

REVIEWS.

Proceedings of the Xth International Ornithological Congress, Uppsala, June, 1950. (Almqvist & Wicksell, Uppsala, Sweden, 1952. Price Sw. Kr. 35, or £2 8s. 3d. Obtainable direct from Prof. S. Horstadius, Zoologiska Institutionen, Uppsala).

THIS eagerly awaited Report of 662 pages contains the whole of the valuable and in many cases extremely interesting papers read at the Uppsala Congress, which was of outstanding importance because it brought together the results of a vast amount of research which had been going on disconnectedly in many countries cut off by war and post-war difficulties during a dozen very busy and fruitful years, and also because the excellence of the organisation and handling of the agenda led to an exceptionally high standard of contribution and to a remarkable amount of progress in the focussing of some of the main problems. Although nothing has been wasted on frills (or even on cloth binding) the work is inevitably expensive on account of its many photographs, maps, diagrams and bibliographies as well as its sheer size, but it is an almost indispensable reference work for those who wish to appreciate the pace and nature of recent advances in ornithology, and the extent of ornithological leadership in the development of the biological sciences. Indeed some of those who strove during that hectic week of June two years ago to keep abreast of the flood of good things which poured out often in two or more places and in two or more languages simultaneously may well be excused for finding that they now begin to understand for the first time what it was all about. With the exception of Sweden, Great Britain sent much the largest national contingent to the Congress (73) followed by the U.S.A. (35), Netherlands (33) Denmark (32), Germany (30) France (20) and Switzerland (15).

Apart from Dr. Wetmore's Presidential Address on Recent Additions to our Knowledge of Prehistoric Birds, and two small sections on Regional Faunas and miscellaneous matters, the papers are arranged under four main headings, each introduced by a careful survey of the present position of science in the particular branch. The first on Evolution and Systematics is opened by Dr. Ernst Mayr's paper on Speciation in Birds which forms a most illuminating brief review of the remarkable developments and changes of approach which have occurred during recent years in this branch of ornithology, and which have led to a reduction in the total of recognized world genera of birds from about 4,000 to about 1,500-1,700 and in species from 19,000 to 8,600. Both in Dr. Mayr's paper and in others of this section stress is laid on the importance of ecological factors in modern taxonomy.

Dr. R. Drost opens the next section with a review of the Study of Bird Migration in which again there have been remarkable developments since 1938. These are briefly summarized with a full list of references. Among interesting papers in this section is an account (in German) of Dr. G. Kramer's experiments at Wilhelmshafen with movable mirrors in an aviary, indicating the important part played in orientation by light from the direction of the sun. Three papers describe the Swedish ringing station at Ottenby and another the vast diurnal migration of birds of prey observed at Falsterbo on the southern tip of Sweden. A report of the Round Table Conference on Bird Ringing summarises the conclusions reached and contains a useful list, compiled by Dr. W. Ryzdewski, of all bird-ringing schemes known to be in current operation, based on 26 different countries, and in some cases covering more than one.

Dr. N. Tinbergen's review of Recent Advances in the Study of Bird Behaviour deals with perhaps even more remarkable advances in knowledge than have been shown in the other main fields; fortunately he has now published a much fuller survey in *The Study of Instinct* to be reviewed in our next issue. Papers on Inheritance and Learning in the Song of the Chaffinch by H. Poulsen and one in German on the capacity of birds to distinguish numbers by O. Koehler may also be mentioned.

The introductory review to the last main section is a paper on Population Ecology in Birds by Dr. D. Lack, and the section contains reviews from a series of countries (from Iceland to Hungary) of some of the remarkable recent changes in bird distribution due to a warmer climate, particularly in spring and autumn. There is also a most interesting account (pp. 515-526) by Dr. Salomonsen of the accidental mass immigration of Fieldfares from Norway into Greenland in the second half of January, 1937, and their subsequent successful establishment of breeding colonies there. Dr. Gross describes how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service treated 790,314 eggs of Herring Gulls with an oil emulsion spray which prevented them from hatching and thus reduced the numbers on islands off the Maine coast by 70 per cent. during the four years 1945-49, with the object of eliminating their excessive pressure on terns and other breeding birds and upon fisheries and other human interests. P. O. Swanberg's researches on Food Storage, Territory and Song in the Thick-billed Nutcracker are also described and illustrated, bringing out the astonishing fact that these birds not only hide large quantities of nuts underground after fetching them as far as 6 km., over several weeks in the autumn, but that they successfully find and dig out these hoards daily in the winter even when covered with up to 18 inches of snow, with a very small percentage of mistakes.

The relatively speedy issue of this well-produced work adds to the debt which ornithologists owe to its Editor, Professor Sven Horstadius the General Secretary of the Congress, and to his colleagues of the Swedish Ornithological Association. E.M.N.

LOCAL REPORTS: PENINSULA PROVINCE.

Cornwall Bird Watching and Preservation Society, Twentieth Annual Report, 1950.

ABOUT 20 pages of the report are devoted to "General Bird Notes for 1950" followed by three further sections of general notes under the headings "The Walmsley Sanctuary, Tregorden and Camel Estuary," "The Cornish Seas," "The Scilly Isles." There is incomplete cross-referencing from the main section to the Walmsley Sanctuary section, but none to the other two sections. Thus to obtain the complete picture of a species in the area covered by the report, reference has to be made to 3 or 4 different sections. The more unusual bird notes include:—Chough, there is no evidence that any broods were reared. Golden Oriole in Scillies in May. Two Crossbills in Falmouth in January. A late Snow-Bunting on April 9th, and several in September and October. The increase of House-Sparrows recorded in the last Report is said to have been maintained in a most spectacular manner. Tawny Pipit on October 13th and 22nd at St. Columb Porth. Water-Pipit, 2 on Marazion Marsh on March 30th, and one on April 5th. Nuthatches reared a brood in the wall of a house. Woodchat Shrike seen on June 5th. No winter records of Chiffchaff are given. Yellow-browed Warbler on October 18-20th. Breeding records of Garden-Warbler near Gweek and Antony, St. Germans. Desert-Wheatear on August 29th. A female Common Redstart on March 3rd and a male and female on March 4th are reported from the cliffs at Bude without mention of any evidence of identification. House-Martin, at Tresco on the remarkably early date of February 19th. Hoopoes on February 21st (unusually early), twice in May and one August. Immigration of Barn-Owls into West Cornwall on a considerable scale is recorded in January based on numerous records of daylight hunting; some 10 birds were later found dead, probably of starvation (thus supporting a suggestion in the Dorset report that the exceptional numbers seen in daylight in many parts of S.W. England east to Hants. in 1949/50 were related to scarcity of nocturnal prey, and not solely to abundance of Barn-Owls). Two or three Rough-legged Buzzards are recorded. Marsh-Harrier present at the end of 1949 remained

