

Zoological Record for Derbyshire, 1908.

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MAMMALS.



LESSER SHREW, *Sorex minutus* L.—Mr. T.

Rumney found an example of this species in a wood near Repton during the spring of 1908. It has previously been recorded from this district by

Mr. G. H. Storer, but is not nearly so numerous as the Common Shrew.

Polecat, *Putorius putorius* L.—The remains of what was apparently a Polecat were also found by Mr. Rumney near Repton, but as it is occasionally kept in confinement and crossed with Ferrets, it is only reasonable to suppose that its presence was due to artificial rather than natural causes. The latest certain record of its appearance in the county was in 1900, when one was trapped at Bradley, near Ashburne, but managed to escape, leaving a foot in the trap.

Badger, *Meles meles* L.—This animal is really far commoner than is generally supposed. The local papers contained notices of two which were dug out of an earth at Sutton-on-the-Hill on January 22nd. The male weighed 26 lbs.

BIRDS.

Addenda to previous reports.

1906.

Turnstone, *Streptilas interpres* L.—Although it is tolerably certain that this bird has occurred in the Trent Valley, we have hitherto only been able to include it in brackets in our county list. During the night of June 1st, 1906, three of these birds were killed by coming into contact with the telegraph wires near Longcliffe, at the highest point of the road between Ashburne and Bakewell. One of these birds was sent by the finder, Mr. J. Fritchley, to Mr. A. F. Adsetts for preservation, and has since, we believe, passed into the Calke Abbey collection. This brings the number of species recorded for the county (according to Howard Saunders' list) to 236.

Grey Phalarope, *Phalaropus fulicarius* L.—The Rev. J. R. Ashworth sends me particulars of the eighth occurrence of this species in the county. It was shot by a man named George Wood some time between December 15th and 17th, 1906. He saw the bird on a pond while walking on the road not far from Winster, borrowed a gun, and shot it, and it is now in Mr. Ashworth's possession at Hartington.

Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus* L.—Although the Whimbrel appears to be a regular visitor in small numbers to the Trent Valley, it is very rare in the west of the county, and the only two which I have seen were shot on the Staffordshire side of the Dove. One was sent to Poole, of Ashburne, for preservation on May 19th, 1906, from Parwich, by a keeper named Brownlee.

1907.

Mr. R. Hall sends me a note of the occurrence of the Nightingale at Matlock Dale. It was heard for several nights at the end of April, but disappeared when a spell of severe weather set in. A few days later, however, one was heard at Duffield. It was last noted on May 13th. Mr. W. N. Statham heard the bird singing himself, and is confident as to its identification.

1908.

The extraordinary weather of the spring of this year will long be remembered on account of its influence on bird migration. In January it was, on the whole, open (although deep snow was reported from the south-west of England at the beginning of the month), and there were severe frosts on January 4th-6th, and again on the 10th-14th. In February, with the exception of the storm on the 22nd-25th, and a little snow which fell on the 28th, the weather was mild and wet. After March 6th it again turned mild till the 14th, when a little more snow fell; but, on the whole, it was fine and open, but accompanied with cold winds, till April 20th. Meantime some of the earlier migrants had already arrived, but on April 20th a cold north-east wind, accompanied by snow, was blowing, and winter resumed its sway. Sleet and snow again fell on the 23rd, but on the 26th it was thawing rapidly, though still very cold, and had all disappeared on the 27th, although from Burton to Bletchley the whole country was still one unbroken sheet of snow. Heavy rain and floods followed on May 3rd; but as it was still early in the year, they did less damage than the great flood which followed the thunderstorm of June 3rd. The ground was then hard and dry, and the water ran off the surface instead of soaking in, so that in the Dove Valley the flood was the worst known for quite twenty years. The destruction to bird-life must have been enormous, for all the low-lying meadows near the river were flooded, in some places to a depth of four or five feet. On my return from Corsica early in June, I found these meadows, which are, as a rule, full of bird life (Yellow Wagtails, Whinchats, Tree Pipits, Lapwings, etc.), silent and deserted. The floods had rapidly subsided, leaving a residuum of mud on the damaged hay-crop; but every vestige of bird-life had disappeared. A wonderfully dry and sunny summer followed, but only a small proportion of the unfortunate birds which had lost their first broods returned to breed.

