

NOTES

CHIFF-CHAFF AND GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER ASSOCIATION.

In a wood running along the top of a hill in Surrey which I visited on June 24th, 1936, I heard a Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) singing in a tall conifer, and as soon as he stopped a Grasshopper-Warbler (*Locustella naevia*) started to reel in the undergrowth below him and for several minutes the two birds sang alternately. During a short walk (about three-quarters of a mile) I heard five more Chiffchaffs and immediately after each had finished a stave a neighbouring Grasshopper-Warbler reeled in reply. The birds never sang together, and in no case did I hear a Grasshopper-Warbler before a Chiffchaff. I spent the next two mornings in the wood, one of them in the company of a friend, and altogether we came across eight Chiffchaffs, each with a Grasshopper-Warbler in attendance. Ten days later I was again in the wood. The weather was cooler and more broken, and fewer Chiffchaffs were calling, but when they did they were instantly followed by Grasshopper-Warblers. It almost seemed as if they had wound up some little piece of mechanism which started to run when they stopped singing.

The only other Grasshopper-Warbler I heard in the neighbourhood was accompanying a Chiffchaff in a narrow strip of ash and other trees about a mile from the first wood.

I find no mention of any association between these two species in Mr. Eliot Howard's exhaustive monograph on the British warblers and I should be interested to hear if it has been noted elsewhere, and to what it may be attributed.

E. MACALISTER.

SUMMER PASSAGE MOVEMENTS OF SWIFTS.

ANYTHING that may help to throw light on the little known and less understood late passage movements of the Swift (*Apus apus*) being of interest, the following observation is worth recording.

On July 1st, 1936, at 5.15 p.m. (normal time) while staying at Ballycotton Lighthouse (on an islet a short distance from the Cork coast) Charles Oldham and I saw a single Swift fly in from the open sea and pass the island, low down, to the

mainland. This bird was at least a mile out at sea, apparently flying from due south, when it first came into the field of our binoculars. The wind was then west and the evening wet and gloomy.

Next day (July 2nd) at 4.15 a.m. soon after dawn, we saw a party of six Swifts fly in oversea in exactly similar manner to that of the bird above-mentioned. These too were noticed when nearly a mile from the island. They were flying relatively slowly, battling against a heavy wind (N.W.) and passed low down round the island to the coast. These birds, by their behaviour and distance from the shore, were obviously not local breeders. All were silent.

W. Eagle Clarke in *Studies in Bird Migration*, I (1912), mentions that, at the Eddystone Lighthouse, "Many Swifts occur in June (24th latest)". He also records that "several appeared on 5th July, 1902 . . ." but the direction of their flight is not stated. He notes that the occurrence of the Swift at lighthouses "is chronicled for the night-time (especially the earliest hours of the morning) only." BERTRAM LLOYD.

HOBBY AND GREY SQUIRREL.

ON a common in Surrey a Hobby (*Falco s. subbuteo*) laid its last egg on June 27th, 1936, an unusually late date. After incubation had been going on for three weeks, I revisited the place with a friend who was anxious to photograph it. On July 19th the bird was sitting, but we saw a grey squirrel in the tree and another in the next tree. Three days later the nest was deserted: one egg was broken in the nest and the contents eaten. I think there is no doubt that this was the work of the squirrels.

D. H. MEARES.

FLOCK OF GADWALL IN SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

ON July 8th, 1936, at Dornoch, Sutherland, I watched a flock of 30 duck which can only have been Gadwall (*Anas strepera*). I first saw them resting on some saltings about 200 yards from the shore. When disturbed, they flew on to the sands (it was low tide) and on being disturbed again they went nearly to the water's edge. They resembled Mallard, but were perhaps a little smaller and rather darker in shade. The very conspicuous white speculum showed on about six of the party, both in flight and at rest; they did not allow me to get near enough to see the crescentic breast-markings although I was using a telescope. There had been rain all the morning and a cold north-west wind was blowing. Surely it is unusual to

see so many here at this, or indeed at any time? Two years ago, I found a brood of young ones at a loch, about four miles inland.

EDWIN COHEN.

FULMAR PETRELS BREEDING IN PEMBROKESHIRE.

With reference to my note on the Fulmar Petrels (*Fulmarus g. glacialis*) probably breeding at the Stack Rocks in 1935, (Vol. XXIX, p. 117) the coastguard informs me quite definitely that in 1935 one egg was laid by a pair. He was, however, unable to say whether the egg hatched or not.

I visited the colony on June 22nd, 1936, and I saw five pairs in view at one time and I think that the number of Fulmars is greater than in June, 1935. Moreover, one pair has extended the range and now occupies a ledge in the next small bay. I saw no eggs, however.

W. A. CADMAN.

EARLY BREEDING OF STONE-CURLEW.

ON May 3rd, 1936, three friends, all thoroughly competent ornithologists, who are well acquainted with the Stone-Curlew (*Burhinus æ. œdicnemus*), visited a breeding haunt in Dorset. Two nests with eggs were seen on that day and a third pair located. On May 6th, this pair was found after much watching to have young, a single large young bird being discovered which all agreed could not be less than ten days old. Another pair of young was also found, the same evening, but these were only two or three days old. Allowing 26 days for incubation, these birds must have had full sets on or about March 31st and April 7th-8th.

