

7-1-137
v.1

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



LIBRARY

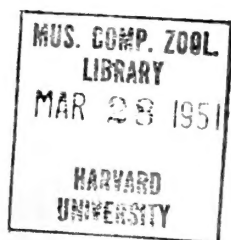
OF THE

MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY

—
GIFT OF

William Cameron Forbes

Walter F. Fisher
1916.



BRITISH BIRDS

VOL. I

MUS. COMP. ZOO.
LIBRARY
MAR 28 1951
HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA



BRITISH BIRDS

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
A. THORBURN, F.Z.S.

WITH EIGHTY PLATES IN COLOUR, SHOWING OVER
FOUR HUNDRED SPECIES

IN FOUR VOLUMES
VOL. I

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK

BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1915

All rights reserved

H-1 701
v.1

PREFACE

THIS work has been designed mainly with the purpose of providing, as far as I have been able, sketches in colour from life of our British birds, including not only the resident species but also in most cases those which have more or less regularly or even rarely visited us from abroad. Having for many years past been making studies from life with this object in view, the present seemed a fitting time for carrying out the project, and where it was not possible to obtain living birds for the drawings, I have filled in the gaps from the best preserved specimens I could procure.

I have endeavoured, where space permitted, to represent as many species as possible of the same family, on the same plate, and drawn to the same scale.

This not only enables me to make the volumes of a convenient size but also gives the reader an opportunity of comparing the various proportions and divergence of colour in closely related birds.

Being more familiar with the brush than with the pen, it was at first my intention that this book should be simply a sketch-book of British Birds, practically without letterpress; but as the work proceeded, I was induced to write a short description of each of the various species represented, giving rough notes, as far as possible, of the distribution, nest and eggs, food, song, and habits of the different birds.

This letterpress is admittedly and of necessity largely a compilation; for at the present day it is not easy to supply much original matter, and I have inserted, in addition to that which has already appeared in print, such notes as I have been able to add from my own observations and those of my friends. For full and more scientific accounts of the birds included in this book, I would refer my readers to some of the standard literature on the subject, which has been freely used by me in preparing the letterpress—viz. the fourth edition of Yarrell's *British Birds*; Macgillivray's *British Birds*; Lord Lilford's *Coloured Figures of the Birds of the British Islands*, and his *Birds of Northamptonshire and Neighbourhood*; Mr. Dresser's *Birds of Europe*, and his *Manual of Palearctic Birds*; Mr. J. G. Millais' *The Natural History of British Surface-feeding Ducks*; *British Diving Ducks*; and *The Natural History of British Game Birds*; Howard Saunders' *Manual of British Birds* (2nd edition); Seebohm's *British Birds*; also *A Hand-list of*

PREFACE

British Birds, by Hartert, Jourdain, Ticehurst, and Witherby; Witherby's *British Birds*, and others.

The task, otherwise so difficult, of noting the occurrence of rare stragglers, has been made much easier by the accurate records of rare visitants in the two last mentioned works.

I have adopted as far as possible the classification and nomenclature of Howard Saunders' Manual, making some slight alterations in the classification to suit the requirements of the plates.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the Hon. W. Rothschild for kindly lending me specimens from his collection, to complete the details in the plumage of various birds, which I could not otherwise have obtained, and my thanks are also due to Dr. Hartert for the trouble he has taken in selecting these.

My friend Mr. J. G. Millais has freely given me the run of his collection, and has looked over the letterpress besides providing me with various notes, and I am under much obligation to Mr. G. E. Lodge and many other friends, especially to Mr. Robert J. Howard, without whose advice and assistance the book could not have been produced in its present form.

A. T.

HASCOMBE,
GODALMING, *July* 1914.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

Order PASSERES.

	PAGE		PAGE
PLATE 1. (Opposite page 2)			
MISTLE-THRUSH. <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	1	GREENISH WILLOW-WARBLER. <i>Phylloscopus viri-</i>	
SONG-THRUSH. <i>Turdus musicus</i>	2	<i>danus</i>	38
REDWING. <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	3	CHIFFCHAFF. <i>Phylloscopus rufus</i>	39
FIELDFARE. <i>Turdus pilaris</i>	4	WILLOW-WREN. <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	40
BLACK-THROATED THRUSH. <i>Turdus atrigularis</i>	5	WOOD-WREN. <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	41
PLATE 2. (Opposite page 6)			
DUSKY THRUSH. <i>Turdus dubius</i>	6	PLATE 7. (Opposite page 42)	
WHITE'S THRUSH. <i>Turdus varius</i>	7	RUFOUS WARBLER. <i>Aedon galactodes</i>	42
SIBERIAN THRUSH. <i>Turdus sibiricus</i>	8	RADDE'S BUSH-WARBLER. <i>Luscinola schwarzi</i>	43
BLACKBIRD. <i>Turdus merula</i>	9	ICTERINE WARBLER. <i>Hypolais icterina</i>	44
RING-OUZEL. <i>Turdus torquatus</i>	10	MELODIOUS WARBLER. <i>Hypolais polyglotta</i>	45
ROCK-THRUSH. <i>Monticola saxatilis</i>	11	REED-WARBLER. <i>Acrocephalus streperus</i>	46
PLATE 3. (Opposite page 12)			
WHEATEAR. <i>Saxicola oenanthe</i>	12	MARSH-WARBLER. <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	47
ISABELLINE WHEATEAR. <i>Saxicola isabellina</i>	13	PLATE 8. (Opposite page 48)	
BLACK-THROATED WHEATEAR. <i>Saxicola occidentalis</i>	14	GREAT REED-WARBLER. <i>Acrocephalus turdoides</i>	48
BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR. <i>Saxicola stapanina</i>	15	SEDGE-WARBLER. <i>Acrocephalus phragmitis</i>	49
DESERT WHEATEAR. <i>Saxicola deserti</i>	16	AQUATIC WARBLER. <i>Acrocephalus aquaticus</i>	50
EASTERN PIED WHEATEAR. <i>Saxicola pleschanka</i>	17	GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER. <i>Locustella naevia</i>	51
BLACK WHEATEAR. <i>Saxicola leucura</i>	18	SAVI'S WARBLER. <i>Locustella luscinioides</i>	54
STONECHAT. <i>Pratincola rubicola</i>	19	CETTI'S WARBLER. <i>Cettia cettii</i>	55
EASTERN STONECHAT. <i>Pratincola maura</i>	19	 	
PLATE 4. (Opposite page 20)			
WHINCHAT. <i>Pratincola rubetra</i>	20	PLATE 9. (Opposite page 56)	
REDSTART. <i>Ruticilla phoenicurus</i>	21	GOLDCREST. <i>Regulus cristatus</i>	56
BLACK REDSTART. <i>Ruticilla titys</i>	22	FIRECREST. <i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>	57
ARCTIC BLUETHROAT. <i>Cyanecula suecica</i>	23	HEDGE-SPARROW. <i>Accentor modularis</i>	58
WHITE-SPOTTED BLUETHROAT. <i>Cyanecula leucocyana</i>	24	ALPINE ACCENTOR. <i>Accentor collaris</i>	59
REDBREAST. <i>Erythacus rubecula</i>	25	DIPPER. <i>Cinclus aquaticus</i>	60
NIGHTINGALE. <i>Daulias luscinia</i>	26	NUTHATCH. <i>Sitta caesia</i>	61
PLATE 5. (Opposite page 26)			
THRUSH-NIGHTINGALE. <i>Daulias philomela</i>	26	WREN. <i>Troglodytes parvulus</i>	62
WHITETHROAT. <i>Sylvia cinerea</i>	27	PLATE 10. (Opposite page 62)	
LESSER WHITETHROAT. <i>Sylvia curruca</i>	28	BEARDED TITMOUSE. <i>Panurus biarmicus</i>	63
ORPHEAN WARBLER. <i>Sylvia orphea</i>	29	LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE. <i>Acredula caudata</i>	64
SARDINIAN WARBLER. <i>Sylvia melanocephala</i>	30	GREAT TITMOUSE. <i>Parus major</i>	65
BLACKCAP. <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	31	COAL-TITMOUSE. <i>Parus ater</i>	66
GARDEN-WARBLER. <i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	32	MARSH-TITMOUSE. <i>Parus palustris</i>	67
BARRED WARBLER. <i>Sylvia nisoria</i>	33	BLUE TITMOUSE. <i>Parus caeruleus</i>	68
PLATE 6. (Opposite page 34)			
SUBALPINE WARBLER. <i>Sylvia subalpina</i>	34	CRESTED TITMOUSE. <i>Parus cristatus</i>	69
DARTFORD WARBLER. <i>Sylvia undata</i>	35	PLATE 11. (Opposite page 70)	
YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER. <i>Phylloscopus superciliosus</i>	36	TREE-CREEPER. <i>Certhia familiaris</i>	70
PALLAS'S WILLOW-WARBLER. <i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>	37	WALL-CREEPER. <i>Tichodroma muraria</i>	71
		PIED WAGTAIL. <i>Motacilla lugubris</i>	72
		WHITE WAGTAIL. <i>Motacilla alba</i>	73
		GREY WAGTAIL. <i>Motacilla melanope</i>	74
		BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL. <i>Motacilla flava</i>	75
		GREY-HEADED YELLOW WAGTAIL. <i>Motacilla viridis</i>	75
		YELLOW WAGTAIL. <i>Motacilla raii</i>	76

CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
PLATE 12. (Opposite page 76)			
TREE-PIPIT. <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	77	BLACK-HEADED BUNTING. <i>Emberiza melanocephala</i>	121
MEADOW-PIPIT. <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	78	PINE-BUNTING. <i>Emberiza leucocephala</i>	123
RED-THROATED PIPIT. <i>Anthus cervinus</i>	79	CORN-BUNTING. <i>Emberiza miliaria</i>	124
TAWNY PIPIT. <i>Anthus campestris</i>	80	PLATE 18. (Opposite page 124)	
RICHARD'S PIPIT. <i>Anthus richardi</i>	81	YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING. <i>Emberiza aureola</i>	122
ALPINE OR WATER-PIPIT. <i>Anthus spipoletta</i>	82	YELLOW BUNTING OR YELLOW HAMMER. <i>Emberiza</i>	
ROCK-PIPIT. <i>Anthus obscurus</i>	83	<i>citrinella</i>	125
PLATE 13. (Opposite page 84)		CIRL BUNTING. <i>Emberiza cirrus</i>	126
GREAT GREY SHRIKE. <i>Lanius excubitor</i>	84	ORTOLAN. <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>	127
LESSER GREY SHRIKE. <i>Lanius minor</i>	86	MEADOW-BUNTING. <i>Emberiza cia</i>	128
RED-BACKED SHRIKE. <i>Lanius collurio</i>	87	SIBERIAN MEADOW-BUNTING. <i>Emberiza cioides</i>	129
WOODCHAT SHRIKE. <i>Lanius pomeranus</i>	88	RUSTIC BUNTING. <i>Emberiza rustica</i>	130
MASKED SHRIKE. <i>Lanius nubicus</i>	89	LITTLE BUNTING. <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>	131
PLATE 14. (Opposite page 90)		REED-BUNTING. <i>Emberiza schœniclus</i>	132
GOLDEN ORIOLE. <i>Oriolus galbula</i>	90	LAPLAND BUNTING. <i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	134
WAXWING. <i>Ampelis garrulus</i>	91	SNOW-BUNTING. <i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	135
SPOTTED FLYCATCHER. <i>Muscicapa grisola</i>	92	PLATE 19. (Opposite page 136)	
BROWN FLYCATCHER. <i>Muscicapa latirostris</i>	93	STARLING. <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	136
PIED FLYCATCHER. <i>Muscicapa atricapilla</i>	94	ROSE-COLOURED STARLING. <i>Pastor roseus</i>	137
COLLARED FLYCATCHER. <i>Muscicapa collaris</i>	95	CHOUGH. <i>Pyrrhocorax graculus</i>	138
RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER. <i>Muscicapa parva</i>	96	NUTCRACKER. <i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>	139
PLATE 15. (Opposite page 96)		JAY. <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	140
SWALLOW. <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	97	PLATE 20. (Frontispiece)	
RED-RUMPED SWALLOW. <i>Hirundo rufula</i>	98	MAGPIE. <i>Pica rustica</i>	141
MARTIN. <i>Chelidon urbica</i>	99	JACKDAW. <i>Corvus monedula</i>	142
SAND-MARTIN. <i>Cotile riparia</i>	100	RAVEN. <i>Corvus corax</i>	143
GREENFINCH. <i>Ligurinus chloris</i>	101	List of closely related species or forms mentioned	
HAWFINCH. <i>Coccothraustes vulgaris</i>	102	in Vol. I., but not figured :	
GOLDFINCH. <i>Carduelis elegans</i>	103	DUSKY WARBLER. <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	38
SISKIN. <i>Carduelis spinus</i>	104	NORTHERN CHIFFCHAFF. <i>Phylloscopus abietina</i>	39
PLATE 16. (Opposite page 104)		SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF. <i>Phylloscopus tristis</i>	39
CITRIL FINCH. <i>Chrysomitris citrinella</i>	105	EVERSMANN'S WARBLER. <i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>	40
SERIN. <i>Serinus hortulanus</i>	106	EASTERN FORM OF RUFOUS WARBLER	42
HOUSE-SPARROW. <i>Passer domesticus</i>	107	BLYTH'S REED-WARBLER. <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>	47
TREE-SPARROW. <i>Passer montanus</i>	108	PALLAS'S GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER. <i>Locustella cer-</i>	
CHAFFINCH. <i>Fringilla œlebs</i>	109	<i>thiola</i>	52
BRAMBLING. <i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	110	LANCEOLATED WARBLER. <i>Locustella lanceolata</i>	53
LINNET. <i>Linota cannabina</i>	112	BLACK-BELLIED DIPPER. <i>Cinclus melanogaster</i>	60
MEALY REDPOLL. <i>Linota linaria</i>	113	SYKES' WAGTAIL. <i>Motacilla beema</i> Sykes	75
LESSER REDPOLL. <i>Linota rufescens</i>	114	BLACK-HEADED WAGTAIL. <i>Motacilla melanocephala</i>	75
PLATE 17. (Opposite page 114)		ASHY-HEADED WAGTAIL. <i>Motacilla cinereicapilla</i>	75
SNOW-FINCH. <i>Montifringilla nivalis</i>	111	AMERICAN WATER-PIPIT. <i>Anthus ludovicianus</i>	82
TWITE. <i>Linota flavirostris</i>	115	SOUTHERN GREY SHRIKE. <i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	85
BULLFINCH. <i>Pyrrhula europæa</i>	116	GREENLAND REDPOLL. <i>Linota hornemanni</i>	113
SCARLET GROSBEEK. <i>Pyrrhula erythrina</i>	117	HOLBOELL'S REDPOLL. <i>Linota holboelli</i>	113
PINE GROSBEEK. <i>Pyrrhula enucleator</i>	118	GREATER REDPOLL. <i>Linota rostrata</i>	113
CROSSBILL. <i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	119	HOARY REDPOLL. <i>Linota exilipes</i>	113
TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL. <i>Loxia bifasciata</i>	120	NORTHERN BULLFINCH. <i>Pyrrhula major</i>	116
		PARROT CROSSBILL. <i>Loxia pityopsittacus</i>	119
		LARGE-BILLED REED-BUNTING. <i>Emberiza pyrr-</i>	
		<i>huloides</i>	133

ERRATUM

Page 135, line 4, for 'Captain Fielding' read 'Colonel Feilden.'

BRITISH BIRDS

Order PASSERES.

FAMILY TURDIDÆ.

SUBFAMILY TURDINÆ.

THE MISTLE-THRUSH.

Turdus viscivorus, Linnæus.

PLATE I.

The Mistle-Thrush, Mistletoe-Thrush, or Stormcock, the largest of our native species, may be found in meadows, woodlands, and gardens throughout the year. There it seeks its food of worms, snails, and larvæ, supplemented in autumn and winter by various berries, including among others those of the mistletoe.

The name Stormcock happily describes the character of this Thrush. Often long before the coming of spring, he may be seen, perched high up on some tall tree, pouring forth his wild and broken song, at one moment loud and clear, then again lost in the rush of the wind among the branches.

The sketch for the accompanying drawing was taken from a bird, singing in the teeth of a north-easterly gale, among the topmost boughs of an old ivy-covered oak.

Though usually a shy and wary bird, he is bold and fearless in defence of nest and young, fiercely attacking any prowling magpie or other intruder upon his domain, whom he pursues with loud and strident cries. The nest is made outwardly of grasses, to which moss and wool are sometimes added. Inside this structure a layer of mud is spread, with a final lining of finer grasses. Placed on a branch or in the fork of a tree, it contains four or five eggs, greenish- or reddish-white in ground colour, blotched with ruddy-brown and lilac.

The Mistle-Thrush inhabits the greater part of Europe, breeding as far north as Norway; in Asia ranging eastwards to Lake Baikal, while in winter it is found in India, Persia, and North Africa.

It may easily be distinguished from the Song-Thrush by its larger size, bolder carriage, greyer colouring, and by having the axillaries white, instead of buffish-yellow.

THE SONG-THRUSH.

Turdus musicus, Linnæus.

PLATE I.

Though subject to a partial migration during the autumn months, the Song-Thrush is resident and common in most parts of the British Islands. Numbers of this species, however, bred in Northern Europe, visit our shores in autumn, travelling mostly by night; while many of our home-bred birds leave us at the same time for the Continent, returning in spring. It breeds in Norway, thence southwards throughout a great part of Europe, and across Siberia as far as Lake Baikal.

The Song-Thrush breeds early in the year, rearing more than one brood during the season, and builds its nest in almost any shrub, hedge, or furze-bush. The nest is skilfully constructed of dead grass-stalks, roots, &c., the cup-shaped interior being lined with rotten wood and dung, which becomes quite water-tight when dry. The beautiful greenish-blue eggs, spotted with black and dark brown, vary in number from four to six.

The food of the Song-Thrush consists of worms, insects, larvæ, and snails, varied with fruit and berries in their season.

Its presence is often made known in the garden by a tapping sound, as it batters a snail against some convenient stone, to which it will return again and again with fresh victims.

This Thrush is the Mavis of Scotland, while it is also known as Throstle in many places.

The song, composed of various loud clear notes, repeated several times in succession, is continued throughout the greater part of the year, and may often be heard late in the evening, until darkness sets in.

The female is slightly smaller and paler in colour than the male.



Mistle-Thrush

Black-Throated Thrush
♂ & ♀.

Song-Thrush

Fieldfare
Redwing

THE REDWING.

Turdus iliacus, Linnæus.

PLATE I.

The Redwing, a winter visitor to our shores from Scandinavia and Iceland, usually arrives about the middle of October, travelling in flocks, when the plaintive call-note may often be heard at night as the birds pass overhead.

Early in April it returns to its breeding quarters in Northern Europe. According to information supplied to Mr. Hewitson by Wooley, as quoted in the 4th Edition of Yarrell (p. 269) by Professor Newton, it "makes its nest near the ground, in an open part of the wood, generally in the outskirts, on a stump, a log, or the roots of a fallen tree, sometimes amongst a cluster of young stems of the birch, usually quite exposed, so as almost to seem as if placed so purposely, the walls often supported only by their foundation. The first or coarse part of their nest is made for the most part of dried bents, sometimes with fine twigs and moss; this is lined with a layer of dirt, and then is added a thick bed of fine grass of the previous year, compactly woven together, which completes the structure."

The eggs, usually six in number, are very like those of the Blackbird, but smaller. The ground colour is pale green, closely marked with reddish-brown. While with us the Redwings remain in flocks, and being more dependent on a diet of worms and grubs, than on berries, are among the first to suffer from a severe spell of frost and snow. The Redwing haunts the open fields and meadows during the day, roosting by night among evergreen shrubs and trees. The full clear song is only heard in its summer haunts, but Mr. J. G. Millais has kindly given me the following note of its song in this country: "Before leaving us in the middle of April, male Redwings assemble in parties of ten to fifty and indulge in a chorus of song so subdued that it is not heard unless the observer is close at hand."

