

FIELD-NOTES FROM LAKELAND, 1927.

BY

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RAVEN (*Corvus c. corax*).—A pair began building on a turret rock in the third week of January, and on February 24th the nest was ready for eggs. Both adults were very noisy and restless this day, but at the next visit the nest was empty, the birds were quiet, and it was evident the female had laid and had been robbed. Later in the season a pair of Common Buzzards took possession of this nest and in it reared one young bird (see under Buzzard).

The remains of two small lambs were found on a feeding place beside a nest of four young Ravens, but whether the adults had killed the lambs or picked them up dead is not known.

In late February a pair was observed to soar to a great altitude, both birds frequently calling, and one occasionally planing upside down. The apex of their soaring reached, one continued at this altitude, whilst the other began diving earthwards, either a straight descent or else with a zig-zag movement, then stalling would soar to its companion's altitude, and again dive. A similar performance was observed in the last week of August. A pair, when disturbed from an old nest which they were repairing, began soaring together, when presently the female alighted on a rock. The male continued soaring, then twice called "kroc," the female answered "kroc" and he alighted upon the rock beside her and began stroking her face with his bill.

One bird of a pair was noticed planing upside down on September 25th and October 23rd.

HOODED CROW (*C. c. cornix*).—During the autumn a flock of thirty to forty birds fed for several weeks on an uncut field of oats a few miles north of Lake Bassenthwaite.

ROOK (*C. f. frugilegus*).—Twenty-two nests examined held forty-three young, average brood 2.0 young.

BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula* subsp. ?).—On January 30th a party of nine, and on December 11th one of fifteen, Bullfinches were noticed feeding on the seeds of the heather on one of the lake mountains.

CORN-BUNTING (*Emberiza c. calandra*).—In an inland locality a male was singing on January 20th, a warm sunny day after a hard frost, whilst in the coastal region on 27th two males were singing.

A young fledged bird was picked up on June 11th, an early

date. On July 30th a nest of three fresh eggs was found, whilst a meadow hay-field was being mown. A nest of two eggs was found at the foot of a hay-cock on August 8th.

SNOW-BUNTING (*Plectrophenax n. nivalis*).—A regular winter visitor to the Solway coast and the mountains of the Pennines and Lake District. The birds occur, either in small parties or flocks (largest flock forty birds), from mid-November until mid-March. On the fells they feed mainly on the seeds of the rushes, on the sea coast the seeds of the marram-grass and the sea-pink are favoured. On warm sunny days in early spring a flock will often assemble on a mountain scree and in chorus utter their trilling call-notes.

TREE-PIBIT (*Anthus t. trivialis*).—A brood of seven young was found on June 16th.

YELLOW WAGTAIL (*Motacilla flava rayi*).—In the second week of May a female was observed nest-building, the male not assisting in the building but accompanying her to and fro in her search for nest materials. She gathered several beakfuls of dead grass, which was pulled from the ground, and then collected a little wool. The nest was located under a tuft of grass; five eggs were subsequently laid and four young reared. Another brood of five young was found in the third week of June in a meadow hay-field, whilst in the last week of July a pair was noticed feeding young.

PIED WAGTAIL (*M. a. yarrellii*).—The spring migration usually lasts from the last week of February until the middle of April. It is usual for the males to arrive first (occasional birds arrive paired). These frequent the tops of barns and walls and call "chissick, chissick" to attract the females. During May another migration is noticed of birds which are evidently proceeding further north to breed. These often migrate in small flocks of twenty to thirty birds and roost at nights under gorse-bushes or occasionally on branches of trees.

The autumn migration is from the second week of August until the last week of October. Many flocks, composed of adults and young, and often hundreds strong, appear to migrate during the night, for the birds have been observed, as dusk fell, to leave the fields where they had been feeding and set off on a south-easterly course.

A pair was found to be feeding their young on horse-flies and their larvæ. Another pair collected click-beetles for their brood.

PIED FLYCATCHER (*Muscicapa h. hypoleuca*).—On May 7th a pair was noticed pursuing each other about the branches

of an ash tree, and on the 28th the female was flushed from a nest of seven eggs in a natural hole in this tree. Both the adults approached within a few feet of me, calling "whit" and "whit-tic."

A brood of seven young was found on June 15th in an old hole of a Woodpecker about thirty feet from the ground in an ash tree. Both adults fed the young on small flies and moths. The same day another pair was watched feeding a brood of fledged young which were scattered about the branches of a tree when a squirrel alighted in this tree. Both adults immediately attacked it, diving down within inches of it, whilst sometimes the male appeared actually to strike it. On these occasions he uttered a note resembling the sound produced when two pebbles are knocked together. The birds never ceased their attacks until they had driven the squirrel out of the tree and some distance along the ground.