ARRIVAL OF MIGRANTS.—The first Wheatear was reported from Waterhouses (Staffordshire) on March 20th, but did not reach its breeding quarters on Thorpe Cloud, Dovedale, till March 30th, when I saw a single cock bird there. The Chiff-Chaff was heard at Whitchurch (Salop) on March 30th (H. G. Tomlinson), and again at Burton on April 9th (E. H. T.), but did not reach the Ashburne district till April 17th. The first Sand Martin appeared at Clifton on April 2nd, and a small flock of five birds was seen the same afternoon. The cold winds seem to have put a stop to the arrival of further reinforcements, and the few birds which had already reached us disappeared. A Swallow, however, was reported from Burton on the 9th (possibly a Sand Martin), but no others were noted till the disappearance of the snow on the 27th. On the 22nd, in spite of cold winds, a small party of Willow Wrens had already reached Sturston (a mile or two above Ashburne), and a single Sandpiper was noted by the river Dove. The first cock Yellow Wagtail was seen by the Henmore brook on April 24th, and with the thaw on the 27th came quite a rush of migrants. Tree Pipits, Cuckoos, and Willow Wrens were singing in all directions, and Sand Martins and Swallows were flying about. The first House Martin was noticed at Thorpe on the 29th. Hard on the heels of these late arrivals came the Swift, which was noticed at Burton on May 1st, while on the same day I had the pleasure of seeing a beautiful cock Pied Flycatcher close to the North Stafford Railway between Clifton and Norbury. This bird is only a rare visitor to us on migration, and I have only once previously seen it here, on May 14th, 1887; but it occurs occasionally, and is believed to have bred at Matlock in 1892. Whinchats, Common Whitethroats, a Redstart, and a cock Blackcap were observed between Norbury and Clifton also on May 1st. Two days later Sedge Warblers were singing at Clifton, and large flocks of Swallows and Martins were hawking over the flood-water. Spotted Flycatchers were noted at Burton on May 6th (E. H. Tomlinson),

and Garden Warblers on the 11th at the same place, while Reed Warblers were heard on May 23rd and Turtle Doves on the 24th (E. H. T.). From these notes it will be seen that owing to the vagaries of the weather many species which usually reach us early in April failed to do so till after the disappearance of the Easter snow, while the late arrivals, such as the Swift and Spotted Flycatcher, were quite up to their usual time.

DEPARTURE OF MIGRANTS.—As a rule, the departure of our summer visitors is so difficult to note accurately, that the ordinary observations have but little value; but an exception may be made in the case of the *Hirundinidæ* and *Cypselidæ*, which are easy to watch. The Swift is generally the first to leave us, and the main body of breeding birds apparently left the Ashburne district on the 9th of August, although a party of five or six were seen on the 10th. Nothing more was seen of them till August 25th, when a party of eight birds was noticed at Mapleton (J. Henderson, jun.), while lower down the river two or three more were seen. At intervals three or four birds were seen almost daily in the Dove Valley till September 1st, when we saw only a single bird, while one was also seen on the 4th and 5th. The latest date, however, proved to be September 14th, when Mr. Henderson saw one at Mapleton in the morning, and we both distinctly saw one at Ashburne the same afternoon. The only previous occasions on which I have seen Swifts in September in this county are as follows: September 1st, 1885; September 4th, 1887 (one seen); and September 3rd, 1905 (one seen). Whitlock records one on September 6th, 1893, and a correspondent of *The Field*, Mr. J. J. Dodgshon, mentions having seen one at Higher Buxton on October 26th, 1891! The *Hirundines* (Swallows, Sand and House Martins) remained in their usual numbers till September 26th, when the great majority disappeared. A few Swallows and Martins were seen together on the 29th, but no Swallows or Sand Martins were noted after this date, although a few House Martins

remained in Ashburne till October 16th. A Nightjar was observed at Burton (where this species rarely occurs) on September 24th (E. H. Tomlinson).

