

## BIRDS OF INNER LONDON.

BY

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES IN 1931.

NOTES have already appeared in this volume on the occurrences of a GOLDEN-CRESTED WREN (*Regulus r. anglorum*) in Eaton Square Gardens (p. 102), and a curiously coloured SCAUP (*Nyroca m. marila*) in Kensington Gardens (p. 304).

On February 11th, a MISTLE-THRUSH (*Turdus v. viscivorus*) was singing in Campden Hill Road from the top of a chimney; a strange position, for there are high trees in the neighbourhood.

Referring to four WHEATEARS (*Ænanthe æ. leucorrhœa*?) in Regent's Park on May 5th, Mr. D. Seth-Smith writes: "They appeared to be very large birds, and as by this date the British breeding Wheatears would be nesting, it is possible that these may have been of the Greenland race" (*Report to H.M. Office of Works Bird Sanctuary Committee*). I saw these birds and was struck by their size and deep buff chests.

On April 30th I watched a male REDSTART (*Phœnicurus ph. phœnicurus*) in the grounds of Holland House.

There was a marked passage of young CUCKOOS (*Cuculus c. canorus*) through London in the second half of August. Mr. R. Hardy-Syms informs me that in the course of about ten days, from August 17th to 27th, he saw certainly three, and probably four, young Cuckoos in the garden of Gray's Inn. Major A. H. Daukes noticed one on August 18th in his garden in Egerton Terrace, Chelsea. Another was found dead on August 23rd in Green Park. I heard of others being seen about this time just outside the Inner London area.

In May a letter appeared in *The Times* from P. MacAlister, a boy at St. Paul's School, Hammersmith Road, stating that a pair of KESTRELS (*Falco t. tinnunculus*) was nesting in the school belfry and had nested there once before. Although enquiries failed to confirm these statements, Kestrels had undoubtedly been seen on many occasions frequenting the school buildings. At the end of September, another pupil at the school, R. A. Beatty, showed me a large portion of the shell of a Kestrel's egg picked up by him on June 15th on the playing field, which adjoins the school buildings. Mr. L. H. S. Mathews, the Sur-Master, told me that he had often seen the Kestrels perch on the cills of some louver windows, or slits, which ventilate the loft above the school hall and are a considerable height from the ground. On October 8th, accompanied by the two boys, we entered the loft and examined the cills. One of them was occupied by a nest

containing two half-fledged pigeons, and lying beside them was a much soiled Kestrel's egg, which had been incubated.

On December 3rd, a SPARROW-HAWK (*Accipiter nisus*) was seen to capture a Sparrow in Regent's Park (D. Seth-Smith, *l.c.*).

A pair of MALLARD (*Anas p. platyrhyncha*) appeared again in spring in the small garden of New Square, Lincoln's Inn. Four eggs had been laid when the drake introduced a second duck, which also laid some eggs. But two more drakes arrived on the scene, and, after many fights, all five birds flew away.

Another pair bred by a little pond in the garden of No. 13, Holland Park, where six ducklings were successfully reared.

On August 11th, and the next few days, a CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax c. carbo*) created much interest by taking up a position each evening on the cross of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Dr. G. Carmichael Low saw a BLACK-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps n. nigricollis*) on the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens on September 28th, and Major A. H. Daukes found it there later on the same day.

Miss M. Rew saw a TURTLE-DOVE (*Streptopelia t. turtur*) in Regent's Park on May 17th, and on several subsequent occasions in the same neighbourhood.

On May 1st there was a COMMON SANDPIPER (*Tringa hypoleucos*) on the Island in the Serpentine.

CURLEW (*Numenius a. arquata*) were heard at Regent's Park passing over at night by Miss M. Rew on March 11th; and by her brother, Mr. E. Rew, on June 21st. Major A. H. Daukes tells me that from 5 a.m. to 7 a.m. on August 26th many flocks of Curlew passed over Chelsea.

An injured WOODCOCK (*Scolopax r. rusticola*) was found in January on the football ground near the Knightsbridge Barracks. Another was picked up alive on April 11th in Paddington (D. Seth-Smith, *Times*, April 13th, 1931).

One of the adult BLACK-HEADED GULLS (*Larus r. ridibundus*) which frequented the Round Pond began to acquire its dark hood early in November, and by November 26th was in full breeding plumage.

The BRITISH LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus f. graellsii*) was seen during the autumn in Kensington Gardens and St. James's Park.

On October 21st a LANDRAIL (*Crex crex*) was found alive but exhausted in Orange Street, W.C.2, and was taken to Mr. J. Hinton, the bird-keeper in St. James's Park. It recovered and was given its freedom.

Mr. Hinton reports that on November 29th, 1930, a Landrail was brought to him, which had been found exhausted in Leicester Square, only a few yards from Orange Street.