till January 19th. Spoonbills wintered in both seasons on the Tamar where an immature remained all summer. Purple Heron on Scillies in April. Night-Heron reported several times in March at Carne Creek and one in May at Marazion Marsh. Three Bitterns in winter. Whooper Swans wintered in both seasons. Seven Barnacle Geese in March. Great Shearwater on Scillies crossing on August 26th, and on September 16th a shearwater with dark under-parts is recorded as a Sooty. Fulmars bred at a number of places. Great Northern Diver wintered in Mounts Bay area. Black-throated Diver seen in March. Birds whose appearance agreed with that of Rock-Dove bred in two localities, in a cave and a rabbit burrow on a cliff. Black-tailed Godwit wintered in both seasons on the St. Germans river, and its tributaries. About 9 records of Grey Phalaropes between August and November. A bird on November 21st with "a long, slender slightly curved bill" is rather surprisingly recorded as a Red-necked Phalarope.

An American Pectoral Sandpiper on Camel Estuary on October 16th. Wood-Sandpipers at four localities in August-September, up to 4 birds together. Details of a reputed Greater Yellowshank, accepted in the Report under review, have been submitted to *British Birds* and rejected. Spotted Redshank on November 26th. Kentish Plover in August. Up to 5 Avocets on the Tamar between January 1st and March 19th; one on the Helford river in September. Several Black Terns in September/October. Little Gulls in January-April, and September-November. Scandinavian Herring-Gull on January 2nd. Glaucous Gulls in February, March and October. Three Pomatorhine Skuas on September 17th at Newquay, and one in the Scillies on May 29th and September 9th. About 70 Little Auks reported "wrecked" in February. A short article on Roseate Terns in the Isles of Scilly records the re-establishment of a definite colony of 6 pairs on Annet in 1950, where a pair or two have been observed annually since 1946, as well as pairs on other islands. Unfortunately, as we learn from another part of the report, a fire smouldered for a week in July, 1950, burning out a considerable area, in which the Roseate Terns were breeding.

There is also a table of arrival and departure dates of Cornish breeding migrants, and a page is devoted to the weather of the year.

In addition to the General Notes, there is an important paper (12 pages) by Lt.-Col. and Mrs. B. H. Ryves on "The Breeding Habits of the Spotted Flycatcher." This account condenses 30 years' experience under the following headings:—Arrival and Departure of Birds; Voice and Song; Courtship and Nest-site Selection; Nest-Construction; Eggs and Incubation; The Period of Young in Nest; Double Brooding. It concludes with a detailed account of intensive work on two pairs in 1950.

Casual visitors to the county might be able to make some observations on the following points, on which notes are requested.

- (1) The number of breeding House-Sparrows, House-Martins, Starlings and Reed-Buntings in known areas.
- (2) The sites used for nesting, together with any information as to increase or decrease.
- (3) Accurate counts of Choughs, with localities; a census of these birds is wanted.
- (4) The sites of Starling roosts, and the nature of the roost, whether in reeds or shrubs. etc. P.A.D.H.

Twenty-third Report of the Devon Bird-Watching and Preservation Society, 1950.

THE main part of this report consists of records for 1950 (50 pages). For recording purposes the county is split up into 8 areas, while a ninth area, West Somerset is also covered by the records, although from the title of the Report one would expect it to refer to Devon alone.

The Report includes a map showing clearly the bounds of each area, and an initial preceding each note indicates the area in which it was made. The great majority of the notes have local significance, but there are also some few notes on calls, food and behaviour. Among the more unusual birds are: Golden Oriole, a pair for 6 weeks in June/July near Newton Abbot, and a male on June 4th near Hartland Point. Two Twites in October. Crossbills in January, March and May at Minehead (Somerset). Blue-headed Wagtail at Minehead in May and September. Great Grey Shrike in March and December. Pied Flycatchers bred near Chagford and on E. Exmoor (Somerset). A Firecrest in W. Somerset in February. Seven wintering records of Chiffchaffs. A Yellow-browed Warbler on the remarkable date of March 11th. Dartford Warblers in two localities on several dates. A roost of about 2,000 Redwings in rhododendrons. Hoopoes in May and June. A Marsh-Harrier in March. Four nests of Montagu's Harrier hatched on Dartmoor where a Kite was reported in January. Spoonbills were present throughout the year except in June, up to seven in December on the Teign, Tamar and Tavy estuaries. A Bittern on December 28th. Whooper Swans wintered on Tamar Lake in both seasons and were seen elsewhere in January and December. Long-tailed Ducks at the beginning and end of the year, spread over 5 months and three localities. Eiders were also seen in three localities, in February-March and December, maximum 13 together. An important breeding record is of a Storm-Petrel incubating a fresh egg in S.E. Devon in a hole also containing a badly stained egg presumably from previous year; the report states "it is apparent that breeding may have taken place regularly undetected." Fulmars were proved to breed on Berry Head, as last year, and Scabbacombe. Two Great Shearwaters on September 6th seen on a crossing from Lundy to Bideford. Twenty Black-necked Grebes were reported at Dawlish Warren in February and 28 there in December. Two winter records of Black-throated Diver. About 30 Black-tailed Godwits wintered on the Exe estuary in both seasons. An American Pectoral Sandpiper was on Porlock marsh (Somerset) September 20th-October 7th and one at Wembury October 7th-15th. (*antea*, vol. xlv, p. 252). About a dozen records of wintering Common Sandpipers. A Wood-Sandpiper in October at Wembury. Spotted Redshanks were recorded in all months except May and June. Five winter records (January, February, December) of Greenshank from three localities, maximum 7 birds together. A Kentish Plover wintered on the Exe Estuary from the beginning of the year to March 26th and one from October 7th to December 31st; 2 reported at Fremington in September. About 10,000 Lapwings in the Braunton district at the end of the year. Avocets wintered on the Exe and Tamar estuaries in both seasons (5 in January, 7 in December). A reported Pratincole is square-bracketed. Black Terns were seen in spring and autumn. A juvenile Sabine's Gull at Woolacombe on September 22nd (*antea*, vol. xlv, p. 256). Little Gulls in February

