

Zoological Record for Derbyshire, 1913.

By the REV. F. C. R. JOURDAIN, M.A., M.B.O.U., etc.



THE most remarkable feature of the weather during this year was the drought of July and August, following the wet weather in the early summer.

Much damage was done to the fruit crops by the birds, especially the Blackbirds, which attacked the unripe apples on the trees in many places. The autumn was exceptionally fine and open, broken only by a snowfall on December 4th, which soon disappeared.

ARRIVAL OF MIGRANTS.—The Wheatear was the first migrant to arrive, being recorded from near Dove Holes, Buxton, on March 18th (W. L. Shipton), at Via Gellia on the 24th (L. F. Coxon), and on the 26th at Thorpe (E. Grindey). The Ring Ouzel is also recorded from Dane Flat on March 30th (W. L. Shipton), and the Chiff Chaff was in song at Calwich on March 31st (F. C. R. J.), and on April 2nd had reached Thorpe (E. G.). Curiously enough, the Willow Warblers began to arrive much about the same time, and a few are recorded from Thorpe on April 2nd (E. G.), and Melbourne on the 5th (L. F. C.). A sharp snowfall on April 11th probably kept the rest back, and the next record is not till April 12th, one at Mapleton (J. Atkinson), and April 15th, at Willington (W. M. Tomlinson). The first Sandpiper was seen on April 12th at Mapleton (J. A.), and at Thorpe on the 16th (E. G.). A single Swallow was noted at Thorpe on

April 3rd (E. G.), but no others till the 12th, when it is recorded from Burton (H. G. Tomlinson), and the 13th, when a third was seen at Mapleton (J. A.), and the main body only began to arrive about April 20th. Two Sand Martins were seen near Mapleton on April 13th (J. A.), but the first record is one near Derby on March 28th, and four or five on April 1st (L. F. C.), while two more reached Thorpe on the 18th April (E. G.), and on the 20th they were seen at Clifton (M. Henderson). The Tree Pipit was noted at Mapleton on April 12th (J. A.), and at Thorpe on the 18th (E. G.), and after the 22nd became common. The first Yellow Wagtail was seen at Willington on April 14th (W. M. T.), and on the 16th one appeared at Mapleton (J. A.), while on the 19th others are recorded from Rocester (M. H.). Two House Martins were seen near Mayfield on April 19th (C. Bradbury), and two near Mapleton on the 20th (J. A.), while one was seen near Derby on the same day (L. F. C.), and on the 24th they had reached Buxton (W. L. S.). On April 22nd the Cuckoo was heard at Ilam (E. G.) and Ellastone (W. M. T.), near Rocester on the 23rd (C. B.), at Burton on the same day (H. G. Tomlinson), and at Clifton on the 24th (F. E. Jourdain). The Lesser Whitethroat was also first heard on April 22nd at Mapleton (J. A.), but not till May 1st at Tissington (E. G.) and Willington (W. M. T.). Mr. W. Storrs-Fox and Mr. W. Boulsover report this species from the Bakewell district, where it is by no means common. A Garden Warbler is recorded from Clifton on April 20th (M. H.), and from Thorpe on the 27th (E. G.). The Whitethroat appeared at Ilam on April 23rd (E. G.), but no Redstarts are noted prior to April 26th; one at Thorpe (E. G.) and two at Mapleton on the 29th (J. A.). Whinchats were seen near Mapleton on April 30th (J. A.), and at Willington on May 1st (W. M. T.), while they had reached Thorpe on May 3rd (E. G.). The Blackcap is only recorded from Thorpe on April 27th (E. G.), while the Sedge Warbler is noted from Okeover

on April 25th (M. H.), and on the 27th near Derby (C. H. Wells), and at Mapleton on April 30th. The Swifts arrived before their usual time, and the first were noted at Bakewell on April 27th (W. Storrs-Fox), while two were seen at Mayfield on April 30th (C. B.), and at Burton on the same day (H. G. T.), as well as at Willington on May 2nd (W. M. T.). Two Corncrakes were heard near Derby on April 26th (L. F. C.), and the note was noted at Snelston on the 29th (C. B.). I have no note of the Wood Wren prior to May 10th, but it probably arrived before this date. The Spotted Flycatcher arrived at Burton on May 11th (H. G. T.), and reached Hanging Bridge on the 15th (C. B.). The Turtle Dove was observed at Burton on May 10th (H. G. T.), and Nightjars were on their breeding grounds late in May, but had evidently been there some time.

