

**BREEDING OF TEMMINCK'S STINT IN
SCOTLAND.**

BY
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ON June 13th, 1934, I was in Scotland with Mr. Vernon S. Crapnell for the purpose of making cine-films of nesting birds. I had just seen my companion into his hide tent and was returning along a loch side when a small wader came off her nest at my feet. The flight was typical of a wader leaving eggs, fluttering and slow. For a few seconds this bird dragged her feet in the water, then made off at top speed.

I passed on and some hours later when Crapnell returned I showed him the nest. The bird had not returned, and as a heavy thunderstorm was working up we left as quickly as possible to allow the bird's return. For two hours heavy rain fell and that evening we visited the nest to determine the species, but to our disappointment the bird had not returned and the eggs and nest were very wet.

Bad weather continued on the 14th and 15th and in the evening of the latter date I filmed the eggs in the nest, then, having completely satisfied ourselves of the desertion, carefully packed them in moss.

We obtained a very close view of the birds during that Friday evening. The distance was twenty feet and we both had field-glasses so that we were able to make accurate notes of plumage, notes and flight.

The eggs were sent to Dr. P. R. Lowe of the Natural History section of the British Museum for identification. He has been very kind in having them blown (they were hard set) and he has gone to some pains for accurate information. The eggs were shown to Mr. J. L. Chaworth Musters and to Dr. M. Schönwetter, who identified them as belonging to the same species as Dr. Lowe and ourselves arrived at independently, namely Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*). We have presented the eggs to the Museum.

When we left the district on June 16th the birds were displaying, and on arriving home I wrote to Mr. Ralph Chislett, hoping that he might go up and photograph them. Unfortunately he was away and it was not until July 13th that he and I were able to proceed to the spot. Much to our disappointment we were unable to find the birds again notwithstanding a very intensive search of the whole shore of the loch. We can only hope that the birds will appear again next year.

The following are details :—

NEST.—On a small loch side. The nest was eight feet from the water's edge. Sand reached for about two feet, then came short grass and a few reeds. Scattered on the grass was a mass of dried vegetation left by high water during the winter months. In the short grass was the nest quite exposed. It contained not the slightest collected material but was quite a deep, cup-shaped hollow. The ground was so soft that each egg had bedded itself into a little hollow also.

EGGS.—At the first glance like a Dunlin's. Ground colour, olive-green. Underlying markings of purplish-brown and darker brown above.

BIRD.—The best description possible is, exactly like a small Common Sandpiper, both in colour and plumage and in general outline.

The head, back and wings were light brown with greyish edges to some wing-feathers. Down *each* side of the middle back could be detected four tips of dark brown like four black dots. On the rump could be seen a very slight touch of rust.

A faint bar was on the wing but only showed when the wing was spread. The throat was very pale brown. The breast and all under-parts pure white. Rump and tail dusky and white in flight. Bill and legs very dark coloured.

FLIGHT.—Swift and erratic. The birds' movements in the distance were very like Sand-Martin's, although the actual wing beats were typical of the Sandpiper's well-known jerky flight. A most noticeable action was to fly swiftly to about twenty feet high then turn and glide right down to water level with wings held stiffly V shaped (as in Common Pigeon), all the while uttering its call. On shore the bird always ran swiftly with head down and hunched into the shoulders, and with the tail up. The wings were often lifted high above the head for periods of about two or three seconds and this action was always practised before taking flight. The under-side of the wing was silvery white.

SONG.—A short, high-pitched trill, duration about three seconds on the ground and longer when uttered during the gliding flights. When flushed suddenly from the loch side this call was short and sharp like a Snipe's call.

The call was at no time as sustained as the Dunlin's, which we both know well having just completed a film of this species on the Yorkshire hills.

[Dr. P. R. Lowe has very kindly supplied us with the following measurements and weights of the eggs. Dr. Lowe remarks that six Dunlin's eggs weighed on the same delicate balance averaged 490 milligrammes.

	<i>Measurements in millimetres</i>	<i>Weight in milligrammes</i>
(1)	29.2 × 20.7	300 ±
(2)	29.4 × 20.9	300 ±
(3)	27.5 × 20.5	300 ±
(4)	28.4 × 20.4	300 ±

In connexion with the above record of the breeding of Temminck's Stint in Scotland, it is a fact of much interest that this species has recently extended its breeding range in Scandinavia considerably to the south. Up to 1929 its most southerly breeding-place near sea-level was on the Lofoten Islands, but it was known to nest at considerable altitudes round Røros (about 70 miles S.E. of Trondhjem). In 1930 Mr. J. L. Chaworth Musters published an article in the *Norsk Ornitologisk Tidsskrift* in which he showed that breeding had taken place at sea-level in Nordmøre, near Surendalsøren, in May, 1929, where a nest is also said to have been found in 1917. Mr. Chaworth Musters also informs us that during the present season Herr H. L. Lövenskiöld has still further extended the breeding range southward in Norway, but the details of this discovery have not yet been published.—Eds.]