to be continued...

and March. An assembly of gulls at Erme Mouth in January included 2,000 Great Black-backs. Glaucous Gulls were seen at Slapton on April 30th, and Plymouth May 7th; an Iceland Gull was seen at Wembury on April 22nd, and another at Plymouth on May 7th. Kittiwakes bred Scabbacombe, Berry Head and Lead Stone (Torbay). Twenty-one "wrecked" Little Auks recorded. A Spotted Crane was found dead at Braunton in September. Several reports of Black Grouse from each of four out of the eight Devon recording areas; it would be interesting to know whether the bird is increasing.

In most cases of rare or difficult birds some evidence of identification is given, but in a few instances, for example immature Black-throated Diver, immature Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, it is not even mentioned that full details have been supplied, though in the case of two of the gulls details were published in our pages, (vol. xliii, p. 409) and attention might be directed to this. Such a statement not only strengthens a reader's confidence in the record, but emphasises to contributors the need for careful note-taking and for submitting these notes in detail.

The Report appears to mention all the species recorded in the area during the year, yet trivialities have in the main been avoided. We prefer this treatment to the practice in some reports of omitting entirely an unspecified number of the species of regular occurrence.

Several rarities in the Devon report which are reprinted from the *Lundy Field Society Report* 1950, have been omitted from the present review.

In addition to the Records, there are migration reports on Wheatear, Swallow, House-Martin and Swift. For House-Martin, there are phenomenally early dates; February 19th and 20th and March 9th, but the observers' names unfortunately are not given. Reports of this species seen on March 1st and caught on March 2nd come from a non-ornithologist. Attempts to trace the course of arriving Swifts included a motor boat patrol some distance out to sea, but the lack of success there, and shore observations, suggested that the birds were crossing the Channel too high to be seen.

Separate reports are also made on a census of Nightingales (totalling about 63 birds, although rather incomplete and apparently not confined to singing males); Black Redstarts (showing a minimum of 45 birds) and an enquiry into the habits of Spotted Flycatcher giving observations mainly on arrival, song, breeding and food. The last two enquiries are being continued.

The list of members totals some 400 names.

P.A.D.H.

Report on Somerset Birds, 1950.

Most of this report is occupied by Notes (20 pages), separated under each species into the district in which the observation was made. A map is included, which shows the limits of these districts of which there are seven. We extract the following:—

Crossbills in W. Somerset in January, March and May, and 6-10 at Winscombe in June. Water-Pipit at Blagdon on October 29th. Blue-headed Wagtail at Minthead in September, and a Waxwing there in January. Pied Flycatcher spreading on Exmoor. Firecrest at Blagdon on December 10th and Dunster on February 19th. One or two wintering Chiffchaffs. Half-a-dozen or more records of wintering Black Redstarts. Four Swallows on February 25th. Hobbies in 2 localities in May or June. Rough-legged Buzzard in November. Common Buzzard still increasing and spreading. Bittern in December. Bewick's Swan in both winters, maximum 23. Red-crested Pochard at Cheddar reservoir on September 24th. Ferruginous Ducks at Durleigh reservoir on January 2nd and 4th, and at Cheddar on December 26th. 20-30 Goldeneye at Blagdon and Cheddar reservoirs in January/February. Two Long-tailed Ducks at Durleigh reservoir in January. Two Gannets fishing in Blagdon reservoir on September 18th. Black-throated

Diver at Blagdon in February/March. Great Snipe at Blagdon on December 27th. Grey Phalaropes in 5 localities. About 2,000 Knots on Steart Flats in January. American Pectoral Sandpiper at Porlock, September 22nd to October 4th. Several wintering Common Sandpipers, and one Green Sandpiper. Several records of Black Terns in spring and autumn, including parties of *c.* 70 and 46 on May 13th. Remains of an immature Sabine's Gull at Cheddar in September. Little Gull at Durleigh in February. Immature Glaucous Gull on the river Avon in February/March. About 25 Little Auks recorded in the February "wreck."

A number of these records are duplicated in the Devon, Mid-Somerset and Bristol reports, and some have already appeared in *British Birds*.

The report also contains 3 pages of arrival and departure dates of migrants (including a House-Martin on March 29th), and a list of some 130 members.

P.A.D.H.

The Mid-Somerset Naturalist Society—First Report and Reference Book, November 1949-January 1951.

THIS new society is centred in Bridgwater and the first report is intended to be "a small handbook which will be a guide to both local and visiting naturalists and also to beginners." About half the Report is devoted to birds: "Introduction to Bird Report" by D. H. Perrett, "Items of Outstanding Interest" (3 pages), "Systematic List" (10 pages), and "Observations on Sheld-Duck" by D. H. Perrett. The area covered is rather loosely defined as the "district consisting of the Central Somerset plain, with the well-wooded Blackdowns and Quantocks to the south and west, and the Mendips to the north and east, extending to the sea at Brea Down." A map of a much wider area, printed in the Report, gives no clearer idea of the area covered, nor shows all the features mentioned above; in fact it serves to emphasise that several records (e.g. from Dunster, Minehead, Weston-super-Mare) are outside the area indicated.

