

## REVIEWS.

*The Breeding Distribution, History and Population of the North Atlantic Gannet (Sula bassana)*. By James Fisher and H. G. Vevvers. Part I.—A History of the Gannet's Colonies, and the Census in 1939. *Journal of Animal Ecology*, Vol. xii, pp. 173-213, 1943. Part II.—The Changes in the World Numbers of the Gannet in a Century. *Ibid.*, Vol. xiii, pp. 49-62, 1944.

THE title of this paper indicates its contents. In Part I information concerning each of the 39 localities in the North Atlantic where Gannets breed, have bred, have been suspected to have bred, or have occupied cliffs or ledges in the breeding season, is set out in chronological order with references to the sources of information. Particulars about those colonies already fully treated in Gurney's well-known book, or in recent papers by the writers, are supplementary to the accounts already published, but in each case a summary gives the numbers estimated or counted at various dates.

In 1939 an attempt was made to arrange for all the known colonies to be counted and was so nearly successful that figures were obtained for all the 16 gannetries in Britain, the Faeroes and Iceland and two of those in the Gulf of St. Lawrence area. In the latter region two other colonies were last visited in 1934 and 1936 respectively, another was visited in 1940, and a sixth was discovered in 1941. It is concluded that the number of breeding Gannets in 1939 was 165,600  $\pm$  9,500. This is in close agreement with the figure of 156,000 arrived at in 1936 by Messrs. Wynne-Edwards, Lockley and Salmon (*Brit. Birds*, Vol. xxix, pp. 262-276).

The information is admirably set out and the paper is illustrated with some excellent photographs of the colonies and numerous maps and charts. Any library which possesses Gurney's *The Gannet: A Bird with a History* should acquire a copy of this paper, which brings the history up to date.

In Part II the authors discuss trends in the Gannet population in the last hundred years. They consider that in 1834 the world population was of the order of 334,000 breeding individuals, of which about two-thirds nested on the Bird Rocks in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Mainly owing to depredations by man at this great colony, the numbers steadily decreased during the next sixty years to a figure of the order of 106,000. Since 1894 there has been a steady recovery of numbers, chiefly owing to increase in the Irish and Welsh colonies since man ceased to molest them. W.B.A.

## LOCAL REPORTS.

*Birmingham Bird Club: Tenth Annual Report on the Birds of Warwickshire, Worcestershire and South Staffordshire, 1943.* Edited by A. J. Harthan.

THE breeding of the Black Redstart in Birmingham has already been recorded. Other noteworthy records are those of four Water-Pipits at Bellfields on October 9th, a Marsh-Harrier there on September 26th (first record for Staffordshire), and a Fulmar seen flying over Bromsgrove on March 8th. A Quail was heard calling in flight over Bromsgrove. This has been noticed by continental observers, but, so far as we know, rarely in this country. There are short articles by H. G. Alexander on a new gull roost in Warwickshire and by A. J. Martin on "Some Birds of Upton Warren."

*Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society: Ornithological Section for Leicestershire and Rutland. County Report of Wild Birds for 1943.* 2s. 6d.

AMONGST the general notes we may mention the records of a Great Grey Shrike at Leicester on May 5th, a Firecrest in Swithland Woods on December 29th, six Whoopers at Stanford Reservoir in February and March, three drake Red-crested Pochards (possibly escapes) there in the autumn, a Leach's Petrel at Melton Mowbray on April 6th, several Curlew Sandpipers at Eye Valley Reservoir in September and at least one Oyster-catcher, an uncommon visitor inland, there on March 30th. We also note that there are several records of Great Black-backed Gulls in this inland area.

Under the heading "The Changing Status of Leicestershire Birds" Mr. A. E. Jolley tabulates the species amongst the commoner birds whose status appears noticeably to have changed during the period between the publication of Montagu Browne's *Vertebrate Animals of Leicestershire and Rutland* (1888) and the present.

*Ornithological Record for Derbyshire, 1943.* By W. K. Marshall (Reprinted from the *Derbyshire Archaeol. and Nat. Hist. Soc. Journal, 1943*).

THIS report contains numerous records chiefly of local interest. Six Buzzards seen together at Bretby on June 6th are noteworthy, and Crossbills were present in spring in North Derbyshire, but breeding was not proved. The systematic order adopted is peculiar, with pigeons between shrikes and flycatchers and other species clearly out of place.

*The Liverpool Naturalists' Field Club : Proceedings and Natural History Notes for the Area, 1943.* 1s. od.

THE short section of "Ornithological Notes" contains mostly records of local interest. A Whooper Swan was present on the Dee at Chester during April and a Hen-Harrier is recorded in April. There are also several separate short notes on birds. We note that the Willow-Tit, recorded for the first time in Wirral in 1942, evidently bred in 1943, as a brood was seen in July.

*Yorkshire Naturalists' Union : Committee for Ornithology Report for 1943.* Edited by R. Chislett (Reprinted from *The Naturalist, April-June, 1944*). 1s. od.

THE Yorkshire report again contains a large amount of valuable faunistic data carefully edited and a notable number of interesting records. The chief event of the year was the breeding of two pairs of Black-necked Grebes in the county for the second time on record, the first having been in 1928. Yorkshire was also the main focus of the Waxwing invasion, but thanks to the courtesy of the Editor, the county records have already been given fairly fully in this journal. Amongst noteworthy visitors not previously recorded in *British Birds* are a Nutcracker near Great Smeaton on March 23rd, a Hoopoe on the unusual date of December 9th (there are also September records for 1942 and 1943), a Marsh-Harrier at Ainderby Bottoms on April 3rd, and an Iceland Gull at Hull on December 20th. An Osprey was unfortunately shot near the east coast on May 22nd and others are recorded as seen. Two nests of Crossbill were found near Thornton-le-Dale and the species also evidently bred in the North Riding and possibly elsewhere. Three pairs of Montagu's Harriers are recorded, but only one is positively known to have bred and these reared two young. Little Owls are now "reported from many localities from south to extreme north," where breeding is recorded, and several nests or broods of Quail are reported.

B.W.T.

*The Peregrine : a publication of the Manx Field Club.* Edited by K. Williamson and W. S. Cowin. 1s. od.

ALTHOUGH many members of the Field Club are abroad on active service this publication shows that it does not lack for vigour and enthusiasm.

The Peregrine Falcon, as is proper in an island for which it has long been famous, receives special attention, including a very interesting paper by K. Williamson on historical records—one actually going back to Norse times; incidentally it may be mentioned that the bird's occasional practice of taking birds and animals from the ground is noted in *The Handbook*, although E. F. Ladds, in recording the capture of a feeding Redshank by a Peregrine, seems to be unaware of this.

Articles on the following subjects are of interest to the ornithologist: the Calf of Man, where Chough, Raven, Peregrine and Fulmar breed; the Wood-Warbler, four nests of which have been known in the island; the spread of the Fulmar—a valuable record; a marked increase in the number of nesting Barn-Owls; and the almost complete failure of the tern colonies in 1943.

Entomological and botanical notes also are included.

A.W.B.