REVIEWS.


Photographs of the Blagdon, Barrow and Cheddar Reservoirs, from which many records come, are a pleasant feature of this report. Duck have received special attention and their numbers are recorded in considerable detail; a flock of 300 Pintails at Durleigh reservoir in Central Somerset during a gale was of unusual size for an inland water. Among the more notable records are those of Rose-coloured Starling, Snowy Owl, Kite and Sandwich Tern which have already been noted in British Birds, and of an immature White-tailed Eagle shot at Steart on December 1st. The presence of a pair of Montagu's Harriers on Exmoor during summer, the continued breeding of Buzzards in several localities outside their stronghold in West Somerset and an increase in the nesting Curlew in the Sedgemoor area are also noteworthy.

A record of Iceland Gull is quite properly enclosed in square brackets and several other records for which certainty is not claimed might well have been treated in the same way, particularly those of Marsh-Harrier ("almost certainly thought to be this species") and of a Hen-Harrier's nest which the Vice-President of the Society himself calls in doubt. A second record of a Kite (Milvus m. milvus), quoted from Country Life, seems to us worthless. "In appearance and flight it was identical with the Black Kite" is the only evidence provided. On this evidence it should surely have been recorded as a Black Kite or not at all! It seems unwise to include under the heading of British Redshank records referring to February, October and December; it would have been better to omit sub-specific rank altogether.

A.W.B.


This carefully compiled report contains much of interest. A note on the status of the Wryneck in the Maidenhead district and its continued nesting in old orchards is particularly interesting, as it supports the belief that its reduction in numbers in many parts is due to the eradication of old fruit trees and the consequent destruction of nesting-sites. The Wood-Lark has continued to spread as a nesting bird and a flock of no fewer than 19 was seen in the Oxford district in November. Hobbies nested again near Oxford and Buzzards were seen a number of times in each county. Observers in the Eton district have been specially active and have recorded at Ham two Black-winged Stilts (British Birds, xxxviii, p. 337), four Spoonbills on May 19th, and many waders. Sewage farms at Slough and Sandford also were well watched; at the former a Spotted Crake was seen on September 12th. Wood Sandpipers were noted in all three counties. A Chaffinch marked in Holland in October, 1938, was recovered at Wantage in winter some three years later.

A.W.B.


The Bristol district for the purpose of these notes is defined as covering "a considerable portion of both South Gloucestershire and North Somerset," the limit of the Gloucestershire section being a line drawn from the New Grounds on the Severn to Tetbury. The notes for North Somerset duplicate those in the Report on Somerset Birds and the more important of them are referred to by us in the notice of that publication, so that we shall here confine ourselves to the Gloucestershire data. The greater part of these consist of observations on the geese at the New Grounds and on waders and waterfowl there and at Severn Beach.
The important discovery of two Lesser White-fronted Geese on the New Grounds has already been fully recorded in *British Birds*. Seven Barnacle Geese, apparently the largest number yet recorded for the Severn area, were present in January and February. A male Black Redstart was seen and heard on buildings adjoining the bombed area of Wine Street, Bristol, on June 12th, but not subsequently.

The observers responsible for the notes are indicated collectively in the introduction, but not individually in the systematic part. In the case of the Somerset notes this does not particularly matter, because, as above noted, the information is available elsewhere, but at least in the case of the Gloucestershire part we think the omission a mistake. We know that a large proportion of the observations are those of the writer of the report himself, but where they are not we suggest that the person responsible should be indicated by means of initials in the usual way; a record without the observer's name is incomplete.

*Bryans10n School Natural History Society. Report for 1945.*

The interesting Bryanston School Report is printed this year. The local notes in the bird section refer largely to Poole Harbour and the Dorset heaths and downs. Dartford Warblers were seen regularly, but Montagu's Harriers appear to have been absent from their usual haunt. 128 Black-tailed Godwits were counted at Swineham Point on Poole Harbour on October 28th, and there are records of Great Grey Shrike, Gadwall, Hen-Harrier and other interesting species. We note that the Ferruginous Duck recorded in *British Birds* (antea, Vol. xxxix, p. 298) as present on the Stour near Blandford from January 4th to 24th re-appeared on February 16th and 17th.

*Report of the Marlborough College Natural History Society for the year 1945.*

In the bird section, we note that Cirl Buntings have established themselves in Marlborough at several places, that two or more birds which were almost certainly Snow-Buntings were seen in the neighbourhood in November and December and as many as ten Short-eared Owls together in October. There are records of various more or less uncommon visitors, such as Bittern (unfortunately shot), Gadwall, Scaup-Duck and Smew.


This report appears, as in previous years, to cover the period from the summer term of one year (viz. 1945) to the Lent term of the next, though this is nowhere made clear in the notes and may easily lead to confusion, since although the records are mainly for 1945, those for January to March are for 1946.

The section on birds includes some particulars of a census of Corn-Buntings organized by Mr. R. E. Burton, in which members assisted, counts at the local heronries, and some notes from the Ecton (Northampton) Sewage Farm and the Eye Valley Reservoir, where a number of interesting birds were observed, especially 100 Pintails on January 13th and 14 Brent Geese during severe weather on March 2nd-3rd (presumably 1946 in both cases). The record of a Ferruginous Duck has appeared in *British Birds* already. Curlew did not breed in the Barnwell meadows, where there was a nest in 1944.