A male frequented an oak tree for about three weeks, singing and paying frequent visits to an old hole of a Woodpecker, but no female appeared and he disappeared.

WILLOW-WARBLER (*Phylloscopus t. trochilus*).—An unlined nest holding six young was found near Keswick on June 6th.

COMMON WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia c. communis*).—In the third week of June a female was flushed from a nest of five eggs placed in a hawthorn hedge at a height of eight feet from the ground.

WHEATEAR (*Enanthe æ. ænanthe*).—A female, caught on eggs and ringed, continued to sit and reared the young; another female, when caught on eggs and ringed, deserted.

A female was noticed collecting ants from underneath small stones for a brood of young. Two nests, one with five young, the other with seven young, were thirty-five yards apart.

DIPPER (*Cinclus c. gularis*).—In the first week of February a pair began building a nest on a buttress of a bridge. Both birds assisted in building the moss portion of the nest and usually perched on a boulder in the river, where the moss was repeatedly dipped in the water, before flying to the nest. Sometimes the birds visited the nest in turn, on other occasions one bird visited the nest three times as frequently as the other. By the last week of the month the inner cup was being lined with leaves but only one bird (the female?) carried leaves, the male accompanying her on her journeys and singing from a boulder whilst she was at the nest. The female usually dipped the leaves in the water before carrying them to the nest.

KINGFISHER (*Alcedo a. ispida*).—A *Practical Handbook* describes the nesting tunnel as “generally, about a yard in length,” but the average length of eight tunnels which I measured was two feet.

A pair began excavating a tunnel in a bank of a river in the last week of March. The birds worked in turn, one keeping guard on a neighbouring branch whilst the other was in the tunnel, which was subsequently destroyed.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER (*Dryobates m. anglicus*).—In a large fir plantation, where two or three pairs of these Woodpeckers are resident, several worked Scots pine cones have been found inserted in the crevices of a dead pine tree.

CUCKOO (*Cuculus c. canorus*).—A nestling Cuckoo, about six days old, was found in the nest of a Willow-Warbler, but a week later the young Cuckoo had mysteriously disappeared.

LONG-EARED OWL (*Asio o. otus*).—A brood of two fledged young was found in an old nest of a Crow in a Scots pine, and about the nest and on the ground underneath were the remains of 1 Greenfinch, 1 Song-Thrush, 1 Blackbird and 1 Rabbit.

TAWNY OWL (*Strix a. sylvatica*).—A pair nested for the third consecutive year in the same tree. Four eggs were laid and hatched but only two young reared, the other two nestlings disappearing within nine days of hatching. The female brooded the young until they were about sixteen days old. The following food was found in the nest :—April 29th : 1 Song-Thrush, 1 Starling. May 7th : 1 Song-Thrush. May 16th : 1 Song-Thrush.

Another pair laid two eggs and reared two young, and on one occasion the remains of a mole was found in the nest.

BARN-OWL (*Tyto a. alba*).—A nest of one newly-hatched young and one chipped egg was found amongst the hay in a barn on April 29th, whilst on August 26th a brood of three fledged young was found in a hollow tree, which also held the remains of a rabbit.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco p. peregrinus*).

Eyrie No. 1.—April 17th : Female flushed from four eggs on a rock-ledge ; bird noisy and stayed about the crags ; 2 Starlings, 1 Greenfinch, 1 Song-Thrush, 1 Red Grouse, 1 Pigeon. May 20th : Both adults about and very noisy as nesting-crag was approached. Brood of three nestlings, clad in white down, on the ledge. 1 Meadow-Pipit, 2 Song-Thruses, 2 Pigeons. June 5th : Both adults present and noisy, young Falcons answering them. Three young very

pugnacious, lying on their backs and using their talons. Young have their flight-feathers developed, tail-feathers almost developed, mantles beginning, rest in down. 1 Lapwing, 1 Wood-Pigeon, 1 Moorhen, 1 Red Grouse, 1 Pigeon. June 17th: Only the adult female present, noisy, and twice swooped close at me. Young answering the female, and were perched at the edge of the ledge. They were full feathered except for a little down adhering to their mantles and heads. 1 Song-Thrush, 2 Wood-Pigeons, 3 Homing Pigeons. September 18th: 1 Curlew, 1 water-rat. October 31st: 1 Mistle-Thrush, 1 Partridge. November 24th: 2 Pigeons.

