

REVIEWS OF COUNTY BIRD REPORTS.

Birds in Hampshire, 1951. Edited by Edwin Cohen, Hazelhurst, Sway, Hampshire. From *Proc. Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, vol. xviii, pt. 1 (1953).

Birds (in Hampshire, 1952). By Edwin Cohen. From *Proc. Hampshire Field Club and Arch. Soc.*, vol. xviii, pt. 2 (1953).

HAMPSHIRE is beyond question the weakest point in south coast ornithology, and, although Mr. Edwin Cohen in these two brief annotated lists for 1951 and 1952 has done his best to produce a Report which can look those of other counties in the face, he would be the first to admit that the necessary quantity and quality of material has not yet been forthcoming. Apart from two field clubs, fewer than fifty individuals contributed to the first of these reports and only about thirty to the second. When fully organised and active Hampshire should do much better than this. The second Report is stated to have been cut down, but it runs to 14½ instead of 12 pages in the first; it follows the *B.O.U. Check-List* order, and adopts *British Birds* practice regarding certain names.

In the 1951 List we note: Golden Oriole, males in two localities; Crossbills, evidence of breeding in New Forest; Rock Pipit, unsuccessful breeding on mainland; Great Grey Shrike, two on May 26th, a late date; Moustached Warbler (see *antea*, vol. xiv, p. 219); nestling Blackbird with half-swallowed Stickleback; Hoopoes in June, August and September; Montagu's Harrier reared young, New Forest; Honey Buzzard, two sight records noted as backed by full details, some of which would have been worth publishing in preference, for instance, to a misleading three-line entry under Marsh Warbler merely stating that none were found; Brent Goose, 250-300 Langstone and 19 Hurst Castle; Black-necked Grebe found with neck caught in a branch in Lynton garden; Black-tailed Godwit up to *c.* 300, Titchfield Haven; Spotted Redshank, first Isle of Wight record; Stone Curlew, *c.* 15 pairs on 4,000 acre estate; Common Tern, 29 nests at coastal colony; Little Tern nesting Isle of Wight as well as mainland; Great Black-backed Gull nest in *Spartina* on mud-flats; a February Corncrake, and an October Spotted Crake.

In the 1952 List we note: probable Southern Cormorant which should have gone in square brackets; Bittern, evidence of recent breeding in Avon valley, but not conclusive; White Stork in July near Wiltshire border, probably the same bird as recorded in the *Wiltshire Report* for June (*cf. antea*, p. 213); Red-breasted Merganser, up to about 30 in sheltered coastal waters; about 400 White-fronted Geese and 10 Brent in winter; Sparrow Hawk feeding on rat killed by car on roadway, and confusing duplicate reference giving two different dates for exceptionally large female trapped or shot at Damerham; probable Kite in April, and probable Goshawk; Montagu's Harrier, at least three pairs reared young; Kestrel, numerous records of eating carrion mentioned; Quail breeding successfully two places; Spotted Crake, five seen at Farlington, October-December; Little Ringed Plover, one pair hatched young (*cf. antea*, p. 199); Common Sandpiper in winter; Redshank up to 1500 wintering at Hayling; Spotted Redshank, several records including two more in Isle of Wight; Pectoral Sandpiper, Farlington; Hoopoe, probably three individuals; Golden Oriole, four records; Dartford Warbler affected by burning in New Forest; Grey Wagtail breeding Avon Valley; Twite seen at Farlington. A sight record of a Nutcracker reported by an inexperienced observer is mentioned as submitted to *British Birds*, and it should be added that this was rejected by us. Included in the same reprint is Mr. B. Goater's report on *Butterflies and Moths* containing interesting details of immigration in March 1952 of species from S.E. Europe and Asia Minor, simultaneously with bird vagrants from similar areas. E.M.N.

The Sussex Bird Report, 1952. Edited by G. des Forges and D. D. Harber. Obtainable from The Vale, Ovingdean, Brighton. 5s.

