

Zoological Record for Derbyshire, 1910.

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VERTEBRATA.

BIRDS.

1909.

Addenda to previous report.

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus* Tunst.—On November 30th, 1909, Mr. J. Henderson was at Ashburne station and saw a Peregrine sail deliberately overhead, coming from the direction of the church, on which it had probably been resting. Two days afterwards he again saw either this, or another bird, on the River Dove, near Birdsgrove.

1910.

A few notes on the weather conditions during the spring and summer as observed in the Dove valley may be of interest when taken in conjunction with the migration notes.

January opened with showery and mild weather: Song Thrushes, Blackbirds, Mistle Thrushes, and Skylarks were all in song occasionally during the first ten days of the new year. A slight fall of snow took place on January 11th, but had gone by the 14th. Colder weather set in on the 22nd, and more snow fell on the 23rd. This spell of severe weather lasted till

the beginning of February, when steady rain fell, but the ice had not disappeared from the roads till February 6th. During this period the birds suffered greatly. On the evening of January 30th a Meadow Pipit, *Anthus pratensis* (L.), ran into the brightly-lighted kitchen of my house. It was apparently quite tame, and allowed itself to be handled without making any resistance or outward signs of fear, but took no food. I placed it in a warm greenhouse for the night, but found it dead next morning. It was in very poor condition, and practically starved to death. Another curious feature of this period was the entire disappearance of the Song Thrush, *Turdus philomelos clarkei* Hart., from the Ashburne district. It was not till February 7th that the first straggler returned. It was very wild, and the Blackbirds, *T. merula* L., which had remained through the hard weather, were bullying it constantly.

Some fine weather in late February and March tempted some of our earlier breeders to nest sooner than usual, and remarkable instances of early breeding will be found in the classified notes under the headings of Dipper and Kingfisher.

The weather in April was on the whole cold and windy, and the arrival of migrants somewhat irregular, but the weather conditions improved in May. The latter part of the summer was very wet, but a month of delightful weather and brilliant sunshine was experienced in September, followed, however, by spells of wintry weather in the middle and latter part of November, and an exceptionally mild December.

ARRIVAL OF MIGRANTS.

My notes on this subject are unfortunately somewhat defective owing to my absence in Roumania during the whole of April.

The first migrant to arrive was the Chiff Chaff, as usual, which was noted near Burton on March 25th (H. G. Tomlinson). It was followed at a short interval by the Sand Martin, two of which reached Clifton on April 4th, while Mr. J. Henderson also noted two (perhaps the same birds) on the 5th. On April 5th Mr. Henderson also reported a few Swallows at Clifton, but these could only have been stragglers, for it was not till April

12th that the next notice of their appearance came in from Okeover (J. Atkinson), and on the 14th they were noted both at Burton and Ashburne in some numbers. Willow Wrens were heard at Ashburne on April 14th (Rev. W. M. Tomlinson), and on April 18th the Redstart was noted at Mapleton (J. Atkinson), while it was also seen near Ashburne on the 23rd. The Common Sandpiper had penetrated up the River Dove as far as Mapleton on April 25th (J. Atkinson), and the Cuckoo was recorded simultaneously from Bretby Park (H. G. Tomlinson) and Mapleton (J. Atkinson).

The Swift was punctual to the day at Burton, arriving on May 4th (H. G. Tomlinson), while on the following day one bird was seen at Mapleton (J. Atkinson), and on May 8th Mr. Storrs Fox notes its arrival at Bakewell. The main body arrived in the Dove valley, near Okeover, on May 10th, and reached its breeding quarters at Ashburne on the 15th.

Whinchats were noted on May 9th in the Ashburne district, but may have arrived earlier. Exact dates of the arrival of most of the warblers are lacking, but in the case of two birds it is evident that their arrival was retarded by some cause. Not a single Spotted Flycatcher was noticed in the Dove valley (Ashburne district) till May 18th, when two were noted at Snelston (A. Evans). Even then they did not appear in anything like their usual numbers, and I never remember seeing so few breeding pairs about. Another late arrival was the Corncrake. The first record of its note being heard was from Uttoxeter on May 10th (Rev. E. Deacon), while one bird had reached Ashburne on the night of the 13th (T. A. Mathews), and they were calling in the fields at Clifton and Snelston on the 14th.