Eyrie No. 2.—January 30th: Peregrine about but no prey found. February 26th: 1 Song-Thrush, 2 Pigeons, 1 Snipe. March 27th: 1 Song-Thrush, 2 Blackbirds, 1 Common Gull. April 29th: Female flushed from three eggs on rock-ledge. Male on guard but made no outcry; female noisy. 1 Starling, 1 Song-Thrush, 1 Snipe, 2 Common Gulls. May 22nd: Eyrie robbed. 1 Blackbird, 2 Red Grouse. June 21st: 1 Mistle-Thrush, 1 Red Grouse. July 16th: 1 Song-Thrush, 1 Snipe, 1 Pigeon. August 25th: 1 Starling, 1 Curlew. September 18th: 1 Starling, 1 Red Grouse. October 16th: 1 Redwing, 1 Wood-Pigeon. November 20th: 1 Redwing, 1 Red Grouse, 1 Pigeon. December 11th: 2 Blackbirds, 1 Red Grouse.

Eyrie No. 3.—August 30th: 1 Song-Thrush, 1 Mistle-Thrush, 1 Homing Pigeon, 1 Pigeon. September 25th: 1 Wood-Pigeon, 1 Red Grouse. October 25th: 1 Song-Thrush, 2 Pigeons.

Eyrie No. 4.—February 6th: No prey, no Falcons seen. March 13th: 1 Blackbird, 1 Lapwing. April 29th: 1 Meadow-Pipit, 1 Blackbird, 1 Fieldfare. June 9th: 2 Wood-Pigeons, 1 Pigeon. July 5th: 2 Pigeons. August 20th: 1 Curlew, 1 Red Grouse, 1 Pigeon. September 8th: 1 Red Grouse. October 23rd: 1 Pigeon, 1 Wood-Pigeon. November 20th: 2 Fieldfares, 1 Pigeon.

Eyrie No. 5.—September 11th: 1 Pigeon, 1 Rabbit.

Eyrie No. 6.—January 18th: No prey, but Falcon seen. March 27th: 1 Song-Thrush, 1 Pigeon. May 9th: Female flushed from two eggs in old nest of Raven. Called a little, then disappeared. 1 Meadow-Pipit, 2 Pigeons. May 20th: Eyrie robbed. August 21st: 1 Curlew, 1 Red Grouse, 1 Homing-Pigeon, 2 Pigeons. September 25th: 1 Pigeon. October 30th: 1 Fieldfare, 1 Pigeon. November 27th: No prey. December 4th: 1 Pigeon.

MERLIN (*Falco c. aesalon*).—A pair noticed in the second

week of March, and on April 10th the male was observed flying up and down above the valley where on June 10th the female was flushed from five newly-hatched nestlings. On the 20th the male pursued a Meadow-Pipit into the valley, caught it, and flew around calling, then perched on a boulder. The female flew towards him, calling "ēp, ēp," and alighted beside him. A second later she flew towards a feeding place near the nest with the prey in her talons, whilst the male went hunting again. The young were clad in coarse down, feathers beginning to burst from quills of wings and tails. On July 7th the five young were found about twelve yards from the nest and flew away when approached. On the feeding places the remains of 1 Meadow-Pipit, 2 Skylarks, 2 Song-Thrushes. July 23rd: 2 Greenfinches, 1 Meadow-Pipit, 1 Corn-Bunting, 1 Swallow. September 8th: 3 Meadow-Pipits.

KESTREL (*Falco t. tinnunculus*).—A pair nested for the second consecutive year in an old nest of a Crow, the Hawks adding some larch branches to the nest rim. Four eggs were laid and four young reared. At one visit the remains of 1 Song-Thrush and 1 Blackbird were found in the nest.

Two other broods of young were found, one on a rock-ledge, the other in an old nest of a Magpie; the prey found at various visits consisted entirely of short-tailed field-mice. The behaviour of the adult females differed; the one used to fly away, after calling once; the other flew around the nest, calling frequently, sometimes diving down at me or hovering above.

COMMON BUZZARD (*Buteo b. buteo*).—On June 6th a Buzzard was flushed from three eggs in the nest of a Raven. A lining of rush-grasses had been added for the eggs, otherwise the nest was as built by the Ravens; there was a quantity of down about the nest-rim. On various feeding-places were the remains of four rabbits. June 18th: Down removed from the nest, but eggs unchipped. 2 rabbits, 1 adult stoat. June 26th: Three nestlings hatched, two about five days old, other three days old. During the ten minutes I was at the nest one of the eldest nestlings frequently seized the youngest by the nape of the neck and worried it, the youngest mewing piteously. On the nest-rim, which was undecorated, were the hindquarters of three rabbits and two perfect moles. July 10th: Only one nestling left, no remains of the others. Nest not decorated and held remains of two rabbits.

