

## ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORD FOR DERBYSHIRE, 1937.

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F.Z.S., etc.

The year 1937 was an unusually dry one, judging from Mr. G. C. Lawson's records taken in the Dove valley, the rainfall for the year amounting to 789.3 mm. (31.06 ins.), which is 92.8 mm. (3.6 ins.) below the average. The driest periods included the months of June, August, September and November, while from Sept. 26th to Oct. 20th, there was an absolute drought. Snow fell on 37 days, the heaviest fall being on February 27th and 28th and on the latter day it was 6 inches deep. In spite of the lack of rain, there was a great deficiency of bright sunshine for nine months in the year, including the spring and early summer, when breeding was in progress.

## ARRIVAL OF MIGRANTS, 1937.

We regret the absence of the Red-backed Shrike from our record, but have an interesting note of the occurrence of the Nightingale at Radbourne from Capt. W. K. Marshall.

Tree-Pipit, *Anthus t. trivialis*. April 3rd, Whitwell (G.W.); April 15th, Matlock (R.E.); 22nd, Windley (W.M.); 24th, Ashbourne (K.H.); Hazelwood (C.H.); 27th, Heath (C.B.C.); May 3rd, Radbourne (W.M.).

Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla f. rayi*. April 6th, Whitwell (G.W.); 10th, Ashbourne (K.H.); 15th, Matlock (R.E.); May 18th, Hazelwood (C.H.), a very late date.

Spotted Flycatcher, *Muscicapa s. striata*. May 14th, Ashbourne (K.H.); 15th, Hazelwood (C.H.); and Radbourne (W.M.); 16th, Matlock (R.E.).

Chiff-chaff, *Phylloscopus c. collybita*. March 31st, Ashbourne (K.H.); April 4th, Matlock (R.E.); 11th, Radbourne (W.M.); 12th, Hazelwood (C.H.).

Willow-Warbler, *Ph. t. trochilus*. March 31st, Heath (C.B.C.); April 3rd, Whitwell (G.W.); 4th, Hazelwood, one (C.H.); 10th, Ashbourne (K.H.), Matlock (R.E.), Radbourne (W.M.).

Wood-Warbler *Ph. sibilatrix*. April 27th, Whitwell (G.W.), Sherwood (Notts.), (R.E.); May 2nd, Ashbourne (R.E.).

Grasshopper Warbler, *Locustella n. naevia*. April 20th, Chesterfield (G.W.); May 2nd, Radbourne (W.M.); 6th, Ambergate (R.E.).

Reed-Warbler, *Acrocephalus s. scirpaceus*. May 10-16, Radbourne (W.M.).

Sedge-Warbler, *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. May 4th, Ashbourne (K.H.); 14th, Matlock (R.E.); 18th, Hazelwood (C.H.).

Garden-Warbler, *Sylvia borin*. May 2nd, Radbourne (W.M.); 6th, Matlock (R.E.); 7th, Yeldersley (K.H.); 15th, Hazelwood (C.H.).

Blackcap, *S. a. atricapilla*. April 30th, Radbourne (W.M.); May 3rd, Hazelwood (C.H.); 6th, Cromford (R.E.); 7th, Yeldersley (K.H.).

Whitethroat, *S. c. communis*. April 29th, Cromford (R.E.); 30th, Ashbourne (K.H.); May 1st, Hazelwood (C.H.); 4th, Sudbury (W.M.).

Lesser Whitethroat. *S. c. curruca*. April 9th, Radbourne (W.M.); May 3rd, Hazelwood (C.H.).

Wheatear. *Ænanthe æ. ænanthe*. April 4th, Earls-sterndale, five, and Dovedale, two (J.A.); 9th, Buxton (W.S.); 23rd; Darley Dale (R.E.); Heath (C.B.C.).

Greenland Wheatear, *Æ. æ. leucorrhœa*. April 13th, Ashbourne, one (K.H.); 30th, Whitwell (G.W.).

Whinchat, *Saxicola rubetra*. April 27th, Sherwood, Notts. (R.E.); 28th, Heath (C.B.C.); May 5th, Ashbourne (K.H.); 13th, Derby (R.E.); 18th, Hazelwood (C.H.).

