. Bain records (*Scot. Nat.*, 1927, p. 44) that on October 21st, 1926, he procured on Hyskeir a Lesser Whitethroat, which proved on examination at the Royal Scottish Museum to be an example of *Sylvia c. affinis*. This eastern form has hitherto only been recorded from Fair Isle.

NIGHT-HERON IN LANARKSHIRE.—Mr. J. Paterson records (*Scot. Nat.*, 1927, p. 14) that an immature *Nycticorax nycticorax* frequented the Botanic Gardens at Glasgow from early November to the middle of December, 1926.

WHOOOPER SWANS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE IN APRIL.—Mr. L. J. Vernall informs us that Mr. J. M. Lade observed five Whoopers (*Cygnus cygnus*) amongst some Mute Swans in flooded meadows bordering the River Severn near Tewkesbury on April 9th, 1927. Mr. Vernall saw the Whoopers there on April 14th and 16th, after which they disappeared.

GARGANEY BREEDING IN YORKSHIRE.—In his annual report for 1926 to the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union for the West Riding, Mr. H. B. Booth states (*Nat.*, 1927, p. 17) that on June 5th he saw on a smallish pool on a moor near Clapham a female Garganey (*Anas querquedula*) with a brood of five or six ducklings. On the same pool were two Common Teal, each with its brood.

GOLDENEYES IN NORTH DERBYSHIRE.—With reference to Dr. W. Shipton's note on this subject (*antea*, Vol. XX., p. 295), Mr. A. W. Boyd writes to express his surprise that the bird has been so rarely recorded from north Derbyshire, as it occurs frequently on reservoirs in other parts of the Pennines within a few miles. Mr. Boyd adds that he saw one on the Derwent Valley water-works in north Derbyshire on January 15th, 1921.

FÆROE SNIPE IN THE OUTER HEBRIDES.—The Misses L. J. Rintoul and E. V. Baxter note (*Scot. Nat.*, 1927, p. 24) that among some Snipe sent from North Uist in October, 1926, one proved on comparison to be an example of *Capella g. færoensis*.