DEPARTURE OF MIGRANTS.—The Swifts were present in their usual numbers at Ashburne on August 5th, and one was seen near the River Dove on the 9th, but none on the 12th, though I saw one at Ashburne on the 14th (F. C. R. J.). An enormous flock of Swallows and Martins passed over Clifton on September 10th, but they remained in fair numbers up to the end of the month. On October 4th about fourteen to sixteen Sand Martins were seen at Clifton in the morning, and a larger party of forty to fifty were present in the afternoon, but none were noticed subsequently (F. C. R. J.). Near Derby about one hundred House Martins were seen on migration on September 22nd (R. Watkin), as well as four on the 24th and two on October 6th (R. W.), while one was seen at Derby on October 14th (Cawley). Mr. C. H. Wells records a male Ring Ouzel from Hayfield on October 19th. The autumn song of the Chiff Chaff was noted at Clifton on August 23rd, 26th, 27th, and 28th, and Willow Wrens were heard on August 24th, and also on September 11th and 12th (F. C. R. J.).

Amongst those who have kindly contributed notes to this record may be mentioned the following: Messrs. J. Atkinson,

T. E. Auden, C. Bradbury; Captain R. H. R. Brocklebank; Messrs. L. F. Coxon, E. Grindey, R. Hall, G. G. Harrold, J. Henderson, M. Henderson, D. Palmer Pearson, G. Pullen, W. Storrs-Fox; Dr. W. L. Shipton; Messrs. W. N. Statham and H. G. Tomlinson; Rev. W. M. Tomlinson; Messrs. R. Watkin, C. H. Wells, and other members of the Midland Natural History Society.

CLASSIFIED NOTES.

MAMMALIA.

Common Shrew, *Sorex araneus castaneus* Jenyns.—Mr. G. Pullen informs me that a pure albino (with pink eyes) of this species was caught at Egginton on August 25th. Others are said to have been seen in the district.

AVES.

Rook, *Corvus f. frugilegus* L.—A young Rook for some reason was apparently unable to feed itself, and up to the end of July was repeatedly noticed flying about in company with two old birds, near Clifton, while its loud cries for food were constantly heard. Mr. Pullen says that several pied specimens have been seen on the Egginton Sewage Farm.

Goldfinch, *Carduelis c. britannicus* (Hart.).—There are signs that this species is increasing in numbers. Two broods were successfully hatched off in the Ashburne district in 1913.

British Marsh Tit, *Parus palustris dresseri* Stejn.—As Marsh and Willow Tits are by no means plentiful in Derbyshire, and the older records do not discriminate between them, it may be as well to record a nest of the British Marsh Tit with young at Thorpe, near Ashburne, on June 2nd, 1913 (*cf. Brit. Birds*, vii., p. 143).

British Willow Tit, *P. atricapillus kleinschmidti* Hellm.—The Rev. W. M. Tomlinson found a Willow Tit's nest with

highly incubated eggs at Willington on May 19th (*Brit. Birds*, vii., p. 142).

Nuthatch, *Sitta europaea britannica* Hart.—These birds are so local in Derbyshire that it is of interest to record that a pair are occasionally seen to visit a bird table at Mapleton, near Ashburne, probably wanderers from Okeover Park, where one or two pairs are resident.

Spotted Flycatcher, *Muscicapa s. striata* Pall.—On July 10th I was shown a nest of this species on Mr. Gurney's house at Repton, containing four unspotted blue eggs, somewhat abnormal in shape. A similar clutch of infertile eggs had been laid previously, and ejected by the birds after incubation.

