

## ORNITHOLOGICAL RECORD FOR DERBYSHIRE, 1939.

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F.Z.S., etc.

Probably this will be my last record for the county since I resumed the work, for Capt. W. K. Marshall, The Silverhill, Radbourne, Derby., has kindly undertaken to keep it up, and I hope that all my correspondents will continue to send in their notes to him in 1940. I regret that on this occasion it will not be possible to include meteorological data. Owing to the censorship, records were held up for some considerable time all over the county, and, though they could probably now be obtained, there is no time to get the necessary data together.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST.

Carrion-Crow, *Corvus c. corone*. A flock of about 80 of these birds, which frequents a plantation at Kingstern-dale, near Buxton, is believed to consist of males whose mates have been shot off the nests earlier in the year and which have been unable to obtain fresh partners (J.A.).

Rook, *Corvus f. frugilegus*. The following figures show the annual variation in numbers of nests at two rookeries at Radbourne, only half-a-mile apart:

			1936	1937	1938	1939
Radbourne	Rough	...	469	386	389	330
„	Park	...	215	201	194	254
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
			684	587	583	582
			<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Less than one young per nest shot in each rookery; no tree-felling (W.M.).

Twite, *Carduelis fl. pipilans*. For some years past this interesting moorland species has bred on high ground near Buxton. Three nests were located in 1939, all at about 1,500 feet among grassy tussocks (J.A.).

Crossbill, *Loxia c. curvirostra*. A male seen in Shirley Park, March 29th (J.W.).

Snow-Bunting, *Plectrophenax n. nivalis*. Two near Axe Edge, Dec. 3rd (J.A.).

Tree-Sparrow, *Passer m. montanus*. In the Hazelwood district; has definitely increased in the last twenty years, and is now common (G.H.).

Pied Wagtail, *Motacilla a. yarrellii*. The roost in Dr. Hollick's garden was visited by one bird on Jan. 4th and 20th, but on the 29th twenty birds arrived, and the number had increased to thirty by Feb. 3rd, but by the 17th only one was left. No Yellow Wagtails this year (K.H.).

[The following note applies to 1938: On Oct. 19th, 1938, a pure white Pied Wagtail (in company with other normal birds) appeared on arable ground at Holmewood. No trace of black about it, but beak and legs pinkish; eyes apparently dark. Not seen again (C.C.)].

Willow-Tit, *Parus a. kleinschmidti*. Reported as present in small numbers: Shottle, Idridgehary, Callow and Hazelwood (C.H.).

Pied Flycatcher, *Muscicapa h. hypoleuca*. Males still occasionally pass through on spring migration; one seen in Yeldersley Hall Gardens on May 2nd (K.H.).

Little Owl, *Athene n. vidalii*. Continues to colonize the more barren dales of the Peak district, breeding among rocks and rabbit burrows (J.A.); noted at Thor's Cave, over Staffs. border (A.W.W.).

Short-eared Owl, *Asio f. flammeus*. We fear the departure of our friend Mr. B. R. S. Pemberton, from Alstonfield, will prove a serious detriment to this fine bird on the Warlow moors, where it bred almost regularly

up to 1938 (F.J., J.A.). There was a welcome re-appearance on the Sheffield side; four or five were seen on one afternoon in the first week of January near Owler Bar (A.W.), and one was seen attacked by a female Hen Harrier near Sheffield on Jan. 15th (C.W.). Later prolonged watching near Longshaw only produced proof of the presence of one bird (A.W.).

Peregrine Falcon, *Falco p. peregrinus*. One picked up at Hollington, winged and helpless, on April 4th; it was a female and weighed exactly two lbs.

Red-footed Falcon, *Falco v. vespertinus*. A pair of Falcons was seen together in May in N. Derbyshire, and one was shot. This bird was seen in the flesh by Dr. Abercrombie, Mr. J. J. Baldwin Young and Mr. A. Whitaker, and all agree that it is undoubtedly of this species. May 16th (when seen by A.W.) might suggest possible breeding, but Derbyshire is so far to the west of the normal breeding range that this seems improbable. It is the first time that this Central European species has occurred in Derbyshire, and we understand that it will be preserved in the Weston Park Museum, Sheffield.

Common Buzzard, *Buteo b. buteo*. One soaring over Deepdale, Dec. 18th (J.A.).

Hen-Harrier, *Circus c. cyaneus*. A female watched for some time on the rough moor a few hundred yards on the Sheffield side of the Derbyshire border, near Sheffield, on Jan. 15th. After some sparring both disappeared southward over the border (C.W.).