DEPARTURE OF MIGRANTS.

The main body of Swifts disappeared from Ashburne on August 13th, but stragglers continued to drift down the Dove valley for some time afterwards. Mr. Henderson saw four on the 16th, two on the 17th, one on the 18th, and three on the 23rd,

when I also saw one; while the Rev. W. M. Tomlinson noted one above Rocester on the 19th, and Mr. H. F. Gibson records the last near Okeover on August 29th. Although most of the Spotted Flycatchers left in August, one was noticed at Holbrook on September 4th (Rev. W. M. Tomlinson), and Mr. J. Henderson saw a single bird more than once up to September 12th, but the latest record is that of one seen at Holbrook on September 25th (Rev. W. M. Tomlinson). After September 20th there was a great decline in the numbers of Swallows and Martins, but both Swallows and House Martins were present in small numbers till October 3rd, when Mr. J. Henderson and I saw a flock of sixty or seventy House Martins and one or two Swallows in the Dove Valley. After this date the only occurrences noted were a flock of thirty or forty House Martins flying over Clifton on October 7th, while Mr. H. G. Tomlinson noticed a very large flock of Swallows on migration at Burton on October 12th, and the Rev. W. M. Tomlinson saw two Swallows at Ashburne on the 13th.

While at Swarkestone on September 22nd I noticed some fifteen or twenty Swallows perched on and hawking round a tall elm tree. One so rarely sees Swallows perching on trees, especially when there are buildings close at hand, that it is probable that this was a party of migrants resting on their long journey to Africa.

CLASSIFIED NOTES.

Mistle Thrush, *Turdus viscivorus* L.—An interesting example of reversion to an old nesting site came under my notice this year. In 1901 a pair of Mistle Thrushes built in one of the top branches of a big chestnut tree in my garden. After the first brood had been safely hatched off the parents removed the lining of the nest and replaced it with fresh material, and a second laying was deposited on June 24th. Nine years later, when all traces of the nest had long ago disappeared, the site was again used, and a brood of young were safely hatched off from the very branch which was used in 1901.

Almost all the nests in this district contain four eggs only, but the first brood of the 1901 nest mentioned before consisted of five, and in the *Zoologist* for 1910, p. 226, Mr. J. S. Macdonald records finding a nest with the quite extraordinary number of six eggs at Hucklow, North Derbyshire, on May 17th. 1910, in the fork of an oak tree.

Dipper, *Cinclus cinclus britannicus* Tsch.—Mr. C. Turner reports having found a Dipper's nest with five fresh eggs under a wooden bridge over the River Dove above Hanging Bridge on February 10th. In the Ashburne district it is very rare to find eggs before the last ten days of March, and most nests have full clutches about the beginning of April, so that this date is unusually early.

Nightingale, *Luscinia megarhyncha* Brehm.—The Dove valley lies on the northern limit of the breeding range of this species, and its appearances are few and irregular. One was reported this spring from Thorpe, where the song of the cock has occasionally been heard in former years.

Marsh Tit, *Parus palustus dresseri* Stejn.—Now that it is known that two distinct species of Tit have been hitherto confounded under the common title of "Marsh Tit," differing widely in notes and nesting habits, but bearing a strong likeness to one another, much more attention has been given to them by naturalists than formerly. As a rule, the true glossy-headed Marsh Tit is rather a scarce bird in South Derbyshire, but this spring it was comparatively common, and though I was not successful in finding a nest, there is no doubt that a pair or two bred in the Ashburne district.

