

LETTERS.

CUCKOO CALLING WITH BILL OPEN.

To the Editors of BRITISH BIRDS.

SIRS,—Some 25 years ago there was much discussion amongst my friends about Cuckoos (*Cuculus c. canorus*) calling with open or closed beak : and a lady said she had watched one through her window and that it opened its beak for the first syllable and closed it for the second.

At the time I had glasses of only 12x. I then got 18x and when I learnt to keep the glasses on the beak before the bird called, I found she was right. He opens it for the "cuck" and closes it for the "ooo." But he opens it very little. Now I have glasses of 20x it is easy to see so long as he "cucks" on the skyline. ELIOT HOWARD.

To the Editors of BRITISH BIRDS.

SIRS,—In so far as a single observation goes I can corroborate Fr. Haverschmidt's remarks (*antea*, p. 264) on a Cuckoo opening its bill when calling.

Last summer I watched a Cuckoo, at a distance of only a few yards, for upwards of five minutes during which time it was repeatedly calling. Using 8x binoculars I was able to note that, with the exception of the bill which was opened very slightly at each call, the bird's attitude (when actually calling) was almost identical with that shown in the late A. Thorburn's large edition of *British Birds*.

Although part of the "call-action," the slight opening and closing of the bill appeared to have little, if any, relation to the volume of sound produced. H. H. DAVIS.

LITTLE STOKE, NEAR BRISTOL.

January 20th, 1937.

HABITS OF STARLINGS ROOSTING IN LONDON.

To the Editors of BRITISH BIRDS.

SIRS,—I am anxious to acquire all the information available on the habits of Starlings (*Sturnus v. vulgaris*) roosting in central London. In the areas with which I have become personally familiar since my stay in England, the birds left the trees for buildings when the trees dropped their leaves. That was the first indication of movement I noticed. Subsequently there have been indications of fairly large movements on occasion by a sudden increase in the numbers of roosting birds on certain selected buildings in the west end, as well as one rather rapid desertion around the beginning of the year from the Piccadilly end of Shaftesbury Avenue. A gradual drop in numbers seems to have affected the birds of the Charing Cross and Trafalgar Square area from the middle of January onwards, till a marked influx occurred in the middle of February which provided colonists even for Canada House which is usually devoid of Starlings.

Any definite information that your correspondents can let me have would be greatly appreciated along these lines. I am also particularly desirous to find out, if it is possible, for how many years Starlings have roosted in London at all and if trees were patronised before buildings.

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THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB.

To the Editors of BRITISH BIRDS.

SIRS,—Might I draw the attention of those of your readers who are interested in the bird-life of Scotland to the recently inaugurated Scottish Ornithologists' Club.

The object of this Club is to enable ornithologists who are resident in Scotland to meet together to discuss observations and problems relating to Scottish Ornithology.

It is proposed to hold meetings at least twice a year at centres to be arranged at which Papers will be read, films exhibited and discussions held.

The first meeting of the Club was held in Edinburgh on 14th January and was attended by over 65 people, many of whom had travelled a considerable distance specially to attend. Over 140 Members have now enrolled. The next meeting will be held in Glasgow on 2nd April.

Membership is open to anyone interested in Scottish Ornithology, and full particulars can be obtained from me.

27, INVERLEITH TERRACE,
EDINBURGH.

GEORGE WATERSTON,
Hon. Secretary.