Redstart, *Phœnicurus ph. phœnicurus*. April 13th, Ashbourne (K.H.); 21st, Hazelwood (C.H.); 27th, Matlock (R.E.); 30th, Radbourne (W.M.); May 14th, Buxton (W.S.).

Nightingale, *Luscinia m. megarhyncha*. May 2nd, Radbourne (W.M.).

Swallow, *Hirundo r. rustica*. April 7th, Radbourne (W.M.); 10th, Ashbourne (K.H.) and Whitwell (G.W.); 11th, Hazelwood (C.H.), Sudbury (W.M.) and Buxton (W.S.); 20th, Matlock (R.E.).

House-Martin, *Delichon u. urbica*. May 5th, Hazelwood (C.H.); 6th, Tissington (K.H.); 8th, Milton (W.M.); 9th, Matlock (R.E.); 11th Buxton (W.S.).

Sand-Martin, *Riparia r. riparia*. April 7th, Bakewell, five (J.A.); 11th Hazelwood, several (C.H.); 13th Mapleton (K.H.) and Matlock (R.E.); 24th, Sutton-on-the-Hill (W.M.).

Swift, *Apus a. apus*. May 4th, Ashbourne, seven (K.H.); 6th, Matlock (R.E.); 9th, Radbourne (W.M.); Heath (C.B.C.); 10th, Buxton (W.S.) and Whitwell (G.W.); 16th, Hazelwood (C.H.); a very late date.

Nightjar, *Caprimulgus e. europæus*. June 23rd, Ambergate (R.E.).

Cuckoo, *Cuculus c. canorus*. April 27th, Hazelwood (C.H.), Barrow and Matlock (R.E.); 29th, Whitwell (G.W.); 30th, Radbourne (W.M.); Heath (C.B.C.); May 1st, Ashbourne (K.H.); 8th, Buxton (W.S.).

Turtle-Dove, *Streptopelia t. turtur*. May 10th, Whitwell (G.W.); 15th, Matlock (R.E.); 16th, Radbourne (W.M.); 28th, Etwall (C.H.); 29th, Hazelwood (C.H.).

Sandpiper, *Tringa hypoleucos*. April 13th, Mapleton (K.H.) and R. Dove (R.E.); 23rd, Darley Dale (R.E.).

Corncrake, *Crex crex*. May 1st, Hazelwood (C.H.); 19th, Matlock (R.E.).

#### DEPARTURE OF SUMMER MIGRANTS.

Yellow Wagtail last seen Sept. 6th, Ashbourne (K.H.).

Spotted Flycatcher, Sept. 9th, Ashbourne (K.H.).

Wheatear. Sept. 28th, Heath (C.B.C.).

Whinchat. Sept. 15th, Heath (C.B.C.).

Swallow, Sept. 28th, Buxton (W.S.); Oct. 9th, Thorpe (K.H.).

House Martin, Oct. 22nd, Ashbourne (K.H.).

Sand Martin, Sept. 15th, Ashbourne (K.H.).

Swift, Aug. 8th, Buxton (W.S.); 10th, Ashbourne (K.H.); 21st, Radbourne (W.M.).

#### WINTER MIGRANTS.

The absence of Fieldfares (*T. pilaris*) during the winter of 1936-37 was very noticeable in the Dove valley (B.P. and K.H.). None was seen at Ashbourne till Feb. 11th, and the last was noted at Radbourne on March 21st (W.M.) and Biggin on April 4th (K.H.). A large flock seen at Hazelwood on March 28th, but none later (C.H.). Redwings (*T. musicus*) were last noted at Ashbourne on April 5 (K.H.), and at Hazelwood on the 4th (C.H.). Bramblings (*Fr. montifringilla*) were commoner than usual in 1936-37 and a flock of about 100 was noted at Clifton on Jan. 16 (K.H.) and also about 50 feeding with Chaffinches and Yellow Buntings near the Chevin in the same month (C.H.).

Siskins (*C. spinus*) were last seen at Shirley Wood on March 9th (K.H.), and also reported from the Ecclesbourne between Shottle and Duffield and at Farnah Hall in January and March (C.H.).