Willow Tit, *P. atricapillus kleinschmidti* Hellm.—This is the dull black-headed Tit, which has now been proved to be a distinct species to the Marsh Tit. It occurs in the winter occasionally, and breeds in the old willow trees by the brook sides in the Burton-on-Trent district, excavating a circular chamber out of the dead wood, and making hardly any nest.

Tree Creeper, *Certhia familiaris britannica* Ridgw.—A nest of this bird, found behind a piece of loose bark on a tree trunk at Mapleton, only 18 in. from the ground, contained the unusually large number of seven eggs on May 25th (Rev. W. M. Tomlinson).

Golden Oriole, *Oriolus oriolus* (L.).—Two of these beautiful birds, in all probability a breeding pair, were seen about Cratcliff Tor, near Bakewell, on May 14th. The male was bullied by some Jackdaws, and received a wound on the head. It was unfortunately killed subsequently by a boy, and the hen then disappeared. On examining the bird I found that it was not in the full plumage of the adult (see *British Birds*, iv., p. 79), but it is well known that many birds breed in this state. It is most regrettable that this bird should have been killed, for the Oriole has repeatedly bred, or attempted to do so, in our southern counties, and there is little doubt that efficient protection would result in its becoming a regular summer visitor. It is to be hoped that any future attempts to breed will meet with a happier fate.

Tree Pipit, *Anthus trivialis* (L.).—For some reason or other, a much larger proportion than usual of our local Tree Pipits' nests contained six eggs during the season of 1910. We know at present very little of the factors which regulate the number of eggs in a clutch, but it is very curious that four out of the first five nests examined each contained six eggs, although this number is exceptional here in other seasons.

Lesser Redpoll, *Carduelis linaria cabaret* (Müll.).—A flock of about thirty noticed among the alders by the River Dove on March 18th (J. Henderson).

Chaffinch, *Tringilla colebs* L.—A clutch of eggs found at Swarkestone late in May were a beautiful deep blue, without any markings (Rev. W. M. Tomlinson).

Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris* L.—A bird which was seen at Clifton several times in March had a pure white tail, but in other respects was normally coloured.

Kingfisher, *Alcedo ispida* L.—While making some alterations in the bank of a brook at Sandybrook, near Ashburne, Mr. P. Turnbull reported that a Kingfisher had been seen to enter a hole in a bank. As the usual breeding season of this species in the Ashburne district is the last week of April and even the first days of May, I naturally supposed that at the end of March the hole, even of the previous year, would still be empty. It was necessary to pare away part of the bank where the nesting-place was, and while engaged on this work on March 31st the workmen accidentally cut into the nest chamber, and found three, or possibly four, fresh eggs. Such an instance of early breeding on the part of the Kingfisher is, I think, unparalleled, as it is about a month in advance of the usual time, and the weather at the time was cold and cheerless. Near Burton Mr. H. G. Tomlinson reports a nest with six eggs on April 17th, a week or so earlier than usual for the Trent valley.

Nightjar, *Caprimulgus europæus* L.—Mr. H. F. Gibson found the feathers of a Nightjar in his garden at Ashburne on September 19th. This is the second instance in which the bird has been killed by a dog or cat while squatting on the ground at Ashburne, although the bird does not breed there, and can only have been resting while on migration.

Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus* L.—The only Cuckoo's egg reported to me this season was found in a Robin's nest at Swarkestone, not fifty yards from where another was taken in a similar foster-parents' nest in 1909 (Rev. W. M. Tomlinson). A young Cuckoo was reared by Pied Wagtails at Snelston.

White Owl, *Strix flammea* L.—Mr. W. Storrs Fox reports the appearance of this species at Bakewell, although he has not noticed it before during a residence of twenty-two years in that district.

Little Owl, *Athene noctua* (Scop.).—Mr. G. Pullen informs me that he believes that this species has established itself in a new locality in the county. We hope to investigate the matter next spring.

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus* Tunst.—On September 16th Mr. J. Henderson saw what he believes to have been a Peregrine at Okeover. It is not improbable that it was an escaped bird, which had been flown at Rooks, for Mr. Henderson noticed that some Rooks showed every sign of alarm, as if the Falcon had already stooped at them.