The Hastings and East Sussex Naturalist, April 1953. Edited by N. F. Ticehurst, Spots House, Smallhythe, Tenterden, Kent. 5s. 6d.

THESE two reports concern the same year (1952), but for the area which is common to both of them there are a number of records which do not appear in both publications. It seems that some of these records are not universally acceptable and others are perhaps not submitted to both editors. These are points which could be of significance to future workers in the county, and as it is, neither report even mentions the other. *The Hastings and East Sussex Naturalist* does not give a list of contributors and to discover any observer's full name from the customary initials which appear after every record one has to turn back in the report until one discovers his or her first mention.

The Sussex Bird Report seems the more selective, and rightly gives some description of the rarer birds recorded. Two pages are devoted to "Further notes on the diaries of R. Morris" (1880-1947), mainly with reference to migration, and there are 16 pages of classified notes of 1952 observations, arranged in *The Handbook's* old order. Scientific names are omitted. As in previous years, notes on diurnal migration are numerous, including Starlings and Swifts in particular. Of scarcer birds, 3 Lapland Buntings were reported at the Midrips in September. A Water Pipit wintering in the Cuckmere Valley stayed till mid-March and one reappeared there for the fourth successive season in November. Of Yellow Wagtails, two different birds at Pett Level are described and considered to be variants or mutants; but the same two birds, judging by date, locality and observers initials, are recorded in *The Hastings and East Sussex Naturalist*, without description, as Blue-headed Wagtails. A Woodchat Shrike was seen near Seaford Head in June (see *antea*, vol. xlv, pp. 220-221). A Firecrest in February, two in October and two in November. There was a widespread arrival of Chiffchaffs as early as March 9th. Several Black Redstarts wintered, and pairs bred at Hastings and Pett Level. There were nearly 20 records of Hoopoes between April 9th and May 11th. A Yellow-billed Cuckoo was found at Eastbourne in November (see *antea*, vol. xlv, p. 218). Ospreys were reported at five localities in autumn. A Little Egret was reported in the county for the first time, in June and July (see *antea*, vol. xlv, pp. 257-258). Single records of Grey Lag and Pink-footed Geese and several of White-fronts. Gadwall were seen in spring and autumn; at least one pair of Garganey bred. Ferruginous Duck were reported in September and December. A Long-tailed Duck wintered; and several Eiders were reported in January, February, March, April, November and December. Apparently only one disabled Common Scoter summered, and few Velvets were seen throughout the year apart from c. 100 in April. Four Shags were recorded. Gannets, unusual in summer, were seen in June and July. Storm and Leach's Petrels occurred in autumn, Manx Shearwaters in July and September, and Balearic Shearwater in September (see *antea*, vol. xlv, p. 64). Five records of Fulmar April to June. Red-necked Grebes were seen at both ends of the year, and one in summer plumage in September. Several Slavonian Grebes and Great Northern Divers; and a Black-throated Diver in March. Although there were as usual several hundred Black-tailed Godwits in Chichester Harbour in autumn, the bird does not appear to winter there, nor do Spotted Redshank or Greenshank. Several Red-necked Phalaropes appeared in autumn, and more Curlew Sandpipers than usual. A Temminck's Stint on July 5th was very early. A Baird's Sandpiper in September (see *antea*, vol. xlv, pp. 304-305). A Common Sandpiper wintered. There were 7 breeding pairs of Little Ringed Plovers in the county. A Kentish Plover was seen on March 30th; Avocets in March and May. Several pairs of Oystercatchers nested. Gull-billed Terns (see *antea*, vol. xlv, p. 371) and Roseate Terns were seen in June and July, and Little Gulls in October and November. A description is given of an Iceland Gull seen in March, Great Skuas were reported in January and July, and Quail at three localities in July.