[Marsh Warbler, *Acrocephalus palustris* (Bechst.).—Mr. G. G. Harrold has recorded in the *Field* of August 31st, 1913, the finding of this species apparently breeding near Breaston. He kindly forwarded two of the birds, as well as eggs, from this locality for examination, but after careful investigation the birds were proved to be Reed Warblers, and the eggs resembled a scarce variety of that of the Reed Warbler, and probably also belonged to that species. Meantime we cannot admit this species to the county list without further evidence.]

Stonechat, *Saxicola torquata hibernans* (Hart.).—A few Stonechats appeared in the Dove Valley during the latter part of March. A male haunted a field at Mayfield (Staffs.) for several days about March 18th-21st (C. Bradbury), and another was seen on March 25th on the telegraph wires by the railway line between Norbury and Clifton.

Little Owl, *Athene n. noctua* (Scop.).—Mr. G. H. Storer, speaking at Burton, stated that a colony of these birds is now established at Bretby Park. He first heard of it in 1908, and since that date the birds had been met with annually, and had been proved to nest on at least one occasion.

Red Kite, *Milvus milvus* (L.).—The most remarkable ornithological event of the year is undoubtedly the appearance of a bird of this species in mid-Derbyshire. For obvious

reasons it was not thought advisable to publish any record of its appearance as long as it remained in the neighbourhood. Mr. R. Hall, of Matlock, was the first to call my attention to the occurrence of this fine bird. It was first noted about the end of April by Mr. D. Palmer Pearson, who saw it gliding along the face of the High Tor, and noticed particularly its large size, reddish colouring, gliding flight, and forked tail. The deflection of the tail in flight was also noted. From this time onward it was seen near the Tor on several occasions, amongst other dates on May 16th and 19th, on one occasion perching on a tree growing out of the cliff for some considerable time. On June 17th Mr. Pearson wrote that he had seen the bird that evening at about 6.30 p.m. It was also observed subsequently to this date at the same spot. An interesting piece of confirmatory evidence is furnished by Miss Marjorie Fitzherbert, of Somersal Herbert, who states that about the end of June or beginning of July she saw a large dark hawk, considerably bigger than either of our two well-known species, and with a distinctly forked tail, flying in the direction of Eaton Wood. Mr. W. N. Statham also informs me that it was observed by at least four other independent observers at Matlock. Apparently it was not breeding, and as no report of its death has been received, we may hope that it has escaped the usual fate of the larger birds of prey.

Sparrow Hawk, *Accipiter n. nisus* (L.).—I have received some interesting notes on a nest of this species in the Bakewell district, which was found with two eggs on May 7th. The eggs were removed at intervals, one being left in the nest, and between May 7th and June 19th thirteen other eggs were laid, making fifteen in all. Possibly even more might have been laid if the last egg had not been taken. Some of the later eggs were almost devoid of markings. Mr. H. S. Davenport has recorded similar observations from Leicestershire in the *Ornithologist*, p. 45. On September 9th I watched a Sparrow Hawk working up behind a hedge. At the top it struck a

Thrush, killing it at once, and when I surprised it a minute later, had just swallowed the Thrush's head, while the body was yet untouched. It left its prey reluctantly, but on passing the spot an hour afterwards I found that the body of the Thrush had disappeared.

Brent Goose, *Branta b. bernicla* (L.).—On January 10th, 1913, a Brent Goose was brought in the flesh to Mr. T. E. Auden, of Repton, which had been caught in an exhausted state in the yard of a cottage at Winshill, in that part of Burton which lies in Derbyshire, on the previous evening (see *Brit. Birds*, vi., p. 314). The last recorded instance of the occurrence of this species in the county took place in 1903.

Wild Duck, *Anas p. platyrhynchos* L.—The Rev. W. M. Tomlinson informs me that a Wild Duck brought a brood of six newly-hatched ducklings on to a pond near Bretby on November 6th, 1913, a remarkably late date. All the ducklings were found dead, however, on the following day.