In the autumn of 1937 the first Redwing was found in a trap at Whitwell on Sept. 17th, a remarkably early date (G.W.). A few (about six) were seen at Ashbourne on Oct. 6th (K.H.) also at Radbourne, Oct. 13th (W.M.) and large flocks of Redwing and Fieldfares were reported from Hazelwood on Oct. 10th (C.H.); Fieldfares at Radbourne on Oct. 16th (W.M.), while Redwings were noted at Markeaton, Oct. 21st, and Matlock on the 24th (R.E.). The first Siskins were noted near Ashbourne on Nov. 2nd (K.H.).

## SYSTEMATIC NOTES, 1937.

The latest list of Derbyshire birds is that published by the writer in the *Victoria County History* in 1905, which is not only more than thirty years old, but was compiled under an obsolete system of nomenclature, which renders it inconvenient for comparison with modern works. A new list, with brief notes on the status of each form, would be extremely useful to all students of ornithology in the county, and we hope in the course of the next year or two, to make use of the material collected in the interval which has elapsed since 1905 by the publication of a new list, revised and brought up-to-date. We shall be glad to receive notes on any occurrences of interest in order to make the work as complete as possible (F.J.).

Hooded Crow, *Corvus c. cornix*. One was shot on Oct. 25th, on the Sydnope Hall Estate, near Matlock, by Mr. J. Woodhouse. It was sent to Mr. Adsetts but too late for preservation and was apparently a bird of the year (R.K.).

Rook, *C. f. frugilegus*. A partial albino, but with a black head was reported as associating with other Rooks near Kedleston by Lord Scarsdale in the *Derbys. Advert.*, Nov. 19th.

Starling, *Sturnus v. vulgaris*. A pure white bird seen at Brailsford, by Dr. H. H. Hollick, on March 16th (K.H.).

Hawfinch, *Coccothraustes c. coccothraustes*. A cock watched for nearly an hour feeding on the ground under larch trees near the Ecclesbourne, on March 28th (C.H.). Possibly searching for fallen cones as I have seen it on the ground under beeches, after beech-mast at Clifton (F.J.).

Goldfinch, *Carduelis c. britannicus*. Appears to be steadily increasing: a pair bred in an orchard near Rowsley (R.E.); noted in July at Parwich and Alsop-en-le-Dale (C.C.).

Tree-Sparrow, *Passer m. montanus*. In some notes from the Sheffield District, there is a record of a nest with

eggs in a thick isolated thorn tree on a sewerage farm at Dronfield, built exactly like a House-sparrow's nest would be in a similar site, but lined with horsehair, etc. (A.W.).

Corn-Bunting, *Emberiza calandra*. This species seems to have decreased in numbers of late years in the Trent valley, where it is now quite a rare bird (J.L.A.): also not noticed recently above Winster (F.J.). It still breeds in one district in the north of the county.

Pied Wagtail, *Motacilla a. yarrellii*. The roost in a large rhododendron in Dr. Hollick's garden at Ashbourne was occupied from Nov. 25th, 1936 till about Jan. 2nd, 1937, the numbers present varying from 16 to about 50. They left from 20 minutes to half-an-hour before sunrise. On March 2nd about 20 birds came in, and by March 24th there were about 220. On April 10th two Yellow Wagtails (*M. f. rayi*) joined them, but there were never more than about six present, though they continued to come for a few days. On April 16th the roost was fully occupied, but not one came on the 17th, though a few birds flew about the garden half an hour before roosting time. Some 50 to 100 Pied Wagtails roosted in trees in the neighbourhood for about a fortnight longer, but they did not return to the bush again (K.H.).

Nuthatch, *Sitta e. affinis*. The distribution of this species in the county is very interesting. Two pairs are resident at Radbourne: one in the Hall Gardens and one in the Park (W.M.). 'Heard daily between Windley and Turnditch, 27th Sept. to 4th Oct., evidently not uncommon here' (C.C.). Apparently now extinct in Derby and Matlock districts, but noisy in Osberton Park, over the Notts. border (R.E.) and among old timber in N.E. Derbyshire.