A feature of *The Hastings and East Sussex Naturalist* is a valuable article by Dr. N. F. Ticehurst on changes in status in the area during the past 50-60 years. Carrion Crow, Magpie, Jay and Goldfinch have increased markedly; Corn Bunting, Tree Sparrow, Woodlark, Wood Warbler, Mute Swan, Redshank and, recently, Red-backed Shrike have expanded their nesting localities; Black Redstart, Little Owl, Sheld Duck, Oystercatcher and Herring Gull have

become established as breeding birds; as also, but precariously, have Black-headed Gull and Common Gull. Hooded Crow has decreased very considerably as a winter-visitor; Wryneck and, to a lesser extent, Sand Martin have decreased as summer visitors; while Montagu's Harrier and, it would appear, Kentish Plover and Corncrake have been lost as breeding birds.

It should be mentioned that parts of Kent are included in the Society's area. The Society has taken an active part in the successful establishment of the Dungeness Bird Observatory. Thirteen pages of the report are devoted to systematic notes and include:—A flock of *c.* 600 Goldfinches in September. Several parties of Snow Buntings. Woodlarks in new localities. Shore Lark as early as September 20th and Bearded Tit in October (both without description) Several Firecrests in autumn. One pair of Dartford Warblers bred in the area. Hobbies were seen at Pett Level and Rye Harbour. A description is given of a male Red-footed Falcon seen on April 11th. Buzzards were reported in April, September and October. A Bittern on the unusual date July 24th. 33 Brent Geese on December 26th. Ferruginous Duck in September and December. An Eider in April. Velvet Scoters reached about 100 in April. A Fulmar in December. Over 250 Great Crested Grebes and 53 Red-throated Divers off Pett Level in January. 500-600 Snipe in January. Two Red-necked Phalaropes in September. Wader passage began earlier than generally realised, 15 species being seen in July. 80-100 young Common Terns were eventually reared at Rye Harbour after many re-layings. 3 or 4 Glaucous Gulls were reported in November. An immature Kittiwake was seen in June and July, a Great Skua in July and a Pomarine Skua found dead in August. A Little Auk was seen in December. Spotted Crake is recorded as breeding, but the report would have been more convincing if some details of the appearance or calls of the birds had been given. P.A.D.H.

Wild Bird Protection in Norfolk, 1952. Report of the Council of the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust. Obtainable from Miss C. E. Gay, The Assembly House, Theatre Street, Norwich.

Great Yarmouth Naturalists' Society, Annual Report, 1952. Obtainable from M. J. Seago, 33 Acacia Road, Thorpe, Norwich, Norfolk. 1s.

Lowestoft Field Club, 7th Annual Report (1952). Obtainable from E. W. C. Jenner, 119 Worthing Road, Lowestoft. 6s.

Suffolk Bird Report, 1952. From *Trans. Suffolk Naturalists' Society*, vol. viii, pt. ii. Obtainable from Dr. P. R. Westall, Old Vicarage, Stoven, Brampton, Beccles, Suffolk.

THE overlapping between these four Reports has been referred to previously (*antea*, vol. xlvi, p. 149); it is complicated by the fact that the third and to a less extent the second also deal with groups other than birds, while the first is the product of a county organisation whose main and most impressive activities are concerned with bird protection rather than with study and observation. Both the first and the fourth are also overlapped by the *Cambridge Bird Club Report*. The inevitable result is a good deal of duplication; for example a record of attempted nesting by Pintail on the Norfolk side of Breydon is published in the first three of these Reports, fortunately without discrepancies. The persevering inquirer into the ramifications of East Anglian ornithology will also find further buried treasure relating to important localities in both Suffolk and Norfolk in the Royal Society for Protection of Birds Report, *Bird Protection 1952*, pp. 13-21.