One object of the Report is stated to be "to give a list of birds definitely identified in our district since the formation of our Society in the autumn of 1949" which seems difficult to achieve until the district is specific, and calls for co-operation with the county ornithological body already covering the area. At the same time, if the county body were offered the records in the same form as published in the Report under review, we can understand that it would find them of little value, lacking as they do in most cases either date or locality, and often both. The systematic list is a status summary; for example:—"Raven. Resident. Local and chiefly confined to coastal areas." The "Items of Outstanding Interest" often add nothing of consequence, for example "Raven. Two fledglings found in nest." Rather worse than average is "Greenland Wheatear arrived late March and remained until November 10th"—a statement evidently badly expressed or erroneous, probably both. Better than average is "British Black Grouse seem to be increasing in numbers."

The short article on Sheld-Ducks records that in 1950 numbers at Steart were at a low ebb in January, rising to 800 adults (and about 1,000 young) in June. Thereafter, unlike the habit of this bird in some other localities, adults increased steadily in numbers to 1,800 in September and 2,400 in October, and decreased from mid-November to under 100 by the end of the year. As in the rest of the report, few exact dates or figures are given.

P.A.D.H.

CHANNEL.

Report of the Natural History Section of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1950. (Reprinted from the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, Vol. liv, June, 1951).

THIRTY pages of this report are devoted to birds, with 54 contributors. The more interesting items in the systematic notes include: A Raven over Marlborough Downs in March. Resident Starlings were showing yellow or

mainly yellow bills by December 25th when flocking birds still had completely black bills. Crossbills bred near Redlynch. Cirl Buntings in several localities, and two breeding records. It would be interesting to know the points on which an apparently silent party of Tree-Pipits were identified, on the exceptionally late date of October 22nd. White Wagtail on May 27th. Twenty-three pairs of Red-backed Shrikes were located in the neighbourhood of Redlynch, "a remarkable increase from the two pairs in the same area in 1949." Dartford Warblers showed an increase, and apparently Stonechats also. Several Hedge-Sparrow nests contained dead nestlings on April 26th, following snowfall. Hoopoes on two dates in May and one June. A pair of Long-eared Owls bred. Buzzards bred in several parts of the county. Two winter records of Bitterns. Long-tailed Duck in October. Several pairs of Curlew probably breeding. A Golden Plover of the Northern race in April. A number of Black Terns in May, also recorded in October. A dead Little Gull on February 26th at Savernake. Six Great Black-backed Gulls at Larkhill in December. Eight Little Auks in the early part of the year. Red-legged Partridge reported from three localities; Quail from five.

Over six pages are allotted to lists of arrival and departure dates of migrants, although most of the information appears to be of little consequence.

A report is made on a two-year Redwing and Fieldfare enquiry, giving some information on autumn arrival, winter distribution and habits. The observers were asked to take the same walk once a month, on a specified date, and to note numbers and behaviour. No intensive observation was undertaken.

A largely negative account is given of autumn migration across high ground at Marlborough. P.A.D.H.

Report on Dorset Birds, 1950—(Reprinted from the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, Vol. 72, pp. 149-172, 1950) (Ed. by Dr. K. B. Rooke).

THIS report consists of two pages of introduction, a map of the county divided into 19 areas to which records are related, followed by 20 pages of closely printed notes, which repeatedly show evidence of careful and critical consideration. "No undue emphasis is placed on rare or unusual events. So little is known about normal occurrences that even the common species offer plenty of scope for investigation." The introduction also states "The fact that current activities are uncovering more problems than they solve is a measure of our ignorance."; it is an indication, too, of the progressive and questing spirit of the Dorset Field Ornithology Group. Some of the species regular in the county have been omitted altogether from the classified notes; we would have preferred to see a list of them. For example not everyone reading the report will know whether records of Red-legged Partridge are too commonplace, or non-existent.

The following are taken from the report: Eight pairs of Ravens reported breeding on the coast. Several records suggest considerable spring and autumn migration of Goldfinch. A few pairs of Crossbills bred. A late Brambling on May 7th. Only two winter records of Chiffchaff (January and December). Dartford Warbler increased decidedly. No Whinchat breeding records. Stonechat is now quite common again. At least 20 Black Redstarts noticed between October 7th, 1949, and March 20th, 1950. Two Hoopoes in May. A Long-eared Owl in June. Seven breeding pairs of Peregrine, which had been reduced to one pair by end of war. Buzzard now stationary or decreasing, suffering widespread and shameful human persecution. Of several very pale Buzzards, some "may have been *B. lagopus*, but feathered tarsi not seen, the only certain field-character distinguishing Rough-legged from exceptional examples of the Common Buzzard." One, probably two, pairs of Montagu's Harrier bred. Three records of Bitterns in winter, and several Whooper Swans. Brent Geese, extremely scarce in recent years, were only reported twice. A number of Sheld-Duck counts are given. Only two Garganey records. Drake Red-crested Pochard on December 24th, 25th and

January 15th, 1951. Long-tailed Ducks in January and November. One Eider in Studland Bay in January and three in March. Shags bred in Portland. Still no evidence of Fulmars breeding, although frequenting cliffs in three or four areas in June. In Poole Harbour Black-necked Grebes reached 43 in January, about 40 in December. Black-tailed Godwits present in every month of the year, with a maximum of over 600 in February. The increase and expansion of the Curlew breeding population evidently continues. Two Wood-Sandpipers in September. Spotted Redshanks seen in July and December, and only three Greenshank records. Two Little Ringed Plovers recorded on May 3rd for the first time in Dorset. A Kentish Plover in August. In April Golden Plovers of the Northern race were recorded for the first time in Dorset. Four records of Black Terns in autumn. A few Arctic Terns in June and July at Abbotsbury. Four pairs of Great Black-backed Gulls nested on Chesil near Abbotsbury. About 13 Little Auks were found, mainly inland, from February 11th onwards.

