

Zoological Record for Derbyshire, 1911.

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VERTEBRATA.

BIRDS.

1910.

Addenda to previous report.

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus* Tunst.—In the record of the Mid. Railway Nat. Hist. Soc. for 1910, it is stated that a peregrine was seen at Alvaston in May in pursuit of a magpie. The late date suggests an escaped bird rather than a migrant.

Scoter, *Ædemia nigra* (L.).—Mr. W. B. Watson informs me that he shot a Scoter on the Trent at a place called the Wiggs, near Weston-on-Trent, on November 2nd, 1910. The bird has been set up by Hutchinson, and is now in Mr. Watson's possession.

1911.

It is with much pleasure that we are able to announce that the members of the Midland Railway Natural History Society have contributed notes to this record through the medium of their secretary, Mr. R. Watkin, and Mr. C. H. Wells. In time we hope to make it more thoroughly representative of the district, but in the meantime our thanks are due to those who have assisted us in the preparation of this year's report.

With regard to abnormal plumages, Mr. C. H. Wells reports a silvery grey variety of the Blackbird noted on

November 3rd, 1910, and Mr. G. Pullen saw a Pied Rook near Breadsall on November 26th, 1911. A Snow Bunting is reported from Alvaston by Mr. C. F. Druitt on October 25th. The Skylark's nest found by Mr. G. Bell at Melbourne with the extraordinary number of seven eggs must surely have been used by two hen birds. Mr. C. H. Wells found the Snipe breeding on the foot of Thorpe Cloud, where the writer discovered a nest in 1887.

The weather conditions of the summer of 1911 were phenomenal all over England, and though in Derbyshire the country never looked so parched and burnt as in the South of England under the continuous sunshine and drought, the effect on vegetation was very marked. The earlier spring migrants were rather late in arriving, and this was especially noticeable in the case of the Sand Martin, which is generally the first of the *Hirundinidæ* to put in an appearance, but this year reached us shortly after the swallow. Once again the Chiff Chaff failed to penetrate up the Dove Valley, but one was heard in September at Clifton, probably on its way south. Spotted Flycatchers have not yet recovered their numbers, but on the other hand Swifts and Corncrakes, especially the latter, were unusually plentiful in the Dove Valley.

ARRIVAL OF MIGRANTS.—Chiff Chaffs did not appear at all in the Dove Valley, but Mr. L. Coxon reports the song at Melbourne on April 1st, and the Wheatear was noted at Morley on April 9th (C. H. Wells). The first of the *Hirundinidæ* to arrive was the Swallow, two being seen at Clifton on April 15th (F. C. R. J.), while others were seen at Derby on the 16th (W. H. Hanbury), and on the 17th I saw six at Clifton, and it was also noted at Mapleton (J. Atkinson) and Stanton-by-Ellastone (Rev. W. M. Tomlinson). Two days later a flock of about thirty was flying over the pond at Calwich. Sand Martins were first noted on the 17th, when Mr. Tomlinson saw two at Stanton, and on the 19th there were eight at Calwich, but they were not observed at Derby till the 22nd (C. H. Wells) or at Mapleton till the 24th

(J. Atkinson). The House Martin is recorded from Swarkestone on April 16th (L. Coxon), but the first bird did not appear at Clifton till the 23rd (F. C. R. J.) and only reached Mapleton on the 26th (J. Atkinson), the main body arriving on the following day. Willow Warblers were noted simultaneously on April 18th at Melbourne (L. Coxon) and in the Ashburne district (F. C. R. J.), while the Wood Warbler was in song at Stanton-by-Ellastone on April 24th (Rev. W. M. Tomlinson), though not recorded from Derby till May 6th (C. H. Wells).

Tree Pipits arrived in fair numbers at Clifton on April 22nd and 23rd (F. C. R. J.), and the first pair of Yellow Wagtails was seen on April 23rd at Mapleton (J. Atkinson), but Mr. Tomlinson saw two at Stanton on the 17th. A Redstart was seen at Mapleton on April 28th (J. Atkinson), and the first Corncrake was reported from Stanton-by-Bridge on April 26th (L. Coxon), May 3rd at Mapleton (J. Atkinson), and May 5th at Stanton-by-Ellastone (W. M. Tomlinson). Spotted Flycatchers appear to have reached us much earlier than usual, though not in large numbers. The first record is from Derby on April 24th, an extraordinary date (W. H. Hanbury), and one was seen at Mapleton on May 2nd (J. Atkinson). A Lesser Whitethroat was seen on April 26th (W. M. Tomlinson). Sandpipers arrived at Mapleton on April 16th (one only), two were seen on the 17th, and three or four on the 18th (J. Atkinson). Swifts were before their usual date: one was observed at Mapleton on April 28th (J. Atkinson); Mr. L. Coxon records this species from Ambergate on the 29th, and two were seen at Ashburne on May 6th (W. M. Tomlinson). The Cuckoo was calling at Snelston on April 21st (F. C. R. J.), at Derby on the 25th (A. B. Scott), and at Mapleton on the 28th. The only note of the arrival of the Whinchat is from Melbourne on May 3rd (L. Coxon).