The Redwing is rather smaller than the Song-Thrush, and may be readily distinguished from it, by the conspicuous light streak along the side of the head above the eye, and by the chestnut-red patch on the flanks, this colour being repeated on the underwing coverts and axillaries.

The female is a little duller in colour than the male.

THE FIELDFARE.

Turdus pilaris, Linnæus.

PLATE I.

Arriving about the same time as the Redwing, the Fieldfare is another of our winter visitors from Scandinavia, and leaves us in April or the beginning of May. It breeds in companies, the nest being placed in the fork of a birch or other tree, sometimes only a few feet from the ground. The birds are very noisy when their nests are approached, and utter harsh cries. The eggs, four to six in number, resemble the Blackbird's, being bluish-green, marked and blotched with reddish-brown. The song is described by Seebohm (*British Birds*, p. 232) as "a wild desultory warble."

The Fieldfare is a shy and wary bird, the flocks in open weather frequenting wide meadows and grass lands, while feeding on worms, insects, and grubs. In times of frost or snow they come into the hedgerows, outskirts of copses, and even gardens, subsisting then on berries. Though more hardy than the Redwing, they soon feel the stress of weather, and numbers often perish.

The female resembles the male in colour.

THE BLACK-THROATED THRUSH.

Turdus atrigularis, Temminck.

PLATE I.

This rare straggler from Western Siberia has been taken thrice in England, the first having been shot near Lewes, Sussex, in December 1868, the second in Kent, January 1909, and the last in the same county, March 1911. In Scotland one was obtained near Perth in February 1879.

Mr. H. L. Popham, who took the first authentic eggs of this species in Siberia, says (*Ibis*, 1898, p. 494): "Although several pairs were nesting in the same locality, they were not by any means in colonies, like the Fieldfares. I obtained my first specimen at Yeniseisk, but did not meet with this Thrush again till we came to Inbatskaya, where I took five nests, each containing six eggs, which vary considerably. Two clutches have the markings of the Mistle-Thrush, but the ground colour is of a deeper blue; other clutches are very much of the type of the Blackbird, and in one of these latter a single egg has the markings of the Mistle-Thrush type. The nests, composed of dry grass with a lining of mud and an inner lining of broad dry grass, were all placed in small fir-trees close to the stem (except one, which was on the top of a stump) at heights varying between 3 feet and 6 feet." He also states, "When singing, the male whistles a few notes at a time, somewhat like a Song-Thrush with considerable variation, but does not repeat the same phrase two or three times."

THE DUSKY THRUSH.

Turdus dubius, Bechstein (1795).

PLATE 2.

An example of the Dusky Thrush was shot near Gunthorpe, Nottinghamshire, on 13th October 1905, this being the only occurrence of the species in the British Islands.

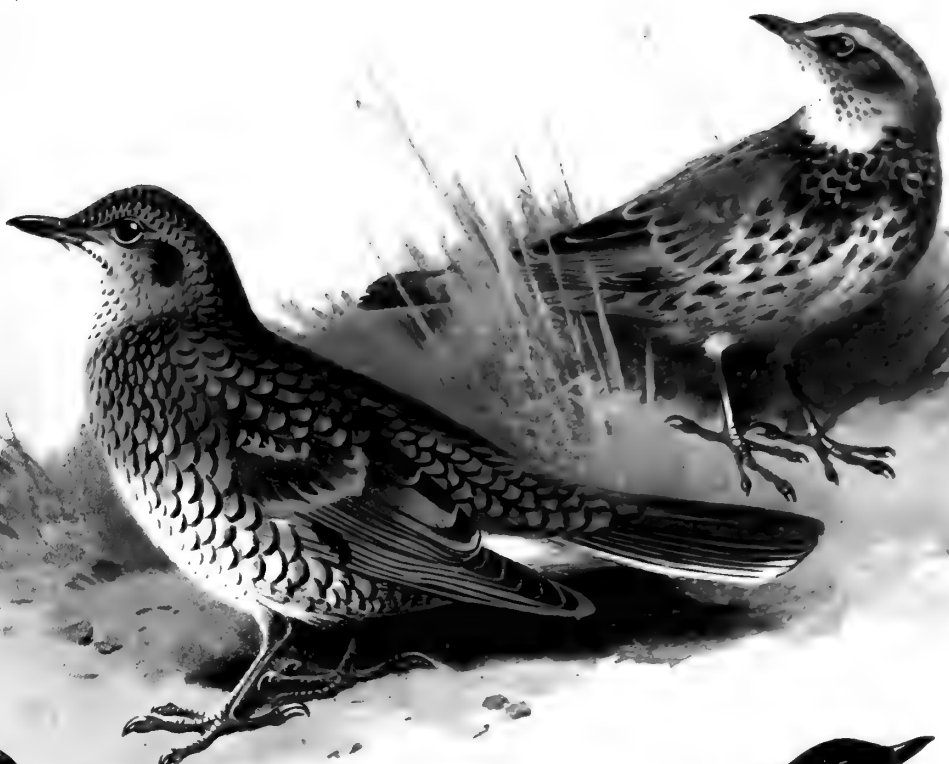
In summer it inhabits Siberia, moving southwards in autumn, to winter in China and North-western India.

Mr. Dresser, in his *Manual of Palearctic Birds*, pp. 13-14, writes: "This species frequents woodlands, usually pine, larch, and spruce groves, and differs little from its allies in its general habits."

The nest, he says, "resembles that of the Fieldfare, is strongly built and lined with fine grass and dry larch needles."

The four or five, rarely six, eggs are also the same as those of the Fieldfare.

The female resembles the male, but is duller and paler in colour.



A. Thorburn
1913

Siberian Thrush
Ring-Ouzel

White's Thrush

Blackbird

Dusky Thrush
Black Thrush

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

WHITE'S THRUSH.

Turdus varius, Pallas.

PLATE 2.

The first recorded example of White's Thrush in the British Islands was shot at Heron Court, near Christchurch, Hampshire, in January 1828; since that time nineteen others have been obtained at different times, fifteen of these in England, one in Scotland, and three in Ireland. They were nearly all procured in winter.

Named after White of Selborne, this bird is a native of Eastern Siberia, Northern China, and Japan, migrating in winter to Southern China and sometimes as far as the Philippines.

According to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palæarctic Birds*, p. 17), "fully authenticated eggs have not yet been obtained, though eggs said to be those of this species, all differing from each other, have been sent from three sources."

This species is one of the "Ground" Thrushes, seeking its food, of various insects and grubs, amongst dead leaves in shady woods. It is larger than the Mistle-Thrush, and its size, beautiful golden colour, crescent-shaped bars of black, and tail of fourteen feathers instead of twelve, distinguish it from all our other Thrushes.

The axillaries are black and white.

The female resembles the male, but is hardly so bright in colour.

THE SIBERIAN THRUSH.

Turdus sibiricus, Pallas.

PLATE 2.

One of these rare Siberian Thrushes is said to have been killed in the winter of 1860-61, in the neighbourhood of Godalming, Surrey. Although the genuineness of this specimen has been doubted by some authorities, Lord Lilford says "the probability is strongly in favour of its having been a *bona fide* traveller, and not an 'escaped' bird."

This species inhabits Eastern Siberia, wintering in China, Burma, Sumatra, and Java.

Mr. H. L. Popham writes (*Ibis*, 1898, pp. 494-495): "The neighbourhood of Toorukhansk appears to be their headquarters. The eggs, which place the identity of my supposed eggs of 1895 beyond doubt, can readily be distinguished from those of other Thrushes nesting in the same locality by their pale greyish-blue ground colour; one clutch has the ground colour very pale blue-green, and is covered all over the surface of the shell with minute reddish spots. I have never observed this Thrush in the pine forests, but always in the willows fringing the shore and islands, on the topmost boughs of which the male sits and whistles a few rich notes without any variation, but darts down out of sight at the slightest alarm. It is rather later in nesting than the other Thrushes, and was not seen at Yeniseisk." He describes the nest as "a rather untidy structure of dry grass, built in the fork of a willow a few feet from the ground, not so bulky as a Fieldfare's, with a scanty wall of mud and an inner lining of coarse dry grass."

The food, which is similar to that of other Thrushes, is always obtained on the ground.

The general colour of the female is buff and olive-brown, shading into white on the lower parts. The throat, as well as the flanks, speckled and barred with brown.

THE BLACKBIRD.

Turdus merula, Linnæus.

PLATE 2.

This handsome species, with velvety-black plumage and "orange-tawny bill," is to be found in almost every garden and shrubbery throughout our islands. It is also widely distributed in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The nest, made of grasses, twigs, moss, and leaves, with a layer of mud, is lined with grass and placed in some bush or hedge. The eggs, varying in number from four to six, are bluish-green, freckled with reddish-brown.

The fine melodious notes of the Blackbird, begun early in the year, especially if the weather be mild, are continued through the greater part of the summer.

At times he is a good mimic, and will imitate the voices of other birds. I have heard one, which haunted a garden, finish off his own familiar song with some of the musical notes of the Australian Piping Crow, learned from some captive birds in an aviary near by.

The Blackbird is an early riser, and leaves the shelter of the hedgerows and bushes at the first streak of dawn, to seek the worms, grubs, and insects which are its principal food, although in late summer and autumn various fruits and berries are consumed.

THE RING-OUZEL.

Turdus torquatus, Linnæus.

PLATE 2.

Unlike the Fieldfare and Redwing, the Ring-Ouzel is a summer visitor to our islands, arriving in April, about the time the others leave us. Passing through the cultivated country, it makes its home among the rocky hillsides and high moorlands. It breeds in many districts in England, Wales, and Ireland, while it is common in Scotland in places suited to its habits. Abroad the Ring-Ouzel breeds in Northern Europe, migrating to spend the winter in the countries by the Mediterranean.