Wild Bird Protection in Norfolk contains reports from the Trust's Reserves at Scolt Head, Blakeney, Cley and Hickling, together with notes from Horsey and Scroby Sands, and a report from the Cley Bird Observatory. Other interesting Norfolk Trust Reserves, such as Weeting, are not covered, and the glimpses given are tantalizingly brief in view of the importance of the area and of the Trust's activities. As already announced (*antea*, vol. xlvi, p. 460) this report has from 1953 onwards been replaced by a new joint publication of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society and the Norfolk Naturalists' Trust; this will do justice to the material available. Among 1952 records we note:—At Scolt Head over 100 pairs of Sandwich Terns and over 1,000 of

note:—At Scolt Head over 100 pairs of Sandwich Terns and over 1,000 of Common Terns bred, with unspecified numbers of Little Terns. Three Roseate Terns visited without breeding, but a greater rarity in Norfolk was the presence in the breeding season of pairs of Kittiwakes, which however did not nest. At Blakeney the watcher marked 2,370 nests of Common Terns, 50 of Sandwich, 4 of Arctic and 97 of Little; Roseates did not breed. An indication of the pressure on East Anglian terns to seek even the most precarious refuge from the excessive human disturbance to which they are exposed even in the bird sanctuaries is provided by the attempted breeding on Scroby Sands off Great Yarmouth of over 400 pairs of Sandwich Terns despite four years' complete loss of eggs and chicks through high tides. Fortunately in 1952 destruction was less severe and a number of juveniles were reared both by Sandwich and Common Terns. At Cley Bearded Tits and Bitterns bred; at Hickling 19 nests of Bearded Tit were found and Marsh and Montagu's Harriers successfully reared young; and two pairs of Marsh Harriers also reared broods at Horsey. The Grey Wagtail's success in colonising Norfolk as a breeding species is described in a special note. Other notes of interest are: Raven near Blakeney; Red-breasted Flycatcher in May; Barred Warbler ringed at Cley (see *antea*, vol. xlvi, p. 431); Bluethroat, up to 6 at Blakeney; Black-bellied Dipper at Aylsham (see *antea*, vol. xlvi, p. 208) in December; Red-rumped Swallow (see *antea*, vol. xlvi, p. 263-4); Goshawk flying in from sea; two Glossy Ibises, one described as an immature and the other undescribed, which appear to require verification; Little Bittern in three localities; a Little Egret (see *antea*, vol. xlvi, p. 256) whose identity was confirmed by filming it; Night Heron, Holt Hall, July; no Bean Geese at Buckenham; Eiders, largest party 18; Red-necked Grebe in breeding plumage, May; supposed Great Snipe at Sidesstrand; Pectoral Sandpiper and Broad-billed Sandpiper at Cley (see *antea*, vol. xlvi, p. 432); a few Kentish Plover; Mediterranean Black-headed Gull at Sheringham (see *antea* vol. xlvi, p. 216-8); 15 Glaucous Gulls and an Iceland at Blakeney on November 19th; and several Spotted Crakes. R. P. Bagnall-Oakeley's excellent photographs of Black-tailed Godwit and Grey Phalarope are the illustrations.

The Great Yarmouth Report largely duplicates part of the Norfolk Report; breeding of two pairs of Black Redstarts and two of Wheatears is noted. Only one Brent Goose is recorded for Breydon in 1951-52 and a party of 11 in 1952-53 winter.

The Lowestoft Report contains four pages on migration, a Tidemark Report, and 14 pages of well-edited specific notes. Fewer Crossbills were reported breeding at Herringfleet; Little Bunting, second Suffolk record, but no details; Bearded Tit increased in four districts; Black Redstart, two pairs bred; a single Hoopoe; Marsh Harrier, at least one brood reared; party of Barnacle Geese in November, but very few Brent; small parties of Eider; Bittern reported from ten localities and reared broods in at least three; Stone Curlew nested two localities or more; Pectoral Sandpiper at Reydon; up to 9 Spotted Redshank, 8 Purple Sandpipers and 200+ Black-tailed Godwits; history given of Little Ringed Plovers breeding in area since 1948.