Willow-Tit, *Parus a. kleinschmidti*. At present this species is only definitely known to breed in two widely separated districts of the county, viz. in the south-west (lower Dove valley) and in the north, south-west of

Sheffield. From the latter district we have received very interesting details of breeding from four localities (A.W.).

[Nothing seen of the Red-backed Shrike (*L. collurio*) in the Parwich neighbourhood (C.C.), nor near Matlock (R.E.) in 1937.]

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa s. striata*. A nesting site on the hinge of a door was occupied in 1937 at Clifton. This site has been regularly in use since 1900, though possibly a year may have been missed occasionally (F.J.).

Willow-Warbler, *Phylloscopus t. trochilus*. A nest in a hedge at Edale, 4 ft. 6 ins. above the ground (J.A.).

Grasshopper-Warbler, *Locustella n. naevia*. It is extraordinary how this migrant discovers suitable breeding ground. In one bit of country in the north of the county there were in 1937 about thirty pairs breeding, but as the trees grow up it is probable that the ground may become less attractive and the birds will be forced to find fresh nesting quarters (G.W.).

Reed-Warbler, *Acrocephalus s. scirpaceus*. The isolated colony at Radbourne Rough has held 6-7 to 12 pairs every year for the past 4 or 5 years (W.M.).

Lesser Whitethroat, *Sylvia c. curruca*. Though fairly common in the south of the county this is a rare breeder in the north and it is interesting to get a definite record of a nest at Totley (A.W.).

Stonechat, *Saxicola t. hibernans*. A cock on the Ashbourne Sewage Farm on March 9th (K.H.); another at Whitwell on April 27 (G.W.).

Dipper, *Cinclus c. gularis*. One noticed perched on the top of a fairly tall alder by the Ecclesbourne on April 25th (C.H.).

Swallow, *Hirundo r. rustica*. A nest built on the top of an electric light shade inside the museum at Danesgate, Repton (J.L.A.).

Cuckoo, *Cuculus c. canorus*. A young Cuckoo was reared from a Blackbird's nest, together with three young

Blackbirds at Snelston in a syringa bush. The nest was placed deep down between the branches, so presumably the young Cuckoo was unable to eject its companions. Two or three Cuckoo's eggs or young found annually in the Reed-Warbler colony at Radbourne (W.M.).

Short-eared Owl, *Asio f. flammeus*. These birds were present throughout the year on the Warslow moors, just over the border (B.T.). At Axe Edge, near Buxton, one came several times within a few yards on May 20th; also seen in Goyt Valley on June 15th (W.S.).

Little Owl, *Athene n. vidalii*. Reported as quite common round Buxton and noted in Goyt valley, June 13th (W.S.), but some decline in numbers near Matlock (R.E.).

White Owl, *Tyto a alba*. A pair resident between Windley and Turnditch (C.C.); reported as breeding in Darley Dale and seen near Derby in October, but has disappeared from Markeaton (R.E.).

Peregrine, *Falco p. peregrinus*. We have received some details of the attempted breeding of this fine species on Kinder Scout in 1929. In this case both parents were shot and one young bird was taken from the nest on June 29th (R.K.). Since 1919 when it first essayed to breed in Derbyshire, it has made several attempts to established itself on the moors in at least two districts, but we believe in every case without success. While one could hardly expect this grand species to be allowed to exist in numbers, it does seem deplorable that one pair should not be spared to represent the species in the North Midlands.

Merlin, *F. c. cesalon*. A pair bred near Alstonfield in 1937 (B.P.).

Buzzard, *Buteo b. buteo*. One reported in the same district, as well as a Harrier (sp.?) (B.P.).

Bittern, *Botaurus stellaris*. One caught in a terribly emaciated condition on Feb. 16th by a reservoir at Strines, which died the same night and is being set up for the Sheffield Museum (A.W.).



Shoveler, *Spatula clypeata*. Breeding was definitely recorded in 1937 in N.E. Derbyshire, two nests being found, which ultimately contained 10 and 11 eggs (G.W.).

