

**A BLACK WHEATEAR'S NEST.**

BY

JOHN ARMITAGE.

(Plate 4).

WHILE in the Sierra de Ronda, south Spain, on May 29th, 1935, I noticed a female Black Wheatear (*Enanthe l. leucura*) on a roadside pile of stones. The bird was reluctant to leave and evidently had a nest near at hand. A piece of dead grass projecting from a small hole in the rock face above the road disclosed the site. The nest was made of grass and goat-hair with a lining of Chough feathers, and could not be inspected until three of five stones placed there by the bird had been removed. Inside was the nestling described on another page, and three eggs—obviously incubated but showing no signs of chipping.

Towards the end of that day I revisited the nest and saw that an egg was missing, but another had just hatched, the down on the nestling being matted together. This suggested a period of about thirteen hours between the hatching of one egg and another. The nest was examined four days later; two young only were being brooded by the female, and the last egg had vanished. The male arrived and began to display anxiety, while the female alighted on the wayside litter, flying from stone to stone and growing so bold that I exposed several films at a range of under twelve feet, one of which is reproduced showing her in characteristic attitude with outspread tail.

The road was practically deserted and the site a remote one; human interference was very unlikely, yet the long period between hatching of first and second of the brood and the disappearance of two eggs at different times was certainly peculiar, and one is left wondering if the Wheatear removed the eggs herself.



Female Black Wheatear, Sierra de Ronda, S. Spain, May, 1935.  
(*Photographed by John Armitage.*)