The nest, which is very like the Blackbird's, is placed under a bank or overhanging rock, and contains four, or occasionally five, eggs, bluish-green in ground colour, blotched and speckled with reddish-brown.

The food consists of worms, grubs, and insects, varied at times with fruit and berries, especially those of the rowan-tree.

The Ring-Ouzel has a wild and sweet song, harmonising well with his surroundings, as he delivers it from some crag or stone on the mountainside. The female is duller in colour than the male, and has a less conspicuous gorget. A race of the Ring-Ouzel, the *Turdus alpestris* of C. L. Brehm, having the pale margins to the feathers on the underparts broader than those in our bird, and marked in the centre with white, has twice or thrice occurred in England. This form inhabits the mountains of Southern and Central Europe.

THE ROCK-THRUSH.

Monticola saxatilis (Linnæus).

PLATE 2.

The first British example of the Rock-Thrush was obtained in Hertfordshire in May 1843, and two or three more have since been taken. It is a native of Southern and Central Europe, North-west Africa, and Asia Minor, ranging across Asia to Northern China, while it migrates southwards in winter.

The nest, built of dead grasses and roots, with a lining of finer grasses and rootlets, sometimes of hair and feathers, is placed in a hole or cranny in an old wall or under a fallen rock.

Seebohm writes (*British Birds*, p. 284): "The eggs of the Rock-Thrush are four or five in number, of the same beautiful bluish-green as those of the Song-Thrush, but slightly paler and rounder; indeed they are almost intermediate between a Song-Thrush's and a Starling's. The markings are confined to a very few faint light-brown specks, usually on the larger end; but the eggs are very often spotless."

The female is mottled brown, lighter on the underparts, which are whitish or buff, marked with broken crescent-shaped lines of brown.

THE WHEATEAR.

Saxicola Œnanthe (Linnæus).

PLATE 3.

The Wheatear, a summer visitor to the British Islands, usually arrives in March, migrating southwards in autumn to spend the winter in the tropical parts of Africa. Abroad during summer, it has a wide range over Europe, Iceland, Greenland, and across Siberia to China.

The nest, composed rather loosely of dead grasses, mixed sometimes with small roots and moss, and having a lining of hair and feathers, is placed in a hole in a wall, a crevice under a rock, or within a deserted rabbit-burrow. The eggs, varying in number from four to seven, are in colour light greenish-blue, occasionally marked with tiny purple specks.

Stony hillsides and high grassy uplands are its favourite haunts. In former days it was much sought after as a table delicacy, and vast numbers were trapped, by means of horse-hair nooses, by the shepherds of the South Downs.

A large race of this species, differing from ours also in its brighter colour, touches our shores on its way to breed in Greenland, and is known as the Greenland Wheatear.



Wheatear
 Desert-Wheatear
 Eastern Stone Sparrow

Blue Jay
 Eastern Towhee
 Blue Jay

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE ISABELLINE WHEATEAR.

Saxicola isabellina (Rüppell).

PLATE 3.

Only four examples of this Wheatear have been taken in the British Islands, the first shot at Allonby, in Cumberland, on 11th November 1887, a second at Rye Harbour, Sussex, 17th April 1911, a third at the same place on 28th March 1912, and the last on 10th May 1912, near St. Leonards-on-Sea.

This is an Eastern species, ranging in summer from South-eastern Russia across Asia to Northern China, wintering in Arabia and India, while it appears to be resident in Egypt, and southwards to Abyssinia, as well as in Palestine and Persia.

The nest is usually placed underground in the empty burrow of some small animal, and contains from four to six pale blue eggs.

The Isabelline Wheatear frequents barren sand-covered regions, also bush-covered slopes, and occasionally fir woods. It is said to have a powerful song, and its food consists of insects.

The female resembles the male, but is duller in colour. Although the Isabelline Wheatear is very like the female of our Common Wheatear, it may be distinguished by having a smaller patch of white at the base of the tail feathers.

THE BLACK-THROATED WHEATEAR.

Saxicola occidentalis, Salvadori.

PLATE 3.

This handsome species, the *Saxicola stapazina* of Vieillot, is a summer visitor to Southern Europe, moving southwards to warmer regions in winter. It was first known as a British bird on 8th May 1875, when a specimen was shot near Bury, Lancashire. A second example was obtained near Lydd, Kent, on 23rd May 1906, and a third, the first recorded in Scotland, on Fair Isle, Shetlands, September 25, 1907; while two more were shot near Winchelsea on 16th and 19th May 1912.

A female of either this species or the Black-eared Wheatear was also obtained on St. Kilda, September 21, 1911.

Dr. Hartert, who considers these two birds, viz. the Black-throated and Black-eared Wheatears, to be one and the same species, states (Witherby's *British Birds*, vol. iv. p. 131): "An unbiassed and careful study of a large series of skins, and last, but not least, my own personal observations in company with the Hon. W. Rothschild in Algeria, have confirmed Pastor Kleinschmidt's suspicion and the observations of Messrs. Schiebel and Reiser."

The nest, loose in texture, is made of dead grasses and bents, and placed in a hole or cranny among rocks or ruined masonry. The eggs, varying in number from four to five, are in colour pale green, speckled and marked with brown.

In its habits and food this species is like the Common Wheatear.

The female has the upper part of the back tawny-brown, with the rump white, as in the male, the tail also being similar. The throat is dull white, and the underparts buffish-white.

THE BLACK-EARED WHEATEAR.

Saxicola stapazina (Linnæus).

PLATE 3.

This bird, either closely related to or the same as the Black-throated Wheatear, does not differ from the other in its food, nest, or habits. It has been obtained four times in England, the first near Polegate, Sussex, May 28, 1902, the second shot near Hoo, Sussex, May 22, 1905; another near Pett, Sussex, September 9, 1905, and a fourth obtained at Winchelsea on May 2, 1907.

According to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palearctic Birds*, p. 38), "the female has the dark portions of the plumage brownish-black, the crown, nape, and back brownish-grey," and the habitat of the species is given as "S. Europe, Asia Minor, Palestine, Persia, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, and Arabia, migrating further south in winter."

THE DESERT WHEATEAR.

Saxicola deserti, Rüppell.

PLATE 3.

The Desert Wheatear has been obtained six times in the British Islands, the first near Alloa, Clackmannan, on November 26, 1880, the second on the Holderness coast, Yorkshire, October 17, 1885, the third near Arbroath, Forfar, December 28, 1887, a fourth on the Pentland Skerries, June 2, 1906, while another was shot in Norfolk, October 31, 1907, and the last at Scotney, Kent, on May 21, 1913. The home of this bird lies more to the south than that of the Black-throated and Black-eared Wheatears. It ranges from North Africa southwards and eastwards across the deserts to Abyssinia, and through Asia Minor, Arabia, and Persia as far as Afghanistan and India. It inhabits dry and sandy wastes, and builds its nest in holes and fissures among rocks or underground. The eggs are of a pale bluish-green colour, speckled with reddish-brown.

The female has no black on the throat, is duller and greyer than the male, has the black portions of the wings brown, and the rump tinged with sand-colour.

THE EASTERN PIED WHEATEAR.

Saxicola pleschanka (Lepech).

PLATE 3.

A female of this species was taken on the Isle of May on 19th October 1909. Mr. Dresser, in his *Manual of Palearctic Birds*, p. 32, gives its habitat as "Cyprus, the Crimea and the lower valley of the Volga, east to Kashmir, south-eastern Siberia, Tibet, Mongolia, and northern China, wintering in N.W. India, Abyssinia, and Arabia, and occasionally in Gilgit."

It appears to be more inclined to perch on trees and bushes than the other Wheatears, and builds its nest in holes and crannies among rocks and stones. The eggs are a delicate blue in colour, sometimes, but not always, marked with small reddish spots.

Lord Lilford, in his list of the birds of Cyprus (*Ibis*, July 1889), says: "This is the characteristic Chat of Cyprus; so far as my observation goes it mostly frequents the neighbourhood of towns, and is especially common near Larnaca."

The female is dull brown on the upper parts.

THE BLACK WHEATEAR.

Saxicola leucura (Gmelin).

PLATE 3.

The Black Wheatear is resident in Portugal and Spain, and along the northern shores of the Mediterranean to Sicily, some birds wintering in North Africa. A pair of these birds were observed in the neighbourhood of Rye Harbour, on August 31, 1909, and were afterwards shot, the male on September 2, and the female on the 16th. On Fair Isle, Shetlands, a male was seen several times, but not obtained, between the 28th and 30th September 1912.

According to Colonel Irby (*The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar*, 2nd ed., p. 41), "the Black Wheatear is a common and conspicuous bird at Gibraltar, and to be seen throughout the year.

"The nest is sometimes in clefts of rocks, so deep as to be inaccessible. Mr. Stark took a nest on the 25th of April, near Gibraltar, containing four pale blue eggs hard sat on, marked with a zone of light reddish-brown spots.

"The nest was very large, loosely built with grass and heather-roots, lined inside with finer grass, two or three feathers of the *Neophron*, and one bit of palmetto fibre.

"The name of *pedrero* is applied to this bird from their curious habit of placing small stones as a foundation to their nest, and frequently, as when open to view, making a sort of wall or screen of stones in front of the nest."

The Black Wheatear inhabits stony places. The female differs from the male in having the black parts brown, while the white is not so pure.

THE STONECHAT.

Pratincola rubicola (Linnæus).

PLATE 3.

This little bird may be seen on most of our furze-clad commons, perched on the top of a prickly spray or on a stalk of dead bracken. In the British Islands it is a resident species, frequenting the more sheltered parts of the country in winter. On the Continent the Stonechat is found occasionally as far north as Southern Sweden, and ranges through Europe to the Mediterranean, some wintering in Africa and Asia Minor.

The nest, carefully hidden at the foot of dense furze-bushes or among other vegetation, is made of dead grasses and moss, with a lining of finer grass, hair, and feathers. It contains five or six pale greenish-blue eggs, marked at the larger end with spots of reddish-brown.

The Stonechat has a pleasing little song, sometimes uttered when on the wing, and its characteristic alarm note, resembling the sound produced by hitting one stone with another, may be often heard as the bird flits from bush to bush.