A clutch of two eggs found in Sussex on April 28th, 1927, by Mr. R. Carlyon Britton was so far advanced in incubation that the embryos were already covered with down and were probably laid about the first week in April.

The Marquis de Tristran (*Alunda*, 1934, p. 555) states that he received a clutch from a farmer at Emerillon, France, taken April 15th, 1932, which was on the point of hatching, and must have been laid about March 20th-25th.

F. C. R. JOURDAIN.

ON May 18th, 1936, on a heath near Thetford, Norfolk, I found a young Stone-Curlew squatting amongst the stones, and after I had examined it, it ran away at a good speed. Its age I should estimate at between a fortnight and three weeks, as it was rather more than half-grown.

H. J. K. BURNE.

“ INJURY-FEIGNING ” BY STONE-CURLEW.

MR. GEORGE BROWN'S note on the above subject (*antea*, p. 90) prompts me to record a similar circumstance which occurred while I was photographing a Stone-Curlew (*Burhinus æ. œdicnemus*) on May 31st, 1936. The chicks were just hatched and a hide was erected over them. (They were about twenty yards from the nest over which the hide had previously stood.) Within a few minutes both birds came up, calling distractedly. One bird (female ?) tried to lure the young away from the tent by brooding a few feet away from them, her brooding patch being fully fluffed out. When this failed to bring them to their feet, both birds paraded about the hide, with necks stretched low over the ground and their wings three-quarters raised. This performance was attended by the most hysterical “ curlew-ing.”

When this manœuvre also failed, one bird indulged in a curious display of “ injury-feigning”. Half-flying, half-jumping she landed prone on her breast on the flints, spread out her wings flat on the ground, and raised her head high and slightly arched backwards. The position was exactly similar to that so often assumed by Nightjars (*Caprimulgus e. europæus*) under similar circumstances. This she repeated several times. The display was perhaps all the more remarkable in that it was performed not in front of a visible human being, but a canvas hide.

G. K. YEATES.

THE FOOD OF YOUNG LAPWINGS.

ON six occasions, whilst ringing young Lapwings (*Vanellus vanellus*) I have been able to catch a young bird with food in its bill. The following is a list of the food noted : (i) A caterpillar of the cabbage white butterfly (*Pieris rapæ*) ; (ii) a large earthworm ; (iii) a wireworm ; (iv) several small black flies ; (v) a caterpillar of the yellow underwing moth (*Triphæna pronuba*) ; (vi) a white grub of the cabbage fly (*Anthomyia brassicæ*).

R. H. BROWN.

NOTES ON WADERS IN CUMBERLAND.

ON December 7th, 1935, a raw day after a night's frost, with the Pennine fells snow-clad to their bases, I was surprised to find a Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*) by the side of the river Eden near Carlisle. The Sandpiper was followed up-river for half an hour ; the call-notes, the butterfly-like flight above the water, with wing-tips just clearing the surface, and when the bird alighted by the water edge, the curtseying of the tail, were typical of the species.

On May 9th, 1936, I watched a Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*), in breeding-plumage, about the mouth of a creek on Newton Arlosh Marsh. The Starling-like plumage and long orange-red legs were distinctive. This is the first spring record I have for this species, and the Rev. H. A. Macpherson in his *Vert. Fauna of Lakeland* states that the species is unknown in summer plumage. On a spit of gravel in the River Wampool adjoining the marsh a pair of Greenshanks (*T. nebularia*) were calling repeatedly to one another, as if anxious for each other's safety. Finally the two birds flew off in a northerly direction, the call-notes of one bird merging in a series of yodelling notes. I have only one other record of the Greenshank in spring on the Solway Marshes: the bird is a regular autumn visitor and this year I saw an early arrival on July 12th, one feeding in a shallow pool in a creek on Rockcliffe Marsh.

On May 16th a party of six Whimbrels (*Numenius ph. phaeopus*) passed over Rockcliffe Marsh, their identities revealed by their ringing tittering cries; although I am on the marshes every April and May, this is the first occasion I have seen the Whimbrel in spring; all other records refer to the autumn except for one winter record.

R. H. BROWN.

COMMON BUZZARD AND OSPREY IN KENT.—Capt. G. E. Took informs us that he saw a Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) near Canterbury in November, 1935. The species has been noted in this neighbourhood in recent years on several occasions (*cf.* Vol. XXVII, pp. 265 and 361).

Capt. Took also informs us that an Osprey (*Pandion h. haliaetus*) was unfortunately shot near Dover in September, 1935. It was found dead in a wood and brought to him for identification.

NEW HERONRY IN MONTGOMERYSHIRE.—Mr. W. A. Cadman reports a small heronry at Rhyd-y-gwial, Cemmaes, Machynlleth, Montgomeryshire, first occupied in 1932 with one nest. In 1933 and 1934 there was one nest each year, but in 1935 and again in 1936 three nests. All the nests were in alders. Mr. Cadman also had reports of another single nest at Grofft, near the above, during 1935 and 1936, but this he had not verified.

YOUNG OYSTER-CATCHER SWIMMING UNDER WATER.—Mr. E. Cohen informs us that on July 6th, 1936, at Golspie, Sutherlandshire, a young (feathered) Oyster-Catcher

(*Hæmatopus o. occidentalis*) took to the sea to escape, as they frequently do, and then dived and swam very well for some twenty yards under water.