

Ornithological Record for Derbyshire for 1930.

By

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A NOTE on "Rare Migrants to Derbyshire in 1904" by the present writer appeared in the *Journal Derby A. & N. H. Soc.* for 1905, and was followed in 1906 by "Ornithological Notes from Derbyshire for the year 1905." From that time onward reports appeared regularly in the *D. A. J.* for ten years, but in 1916 Dr. W. Shipton prepared the annual Zoological Record and in 1917 Mr. N. H. FitzHerbert took over the preparation of Ornithological Notes. The last instalment for the year 1925 appeared in the volume for 1927 and only occasional notes have figured in the *Journal* since that date. In order to prevent records of interest from being lost I have somewhat reluctantly undertaken the task of trying to revive interest in this subject, and hope that in future years I may receive the help of many of my old contributors.

For the year 1930 the record must necessarily be of a very imperfect character, but it contains at least one item of extreme interest, viz. the appearance of the Curlew (*Numenius a. arquata*) as a breeding species in the south of the County.

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Crossbill (*Loxia c. curvirostra*). There was a well defined wave of immigration of this erratic species in 1930, and I received a report of the presence of birds in the Cubley woods in the latter part of the summer, but without exact data.

Pied Flycatcher (*Muscicapa s. striata*). The following note refers to the spring of 1929, and the locality is just over the county boundary, but it seems of sufficient interest to deserve record. A pair of Pied Flycatchers was noticed at Mayfield Vicarage, Staffordshire, in the late spring of 1929 (exact date not recorded). Mrs. Tudsbury was able to watch them through the glass of the dining room window, sometimes at only a few inches distance. The male, in conspicuous black and white plumage, sang repeatedly and the female, evidently in search of a nesting place, made repeated efforts to get into the room and finally managed to do so, but was caught and released. They did not however appear again. The striking contrast of the plumage of the male and the fact of his singing, seem to make any error of identification impossible and Mrs. Tudsbury had the plate in Morris' *British Birds* at hand for comparison. It must however be admitted that breeding in an inhabited house is quite contrary to the normal habits of this species.

Heron (*Ardea c. cinerea*). A census of existing Heronries was carried out throughout England under the direction of Mr. E. M. Nicholson in 1928. The results in Derbyshire were disappointing, as only one Heronry is stated to exist in the County at the present time, viz. that at Shirley Wood, and only a single nest is said to be found there annually. Eaton Wood, Kedleston Park and Sutton Scarsdale are all reported as extinct and no nests were met with in 1928 in Longford Carr, Haddon, Hope Valley, Hopton or Shacklow. On the other hand there is a flourishing colony of about 11 nests now established in the Ilam Woods, Staffordshire, which is close to the county boundary and commands the Dove valley. This is of recent origin and only dates back to about 1916.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*). Dr. H. H. Hollick informs me that a pair of swans bred on a small pond at Bradley, near Ashbourne, but when the cygnets were hatched and

were eight or nine days old, the old birds decided to move and walked about a quarter of a mile to a shallow roadside pond on May 17th accompanied by the family. On the following evening about 8 p.m. the whole party of seven birds started on the road to Ashbourne and in spite of the motor traffic the old birds and three cygnets arrived at the Hall pond, Ashbourne next morning. Another cygnet turned up during the day, but the fifth was not seen again. The distance from Bradley to Ashbourne is over three miles and the swans created quite a sensation walking down the road, cars pulling up for them and allowing them to pass.

Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*). Mr. C. B. Chambers reports that Shovelers have bred for the past three years near his house at Heath, near Chesterfield. Although the nests were robbed in 1928 and 1929 the birds brought off a second laying in each year and nested again in 1930.

Knot (*Calidris c. canutus*). Mr. T. A. Coward records one picked up on the road near Chinley, injured but still alive on Feb. 23, 1930, which was kept in confinement till April 12, when it died (*Field*, 29 Nov., 1930, p. 782).

Curlew (*Numenius a. arquata*). Hitherto the Curlew has only been known as a breeder on the moors in the north of the County, appearing on passage occasionally in the south when grouse shooting begins. However on May 3rd, 1930, Mr. Chambers saw several pairs in the Dove Valley between Doveridge and Sudbury, which were apparently breeding. During the last week of June he again visited this district to investigate the matter and called on the farmer on whose land he had seen the birds in May. The farmer's son informed him that the birds had been there about four years. No eggs or young were actually seen in 1930, but they had been met with in former years. Although the Dove is the boundary between Derbyshire and Staffordshire and it is evident that the birds have been present in both counties in spring

for four years past, there is no mention of this remarkable extension of range in the Zoological Reports of Mr. J. R. B. Masefield for Staffordshire, published in the *Trans. of the N. Staffs. Field Club*. There is also reason to believe that Curlews have recently been observed in spring at other points in the Dove valley on the higher ground between Thorpe and Doveridge. Mr. Chambers is well acquainted with the Curlew in the north of the county and also informs me that the keeper at Beeley Moor found a nest of this species with 5 eggs which hatched out successfully. Mr. W. T. Mynors informs me that two pairs also frequented the high ground near Bostern Grange (Alsop-le-Dale Station) in the spring of 1930 but he was unable to say whether they bred there or not.

Terns (*Sterna hirundo* or *S. macrura*). There was a strong migration of either Arctic or Common Terns in a north-easterly direction at Chesterfield on May 6, 1930 and parties of 2, 1 and 4 were seen moving in the same direction after a heavy thunderstorm on the 5th. (C. B. Chambers).

ADDENDUM.

Since the above notes were written I have received some useful observations on the birds of the Buxton district by Mr. J. Armitage. Mr. E. Grindey has also contributed notes on birds in the Dove valley, including some valuable information on the spread of the Curlew. We hope to incorporate these important records in the next Ornithological Report.—F.C.R.J.