OCCASIONAL VISITORS.—Mr. G. Pullen reports having seen a “gaggle” of eighteen Geese on January 12th, but owing to the mist he was unable to identify the species. Gulls seem to have visited the county in greater numbers than usual. On March 26th Mr. A. Cox saw seven small Gulls, probably Black-headed Gulls in winter plumage, between Chaddesden and Spondon, while on March 27th he identified three more on the flooded meadows near Spondon, and had a good view of a Herring Gull at Derby on April 13th. On August 11th a flock of about a dozen large Gulls (probably Lesser Black-backed) were flying down the Dove Valley near Clifton, and on the following day I again saw eight large Gulls in the distance. On March 27th there were two couple of Pochard on the lake at Calwich Abbey. This duck is a decidedly rare visitor to this part of the county, although it has occurred at Osmaston. On July 10th I flushed a single Green Sandpiper from the side of one of the lakes at Osmaston Manor, and on June 20th a Quail was caught at Chaddesden (G. Pullen). On August 22nd a “Golden Eagle” was reported in the local papers as having been seen at the entrance to Dovedale. Enquiries failed to produce any corroboration of this statement, but on September 2nd, Mr. J. Henderson, jun., caught a glimpse of two large birds soaring in the valley of the Bentley Brook, near Ashburne, which appeared to him to be Buzzards. As he is familiar with the flight of these birds, this observation is of interest in view of the fact that a Honey Buzzard, *Pernis apivorus* L., was subsequently shot at Osmaston, only a few miles away, and sent for preservation on the 10th. It was a very dark bird, with a few white spangled feathers on the nape of the neck. Only three previous occurrences of this bird have been recorded: one prior to 1789, the second about 1843, and the third at Allestree on June 23rd, 1904. It is also worth noting that another of

these fine birds was subsequently shot at Tamworth on September 30th, and another in North Shropshire on the same day. It is, of course, a matter of the greatest regret that this beautiful and most useful species should still meet with such ruthless persecution. A Black Tern, *Hydrochelidon nigra* L., was shot at Aston Hall and sent in to A. F. Adsetts for preservation on August 27th, and on September 30th Mr. J. Henderson saw a Peregrine Falcon near Newhaven. A Manx Shearwater, *Puffinus anglorum* (Temm.), was obtained in a curious way after the gale of September 8th, having taken refuge in a bakehouse at Alvaston, near Derby (A. S. Hutchinson). This is the thirteenth record of this species for the county, and in almost every case of which we have the full data the bird was obtained in the early part of September.

BREEDING NOTES.—As it has been asserted that there are two distinct races of Starling breeding in England, a green-headed and a purple-headed one, and that the purple-headed birds are immigrants from the East, which are displacing our resident birds, I examined several individuals in the spring, and found them all to belong to the green-headed type. Dr. Hartert, however, is of opinion that the difference in colour is due to individual variation only, and has no geographical significance.

A Dipper's nest by the river Dove contained two eggs on March 20th, but most of the nests in this district had full clutches in the first week of April. On March 26th, on ascending an old elm tree, which has frequently been occupied by Brown Owls since the winter of 1886-7, I was interested to find four eggs. This is an unusually large clutch for this district, where I have only on one occasion previously met with four, and the normal number of eggs varies from two to three. Lesser Redpolls were more numerous than usual this season; one nest was built in a laburnum tree on the edge of the lawn within a few yards of my windows, and close to the tennis lawn. During a short visit to the north of the county, I ascertained that three nests of Merlin had been

taken by the keepers on the moors near the upper reaches of the river Derwent during the past season. It is really marvellous that this little hawk manages to survive, in spite of the unremitting persecution to which it is subjected. Mr. Rumney informs me that a pair of Red-backed Shrikes bred near Repton this year, and that a Cuckoo's egg was found in a Willow Warbler's nest.