The Eastern form of Stonechat, of which a sketch is given on Plate 3, has once been taken near Cley, Norfolk, on September 2, 1904; whilst another was obtained on the Isle of May on October 10, 1913. It differs from our bird in having more white on the rump. It ranges from Eastern Europe across Asia to Japan, migrating southwards to winter in India.

THE WHINCHAT.

Pratincola rubetra (Linnæus).

PLATE 4.

The Whinchat, sometimes called "Utick" from its call-note, is one of our summer visitors, arriving in April and leaving us in October.

Although fairly common in many parts of the kingdom, and widely distributed, it is absent or local in others. The nest, placed on the ground and concealed among rough grass and herbage, is composed of dry grasses and moss, and lined with finer fibres and hair. The four to six eggs are greenish-blue, spotted with rusty-red dots.

It feeds on various insects, grubs, and wireworms. The Whinchat has a low sweet song, sometimes heard when the bird is fluttering in the air.

Macgillivray says: "When one approaches their nest, they evince great anxiety; but at first keep at some distance, perch on the top twigs of the bushes, and at short intervals emit a mellow plaintive note followed by several short notes resembling the ticking of a clock, or that produced by striking two pebbles together, and at the same time jerk out their tail and flap their wings."

In the female the colours are duller, the eye-stripe being yellowish, the upper breast having some small spots, and the primary coverts less white than in the male.



Redstart

Redbreast

Black Redstart

Whinnet

Nighthawk

White-spotted Bluethroat

Arctic Bluethroat

Archie McPherson

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE REDSTART.

Ruticilla phœnicurus (Linnæus).

PLATE 4.

The Redstart is a conspicuous bird, on account of his bright and strongly-contrasted colouring, and his curious habit of spreading and flirting the feathers of the tail, which is at the same time moved upwards and downwards. A summer migrant, it reaches the British Islands in April, returning south in autumn.

The Redstart can hardly be called a common bird, but is widely distributed, though local, in many parts of England and Scotland; much rarer in Ireland.

Abroad this species ranges from northern Scandinavia southwards to the Mediterranean, and across Siberia as far as Lake Baikal, wintering in Africa and Persia.

The nest, which is loosely made of moss, dead grasses, and rootlets, lined with some hairs and feathers, is placed in a hole in a wall or tree, and contains six or seven eggs, resembling those of the Hedge-Sparrow, but of a paler blue. Occasionally they are marked with small reddish dots.

The Redstart frequents gardens and orchards, and is often found near ruins and old ivy-covered walls, or among the rocks and birch-trees by the side of a Highland loch.

Its food consists of insects and grubs, and the song, though short, is soft and pleasing.

The female lacks the bright colouring of the male, the upper parts generally being of a brownish-grey, and the chestnut tail of a duller tint.

THE BLACK REDSTART.

Ruticilla titys (Scopoli).

PLATE 4.

Much less common than the preceding species, the Black Redstart regularly visits the south coast of England in autumn while migrating, sometimes spending the winter there, although not, as far as is known, breeding in this country.

Abroad this species occasionally ranges as far north as Scandinavia, and is found southwards to the Mediterranean and North Africa, wintering still further southwards in Africa. Eastwards it reaches the Ural and Asia Minor.

In summer the Black Redstart is a common and familiar bird in the Swiss valleys, frequenting the neighbourhood of villages and cowsheds.

The nest is placed under the eaves of buildings, or in a hole in some wall or rock, and is composed of dead grasses, moss, and rootlets, and lined with hair and feathers.

The eggs, varying in number from four to six, are mostly pure white, though occasionally marked with brown spots.

According to Seebohm (*British Birds*, p. 294), "Its song is very simple, consisting only of three or four melodious notes. Like the Robin it is constantly in the habit of drooping its head and slightly lifting its wing, whilst the tail is suddenly jerked up and half expanded."

Like the Common Redstart, its food consists of flies and various other insects and larvæ.

THE ARCTIC BLUETHROAT.

Cyanecula suecica (Linnæus).

PLATE 4.

This form of the Bluethroat, with a chestnut spot, set in the azure gorget, breeds in northern Scandinavia, Russia, and Siberia, migrating in autumn to spend the winter in China, India, and Africa.

On passage many pass along our east coast, mostly in autumn, though sometimes in spring, and great numbers visit Heligoland at the same time.

During the breeding season the Arctic Bluethroat frequents swampy forest ground, and in its nesting habits and character is very like a Robin. The nest, built of dead grasses and roots, with a lining of rootlets and hair, is concealed in some cavity in the side of a hillock, and contains five or six eggs.

According to Seebohm (*British Birds*, p. 273), "They are greenish-blue, more or less distinctly marbled with pale reddish brown, and are very similar to the eggs of the Nightingale."

The food consists of various insects, grubs, and earth-worms, and sometimes of seeds.

The Arctic Bluethroat is a loud and sweet singer, and is said to approach the Nightingale in the richness of his song.

In colour the females resemble the males in the greyish-brown of the upper parts, but are usually greyish-white on the chin and lower breast, with a band of dusky-brown across the chest. In some old females, however, the blue and chestnut colour is more or less displayed.

THE WHITE-SPOTTED BLUETHROAT.

Cyanecula leucocyana, Brehm.

PLATE 4.

Ranging more to the west than the preceding species the White-spotted Bluethroat is found during summer in Central Europe, breeding in Holland and Germany, and, according to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palearctic Birds*, p. 62), "wintering in Asia Minor, Palestine, and North Africa; Asia as far east as India."

Its habits, food, and song, as well as the nest and eggs, are the same as those of the Arctic Bluethroat; the females being also alike.

In this species the white spot on the throat is sometimes absent.

THE REDBREAST.

Erythacus rubecula (Linnæus).

PLATE 4.

This familiar and best known of all our birds, with its confiding manners and sweet song, hardly needs description. Although the Redbreast or Robin haunts our gardens and homesteads all the year round, and appears to be always with us, yet a migratory movement takes place in autumn, when many birds, moving southwards, cross the Channel. Abroad the Redbreast has a wide range over Europe and Asia.

The nest, made of moss and withered leaves, with a lining of hair and feathers, is placed in a hedgerow, bank, or within some cavity in a wall. The five to seven eggs are white, marked and speckled with red; occasionally without any markings.

As soon as the moult is completed, in early autumn, the Redbreast again begins his song, which is continued through the winter. During September, when the majority of birds are silent, this plaintive strain is very beautiful.

The food of the Redbreast consists of insects and worms, varied with fruit and berries.

Though sometimes rather duller, the female does not otherwise differ from the male in colour. The young in their first plumage are spotted with yellowish-brown, and show no orange on the breast.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

Daulias luscinia (Linnæus).

PLATE 4.

The unrivalled song of the Nightingale, delivered throughout the greater part of the night, as well as during the day, has made the bird celebrated from the earliest times. The male birds, which arrive in this country a week or more before the females, reach us about the middle of April, and, apparently, return year after year to the same spot. The general distribution of the Nightingale in England seems to be roughly as follows. The eastern parts of Devonshire, Somerset, and the south of Glamorgan. In the valley of the Wye, through Hereford, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Derbyshire, extending a few miles beyond York, in all of which districts it is scarce and local. Southwards in the midland, southern, and eastern parts of the country it becomes more plentiful, and is abundant in some districts. It has once occurred in Scotland, one example having been taken on the Isle of May on May 9, 1911.

Abroad the Nightingale is found over a great part of Europe, from Northern Germany to the Mediterranean countries, while it spends the winter in Africa.

The nest is placed on the ground, or just above it, and is constructed of dead leaves, mostly of the oak, and withered grass, with a lining of fine rootlets, grasses, and occasionally horse-hair. The eggs, four or five in number, are usually olive-brown, or sometimes bluish-green, marked with reddish-brown.

The Nightingale loves the thick undergrowth of tall hedges, coppices, and shrubberies, and is fond of thick cover in the neighbourhood of streams.

The food consists of worms and various insects, as well as fruit and berries.

It seems surprising how little Nightingales are affected by cold; late at night on May 18, 1913, I heard two birds in full song, although the thermometer stood at 38 degrees, and the wind was bitterly keen. In June the Nightingale ceases to sing.

The female does not differ from the male in colour.

A larger and greyer species, having a somewhat harsher song, and known as the Thrush Nightingale or "Sprösser," *Daulias philomela*, has once been obtained on Fair Isle, Shetlands, May 15, 1911. A sketch of this bird is given on Plate 5.

It is found in Northern and Eastern Europe.



Geothlypis
Baird's *Geothlypis*
534 *Geothlypis*
Geothlypis

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

Subfamily SYLVIINÆ.

THE WHITETHROAT.

Sylvia cinerea, Bechstein.

PLATE 5.

This summer migrant, the type of the Sylviidæ or Warblers, arrives about the same time as the Nightingale.

An active and restless little bird, it soon makes its presence known by its joyous song, among the trees and brambles of some coppice, or by the roadside hedges.

The notes are often uttered during flight, as the bird rises with a curious flapping action of the wings to a moderate height, and descends again to his perch.

Abroad the Whitethroat is found from Scandinavia southwards to the Mediterranean, also in Asia, Asia Minor, and Palestine, wintering in Africa and the Canaries.

The nest is lightly and neatly constructed of fine grass stalks, with a lining of finer bents and horse-hair. The eggs, varying from four to six in number, are greenish-white, speckled with greyish-green and purplish-grey.

The food consists mainly of insects and grubs, though sometimes fruit and berries are eaten.

The female is duller in colour, and has the head browner than in the male.

THE LESSER WHITETHROAT.

Sylvia curruca (Linnæus).

PLATE 5.

The Lesser Whitethroat may be distinguished from the preceding species by its slightly smaller size, dark ear-coverts, general greyer colour of those parts which are rufous in the other, and by having the feet and legs slaty-grey instead of brown.

Less abundant than the Greater Whitethroat, it confines itself more to the midland and southern parts of England, becoming rarer in the west and in Scotland.