Casual visitors to the county should note that information is requested on exact localities (with six figure map reference) of proved or suspected breeding, date, numbers, and habitat of :—

Corn-Bunting, Cirl Bunting, Wood-Lark, Tree-Pipit, Meadow-Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Wheatear, Stonechat, Sand-Martin, Curlew, Woodcock, Redshank.

Inland information is required on the following points for all species of gull :—feeding habits, distribution and roosts, and seasonal changes in these and in numbers, and age-ratios of the inland flocks. P.A.D.H.

The Sussex Bird Report, 1950. (Ed. by C. G. des Forges and D. D. Harber).

ABOUT 65 observers contributed to this report which contains 21 pages of notes. The objects of the Report are stated to be first, to record the unusual, and secondly to record deviations from the picture painted by J. Walpole Bond's *A History of Sussex Birds*, or to give statistical confirmation, where possible, of statements contained therein. Notes which refer to habits and behaviour are not generally admitted. "In cases of doubt we usually apply this test : could the incident recorded equally well have happened in any other county?" Consistent with their admirably clearly defined policy, the editors usually exclude a record of "an uncommon but regular breeding species being found nesting in a haunt in no way unusual to it. Such records are liable to suggest an extension of the bird's breeding range without any justification."

Thus the report is strictly confined to events regarded as significant within the county, and species for which such notes have not been received are omitted.

We extract the following :—

Several records of Crossbills in March and April from three localities. Practically no records of Bramblings. An Ortolan Bunting in October. Richard's Pipit in October. Tawny Pipit in September. Water-Pipit on the Cuckmere Old Channel in March, and again in December. A Blue-headed Wagtail and a "Sykes's type" in May. Great Grey Shrikes in February and May. A pair of Woodchats in May. Five Chiffchaffs seen in February at Eastbourne and Chichester may well have been wintering, as was certainly the case with a bird of one of the northern races at Pagham in January. Dartford Warbler in spring. About 5 Black Redstarts reported wintering in the early part of the year and 3 at the end of the year ; birds were seen in 5 localities in the breeding-season. White-spotted Bluethroat at Thorney on September 4th. Hoopoes in 4 localities in spring. Buzzard recorded several times in summer in central Sussex. Marsh-Harrier in January, April and May. Osprey in August. Spoonbills in January, February, March, April, May, October and December, spread over four localities, up to 3 birds together. A Bittern in December. Several Whooper Swans were recorded in both winters. Bewick's in March and December. Brent Geese were not recorded as winter-

ing at Pagham or Chichester Harbours and relatively few were seen, apart from an easterly passage off the mouth of the Cuckmere of perhaps 1,000 during an hour or so on April 7th. Common Eiders were again recorded a number of times, in January, February, September, October, November and December; the bird on September 19-21 is the only county record for this month. Shag in September. Gannet in all months except February and March. Leach's Petrel and Manx Shearwater in September. Cory's Shearwater on November 19th off Langney Point, and a Sooty Shearwater there on October 6th. Fulmars in May and June, and in April a bird was put off a cliff at Seaford. Several records of Slavonian Grebe and Red-necked Grebes. Two records of Black-throated Diver. Twenty or thirty Black-tailed Godwits wintered early in the year in Chichester Harbour, but none at the end of the year; numbers reached a maximum of c. 550 in mid-September. Great Snipe at the Midrips on September 30th. Red-breasted Snipe at Thorney October 15th-22nd. Many records of Grey Phalaropes in September or early October. Red-necked Phalarope at Thorney on September 5th and Pett Level September 30th and October 14th. Some very early Little Stints were seen in the first half of April. Three Temminck's Stints in the autumn. Spotted Redshanks in all months except January, June and November. Little Ringed Plovers seen in a number of localities besides the general area where 4 pairs bred. A pair of Kentish Plovers in June. Dotterel in August. An Avocet in April and 10 together in June. Black Terns in greater numbers than usual in spring. Gull-billed Tern at Shoreham on September 17th. Roseate Tern in July. Several Little Gulls in spring and late autumn. Mediterranean Black-headed Gulls in September, October and November. Iceland Gulls on March 25th, April 2nd and 20th and May 8th-18th. Black Guillemot at Langney Point on November 8th. Four "wrecked" Little Auks in February and one seen in December. Spotted Crake in October. P.A.D.H.

The Hastings and East Sussex Naturalist for 1950.

TWENTY-THREE pages are devoted to birds, mainly in classified notes. Among Sussex items which do not find a place in the Sussex Bird Report for 1950, we notice the following: Golden Oriole in June, Richard's Pipit in April, Marsh-Warbler in June and July, Bewick's Swan in January. Fulmars at Cliff End (Pett) in May, June and July. About 180 Great Crested Grebes off Pett Level in December. Immature Black-throated Diver (without description) in December. The report also includes notes on that part of Kent lying west of Dungeness. The Kent notes are not separated from those of Sussex, but include:—Shore-Lark in December. House-Martin on December 3rd. Green Woodpeckers outside breeding season extending in coastal area into bushes far beyond the limit of trees. Dotterel in August. About 6 pairs of Stone-Curlews nested on Dungeness. Scattered remnants of the former Dungeness colony of Common Terns try to breed in various spots, generally without success.

There is also an article by A. A. Wright on the effect of wind on the direction taken by migrating Swallows and Martins. His findings, based on over 100 observed movements (not merely separate parties or flocks of birds) are that the birds "approach the coast mainly by certain routes, viz. down the valleys or across marshland; and that these routes are usually followed whatever the direction of wind. On reaching the coast, they turn either E. or W. (roughly) and fly for varying distances along or near it, before setting out to sea; and in this part of their journey they usually (but not always) fly against the wind." P.A.D.H.

THAMES.

The Essex Bird-Watching and Preservation Society, Report for 1950. (Ed. G. A. Pyman).