On May 15th a Buzzard was flushed from one egg on a grass-covered ledge and except for two small twigs there was no nest. A little down about the ledge and on a nearby feeding place several castings of frog-spawn.

A pair began repairing an old nest in the first week of February and by mid-March the nest was finished except for the egg-cup, which the female was found decorating in the second week of April with the green twigs of Scots pine. The following prey was found on the feeding places:—February 6th: 2 Wood-Pigeons. March 13th: 1 Red Grouse. April 10th: 2 Red Grouse.

From a nest of two eggs, built on a turret rock, some person took one egg, whereupon the birds deserted.

In the second week of June a nest holding three young and one egg was found. The nest-rim was profusely decorated with mountain ash twigs and held the hindquarters of three rabbits.

On June 13th a brood of two young was found; the nest was decorated with mountain ash twigs and held the remains of 1 Meadow-Pipit and 1 rabbit. The young had their flight- and tail-feathers half developed, the mantles beginning to feather, the rest in down. On the 26th an adult flew from the nest where it had evidently been feeding the young, which were in juvenile plumage except for a little down about their heads. The nest-rim was decorated and held the remains of three rabbits.

SPARROW-HAWK (*Accipiter n. nisus*).—Prey found on the feeding blocks or, when the young have left the nest, on the nest itself, has been as follows:—

Eyrie No. 1.—June 19th: 1 Greenfinch, 1 Song-Thrush, 1 nestling Lapwing. 24th: 1 Long-tailed Tit. July 10th: 1 Greenfinch, 1 Linnet.

Eyrie No. 2.—June 27th: 1 Long-tailed Tit, 2 Song-Thrushes, 1 Blackbird. July 3rd: 1 Greenfinch, 1 Blue Tit, 1 Song-Thrush, 2 Blackbirds. 8th: 2 Greenfinches, 1 Chaffinch, 1 Long-tailed Tit, 1 Swallow, 2 Wood-Pigeons. 21st: 1 Chaffinch, 1 Great Tit, 2 Song-Thrushes. August 5th: 2 Greenfinches, 1 Song-Thrush, 3 Blackbirds.

Eyrie No. 3.—July 16th: 1 Greenfinch, 2 Song-Thrushes. August 4th: 1 Chaffinch, 1 Skylark, 1 Blackbird.

COMMON HERON (*Ardea c. cinerea*).—Food cast up by nestlings was as follows:—April 30th: About two dozen minnows, 1 chub, 2 water-rats. May 18th: 1 chub, 1 flatfish, 2 long-tailed field-mice.

On August 2nd a party of five, and on September 12th

seven, Herons were observed, with much calling, to soar to a considerable altitude and begin diving earthwards, diving in a headlong manner or with a zig-zag movement. Some stalled and began soaring after a dive of a few hundred feet, others came very close to the earth before checking their rapid descent.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE (*Anser brachyrhynchus*).—The number of Pink-footed Geese on Rockcliffe Marsh, Solway Firth, on September 27th, could not have been less than two thousand, whilst from the quantity of feathers, principally body-feathers, but some mantle-feathers, strewn about their feeding grounds, it was evident that the birds were still in moult.

STOCK-DOVE (*Columba œnas*).—A Stock-Dove was flushed on July 31st from a nest of four eggs on the inside wall-plate of a deserted barn, and where only one pair of birds was observed during the season.

RUFF (*Philomachus pugnax*).—Three young birds with a small party of Lapwings on Burgh Marsh, Solway Firth, on October 4th.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa limosa*).—A party of five near Port Carlisle, Solway Firth, on October 14th.

LAND-RAIL (*Crex crex*).—Two young Land-Rails caught on August 2nd were in full juvenile plumage except that the flight-feathers were just breaking from the quills. One young bird lay still as death in the hand, the other struggled and kicked like a Coot ; on being released both ran swiftly away.

In the third week of June a Land-Rail was noticed escorting ten downy nestlings through a pasture field.

Two nests, one with seven eggs, the other with four, were found in a rotation grass hay-field on July 18th. The nests were about sixty yards apart and the hay had been cut, turned, raked, and cocked without the eggs being damaged.