Pochard, *Nyroca f. ferina* (L.).—A drake and duck Pochard were on the ponds at Osmaston on May 14th, a very late date for this species, unless they were breeding there (Captain R. H. R. Brocklebank).

Common Scoter, *Oidemia n. nigra* (L.).—On May 3rd, 1913, Captain Brocklebank had a good view of a Common Scoter on the reservoir at Mapperley, where it was busily diving.

Turtle Dove, *Streptopelia t. turtur* (L.).—Although this species has greatly increased its breeding range in South Derbyshire of late years, it is still local. On June 2nd, 1913, we met with a nest for the first time at Thorpe, although for many years it has bred regularly at certain spots in the Henmore Valley.

Lapwing, *Vanellus vanellus* (L.).—The first eggs were picked up earlier than usual this year; one was found at Mapleton on March 19th (E. Grindey).

Curlew, *Numenius arquata* (L.).—Mr. J. Henderson and a friend saw two Curlews flying over the Dove Valley towards Fenny Bentley on September 4th, 1913.

Woodcock, *Scotopax rusticola* L.—Dr. W. L. Shipton informs me that on June 27th, 1913, he saw a Woodcock fly across the Congleton Road between Crag Hall and Dane Flat, south-west of Buxton. The date is remarkable, and points to breeding in the neighbourhood.

INSECTS.

A few notes on collecting Lepidoptera at Repton in 1913.

By H. C. HAYWARD.

The season of 1913, here as elsewhere, despite the fine summer, has been a disappointing one for the collector. With a few exceptions, insects have been remarkably scarce, and the usual methods of capture singularly unproductive. That this is in some measure due to the excessive rainfall of last summer and of the early months of this year cannot be doubted, but there are some circumstances which it is difficult to reconcile with such an explanation. For example, in May and early June the usual *Noctuid* larvæ, far from being scarce, were to be found in the woods in larger numbers than usual; *Glareosa*, *Baja*, *Brunnea*, *Triangulum*, *Augur*, *Festiva*, *Fimbria*, *Ianthina*, *Nebulosa*, etc., were all plentiful; *Glareosa* in par-

ticular were in profusion on the wild hyacinth in Repton Shrubs, and yet later in the year scarcely an insect of any of these species was to be taken at sugar, even on the most favourable evenings. Early in the year the willows were in fine bloom, and *T. Populeti* was sought in its usual haunts. Unfortunately, the willow bushes growing in its favourite copse bore no bloom this year; and as it never seems to travel any distance from its parent trees, and has not been taken on the abundant willow-bloom growing only a few hundred yards away, the first evening proved fruitless. But the simple device of cutting sprays of blossom and decorating the undergrowth beneath the poplar trees therewith produced the species in profusion and in fine condition on the next and subsequent evenings. With it were a very few *Cruda*, always a curiously scarce species here. In March and early April several *Strataria* of a fine dark form and rather large size were taken on tree-trunks in Repton Shrubs. I have seen the species here before, but only at long intervals. Larvæ of *Bembeciformis* were, as usual, common in the osier-beds, but of those collected very few were reared. In May a few alders in a small copse were found to be tenanted by *Trifasciata*, a species that had not been taken here in recent years. It seems curious that it should not occur among the numerous alders in Repton Shrubs. *Albicillata* also occurred in some numbers, though it is usually scarce here. Although it is outside the Derbyshire area, it seems worth while to mention that a pupa of *S. Scotiæformis* was taken from an old birch tree on Cannock Chase in May, which produced an imago on July 1st, and on the same day a second ♀ specimen was captured there, flying round a tree-trunk in the sunshine. The locality had not, I believe, been previously recorded, but there is evidently a considerable colony of the insect there, as many trees were found to be infected, and more than a dozen empty pupæ were found protruding from the trunks. Very few insects of any note were taken in the course of the summer term by boys in Repton School, but