THIS report opens with a census, the first complete one, of the county heronries made in 1950. This discloses some striking changes in numbers and distribution since 1928. Although the earlier census was incomplete the

number of nesting sites has undoubtedly increased, but the total of nesting pairs has declined from 216 to 151. Two of the original heronries are extinct, while the one at Walthamstow has increased from 5 to 67 and now holds almost half of the total nesting population of the county.

The notes contain records of a number of Waxwings in January to March, two Golden Orioles in May and June, a Dipper and a Shore-Lark in December, two Wrynecks on October 12th, a late date, Eiders in August and December and a flock of 200-300 Black-tailed Godwits in October. The nesting of Wigeon, Pochard and Oyster-catcher is also recorded. A separate report follows on the birds of Abberton reservoir, a truly remarkable place. About 20 pairs of Sheld-Ducks nested, some of them using the drains on the slopes of the concrete margins, 25 pairs of Shoveler, 25 to 30 of Tufted Ducks, one pair of Gadwall, probably two of Garganey, one or two of Pochard, about 40 of Common and 11 of Little Terns and 1,000 pairs of Black-headed Gulls, all on the island, while about 45 pairs of Great Crested Grebes also nested. This inland nesting of the Common Tern is notable and it seems curious that the main report says nothing of any coastal colonies. Of casual visitors at Abberton a Little Egret on August 18th, eight Spotted Redshanks on February 26th and five on March 5th call for special mention. N.F.T.

London Bird Report, No. 15, 1950. (Ed. by C. B. Ashby).

THIS report summarizes the observations of 336 contributors; this is a record for the series and is without doubt far higher than for any other local report in the country. One result of this heavy density of observers is that the status of many species in the London area is known with considerable accuracy. Certain species to which special attention has been paid are dealt with in papers following the classified notes. Thirteen pairs of Black Redstarts in the City of London reared a record total of 24 broods; in two cases a third brood was successfully reared after earlier failures. The results of the census of Great Crested Grebes have already been incorporated in a paper in *British Birds*: the total of adults present in the summer of 1950 is estimated at 557, 242 on gravel pits and 315 on other waters. Monthly duck counts have continued, and a paper continuing one in the 1948 Report summarizes results for 1949-51. It is suggested that after a setback in 1947 the numbers of Mallard are now about 33% above those for the winter of 1938-39. Average winter maxima for some other species are: Pochard—1,000; Tufted Duck—2,500 to 3,000; Goosander—150; Smew—100; an interim report on the Starling enquiry suggests that the large roosts in central London, which have a peak of about 100,000 birds in June and July, are composed mainly of native birds; out of 125 recoveries only two are from overseas.

The classified notes contain further detailed figures for some species. At least 17 pairs of Wood-Larks "out of an approximate total of 45 pairs or presumed pairs" bred in 1950, and there are records of breeding, or attempted breeding, in all the London counties except Herts. In 1946, 11 pairs bred out of a known population of 17 or 18 pairs, so it seems that the species is increasing rapidly. The Stonechat, on the other hand, continues to make very slow progress; many winter records are given, but only four breeding sites were known in 1950 and one of these is only a "probable." Only one definite breeding record is given for Wryneck. Figures of a different kind resulted from a trip by launch over 20 miles of the Thames through London on January 29th. This gave a total of 691 Herring-Gulls and 235 Great Black-backs, an interesting indication of the extent to which the latter is following the inland trend of the other species.

It seems unlikely that many rarities can pass unobserved through London's net of observers. The area did well in the autumn of 1950 as is shown by reports already published in our pages of American Pectoral Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Grey Phalaropes and Sabine's Gulls; the last two are appropriately subjects of illustrations in this Report. Other records of interest include unusually large flocks of Bramblings in many parts of the area

in the early months of 1950; a Water-Pipit at Stone Marshes, Kent, in December; several reports of "variant" Yellow Wagtails; a Great Grey Shrike at Hampton Court on May 30th; a Firecrest on Wimbledon Common on March 19th; a Hoopoe at Sanderstead, Surrey, which is an addition to our published lists for 1950; a Storm-Petrel at Staines on November 11th, the first in the area this century; a party of Dotterels at Heathrow from August 26th-30th (see *antea*, p. 110). Shoveler bred in Middlesex for the third time.

There is a report on the bird census in St. James's Park and the Green Park. Reference in the introduction to some outstanding features of the year gives further evidence of the damage done by the late April snowstorm.

J.D.W.

- (1) *The Report of the Oxford Ornithological Society on the Birds of Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire in 1950.* (Ed. D. W. Snow).
- (2) *The Middle Thames Naturalist 1950.* (Bird Section).

It appears to be inevitable to take these two reports together, for the second of them covers S. Bucks. and S.E. Berks., and the more important of its records from that area are incorporated in the Oxford report. They contain a wealth of information of considerable future value, when the time arrives for working out the distribution in the three counties of the more local species, location and character of roosts, roosting flight lines, migration routes, &c., &c., as well as the assessing of the status of the less common visitors. Amongst notes of special interest may be noted the probable nesting of a pair of Dippers in Oxfordshire, the proved nesting of Wigeon and Little Ringed Plover, each at two localities in Berkshire and of the Pochard and Tufted Duck in all three counties. Amongst the less common visitors are a Water-Pipit in Bucks, February 12th and 14th, single Ring-Ouzels in all three counties in March and April, a Hoopoe in Berkshire on June 3rd, a Goshawk in Oxfordshire, January 2nd to 6th, single Bitterns in January, November and December, two Bewick's Swans in Berkshire, March 5th, a Ruddy Sheld-Duck on May 11th, a Ferruginous Duck in Oxfordshire, July 16th, single Fork-tailed Petrels in Berks. and Bucks., a Black-necked Grebe in Berks., February 11th, and a Black-throated Diver from February 3rd to April 4th, a Great Snipe, September 10th, two Temminck's Stints in May, a wintering Common Sandpiper and Spotted Redshank, a Kittiwake in Oxon., two Little Auks and two Little Gulls in winter.