White-tailed Eagle, *Haliaeetus a. albicilla*. 1939 proved to be a memorable year as regards Derbyshire Accipitres. On March 9th a keeper reported that he had seen an Eagle several times during the preceding days, and on one occasion got within 100 yards of it. On March 12th Messrs. A. Whitaker and H. Glover had excellent views of it for some considerable time in the Derwent and Howden valleys. The last report of its

appearance was when it was seen feeding on a dead lamb near Abbey brook on March 17th. It is to be hoped that (unlike its predecessor of 1920-21) it escaped with its life. The observers lay stress on the difficulty of distinguishing it from an immature Golden Eagle, but this should not be difficult to one who knows the Scottish bird, for the great breadth of the wings make the tail appear shorter and give it a somewhat vulturine appearance. The tail is also more wedge than fan-shaped. It was, of course, an immature bird (A.W., J.B.Y.).

Bittern, *Botaurus s. stellaris*. One was shot below Coldwall Bridge on the R. Dove, on Feb. 1st, by the Okeover water keeper, who stated that it attacked him twice! presumably after he had already shot it. It was in good condition (K.H.). Stragglers were formerly shot frequently, but the fact that only a few have been killed during recent years may show some signs of intelligence among our water bailiffs. There is, however, very little probability of its ever breeding here.

[Egyptian Goose, *Chenalopex ægyptiacus*. Two on the Ashbourne Hall Pond, Mar. 5th to 7th, but this species has always been regarded as "escaped" and has no place on the British List (K.H.)].

Teal, *Anas c. crecca*. At least eleven, Bradley Dam, Oct. 26th (K.H.).

Goldeneye, *Bucephala clangula*. A female at the same place, March 5th-10th (K.H.); also one, Bradley Dam, Oct. 18th (K.H.).

Great crested Grebe, *Podiceps c. cristatus*. Two already on Sudbury Pond, Feb. 20th (W.M.). Four on the Osmaston ponds during the summer, and at least one pair reared one young (K.H.). Present Allestree, Apr. 13th, but for first time failed to stay and breed (R.E.).

Golden Plover, *Charadrius apricarius*. One Sturston, Apr. 1st (K.H.); a flock of about 200 at Slipperton, Aldwark, Apr. 29th (Dr. H. Hollick).

Dunlin, *Calidris a. schinzii*. One Williamthorpe reservoir, Nov. 9th; very tame (C.C.).

Common Sandpiper, *T. hypoleucus*. One seen Radbourne, July 19th, for first time (W.M.); one recorded in winter, but no details given (R.E.).

Green Sandpiper, *T. ochropus*. One at Sudbury, Feb. 13th (W.M.); three at Barton Blount, Aug. 23rd (W.M.).

Redshank, *T. t. britannica*. Apparently still penetrating up valleys of S. Derbyshire for breeding; two seen for first time, Radbourne, March 24th (W.M.), but did not stay; two near Clifton, March 27th; Sturston, Apr. 1st; Snipesmoor, Ashbourne, Apr. 6th (K.H.).

Curlew, *Numenius arquata*. A bird flushed from eggs on steep dale side near Kingsterndale, Buxton, perhaps because fields infested with Carrion-Crows (J.A.).

Common Gull, *Larus canus*. After a rough night, an immature Common Gull in field by R. Dove, at Clifton, on Nov. 20th (K.H.).

Corncrake, *Crex crex*. One heard Locko Park, Spondon, May 3rd (A.W.W). None heard in Derbyshire for first time (R.E.).

#### ARRIVAL OF SUMMER MIGRANTS.

Tree-Pipit. April 13th, Ambergate (R.E.); 14th, Hazelwood (C.H.); 16th, Holmewood (C.C.); 19th, Ashbourne, two (K.H.); 24th, Sudbury (W.M.); May 4th, Radbourne (W.M.).

Yellow Wagtail. April 12th, two, Ashbourne (K.H.); 15th, Cromford (R.E.).

Spotted Flycatcher. May 21st, Radbourne (W.M.) and Matlock (R.E.).

[For Pied Flycatcher see under Systematic Notes].

Chiff-chaff. April 3rd, Matlock Bath (R.E.); 8th, Radbourne (W.M.); 12th, Hazelwood (C.H.); 19th, Ashbourne (K.H.).

Willow-Warbler. April 9th, Ashbourne (K.H.), Radbourne (W.M.), Cromford (R.E.), Holmewood (C.C.); 11th, Hazelwood (C.H.).

Wood Warbler. April 25th, Lea, Butterley (R.E.).

Reed-Warbler. May 21st, Radbourne (W.M.).

Sedge-Warbler. May 10th, Ashbourne, two (K.H.); 26th, Darley Dale (R.E.); 30th, Radbourne (W.M.).

Garden-Warbler. May 8th, Sudbury (W.M.); 9th, Holmewood (C.C.); 13th, Shirley Wood, many (K.H.).

Blackcap. April 23rd, Matlock (R.E.); May 2nd, Radbourne (W.M.); 13th, Shirley Wood (K.H.).

Whitethroat. April 21st, Ashbourne (K.H.); 23rd, Cromford (R.E.); May 3rd, Radbourne (W.M.); 8th, Holmewood (C.C.).

Lesser Whitethroat. April 25th, Radbourne (W.M.); May 3rd, Coalville; 6th, Ashbourne (K.H.).