Wood Pigeon, *Columba palumbus* L.—These birds were present in considerable numbers in the spring. A flock of at least two hundred was noted in the Dove Valley on March 5th and 11th.

Black Game, *Tetrao tetrix* L.—It is interesting to note that a few Black Game still survive on the hills on the Staffordshire side of the Dove Valley, and the Rev. E. Deacon reports having flushed a cock and hen in a wood not far from Ellastone in May, when they must have been breeding.

Dotterel, *Eudromias morinellus* (L.).—A small 'trip' was seen on spring migration on May 12th on the same spot (in the Bakewell district) where they were observed last year (W. Boulsover).

Redshank, *Totanus totanus* (L.).—The increase in the breeding range of the Redshank in South Derbyshire has been one of the most remarkable features in the bird life of the last half-century, and it is important that exact dates of its spread should be put on record. Near Sudbury I have notes of breeding since 1896, and in 1901 a pair penetrated up the Dove Valley above Norbury. They did not succeed in rearing young unfortunately, and failed to return in the following year. In 1902 they were breeding between Uttoxeter and Doveridge. During the spring of 1910 they were again present in the same meadow above Norbury which was frequented in 1901.

Common Sandpiper, *Totanus hypoleucus* (L.).—On June 9th I came across a Sandpiper incubating four eggs within a few days of hatching, close to the River Dove. The nest was partly hidden by a large Butter Bur leaf, and finding herself discovered, the Sandpiper ran off squealing loudly. Her tail was widely spread,

and from time to time she stumbled as if broken-winged and wounded, making all the time for the water. Next day she was again sitting quietly and was not disturbed.

Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus* (L.).—Lieut. A. Evans, R.N., reports having seen two Whimbrel on May 16th flying over Snelston Common in the evening in a northerly direction.

Golden Plover, *Charadrius pluriialis* L.—A few were present in the lower Dove Valley on February 27th (Lieut. M. Henderson).

Gulls of various species have visited the Dove Valley on several occasions. Three dark-mantled Gulls. *L. marinus* or *L. fuscus* (probably the latter) were seen at Clifton on January 22nd by Mr. J. Henderson, and on March 29th I saw a single *L. fuscus* at the same place; while a flock of about twenty grey gulls, probably either *L. canus* or *R. tridactyla*, were haunting the flooded meadows by the River Dove on November 1st.

INVERTEBRATA.

INSECTA.

NEUROPTERA and TRICHOPTERA.

(We are glad to say that Mr. Martin E. Mosely is investigating the Neuroptera and Trichoptera of the River Dove, and has already added no fewer than sixteen new species of Trichoptera to our list. We hope at some future time to be able to give some of his results. Practically nothing is known definitely of the Trichoptera of the River Derwent, and Mr. Mosely will be glad to hear of anyone who would collect Caddis-flies, Sedges, and other river flies for him there.)

HYMENOPTERA.

(The almost entire absence of Wasps in the Dove Valley during the autumn of 1910 deserves a word of notice. Several were seen in the spring, but not one was seen in

autumn at Clifton till September 28th, and only a few subsequently. Similar conditions were also reported from other districts.)

LEPIDOPTERA.

Notes on collecting Macro-Lepidoptera at Repton, 1910.

Contributed by H. C. Hayward, M.A.

These notes must of necessity be very fragmentary, as they merely represent the observations of a collector only present in the locality during the school terms, and with rather scanty leisure. Almost all the observations refer to the wood known as Repton Shrubs.