N.F.T.

TRENT.

The Lincolnshire Naturalists Union Transactions for 1950, Vol. xii, No. 4 (published December, 1951). Ornithology, by S. A. Cox.

THESE records include several notes of interest. Wood-Larks bred in several places near Brigg and the Short-eared Owl at Scotton.

A cock Brambling first noticed in the Limber beech-woods on May 31st remained there until at least August 4th and tried, without success, to acquire a hen Chaffinch as a mate (*cf. Leicestershire and Rutland Report*, and *antea*, vol. xlv, p. 17). A Chiffchaff frequented a Grimsby allotment from February 13th to March 13th; the first normal summer immigrant Chiffchaff appeared on March 23rd (*cf. ante*, vol. xlv, p. 86). A Hoopoe was seen at Brattlebury on October 8th, and an early Spotted Redshank on February 6th.

A.W.B.

Derbyshire Archaeological and N.H. Society: Ornithological Record for Derbyshire, 1950. (Compiled by W. K. Marshall).

OF breeding records the most noteworthy were those of the Little Ringed Plover on the River Trent (*antea*, p. 64), of the Pied Flycatcher in site of previous year (and also in 1949 in Chatsworth Park) and of Dunlin, several pairs, among cottonsedge in the N.W. of the county. New to previous records of recent years are: a pair of Ferruginous Duck from mid-December,

1949 to the 3rd week of March at Butterley Reservoir, a Fulmar in Lathkill-dale on 18th December, 1949 (*antea*, vol. xlv, p. 110) (there was a previous Derbyshire record in 1847), and Grey Phalarope at Bradwell on September 17th (Whitlock's *Birds of Derbyshire* gives a number of records between 1770 and 1891).

A table of waders seen at Barbrook Reservoir in August and September is given. A.W.B.

Leicestershire and Rutland Ornithological Society Report for 1950.

A GOOD map of the two counties makes it far easier for the outsider to follow the details of this report than is the case with most local journals. The important reservoirs of Eye Brook, Swithland, Stanford and Cropston have been well covered by several observers, who give a good picture of the avifauna of these waters in central England. At Eye Brook, for example, there were a herd of 22 Bewick's Swans, 39 Goosanders and 11 Smews at the end of December, up to 1,400 Wigeon in February, 3 Velvet Scoters in April, 150/200 Great Crested Grebes in January and February, Red-necked, Slavonian and Black-necked Grebes at various dates, numerous waders including Wood-Sandpiper, Spotted Redshank and Little Ringed Plover and a winter roost of 10/15,000 Common and Black-headed Gulls. The Ferruginous Duck was recorded from Stanford and Swithland Reservoirs in March and December. At Swithland 28 Scaup were seen on December 6th, a large flock for an inland water, and at Stanford two Grey Phalaropes in September, the first recorded for these counties. There is a table shewing the ten wildfowl counts in the year for the International Wildfowl Inquiry at the four chief reservoirs and another table gives the sites where 196 Great Crested Grebes were counted on or near June 7th.

From Beacon Hill (which apparently is not shown on the otherwise useful map) several interesting birds were seen : two Alpine Swifts on May 24th and Goshawks there and elsewhere in February, October and November ; the presence of two Ravens seen there from June 11th to 14th suggests a possible escape from captivity. The Buzzard was seen in the Charnwood Forest district in spring and summer as well as in the earlier months, but there was no evidence of breeding, nor did the Hobbies, reported to be shot annually by a keeper at Outwoods, have a chance. Cannot the perpetrator be prosecuted if his employer is not public-spirited and energetic enough to see that the law is kept ?

Other items of interest were a wintering Chiffchaff at Quorn, the breeding of Quail, an increase in the Redstart population of Charnwood and substantial increases in the numbers of Kingfisher and Barn-Owl. At Old Dalby on May 31st a cock Brambling was seen feeding with a hen Chaffinch and behaving as if paired ; a similar instance recorded in the Lincolnshire Report should be compared with this. A.W.B.

MERSEY.

The Liverpool Naturalists' Field Club : Proceedings and Notes for 1950. THE most interesting records among the bird notes are those of the Scaup which frequent the sea off the coast of Wirral in winter :

In January about 5,000	end of April nil.
In February about 2,000	end of November small number
In March about 1,000	end of December about 1,750.

The same observer gives careful data of the fluctuating numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits on the same coast. Black Terns, far more commonly found over the Cheshire meres, were seen at Meols and Hilbre island on the coast in September and October. A Black Guillemot was seen on a sand-bank at Meols on September 23rd, a great rarity in Cheshire ; T. A. Coward in *Fauna of Cheshire* recorded only one occurrence (in 1837, in the Dee estuary). Grey Phalaropes were seen on September 27th at places some miles apart near the Wirral coast. (*cf. antea*, vol. xlv, p. 250). A.W.B.

HUMBER.

Yorkshire Naturalists' Union, Committee for Ornithology, Report for 1950.
(Edited by R. Chislett).

It is difficult to write in reasonable compass a review of this Yorkshire report which has been compiled from the records of a large number of observers in various parts of the county. Particularly valuable are the data from the Spurn Bird Observatory, where much ringing has been done.

Nesting records include successful breeding of Raven; and, in the East Riding, of Wood-Lark; Pied Flycatchers continue to extend their breeding range and many use nest-boxes; the Reed-Warbler's range has extended in Holderness; the Short-eared Owl nested on moorlands in E. and W. of the county; two pairs of Common Buzzards reared broods, but no nest of Montagu's Harrier was found in 1950 although birds were seen; Shoveler, Pochard and Tufted Duck nested in several localities; there were about 90 Great Crested Grebes in the county in the breeding season; three and probably four pairs of Little Ringed Plover nested.