DEPARTURE OF MIGRANTS.—The main body of Swifts left Ashburne all together and rather earlier than usual; all had left us by August 8th. Two birds, evidently migrants from

the north on their way southward, were seen at Clifton on August 31st (F. C. R. J.), and Mr. J. Henderson, jun., saw another on September 2nd at Ashburne.

On September 30th the Rev. W. M. Tomlinson saw House Martins still feeding young in the nest at Ashburne, but even then many were obviously on migration, though considerable numbers were still about on October 5th. On the 11th Mr. Henderson reported some as still remaining by the Dove, but a day or two later all had disappeared. One straggler visited Ashburne on October 23rd (W. M. Tomlinson), and another was seen in Clifton on October 26th (J. Henderson). Swallows remained in diminishing numbers till early in October. On October 5th Mr. Henderson saw a flock of forty to fifty birds not far above Hanging Bridge, and on the 10th I saw three birds there. One injured individual, which could only fly with difficulty, was noticed several times between October 14th and 20th, and for the last time on the 24th, but probably succumbed to the cold weather of the following week. The last was seen at Repton on November 4th (W. M. T.).

In order to facilitate publication, it is proposed in future to make the annual record run from November 1st to October 31st, and we shall be greatly obliged if correspondents will send in records for publication not later than the first week in November.

CLASSIFIED NOTES.

1911.

Hooded Crow, *Corvus cornix* L.—Although these birds are not uncommon visitors on autumn migration to the Trent Valley and the south-east of the county, they are curiously rare in the upper Dove Valley and on the western side. One bird, however, haunted the low meadows by the Henmore brook for some three weeks in the early spring of 1911, and was seen many times, being last noticed on March 19th (G. M. Bond). On November 16th Mr. J. Henderson, while shooting at Snelston Hall, noticed a dead Hooded Crow, which had not been shot more than a week, on the keeper's gallows in the Holt Wood, Clifton.

Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris* L.—In the heat of summer it is not uncommon to see Starlings hawking in the air for flies at a considerable height, but on April 13th of this year in beautiful weather many were to be seen engaged thus in the Dove meadows. On October 22nd a fresh egg was taken from a nest in the town of Ashburne, and was exhibited in one of the local shops; a remarkable date.

Lesser Redpoll, *Linota linaria cabaret* (Müll.).—Several pairs were breeding in the Dove valley near Ashburne this summer. A nest found by Mr. W. M. Congreve near Clifton had five eggs on June 29th.

House Sparrow, *Passer domesticus* (L.).—The Rev. W. M. Tomlinson reports young sparrows in a House Martin's nest at Repton on October 31st, a late date even for this species.

Song Thrush, *Turdus philomelus clarkii* Hart.—Some birds began to breed very early this season. Two nests, one with four eggs, and the other with one egg, were reported from the Leek Road just above Hanging Bridge, on February 28th. The Rev. W. M. Tomlinson found a nest with the unusual number of seven eggs near Mapleton.

Dipper, *Cinclus cinclus britannicus* Tsch.—The first nest, containing five eggs, was reported from the R. Dove on March 29th.

Wood Warbler, *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* (Bechst.).—An extraordinary case of a Wood Warbler with a song of a totally different kind to the normal type has been already recorded by me in *British Birds*, v., p. 74. The Rev. W. M. Tomlinson kindly called my attention to this bird, whose song he had noticed in Bradley Wood, near Ashburne, on May 18th. From that date onward it sang regularly and persistently till the end of the first week in June. It began with the preliminary "Sip-sip" of the Wood Warbler, but at once broke off into a full-throated little song, impossible to describe in words, but reminding one of the notes of the Tree Pipit, and sung almost as boldly as the well-known burst of music from the Common Wren. There was no trill whatever, but curiously enough the long-drawn melancholy "Wheou" with

which the Wood Wren varies its somewhat monotonous performance was occasionally given, and, as under normal circumstances, was sometimes uttered in flight from one perching place to another.

Nightingale, *Luscinia megarhyncha* Brehm.—Mr. C. H. Wells informs me that a Nightingale was heard and seen in a marshy spinney in the Melbourne district on May 17th, but a long search failed to locate the nest. However, on July 2nd both parents were observed feeding young, apparently just out of the nest.