On the Continent the breeding range of the Lesser Whitethroat extends from Norway to the Mediterranean, and eastwards to the Ural. It winters in Africa.

The nest is placed in some thick cover, and is made of dry bents and grasses, with a lining of hair. The four or five eggs are greenish-white, spotted and blotched with brown.

The song of this bird is superior to that of the Common Whitethroat, and its habits are more shy and retiring.

The food of both species is the same.

The colour of the female is rather duller than that of the male.

THE ORPHEAN WARBLER.

Sylvia orphea, Temminck.

PLATE 5.

Four examples of this southern Warbler have been recorded in England.

Abroad it is found in Central and Southern Europe and North Africa, wintering still further south on the latter continent.

Lord Lilford, in his book on British Birds, describes it as being common in Spain, especially in the neighbourhood of Madrid and Aranjuez. He says: "The nest is very much more substantially built than that of the other Warblers of this family; the eggs much resemble those of the Lesser Whitethroat. The song of this bird, though more powerful than that of our Blackcap, cannot, in my opinion, be compared with it for melody or sweetness, in fact, I have always been puzzled to know why the name of Orpheus should have been bestowed on this species."

The female is duller in colour than the male, the head being greyish-brown instead of black.

THE SARDINIAN WARBLER.

Sylvia melanocephala (Gmelin).

PLATE 5.

Only one example of the Sardinian Warbler has been obtained in Great Britain, a male having been killed near Hastings on June 3, 1907.

According to the authors of *A Hand-list of British Birds*, p. 71, this species "Breeds in south Europe, Asia Minor, and north-west Africa, and winters partly in same countries, partly in Sahara, Palestine, and Nubia."

The Sardinian Warbler resembles the Blackcap in its habits.

Colonel Irby, who was well acquainted with this bird, writes in *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar* (2nd ed., p. 54): "The earliest egg laid was on the 12th of March." Speaking of the nest, he goes on to say: "This was built in a small rose-bush, and was spoiled by a gale of wind, which blew all the eggs out of it, being the only one I ever saw in what could be called an open bush. All the others were placed in thick bushes, generally box, about two to four feet from the ground, and were formed of grass with a few bits of cotton-thread, lined with hair; but they also nest at some height on boughs of trees. The eggs vary in number from three to five. The male assists in incubation.

"This bird is, like the Blackcap and Garden-Warbler, very fond of figs and grapes and all kinds of fruit."

The female is duller and browner in colour than the male.

THE BLACKCAP.

Sylvia atricapilla (Linnæus).

PLATE 5.

The Blackcap reaches this country early in April, and usually leaves in September, though it has been known to winter here. Abroad it is widely spread over Europe during summer, from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean, being also found in North Africa. It spends the winter in Central Africa.

This bird is unobtrusive in its habits, and builds its nest of dead grasses and bents, with a lining of horse-hair, in some shady bush.

It feeds on insects, fruit, and berries.

The Blackcap's beautiful song has been truly described by White of Selborne as "a full, sweet, deep, loud, and wild pipe; yet that strain is of short continuance and his motions are desultory; but when that bird sits calmly and engages in song in earnest, he pours forth very sweet, but inward melody, and expresses great variety of soft and gentle modulations, superior perhaps to those of any of our Warblers, the Nightingale excepted."

This passage has been often quoted, but it stands unrivalled as the best description of the Blackcap's song.

Unlike its congeners, the female Blackcap is larger than the male.

THE GARDEN-WARBLER.

Sylvia hortensis, Bechstein.

PLATE 5.

Arriving after the Blackcap, the Garden-Warbler is seldom noticed before the first week in May.

In England it is widely distributed, though local, becoming much scarcer in the south-west and in Wales.

In Scotland it has not been known to breed north of Perthshire, south of which county it nests in different localities, more frequently in the Lothians and Clyde districts.

It is rarer in Ireland.

On the continent of Europe it is widely distributed, and winters in Africa.

The nest is usually placed in the shade of thick brambles, briars, or bushes, and is composed of stalks of grass, sometimes with the addition of moss, and lined with fine roots and hair.

The four or five eggs are dull white, blotched with different shades of brown and spots of ash colour.

The food consists of insects, fruit, and berries.

This species is more often heard than seen, owing to its shy and skulking ways, and unobtrusive colouring.

In Surrey I have not noticed that it is more partial to gardens than other places, in fact it seems to prefer the cover of tall hedges and copses.

The song, though resembling the Blackcap's, lacks its richness and tone.

The female is very like the male in colour, but slightly paler.

THE BARRED WARBLER.

Sylvia nisoria (Bechstein).

PLATE 5.

At one time only known as a rare straggler to the British Islands, this species has during the last few years been met with in considerable numbers, mostly in autumn.

It breeds in Central and South-eastern Europe, wintering in Central Africa.

The Barred Warbler seeks the shelter of thick coverts and thorn-brakes, where the nest is placed.

This is a more substantial structure than that of most of the Warblers. Seebohm, in his *British Birds* (vol. i. p. 388), describes it as "composed of dry grass-stalks and roots, with generally some small-leaved plants, cobwebs, thistle-down, or other woolly material mixed with it." The four or five eggs, laid towards the end of May, are buffy-white, marked with grey.

Its food consists mostly of insects and fruit.

The song, Seebohm says, "resembles that of the Whitethroat, some of its notes being quite as harsh as those of that bird; but the finest parts are almost as rich as the warble of the Blackcap."

The female resembles the male in colour.

SUBALPINE WARBLER.

Sylvia subalpina, Bonelli.

PLATE 6.

Only two specimens of this delicately tinted little bird have been obtained in the British Islands, the first on the island of St. Kilda in June 1894, and another, an adult male, on Fair Isle, Shetland, on May 6, 1908. It is a South European species, common in some of the Mediterranean islands, and inhabiting also Spain, Portugal, Italy, and south-eastern France. It winters in Africa.

Howard Saunders, in his *Manual of British Birds* (2nd ed., p. 54), says: "The nest, of dry grass with a finer lining, is placed in a low bush"; and he describes the four to five eggs as varying "from greenish-white with brown spots, to reddish-white with violet-brown spots and streaks."

The food consists of insects.

Colonel Irby says, in *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar* (2nd ed., p. 53): "I saw eight or ten among the flowers and trees on the Alameda de Apodaca at Cadiz; they were exceedingly tame, and I watched them for a long time hopping about in and out among the flowers like a common Wren."

In colour the female is brownish above, and tawny-white on the throat and breast.



Archibald Thorburn
1903

Sussex Warbler
Dartford Warbler
Willow Warbler

MOZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE DARTFORD WARBLER.

Sylvia undata (Boddaert).

PLATE 6.

The Dartford Warbler is easily distinguished from the Subalpine Warbler by the tail being longer in proportion to the wing, by its much darker colour, and the absence of the white streak under the eye.

It was first noticed as a British bird near Dartford in 1773. Since then it has been found in many other districts, mostly in the southern and south-western counties. Unlike the other birds of this family, the Dartford Warbler lives throughout the year among the tall furze-bushes and heather on our commons and heaths, although sometimes in winter resorting to the turnip fields.

Abroad it is found in many parts of Southern Europe, also in North Africa.

The nest is placed in thick furze, sometimes in tall heather amongst furze, and is lightly built of grass-stalks with some furze shoots and wool. It contains four or five eggs of a greenish- or buffish-white, with brown spots.

The food consists of insects and wild fruits.

The Dartford Warbler has not much of a song, and the alarm notes of a pair I had under observation lately, reminded me of the Whitethroat's. In habits it is a quick and restless little bird, often spreading and flirting its long tail as it perches on the topmost sprays of the furze-bushes. On the least alarm it hides immediately.

The female is slightly smaller and duller in colour than her mate.

THE YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER.

Phylloscopus superciliosus (J. F. Gmelin).

PLATE 6.

The first British example of the Yellow-browed Warbler was obtained by the late John Hancock, in Northumberland, a few miles north of the mouth of the Tyne, in September 1838. Since that date a considerable number have been recorded, along our eastern coasts at different times, and especially on the Isle of May and Fair Isle, nearly all during the autumn migration. Numbers have also been taken on Heligoland at the same time of the year (Gätke). Its summer home is in Siberia, and it winters in India and China. Seebohm found it near the Yenesej, and describing the nest in his *British Birds* (vol. i. p. 449), says: "It was built in a slight tuft of grass, moss, and bilberries, semi-domed, exactly like the nest of our Willow Warblers. It was composed of dry grass and moss, and lined with reindeer-hair." The six or seven eggs are white, spotted at the larger end with reddish-brown.

Mr. H. L. Popham, writing in *The Ibis* (1898, p. 496), says: "It is quite the commonest of the small forest birds. It arrived at Yeniseisk on June 1, and subsequently (till the limit of trees was reached) was daily heard and seen working its way up the willows and firs in search of food. It is a lively and tame little bird, but the song becomes rather wearisome."

The Yellow-browed Warbler is insectivorous.

It may be distinguished from the other Warblers by the distinct pale yellow eye-streak, extending from the base of the bill to the nape, and by the two bars of a like colour across the wing; there is also an inconspicuous stripe of dull brownish-green along the top of the head.

In the female the colours are similar to those of the male.

PALLAS'S WILLOW-WARBLER.

Phylloscopus proregulus (Pallas).

PLATE 6.

One example of this rare Warbler was recorded by the late T. Southwell (*Zoologist*, 1896) as having been shot at Cley-next-the-Sea on October 31, 1896.

Pallas's Willow-Warbler spends the summer in east Siberia, where it breeds, migrating for the winter to southern China and India.

One specimen has been obtained and another seen on Heligoland.

According to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palearctic Birds*, p. 105): "Its nest is placed on the branch of a tree near the stem, is oven-shaped, constructed of grass-bents and moss and lined with feathers and horse or cattle hair, and its eggs which are deposited in May or June are white dotted and spotted with violet, ash-grey, and red, the spots being frequently collected round the larger end."

It has a loud and melodious song, and frequents wooded districts.

THE GREENISH WILLOW-WARBLER.