Wheatear. April 9th, Radbourne, two (W.M.); 16th, Holmewood (C.C.).

Whinchat. May 8th, Holmewood (C.C.); 21st Cromford (R.E.); June 16th, Bradley, late (K.H.).

Redstart. April 8th, Chesterfield (W. B. Felton); 16th, Lea (R.E.) and Sudbury (W.M.); 19th, Radbourne (W.M.).

Nightingale. May 30th, Codnor Park (R.E.). Reports from Buxton due to confusion with Garden-Warbler (W.S. and J.A.).

Swallow. April 7th, Brailsford, three (K.H.); 11th, Radbourne, three (W.M.); 12th, Sudbury (W.M.); 13th, Ashbourne (K.H.) and Hazelwood (C.H.); 18th, Newton Solney (R.E.); 24th, Cromford (R.E.); 28th, Holmewood (C.C.); 29th, Spondon (A.W.W.).

Martin. April 26th, Tissington (K.H.); May 15th, Matlock Bath (R.E.).

Sand-Martin. April 2nd, Lea (R.E.); 8th, Ashbourne, twelve (K.H.); 13th, Hazelwood (C.H.).

Swift. May 9th, Ashbourne, one (K.H.); 14th, Radbourne (W.M.); 15th, Holmewood (C.C.).

Nightjar. July 5th, Wirksworth (R.E.); (evidently arrived previously).

Cuckoo. April 5th Whatstandwell, reported (R.E.); 16th, Shirley, three (K.H.); 26th, Mugginton (W.M.) and Holmewood (C.C.); not heard till May 4th, Spondon (A.W.W.).

Turtle Dove. May 9th, Radbourne (W.M.); 13th, Shirley Wood (K.H.); 19th, Holmewood (C.C.); 30th, Codnor Park (R.E.).

Sandpiper. April 14th, Birdsgrove, one (K.H.); 18th, Newton Solney and 25th, Cromford (R.E.); May 6th, Barton Blount (W.M.).

#### LATEST RECORDS OF SUMMER MIGRANTS.

Yellow Wagtail. Sept. 16th, Ashbourne (K.H.); 19th, Holmewood (C.C.).

Willow-Warbler. Sept. 13th, Ashbourne (K.H.).

Swallow. Oct. 4th, Ashbourne (K.H.).

House Martin. Oct. 15th, Ashbourne (K.H.).

Swift. Aug. 17th, Ashbourne (K.H.); 11th, Holmewood (C.C.).

Sandpiper. Aug. 27th, Holmewood (C.C.).

#### ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES OF WINTER MIGRANTS.

Siskins. Last seen, Jan. 26th, Ashbourne (K.H.); arrival, Dec. 7th, *ibid* (K.H.).

Redwing. Last seen, April 1st, Sturston (K.H.); 9th, Radbourne (W.M.); arrival, Oct. 8th, Matlock (R.E.); 18th, Holmewood (C.C.); 19th, Radbourne (W.M.); 20th, Ashbourne (K.H.).

Fieldfare. Last seen, April 1st, Sturston (K.H.); 9th, Radbourne (W.M.).

#### SONG-PERIOD NOTES.

First song heard in Ashbourne district: Greenfinch, March 6th; Chaffinch, Feb. 4th; Skylark, Feb. 11th;

Great Tit, Jan. 13th; Blue Tit, Jan. 8th; Goldcrest, Feb. 5th; Mistle Thrush, Jan. 20th; Blackbird, March 6th; Lapwing, Feb. 20th (K.H.).

At Radbourne the following were noted: Greenfinch, March 24th; Chaffinch, Feb. 9th; Yellow Bunting (partially, Elvaston), March 4th; Tree-Creeper, March 20th; Blue Tit (Sudbury), Feb. 5th; Goldcrest, March 16th; Mistle Thrush, Feb. 6th; Blackbird, Feb. 13th (W.M.).

At Radbourne Chaffinch was silent from Nov. 25th, 1938 to Feb. 19th, 1939; then continuous till June 18th and later occasionally.

Song-Thrush was silent from July 16th, 1938 to Jan. 1st, 1939; continuous from Feb. 6th to June 27th, 1939, and then occasionally.

Blackbird silent from Sept. 22nd, 1938 to Feb. 13th, 1939; continuous from March 29th to June 27th, 1939 (W.M.).

In the above notes the following abbreviations are used: J. Armitage (J.A.), C. B. Chambers (C.C.), R. Eglinton (R.E.), Cecil Hall (C.H.), Kathleen Hollick (K.H.), F. C. R. Jourdain (F.J.), W. K. Marshall (W.M.), W. Shipton (W.S.), C. H. Wells (C.W.), A. W. Ward (A.W.W.), A. Whitaker (A.W.), Judith Wright (J.W.), J. J. Baldwin Young (J.B.Y.); also contributions from W. B. Felton, H. Glover, H. H. Hollick and G. T. Walker.