Grey Wagtail, *Motacilla boarula* L.—A nest of this species found on April 29th contained six eggs, an unusually large clutch for this district. The only other case in which I have seen six eggs was a second laying, which was eventually destroyed by rats. On June 30th another pair was found feeding young in a nest high up on a sandstone bluff by the side of a main road, and about a quarter of a mile distant from the nearest stream of any size. In Derbyshire the nests are almost invariably placed close to the water's edge, but in Ireland it appears to breed not infrequently at some distance from the streams. Although the situation was a very exposed one, the young were brought off safely, and as they left the nest about July 8th, it is probable that a previous brood had already been reared. Two broods are quite exceptional in this district.

Swifts, *Apus apus* (L.).—It was a great pleasure to find these birds more numerous than for some seasons past, and re-colonizing haunts which have been deserted for many years past near Ashburne.

Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus* L.—A young Cuckoo, reported to me by Mr. P. Turnbull, proved to have been hatched in a Pied Wagtail's nest in a large flower pot standing in a walled-in garden, and concealed from view by the drooping leaves of a lily.

White Owl, *Tyto alba alba* Scop.—On September 12th I visited an old oak tree from which several broods of both White and Brown Owls have been reared. The usual nesting

place is in a hollow fifteen feet from the ground. This proved to be empty, but there was a good deal of down on the ground near the tree and a large hollow at the foot of the trunk. At the entrance to this hole lay two dead mice, and on looking in, a nesting hole on the ground was visible with the help of a match, together with a good many cast feathers of young owls, pellets, etc. It is quite possible that some of the young birds were even then in the hole, but a careful watch on a subsequent evening showed that they were sufficiently well fledged to perch on the tree at night, and were visited at intervals by their parents with food. It is probable that the upper hole was first taken possession of by a pair of Brown Owls, which breed earlier than the white birds, and that the White Owls were obliged to put up with the inferior site afforded by the hollow at the foot of the tree. No other instance is known to me in which White Owls have actually bred on the ground.

Goosander, *Mergus merganser* L.—Two of these fine birds, one a male bird in black and white plumage, and the other probably a female, were observed by the head keeper on the ponds at Osmaston Manor, near Ashburne, for two or three weeks in March. On March 24th he came across them both on the water and they allowed him to approach quite closely. As he is familiar with the Goosander as a winter visitor to Roxburgh, and has three stuffed specimens in his house, his identification may be accepted without question, though I am glad to say that the birds were not shot at or disturbed in any way.

Corncrake, *Crex crex* (L.).—For many years past this has seemed to be a disappearing species in the Dove Valley, but there was a remarkable increase in the numbers heard during the wonderful summer of 1911. The craking note could be heard from three or four directions at the same time on a still evening, just as used to be the case some thirty years ago.

INVERTEBRATA.

[Mr. G. Pullen reports having taken a fine *Acronycta alni*

during the past season. Some Grasshoppers taken in Dovedale and identified by Mr. W. J. Lucas proved to be *Onocestus vividulus*, *Gomphocerus maculatus* and *Stauroderus bicolor*. Mr. Martin Mosely is still investigating the Neuroptera and Trichoptera of our Derbyshire streams. The results for the R. Dove have now been fairly thoroughly worked out, but material is much wanted from the Derwent and its tributaries, and we shall be glad to hear from anyone who is willing to collect river flies from this part of the county.]

LEPIDOPTERA.

A few notes on collecting Macro-Lepidoptera at Repton, 1911.

BY H. C. HAYWARD, M.A.

After the amazing abundance last year of the larvæ of such species as *Pedaria*, it might have been expected that the imagines would have been in unusual numbers this year. On the contrary, they were unusually scarce and mostly of small size. No doubt vast numbers of the larvæ were partially or altogether starved. After the complete defoliation of the trees last May, it was a common sight to see these larvæ apparently feeding on brake-fern or grass. In late May large numbers of larvæ and pupæ of *Cynipiformis* were obtained in Repton Shrubs from oak stumps where the trees had been cut down two years previously. Noctuid larvæ were commoner than usual in the woods at night, *Baia*, *Brunnea*, *Triangulum*, *Festiva*, *Fimbria*, *Ianthina*, *Nebulosa*, etc., all being taken in some numbers. But the feature of the month was the abundance of larvæ of *Glareosa*, feeding on wild hyacinth. These were to be taken in hundreds. Wild hyacinth also seemed to be the favourite food of *Rubricosa*, which was very common in the wood. Amongst other larvæ taken at this time were *Flavicornis* and *Scolopacina*. In early June larvæ of *Cervinaria* were taken freely on Mallow, accompanied by *Tragopogonis*, and later in the month larvæ of *Cucubali* were found to be abundant in seed-pods of *Flos-Cuculi*, upwards of forty being taken in one osier-bed. Amongst other captures a