Phylloscopus viridanus, Blyth.

PLATE 6.

Mr. G. H. Caton Haigh shot the only British specimen of this Warbler which has been obtained, at North Cotes, on the Lincolnshire coast, on September 5, 1896. Unknown in the western part of Europe, it is found during summer in Russia, Siberia, and Turkestan, migrating for the winter to India.

The eggs of this bird are unknown.

It resembles our Willow-Wren, but differs in having only one whitish bar across the wing.

THE DUSKY WARBLER.

Phylloscopus fuscatus (Blyth).

An example of the Dusky Warbler (recorded in the *Scottish Naturalist*, 1913, pp. 271-3, by Mr. W. Eagle Clarke) was obtained on Auskerry (Orkneys) early in October 1913.

This rare wanderer, apparently never before taken in Europe, inhabits Siberia during the summer months, passing southwards in autumn to spend the winter in southern China and India.

The nest, hidden among herbage on the ground, or close to it in a bush, is domed and has the entrance at the side, the structure being composed of dead grasses and moss, with a lining of feathers. The eggs are white, without markings.

As the only example of this species was recorded after the Warbler plates had been reproduced, a sketch of the bird is given with the drawing of Tengmalm's Owl on Plate 27, Vol. II.

· THE CHIFFCHAFF.

Phylloscopus rufus (Bechstein).

PLATE 6.

This is the earliest of all our summer Warblers, sometimes reaching our shores in the beginning of March, though usually about the end of that month. Common in the southern and western parts of England, it becomes rarer or more local in Norfolk, Lancashire, and part of Yorkshire, its numbers again increasing in the north of England, but diminishing in Scotland. It is widely spread over Europe, wintering on both sides of the Mediterranean.

In habits it seems more partial to the upper branches of tall trees than its near relation, the Willow-Wren, and may often be heard in such situations delivering its double notes of *chiff, chaff*, which compose its song, and from which it has derived its name. Often the bird will add a number of low chirping notes after the others. The latest date on which I have heard its song was the 2nd of October.

It often enters gardens in search of the caterpillars and insects on which it feeds.

Hidden among herbage, the domed nest, with the entrance at the side, is usually placed just above the ground, and is composed of dry grass and moss, with a lining of feathers. The five or six eggs are white, with dark purplish-red spots.

In appearance the Chiffchaff is very like the Willow-Wren, but differs in being rather smaller, slightly browner in colour, and the legs are of a darker brown. The wing also is more rounded in form, the second primary being about the same length as the seventh, while in the Willow-Wren the second is intermediate in length between the fifth and sixth.

There is a slightly larger and paler form, known as the Northern Chiffchaff, *P. abietina* (Nilsson), which has once occurred in the Isle of Wight, and also the Siberian Chiffchaff, *P. tristis*, Blyth, several of which have been obtained on migration in Scotland.

The last-mentioned form is distinguished from our bird by the browner colour of the upper parts, and by the absence of any yellow beneath, except on the under tail coverts and axillaries.

The sexes are alike in plumage.

THE WILLOW-WREN.

Phylloscopus trochilus (Linnæus).

PLATE 6.

The Willow-Wren, often called Willow-Warbler, arrives just after the Chiffchaff, about the beginning of April. It is much more abundant than either the Chiffchaff or the Wood-Wren, being common in most parts of the country, haunting woodlands, gardens, and other like situations. It is widely spread over Europe, from the North Cape to the Mediterranean, ranging eastwards into Siberia and wintering in Southern Europe and Africa.

The nest, concealed by herbage and made of grass and moss, with a lining of finer grasses, horse-hair, and feathers, is placed on the ground, and, like those of the Chiffchaff and Wood-Wren, is domed. The five to eight eggs are white, with light red to purplish-red spots.

The food, similar to the Chiffchaff's, is composed mostly of insects, in autumn varied with fruit and berries.

On its arrival it is partial to birch woods and young plantations of larch, where its joyous and most pleasing notes may be constantly heard.

Mr. J. Burroughs has happily described these: "The song of the Willow-Warbler has a dying fall; no other bird-song is so touching in this respect. It mounts up round and full, then runs down the scale, and expires upon the air in a gentle murmur." It is delivered with short intervals, the bird flitting about and picking up its insect food between the snatches.

The sexes are alike in plumage, but the young are much more brightly coloured.

In autumn many of these birds may be seen about our gardens, even in large towns.

Two specimens of a Willow-Wren, known as Eversmann's Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis* [Blasius]) have been taken in Scotland. In this species the bill is rather thick and heavy, and the colour duller than in our Willow-Wren. Its summer home is in Northern Europe and Siberia, and the bird winters in Southern Asia.

THE WOOD-WREN.

Phylloscopus sibilatrix (Bechstein).

PLATE 6.

The Wood-Wren is the largest and the brightest coloured of the three closely related species, and arrives in its summer quarters later than the others, usually towards the end of April.

Though local it has a wide range throughout the country, and is not uncommon in well-timbered districts.

As a nesting species it is rare in Ireland. The Wood-Wren is found in summer over the greater part of Europe, and winters in North Africa.

In shape and outer materials the domed nest is very like those of the Chiffchaff and Willow-Wren; is lined with hair and fine grass, but contains no feathers. The eggs, five to seven in number, are pure white, spotted with dark red.

This bird, besides being larger, is easily distinguished from the other two by its longer and more pointed wing, the greener tint of the upper parts, the bright lemon-yellow eyestreak, and the pure white of the lower breast.

The Wood-Wren lives, like its allies, on insects and berries. It is usually to be found in woods of beech or oak, when its characteristic song, beginning with the syllables *twee, twee, twee*, and ending with a succession of trilling notes, may often be heard; during the song the bird makes a quivering movement of the wings.

According to Mr. J. G. Millais, the female has far less yellow and is less rich in colour on the back than the male.

THE RUFIOUS WARBLER.

Aëdon galactodes (Temminck).

PLATE 7.

This southern species has been taken five times in the British Islands: the first was shot on September 16, 1854, near Brighton; the second at the Start in Devonshire; the third at the Old Head of Kinsale in September 1876; the fourth near Slapton, Devonshire, on October 12, 1876; and the fifth, and last, in September 1913 at Brede, Sussex.

It is plentiful in the southern parts of Spain and Portugal, though rare in Italy, and is also met with in North Africa.

Lord Lilford found it not uncommon in Andalusia, haunting gardens and vineyards, and he states that the Rufous Warbler "seems to find some special attraction about the plants of prickly pear which is so abundant in Andalusia."

It winters in Africa.

The tamarisk tree furnishes the favourite site for the rather large nest, lined with wool and other soft materials, prominently placed on some branch or in a fork. To the other materials comprising the nest, a piece of cast serpent's skin is usually added.

The eggs, varying in number from four to five, are in ground colour light grey, marked with brownish-ash and violet-grey.

The Rufous Warbler is insectivorous and has a rather low, sweet song. Canon Tristram, in *The Ibis* for 1882 (p. 409), describes its characteristic habit of "expanding, jerking, and fanning its tail, with its conspicuous white bar."

The female is slightly paler in colour than the male.

Two examples of the Eastern form of this Warbler are recorded as having been obtained in England.



MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

RADDE'S BUSH-WARBLER.

Luscinola schwarzi (Radde).

PLATE 7.

One example of this rare Warbler, from south-eastern Siberia, was shot by Mr. G. H. Caton Haigh on October 1, 1898, near North Cotes, Lincolnshire.

According to the late E. W. Oates (*Fauna of British India*, vol. i. pp. 399-400), this species is migratory, visiting the southern half of Burma, Pegu, and Tenasserim; also south China.

He found this Warbler, on the two occasions he met with it, in bushes, and describes it as feeding "a good deal on the ground, its strong tarsus being suited to this mode of life."

The nest and eggs of this Warbler are unknown.

Its brief but rather loud song is wanting in quality.

THE ICTERINE WARBLER.

Hypolais icterina (Vieillot).

PLATE 7.

The first example of the Icterine Warbler was shot at Eythorne, near Dover, on June 15, 1848.

Since that date about twenty others have been recorded in Great Britain.

In summer this species is found over the greater part of Europe, and it winters in Africa.

The well-built, cup-shaped nest is placed in a tree or bush, and is composed of grasses, wool, moss, &c., with a lining of hair.

According to Seebohm (*British Birds*, vol. i. p. 383): "The eggs are four or five in number, very rarely six. They are brownish pink in ground-colour, evenly spotted and more rarely streaked with very dark purplish brown, which occasionally approaches black."

Describing the song he says: "It has great power, wonderful variety, and considerable compass, but is singularly deficient in melody."

This bird feeds on insects, fruit, and berries.

It is closely related to the Melodious Warbler, but is slightly larger and rather brighter in colour, whilst the wing is longer in proportion to the tail. The bastard primary is also smaller.

In colour the female resembles the male.

THE MELODIOUS WARBLER.

Hypolais polyglotta (Vieillot).

PLATE 7.

The Melodious Warbler has thrice been obtained in England, viz. at Burwash, Sussex, April 30, 1897; Ninfield, Sussex, May 10, 1900; and Looe, Cornwall, May 12, 1905.

This species has a less northern and more western range than the preceding, being found, principally during the breeding season, in Portugal, Spain, western and southern France, and Italy. It winters in Africa.

Colonel Irby (*The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar*, p. 65) describes it as "exceedingly plentiful near Gibraltar. . . . The birds frequent trees and bushes, especially willows and sallows; and the nest, neatly built and cup-shaped, in a great measure composed of sallow-cotton and thistle-down, is placed in bushes and usually contains four pinkish-tinted eggs, marked with blackish spots."

The song, according to H. Saunders (*Manual of British Birds*, 2nd ed., p. 78), is far finer, but less loud than that of the Icterine Warbler.

THE REED-WARBLER.

Acrocephalus streperus (Vieillot).

PLATE 7.

This species is a regular summer visitor, arriving in England towards the end of April. It is locally common in many parts, where the surroundings suit its habits, and is usually to be found among reed-beds or where willows fringe river margins. It is very rare north of Yorkshire, while only two authentic occurrences of the bird have been noted in Scotland on migration (Fair Isle, autumns of 1906 and 1909), and one in Ireland, October 1908 (Rockabill Light).

