

LETTER.

DECREASE OF BLACK GAME IN SCOTLAND.

To the Editors of BRITISH BIRDS.

SIRS,—With reference to the note on this subject (*antea*, pp. 206–7) I have had occasion to observe on some moors in Holstein, north Germany, that Black Grouse are extremely susceptible to changes in their environment. During a period of fuel scarcity the moors in question were more rigorously exploited for peat fuel than ordinarily, and a good deal of noisy machinery and many people were employed for this purpose. This caused the Black Grouse to leave these moors, where till then they had been plentiful, and they must have wandered far, as the stock on quieter moors in the neighbourhood was not increased by their numbers.

That Forestry Commissioners in Scotland advocate the extermination of Black Game strikes one as a very rigorous and short-sighted measure.

In Germany, where afforestation is practised to a considerable extent, the Authorities on Afforestation do not regard Black Game as sufficiently harmful to order its persecution, especially as they are known to feed principally on moorland plants and buds of trees like birches, etc., as also on insects, snails and grubs. Moreover, they prefer living on the open moors and do not much fancy plantations.

DUBLIN.

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