INSECTS.

LEPIDOPTERA.

Mr. H. C. Hayward, of Repton, has kindly furnished us with a list of the more important captures which have been made of late years in the Repton district. We hope to be able to give further extracts from this interesting paper on a future occasion, and, meantime, place on record three species previously unrecorded for the county on his authority.

Sesia formiciformis Esp.—Two in an osier bed, Repton, July 1st, 1905.

Miana bicoloria Vill.—One at sugar, 1905.

Plusia moneta (which has only of late years been added to the British fauna) occurred at Repton in 1907, when two were taken on July 4th; and again on July 1st and 2nd, 1908, when two more were captured. Cocoons were also found on *Delphinium* in July, 1908. (Mr. G. Pullen also informs me that one was taken by Mr. R. Watkin in his garden on Stonehill Road, near Derby, in 1908.)

Among other interesting notes may be mentioned the following, all from Mr. Hayward's list:

Agrotis nigricans L.—Three at sugar, Repton, August 5th, 1905.

A. obscura (Brahm.) (*ravida* Hb.).—One at sugar, Repton, July 30th, 1905.

Cucullia verbasci L.—Larvæ on Water Betony; two imagines, May 29th, 1907.

Phorodesma pustulata, Hufn. (*bajularia*, Schiff.).—Three in Repton Shrubs, July, 1905, and 1907.

Macaria liturata Clerck.—One in Repton Shrubs, 1905.

Eupithecia tenuiata Hb.—Two bred, 1908, from larvæ in Sallow catkins.

E. lariciata Frr.—Abundant in Repton Shrubs.

Thera variata Schiff.—Not rare in Repton Shrubs.

Eubolia bipunctaria Schiff.—One imago in Repton, July 29th, 1906.

HYMENOPTERA ACULEATA.

Mr. G. Pullen has kindly furnished me with a list of his additional captures of Aculeates since the publication of my list of the Hymenoptera Aculeata of Derbyshire, which was published in the *Journal*, Derbyshire Archæological and Natural History Society, for 1904, page 219. In that list one hundred and five species were recorded, and we are now enabled to add nine new ones on Mr. Pullen's authority, bringing the total number recorded to one hundred and fourteen. Two more of Mr. E. Brown's old records have also been confirmed by the capture of additional specimens. An asterisk (*) marks those species new to the county list.

FOSSORES.

Sapyga quinquepunctata Fb.—One, Breadsall Moor, 16th June, 1904 (only previously recorded from Burton in 1863).

S. clavicornis L.—Twelve specimens of this rare insect were taken on June 16th, 1904, on Breadsall Moor.

**Mimesa bicolor* Fb.—One ♀ taken at Little Eaton, August, 1904.

**Oxybelus uniglumis* L.—Five taken at Breadsall, June 26th, 1905.

DIPLOPTERA.

Odynerus spinipes L.—A ♀ at Breadsall Moor, 1904.

**O. callosus* Thoms.—Little Eaton, July, 1904.

**O. sinuatus* Fb.—A ♀ at Little Eaton, July, 1904.

ANTHOPHILA.

**Colletes succinctus* L.—A ♀ at Little Eaton, August, 1904.

**Sphcodes affinis* v. Hag.—Breadsall, 1905.

Andrena cineraria L.—Breadsall, May 17th, 1904.

**A. fuscipes* Kirb.—A ♀ at Little Eaton, August, 1904.

**A. similis* Sm.—Little Eaton, June, 1904.

Nomada ferruginata (Kirb.).—A ♀ at Little Eaton, August, 1904 (only previously recorded from Burton in 1863).

**Epeolus productus* (Thoms.).—Camp Wood, Breadsall, August 12th, 1906.