Scoter, *Oidemia n. nigra*. One on the R. Trent at Barton Ferry on Oct. 6th (R.E.). A duck seen on Wyaston Lake, May 10th probably also belonged to this species (K.H.).

Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax c. carbo*. An immature bird was seen for about a week at the Hall Leys, Matlock during the spring (R.E.).

Great Crested Grebe, *Podiceps c. cristatus*. Occasionally seen on Coombs, but never more than one bird (W.S.). Bred at Osmaston, a pair and an immature bird on the large pond, April 6th, and a pair with one small young on Sept. 4th, as well as another bird, on Wyaston Lake, not yet adult and a young bird at same place on Oct. 22nd (K.H.). Also reported as numerous on Sutton Reservoir in June and one bird on Linby Mill Dam, Notts. (C.H.). A pair at Sudbury on Feb. 10th (W.M.).

Dunlin, *Calidris a. schinzii*. We have now positive evidence from different sources of the breeding of this species on the N. Derbyshire moorlands on two or three occasions (A.W.). A small flock at Coombs on Oct. 18th (W.S.).

Green Sandpiper, *Tringa ochropus*. Two in Sudbury Park, Jan. 25th (W.M.).

Woodcock, *Scolopax rusticola*. The increase in the number of breeding birds in north-east Derbyshire is very remarkable and of late years it has nested in some numbers in woods at Hathersage and Grindleford (A.W.) and also east of Chesterfield (G.W.).

Snipe, *Capella g. gallinago*. In spite of the fact that every year instances of Snipe perching on trees are recorded in the 'Field' as extraordinary occurrences, all field ornithologists are aware that this habit is extremely common. A decayed oak overlooking a marsh at Hazel-

wood is regularly used most of the spring and summer (C.H.).

Black-headed Gull, *Larus ridibundus*. Recently we recorded a colony at Spondon. Another colony which has not been previously recorded has existed on the Burton sewage farm since 1929, when perhaps a dozen pairs bred there. Since then it has greatly increased and probably now numbers between 200 and 300 pairs (J. L. Auden). On the Sheffield and East Moors there are colonies at Leash Fen (56 nests reported in 1921, A.W.) and also at Ringing Lowe (33 nests in 1924 with eggs, A.W.). Birds are to be seen at Coombs from spring onwards and about 30 were seen in Fairfield Common, near Buxton, on July 16 (W.S.). They are never absent from the Derwent at Darley Abbey (F.W.).

Corncrake, *Crex crex*. In view of the general diminution of this species in England it is remarkable that it was plentiful in the Hazelwood district in 1937 (C.H.).

Moorhen, *Gallinula ch. chloropus*. A pied bird, showing more white than black seen near Shirley Bridge, March 9th (K.H.).

Red Grouse, *Lagopus s. scoticus*. 1937 was a very favourable year. On the Warslow Moors 1350 brace were shot and a good stock left.

#### SONG DATES OF RESIDENTS AT RADBOURNE.

Greenfinch, April 1; Chaffinch, Feb. 4; Yellow Bunting March 21; Skylark, Jan. 25; Nuthatch, Feb. 14; Great Tit, Jan. 10; Goldcrest, April 2; Blackbird, Feb. 25; Hedge-Sparrow, Feb. 14; Lesser Spotted Woodpecker drumming, Feb. 24; Wood-Pigeon, Jan. 10; Lapwing (Spring call), Feb. 15 (W.M.).

The following abbreviations are used to indicate our correspondents:—

A. F. Adsetts, J. Armitage (J.A.), J. L. Auden (J.L.A.), C. B. Chambers (C.B.C.), C. L. Collenette (C.C.), R.

Eglinton (R.E.), K. Hollick (K.H.), C. Hull (C.H.), F. C. R. Jourdain (F.J.), R. E. Knowles (R.K.), G. C. Lawson, W. K. Marshall (W.M.), B. R. S. Pemberton (B.P.), W. Shipton (W.S.), G. T. Walker (G.W.), C. H. Wells, A. Whitaker (A.W.), F. Williamson (F.W.), to all of whom our thanks are due. Many notes on occurrences during previous years will be incorporated in the forthcoming county list.