In mid-February *Leucophæaria* was more than usually abundant in the wood. Females were to be found by careful search on the ground at the foot of oaks, but I never detected one on a tree trunk. *Pedaria* was also very common, and I saw some darker than I had hitherto observed; but nothing approaching the black variety seems to occur here: very dark varieties of *Marginaria* are, however, always common on the hawthorn hedges at night. In late April and early May larva-hunting in the wood amongst the undergrowth at night produced large numbers of *Fimbria*, *Baja*, and *Repandata*, and in smaller numbers *Triangulum*, *Brunnea*, *Augur*, *Festiva*, *Nebulosa*, and *Glareosa*. Amongst the specimens of *Fimbria* bred the olive-green forms, both pale and dark, largely predominate, the fawn-coloured variety being comparatively scarce, and the dark mahogany brown form, as elsewhere, very rare. Towards the end of May I examined a stump of osier, over which a *Formiciformis* ♀ had been confined last year, but found only two pupæ, both of which emerged in mid-June. The common spring larvæ were amazingly abundant in the wood in May and June, with the result that all the central portions were completely defoliated, not a leaf being left on the tallest oaks. The tree trunks were thickly covered with larvæ descending in search of food, and vast numbers of larvæ of *Defoliaria*, *Aurantiaria*, *Marginaria*, *Pennaria*, *Pedaria*, etc., were apparently feeding on such unusual pabulum as grass and fern, in default of their

usual food. One result of this abundance of larvæ seemed to be that the tree trunks were no fit resting-place for imagines, and scarcely a specimen was to be found of such species as *Crepuscularia* and *Punctularia*, which are usually abundant. On June 3rd I found over twenty pupæ of *Moneta* on a single plant of *Delphinium* in a neighbour's garden, and there is no doubt that the species has now thoroughly established itself with us. I found also one full-fed larva of *Festucæ* on yellow iris, but diligent search failed to reveal any more. From larvæ taken very late last year in the wood (in early October) specimens of *Duplaris* (very small and almost black) and *Dromedarius* emerged in early June, but from larvæ of *Dictæa* and *Dictæoides* taken at the same time no imagines appeared before the end of July, and as this has been my experience with these species in former years also, I think there can be little doubt that they are both normally single-brooded here. *Ulmata* was remarkably common this year in the wood, where I had not observed it in any numbers since 1905, in which year also it swarmed. The complete defoliation by the early geometrid larvæ had left so little for their successors to feed on that it was perhaps not surprising that several species, e.g., *T. W-Album*, *Munda*, *Gilvago*, *Affinis*, *Viminalis*, etc., were not to be found at all in their usual haunts.

Moths came freely to sugar in my garden in the early part of July on the few nights on which I had leisure to sugar, but the only capture of any note was one specimen of *Sublustris*, which I have only once previously taken here. Over flowers *Iota* and *Triplasia* were as common as usual, but *Pulchrina*, *Tripartita*, and *Umbratica* were all scarce. Several *Moneta* were also taken. A few specimens of *Bembeciformis* were taken in osier beds, and *Tipuliformis* was common enough among the currant bushes. In mid-July in the wood I took three specimens of *Bajularia*—a rare species here—one of which was very remarkable, having the green portions of all the wings replaced by a pale, but very clear, brick-red. The specimen, a female, had one wing badly damaged, but did not appear to

be at all faded. I kept her for ova, and she laid a fair number, which unfortunately proved infertile. *Arcuosa* was exceedingly abundant in the wood, flying at late dusk, and settling on the grass stems; and in mid-September *Fulva* was similarly common in the same situations. The males of this latter species fly at very early dusk, and for about a quarter of an hour the long grasses in the open parts of the wood are alive with the active little insects. But the flight is very soon over, and the insects do not seem here to settle on the grass stems, but on the ground. The females do not fly at this time, though a few may be found siting very low down on the grass stems. I have, however, known the female to fly in the afternoon sunshine. Curiously enough this insect, usually regarded as a frequenter of marshy ground, is most abundant in the dry upper portions of the wood.

Larvæ-beating in mid-September has produced *Dromedarius* and *Camelina*, mostly still very small, in some numbers, and a few *Dictæoides*, but I have not this year found *Dictæa*, *Duplaris*, or *Papilionaria*, all of which were taken fairly freely last year.