The Suffolk Bird Report, like the three others, retains *The Handbook* order and includes only some 6 pages of general species notes confined to additions to previous information and reports of rarities. Brevity seems overdone in including without more than the bare date a record of the Swift on November 28th; if not a misprint this should be authenticated being later than any date except one in *The Handbook*. We note: Bullfinch, 74 on passage south at Minsmere, October 26th; shift of breeding Yellow Wagtails in Breck from water-meadows to heather during last four years; Long-tailed Tit, 9 flying in from sea; Bearded Tit in W. Suffolk; two additional Hoopoes; a successful E. Suffolk Wryneck nest; Merlin taking Bearded Tit; Montagu's Harrier, no breeding reported; 400-500 Black-tailed Godwits on Orwell, October-November; Avocet, about 40 pairs bred Havergate and about same number Sandwich Terns; White-winged Black Tern reported from Minsmere, and Spotted Crane heard there; Corncrake nest recorded, with no indication of locality, under initials not indexed.

Major W. H. Payn contributes a useful status list for species in the neglected area of S.W. Suffolk below the Stowmarket-Bury-Newmarket railway. Decreases are noted in wintering Hooded Crows, breeding Corn and Reed Buntings, Red-backed Shrike, Wryneck, Snipe, Redshank and Corncrake; Treecreeper and Goldcrest are noted as not having fully recovered from the winter of 1946-47; Carrion Crow (still scarce), Magpie, Goldfinch, Nightingale and Swift are noted as increasing, with possibly Great Spotted Woodpecker, Heron and Turtle Dove.

E.M.N.

Farne Islands Committee of the National Trust. Ornithological Report for 1951. Compiled by Grace Watt, Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne.

WHEN this report is compared with the Systematic List in Miss Watt's book *The Farne Islands*, published in 1951, it will be found that five more species have been added since that book appeared: Raven, Yellow Wagtail, Wood Warbler, Barn Owl and Goosander have all been recorded for the first time. It is evident that greater interest has been taken in noting the birds that pay transitory visits to the islands. A Pintail was recorded for the first time since 1840; Greenfinch, Linnets, Lesser Whitethroat and Long-eared Owl were seen and had not been recorded since 1885-1887; others not seen for 40 years were also observed. A pair of Robins reared a brood of five on the Brownsman, the first pair known to have nested on the islands. On October 5th, at least 500 Robins were present, part of the great influx to the east coast. Eiders nested in almost exactly the same numbers as in 1950, and Roseate Terns varied little (29 pairs). Gulls proved to be most destructive; on one day in June 250 destroyed clutches were counted in one tern colony.

A.W.B.

Ornithological Report on the Farne Islands for 1952. Compiled by Grace Watt, Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne. (*Trans. N.H.S of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne, New Series, vol. x, No. 2*).

A USEFUL step has been taken by including the annual Farne Islands report in these *Transactions*, where they are made more accessible and are brought into relation with the general bird report for the region. The Report includes a dozen pages of species notes in B.O.U. *Check-List* order, with census data in a number of cases. We note: Fulmar, 10 pairs attempted nesting; Cormorant, apparently 356 pairs bred despite human raiding; Shag, 96 nests counted; Eider, approximately 532 nests, an increase of about 87 on 1951; Oystercatcher, about 38 pairs nested; Ringed Plover, 22 pairs nested; Roseate Tern, at least 31 pairs present; Sandwich Tern, about 850 pairs on Brownsman and over 400 on Longstone. Data for other terns, gulls and auks do not clearly indicate numbers or trends, and it would be particularly valuable if figures could in future be given for the two controlled gull species, the Herring and Lesser Black-backed. The Kittiwake is described as still increasing. Improved watching has added 8 new species to the island list, including Nuthatch, Bluethroat and Lapland Bunting, while both Green and Curlew Sandpipers were recorded for the first time since 1914. It is to be hoped that a special look-out will be kept for shearwaters, of which no more than half-a-dozen Manx were noted during the year, and no other forms. A useful amount of ringing and some other researches were carried out.

E.M.N.