

## REVIEWS.

*Notes on the Birds of Warwickshire* by C. A. Norris. (Cornish Brothers Ltd., Birmingham, 1947). 8s. 6d.

THE only previous account of the birds of this county was that published by R. F. Tomes in the *Victoria History of Warwickshire* in 1904. The present little work thus fills a gap in the series of county ornithologies and the bibliography shows that the author has made a very thorough search of all the relevant literature and has also been able to use unpublished material from many sources. He has found satisfactory records of the occurrence in the county of 238 species and subspecies of which 121 occur regularly (94 of them breeding), 36 are classed as scarce or irregular visitors and 81 as very rare vagrants. The systematic list gives details of the status of each of these.

Mr. Norris states in a foreword that these notes are intended to pave the way for a full and more detailed history of the birds of Warwickshire, which he hopes to compile, and that much has still to be learnt about the distribution of the more local species. With this excellent summary of what is already known ornithologists in the county now possess an admirable foundation for future work.

W. B. A.

*A List of the Birds of the Counties of Galway and Mayo* by R. F. Ruttledge. (*Proc. Royal Irish Academy*, vol. 52, Section B, No. 8 Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1950). 5s.

FEW counties or regions of Ireland have had books or papers devoted to their birds so that this account of the ornithology of the two largest counties of Connaught is a welcome addition to the literature of the subject. The author has long been resident in Co. Mayo and has travelled in both counties at all seasons so that his accounts of the status of the species are largely based on first-hand knowledge, though he acknowledges help from a few other resident ornithologists and a number of visitors, and has quoted records from the literature.

Co. Mayo contains the only known breeding station in Ireland of the Red-necked Phalarope, which began breeding in 1900. From 1905 to about 1920 approximately 50 pairs nested, but after that a rapid decrease occurred and in 1945 only 4 birds were present. These counties also formerly contained the only breeding stations of the Yellow Wagtail in the west of Ireland, but this species has not been met with since 1928. Whilst these and a few other species, have decreased or disappeared, a number of others have appeared or increased as breeding species, these changes being summarized by the author in a brief introduction.

W. B. A.

*Bird Wonders of Australia* by Alec H. Chisholm (Angus and Robertson, Sydney and London, Third Edition, 1948). 15s.

THIS book, originally published in 1934, has been thoroughly revised and brought up to date. It consists of a series of essays, some dealing with specially interesting or peculiar Australian birds such as the Bower-birds, Lyre-birds and Megapodes, and some dealing with interesting ornithological topics such as "anting", song mimicry, curious nests, and migration, with special reference to Australian examples. It is primarily addressed to Australian readers though it can certainly be recommended to British ornithologists who want to learn something of the peculiarities of the Australian avifauna. Nevertheless, in some respects, the British reader may feel disappointed. For instance the chapter on cuckoos is mainly occupied by descriptions of the ejection of their nest-mates by Australian cuckoo nestlings, behaviour exactly like that of the European cuckoo. British readers familiar with this behaviour in their single species would be more interested to know whether in a country with thirteen species of parasitic cuckoos each species parasitises particular hosts and if so whether the eggs in each case resemble those of the host (we are told they do in one case). However, it is perhaps ungracious to ask for more when we are given so much of interest, and we must not fail to add that the book contains a fine series of photographs of birds and their nests, by the author and others, which really do illustrate many of the topics dealt with in the text.

W. B. A.

*News from Nature: A Selection of Seasonal Gossip* by Alec H. Chisholm (Georgian House, Melbourne, 1948). 10s. 6d.

In this small book the writer reprints essays dealing with nature round Melbourne as observed throughout the four seasons. There is much about birds, both native and acclimatized species, and we are introduced also to some of the wild-flowers, fungi, insects and spiders. Admirable photographic and other illustrations are included.

W. B. A.

#### SCHOOL REPORTS

*Winchester College: Report of the Natural History Society for 1947-1949.*

Most of this well-produced report is concerned with ornithology. There is a list of species seen from 1933 to 1947 in the Beaulieu area of the New Forest, mostly referring to part of Scientific Area No. 19 as proposed by the Wild Life Conservation Special Committee. This was prepared in connexion with the Air Ministry's proposal, since abandoned, to convert Warren Flats into a bombing-range. There are tables and diagrams giving results of observations of the dawn chorus on the Sunday of the third week in May in the four years 1946-1949, in connexion with which there is an errata-slip pointing out that in the 1937-1946 report the times for the 1946 dawn chorus are all an hour too early so that "the average times list is almost entirely wrong". The essay on the Common Snipe by M. B. Casement which was awarded second prize in the R.S.P.B.'s annual open essay competition in 1948 is printed here; the same observer has an article on Reed-Warblers which shows close observation over the breeding-season. There are also local bird notes for 1946-1949 and a report on the progress of ringing by the Society from 1936 to 1949 (69 species, total 4,069) with particulars of recoveries.

Among the more interesting local records is a pair of Golden Orioles on June 7th, 1948, five Waxwings, the first in the School records since 1917, on February 20th, 1949, and eighteen Black Terns on May 21st, 1948, (the second record for Winchester); the last two occurrences have been reported already in *British Birds*. There has been a "marked increase" of Red-backed Shrike and "an apparent complete loss of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Hobby". The following are first records of the century: Short-eared Owl, a pair from February 1st to 10th, 1946, and Common Buzzard of which a pair nested at Farley Mount in 1948. There was also a Great Black-backed Gull on Water Meads on February 23rd, 1947.

If the interesting data in these reports are to be of use to other workers a glossary of certain terms used only by the College should be given or it should at least be stated that, when they refer to localities, these are all within five miles of Winchester and also that "Common Time", "Cloister Time" and "Short Half" mean Easter, Summer and Winter Terms respectively. Otherwise parts of the reports are intelligible only to Wykehamists.

E. COHEN.