Passage was particularly well marked and observed at Spurn where the maximum number of Chaffinches was noted between October 6th and 28th and the autumn influx of Blackbirds from October 19th; Pied Flycatchers (89 trapped) mainly in August, September and October; Wrynecks and Ring-Ouzels were passing between May 9th and 15th.

There are many records of birds uncommon or rare in these islands. On April 23rd a cock Golden Oriole at Spurn; on December 8th eight Serins near North Otterington were identified by J. P. Utley, and were seen again four miles south on the following day (*cf. Northumberland and Durham Report*). An Ortolan Bunting was seen on March 11th at Shadwell, Leeds. Shore-Larks were few (February and November) but Great Grey Shrikes were recorded at least 15 times from January to March and October to December. Waxwings occurred in a number of localities from January to March, but in no great number. Red-breasted Flycatchers were seen at Spurn on October 5th and 22nd and Icterine (August and September) and Barred Warblers (July 31st) were also found there. The Desert-Wheatatear (*antea* vol. xlii, pp. 179-183) which was first seen on November 9th, 1949, and recorded in the Report for that year, remained in the Halifax area, where it was discovered, until January 22nd. There was a Red-spotted Bluethroat at Spurn on October 28th; a Hoopoe at Boltby on May 10th; Marsh-Harriers in February and October; Whooper Swans in many places, but rather fewer Bewick's Swans. On January 15th at Swillington Ing K. Brown saw a drake Green-winged Teal (*antea*, vol. xliii, p. 190). There were inland occurrences of Long-tailed Duck in October/November/December, of Velvet Scoter in January and July, and of Red-breasted Merganser in May. A Grey Phalarope was seen at the Gorpel Reservoir in October and two Avocets in September at Redmires Dam, Hebden Bridge, near the Lancs./Yorks. border. Two Stone-Curlew were seen on the Wolds in May and one from August 14th to 25th at Spurn. A young Sabine's Gull at Winterset Reservoir, September 19-29 has already been recorded in our pages. A Long-tailed Skua was found dead at Helmsley in autumn. Black Guillemots were found at Filey and at Flamborough.

The recoveries of ringed birds marked in Yorkshire or of others ringed abroad and recovered in Yorkshire have been numerous and of considerable interest. Of birds marked at Spurn a Linnet was recovered at La Rochelle, a Song-Thrush in N. Portugal, a Blackbird in Jutland, and at Spurn a Swedish Blackbird was caught and released. A nestling Lesser Redpoll marked in the West Riding was recovered in Belgium; nestling Willow-Warblers from Shipley and Horsforth were both found in North Spain and a Merlin, ringed on June 25th, 1944, in the Pennines near the Lancs./Yorks. border, at Rochefort, France, in March, 1950.

Birds marked abroad and recovered in Yorkshire included :—a Swedish Peregrine Falcon, a Norwegian Heron, a Ruff from Swedish Lapland, a Herring-Gull from the Lofoten Islands and a Dunlin from Öland, Sweden.
A.W.B.

TYNE.

N.H. Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne : Ornithological Report for 1950. (Ed. by G. W. Temperley).

THIS very full and detailed report, containing observations and data from well over a hundred contributors, is evidence of the flourishing condition of this society.

The records which Mr. Temperley picks out for special mention as items of unusual interest are :

A Serin at Westoe from November 12th to 26th, a new bird for the county of Durham. A small flock was seen in Yorkshire in December (see *Yorkshire N.H. report for 1950*) and this second record goes to show that in all probability the Durham bird was not an escape from captivity as was at first suggested. Great Grey Shrikes were seen in Coquetdale in January and April ; in April in Teesdale ; and on May 7th at Whitley Bay ; and on May 12th a Red-backed Shrike in Northumberland.

Wintering Blackcaps were seen in Northumberland and Durham in December, 1949 and on March 9th, November 12th, December 4th, 1950.

On October 14th a Roller was seen at close quarters some 12 miles north of Newcastle by an observer who was familiar with the bird in Africa. On July 9th a Hobby appeared at Holy Island, when it was seen to take a Sky-Lark ; from February to May a Golden Eagle frequented the Cheviot district ; and on May 28th an Osprey was fishing in the Tweed near Cornhill. Grey Phalaropes were reported in August and September.

Nesting records : The Little Owl continues to spread northwards ; the Short-eared Owl has increased its breeding range ; the Montagu's Harrier again nested successfully in west Durham ; a duck Goosander with a brood of seven young on June 18th on the Coquet ; Turtle-Doves in summer in both counties, but nests not found ; Kittiwakes built eleven nests at South Shields on window ledges overlooking the Ferry nearly two miles from the sea—twelve young reared.

Other records include : a number of reports of Common and Rough-legged Buzzard ; a Red-crested Pochard duck at Gosforth (the chance of its being an "escape" cannot be disregarded (*cf. antea*, vol. xlv, p.29, xlv p.105) ; a Red-necked Grebe in full breeding plumage from July 8th to 18th off Holy Island ; winter records of Common Sandpiper (Jan. 12th, R. Wear) and Greenshank (January 22nd, Beadnell) ; Glaucous Gulls on the coast in May, June and July.

A.W.B.

Farne Islands Committee of the National Trust : Ornithological Report for 1950. (Ed. by Miss Grace Watt).

DETAILS of the year's birds on these islands are interesting, especially when records are compared with the systematic list of Farne Island birds published in Miss Watt's book (January, 1952) on these islands.

Thus no Carrion Crows nested in 1950, although there were 5 pairs in 1948. Nesting Eider Duck showed an increase over the previous four years—430/50 in all. Thirty-two pairs of Roseate Terns nested, a slight increase, and there were more Sandwich Terns than at any time since 1939. Six pairs of House-Martins tried to nest on the Brownsman, the first time this species has attempted to breed on these islands.

Several species were recorded for the first time on the islands : Bullfinches in March and May, Firecrest in March and September, Waxwing (November, 1949) and Little Stint in July and September. A Whooper Swan in October, 1949 and a Stone-Curlew at the Longstone lighthouse were each recorded for the second time only.

A.W.B.