amongst them may be noted *Moneta*, now thoroughly established here, *Furcula* and *Bifida*, *Dictæa*, *Dictæoides*, and *Ziczac*, the last always a scarce species in the immediate neighbourhood. I have, however, two occurrences to record which are very remarkable, though they cannot be regarded as other than accidental. The first is that of a specimen of *L. Sibylla*, taken in Repton Shrubs by a lad in the village. The specimen was taken in 1910, but was only brought to my notice this year. There seems to be no room for doubt of the capture, and the specimen is now in the school local collection, but it is probably to be accounted for by the release of bred specimens by some local collector, or the turning out of larvæ and pupæ. Such enquiries as I have been able to make have not, however, succeeded in tracing its origin. It is, of course, more than possible that these woods, with their abundant undergrowth of honeysuckle, may have been a habitat of this species in the past, but in the absence of any records from such a well-worked locality, the hypothesis of survival seems quite untenable. The second occurrence, that of a specimen of *S. Semele* in a Repton garden this summer, seems to me far more difficult to explain, as the species is not, like *Sibylla*, easy to breed, or likely to be bred and released by a collector. The specimen is a fine fresh ♂, and was taken by a boy in the same sweep of his net with a specimen of *Atalanta* whilst both were sunning themselves on a clump of Michaelmas Daisies, a combination of circumstances so utterly foreign to the habits of the insect as to be in itself remarkable. The species occurs, though rarely, in Dovedale, but the specimen is quite fresh, and, further, it is again foreign to the insect's habit to travel to any distance from its native haunts. The Rev. R. E. Frampton, late of Winshill, has suggested to me an explanation which may perhaps be the true one. The young larva of *Semele* frequently constructs for itself a shelter in the heads of the taller grasses that it affects, and remains in this shelter until rather late in the autumn before going down into

the ground to hibernate. It is conceivable, therefore, that young larvæ might be imported amongst heather or rough sedge obtained from a distance by some farmer for bedding purposes, and have found their way to the ground and completed their life-cycle here. In my own garden I saw in early August a brown butterfly, but, unfortunately, could not get near enough to it to be certain of its species before it disappeared over a wall. From its size and flight I took it to be *Tithonus*, a species which used to occur here, and probably may still be found in the neighbourhood, but which I have not previously seen, and which is amongst the number of those that have rather unaccountably disappeared from our lanes and hedgerows. The Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain calls my attention to the record of *D. Pulchella*, published in the *Field* of September 6th, 1913, by G. G. Harrold, as taken "recently" at Breaston, which it is interesting to set beside the recorded occurrences of this species at Repton in 1863 and 1874, and in Staffordshire in 1890, as indications of the astonishing powers of flight and migratory impulse of this fragile-looking insect. And he also tells me that *Thecla Quercus*, so abundant on Cannock Chase, was observed by G. Pullen to be not at all uncommon this year at Little Eaton. Mr. W. Storrs-Fox also mentions having seen *V. atalanta* in his garden at Bakewell on October 19th. My usual autumn search for Eupitheciid larvæ proved them to be far less common than is generally the case. *Trisignaria*, *Albipunctata*, *Valerianata*, *Oblongata*, and *Absynthiata* were all scarce, though *Linariata* and *Pulchellata* were found in larger numbers than usual. No fresh *Eupithecia* was added to our list, though much time was devoted to a search for *Pimpinellata*, as the *P. Saxifraga* was so abundant and luxuriant this year, and the species surely ought to be present. I was surprised to find last year that the pupæ from a brood of *E. Vulgata*, from eggs laid in May, did not produce the imagines in August, and refused to do so even under the stimulus of forcing, but all waited until April of this year,

when the moths emerged in due course. Yet the species is probably normally double-brooded here as elsewhere, for specimens certainly may be found late in the summer. An instance in which the fine summer produced an abnormal second brood may be recorded in *C. Pectinitaria*, of which I took a freshly-emerged specimen in my garden in late October.