This species is found practically over the whole of Europe, except the extreme north; also in South-western Asia. It winters in Africa.

The deep cup-shaped nest of the Reed-Warbler is beautifully constructed of fine grasses and the flowering tops of reeds, wool, moss, &c.

Stevenson, in his *Birds of Norfolk* (vol. i. p. 116), says: "The ordinary number of reeds selected is three, round which the materials are firmly woven, so as to include them all in the structure, whilst the nest is placed, with instinctive judgement, neither low enough to be affected by the rising of the water, nor yet high enough to be influenced too powerfully by the wind. Occasionally a nest may be found on four reeds; and I once found one on five, and another on two; but these cases are rare." The four or five eggs are a pale greenish-white, marked with greenish-brown and grey.

The bird is of an active and restless disposition, and its song, consisting of various notes rapidly delivered, is not altogether unmusical. It is continued till late in the evening, while in calm, still weather it is often heard during the night.

It feeds on water insects of various kinds and their larvæ, sometimes during autumn taking fruit and berries.

The sexes are alike in plumage.

THE MARSH-WARBLER.

Acrocephalus palustris (Bechstein).

PLATE 7.

This bird so much resembles the preceding species that it was not until attention was drawn to the difference by Mr. Harting and other ornithologists, that it was given a place on the British list. There is now little doubt that the bird visits England annually. The Marsh-Warbler arrives late in May, and, so far as we know at present, is a scarce and local species, nesting in the midland, southern, and south-eastern counties. Abroad it reaches as far north as Denmark and eastwards to Persia, wintering in Africa.

Although closely resembling the Reed-Warbler in outward appearance, the Marsh-Warbler differs considerably in habits, and in its song which is much more striking and melodious. The colour of the upper parts is slightly more olive and less rufous than in those of the Reed-Warbler; while its legs and feet are fleshy-brown, whereas in the other they are slaty-brown.

The nest is usually placed in rank herbage or bushes, generally near water, but not over it, and is more or less lightly constructed of grass-stalks and lined with horse-hair. The eggs, varying in number from five to seven, are white, spotted and blotched with olive-brown.

Its food consists of insects, and also of berries.

The sexes do not differ in colour.

One specimen of Blyth's Reed-Warbler, *Acrocephalus dumetorum*, was shot on Fair Isle, Scotland, in September 1910.

This species differs from the Reed-Warbler in having a shorter second primary feather, and in the colour being more of an olive-brown.

THE GREAT REED-WARBLER.

Acrocephalus turdoides (Meyer).

PLATE 8.

This Warbler, although nesting yearly in the neighbourhood of Calais, and common in Belgium, Holland, and many other parts of Europe, south of the Baltic, is a rare visitor to England. The first example was shot by Mr. Thomas Robson, near Newcastle, in May 1847, and about nine others have since been recorded. In autumn the Great Reed-Warbler migrates to its winter quarters in Africa.

The favourite haunts of this bird are the beds of tall reeds, among the stems of which its deep cup-shaped nest, composed of reed-tops and grasses, is woven. The four to five eggs are pale blue with a greenish tinge, marked with ashy-grey and dark olive-brown.

Lord Lilford writes (*Birds of Northamptonshire and Neighbourhood*, vol. i. pp. 117-118): "The Reed-Thrush is not a bird likely to escape observation, from his incessant, chattering song, which resembles that of our common Reed-Warbler (*Acrocephalus streperus*), but is much more powerful, and is varied with occasional croaking notes like those of the edible frog, which reptile is often found in great abundance in the haunts of this species. I believe that these birds are never found far from the reed-beds which are their favourite resorts, and amongst which it is often very difficult to obtain more than a casual glimpse of the bird as it flits chattering from one perch to another. In the early morning they come to the tops of the reeds to sing, and no one who has not visited a well-frequented haunt of this species would believe what a confused din can be produced by a dozen or so of Reed-Thrushes, in concert with a sprinkling of the amphibious vocalists above mentioned."

The food of the Great Reed-Warbler consists of insects, sometimes in autumn varied with berries.

The sexes do not differ in colour.



Spizella monticola
G. C. S. P.

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE SEDGE-WARBLER.

Acrocephalus phragmitis (Bechstein).

PLATE 8.

The Sedge-Warbler arrives in this country during the last half of April, usually a little earlier than the Reed-Warbler. It is by far the most numerous of the aquatic Warblers and breeds over the greater part of the mainland of England and Scotland, and also in the Orkneys. It is found in Barra, Outer Hebrides, although absent in the Shetland Islands. Abroad it has a wide range from Norway southwards to central Italy, and eastwards through Russia to Siberia, wintering in Africa.

The nest, composed of grasses and moss, with a lining of finer material, horse-hair, and feathers, contains five or six eggs, in ground colour buff, spotted with brown or olive-buff, often streaked with dark, hair-like lines.

It feeds on insects, and according to Naumann, in autumn it also eats elder-berries.

The Sedge-Warbler is an active restless bird, and has a harsh chiding song which may be heard day and night, and into which it introduces various imitations of the notes of other species. A characteristic of this bird is its habit of breaking out into song, if suddenly disturbed by a stone being thrown into the cover where it is concealed.

It haunts sedgy and marshy ground, but may be found in hedges and plantations far away from water.

The Sedge-Warbler is easily distinguished from the Reed- and Marsh-Warbler by the very distinct yellowish-white streak above the eye, and by the dark brown feathers forming longitudinal stripes on the crown of the head.

The female resembles, but is rather duller in colour than the male.

THE AQUATIC WARBLER.

Acrocephalus aquaticus (J. F. Gmelin).

PLATE 8.

The first authentic example of the Aquatic Warbler was discovered in the collection of the late Mr. Borrer, of Cowfold, Sussex, by Professor Newton. This bird had been shot on October 19, 1853, near Brighton, and had long been considered as only a brightly-coloured specimen of the Sedge-Warbler. Since that date, however, a number of other specimens have been recorded. Abroad it is found during the breeding season in the central and southern parts of Europe, and is said to winter in Africa.

According to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palearctic Birds*, p. 123): "It breeds in May, and its nest, which resembles that of the Sedge-Warbler but is smaller, is constructed of plant stems and bents, and a few rootlets, worked together with insect webs and intermixed with plant cotton, and lined with horsehair."

The number of eggs varies from four to five. Seebohm describes them (*British Birds*, vol. i. p. 359) as: "Brownish white in ground-colour, thickly mottled and clouded over the entire surface with yellowish brown, and sometimes with one or two streaks of dark brown."

The song resembles that of the Sedge-Warbler, but is inferior.

Its food consists of insects.

This bird is easily distinguished from the other by the broad, buff streak running through the centre of the crown. It is shy and retiring in its habits, escaping observation by creeping among the reeds and tangled vegetation of marshy ground.

The female does not differ from the male in colour.

THE GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER.

Locustella naevia (Boddaert).

PLATE 8.

The Grasshopper-Warbler is a local but widely distributed species over England, Scotland, and Ireland, and has been recorded as nesting "as far north as Elgin" (*A Hand-list of British Birds*, p. 62). According to Howard Saunders (*Manual of British Birds*, 2nd ed., p. 89), "Northumberland and Durham are two of the counties in which it is abundant in some summers."

In Europe it ranges as far north as Norway and southwards to Spain, where it sometimes passes the winter. It is also found during this season in North Africa.

The cup-shaped nest is made of dead grass and moss, sometimes with the addition of withered leaves, and lined with finer grasses. It is carefully hidden among dense herbage, such as brambles, furze-bushes, &c., and when disturbed the bird glides off with a mouse-like action before taking wing. The four to seven eggs are of a delicate pinkish-tinted white, spotted with red-brown dots, and having paler underlying markings.

The earliest date on which I have heard the song of the Grasshopper-Warbler in Surrey was on 26th April, and it leaves us in September.

Once heard, its peculiar reeling notes can never be mistaken for those of any other bird, and although called the Grasshopper-Warbler, the noise produced is much louder and more continuous than that made by the insect.

Its food consists of insects and their larvæ.

In habits it is an extremely shy and skulking bird, and may best be observed in the very early morning, when it often leaves the shelter of the thick undergrowth, where the nest is hidden, and sings on the upper twigs of the brambles and bushes.

The sexes do not differ in plumage.

PALLAS'S GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER.

Locustella certhiola (Pallas).

An example of this rare Warbler was found dead at the Rockabill Lighthouse, near Dublin, on September 28, 1908. Its summer haunts are in Asia, ranging from the river Yenesei and the Altai mountains eastward to the Pacific. Passing through China on migration, it winters in India, Burma, and the Malay Archipelago.

Pallas's Grasshopper-Warbler is decidedly larger than our bird, and in colour is blackish-brown and reddish-brown, streaked with dark on the upper parts; the underparts being white, tinted with buff on the breast, flanks, and under tail coverts. The tail feathers are tipped with white.

The sexes do not differ in colour.

THE LANCEOLATED WARBLER.

Locustella lanceolata (Temminck).

This is another rare straggler from Siberia, which winters in India, Burma, and the Andaman Islands. The first recorded specimen was shot by Mr. G. H. Caton Haigh, at North Cotes, Lincolnshire, on November 18, 1909, while two others have since been recorded.

Though smaller than the Grasshopper-Warbler, the general colour of the upper parts of this bird resembles that of the other, but the dark stripes are more distinct and the underparts are strongly streaked with dark.

The colours are alike in both sexes.

SAVI'S WARBLER.

Locustella luscinioides (Savi).

PLATE 8.

Although in former days this bird was without doubt a regular visitor during the summer months to the fens of the eastern counties of England, and bred there; its nest being well known to the marsh men of those parts; it has now vanished entirely from its old haunts, the last having been obtained in Norfolk in June 1856. Since that date only one other example has occurred in Great Britain, viz. on Fair Isle, Shetlands, in May 1908.

The earliest known example of Savi's Warbler was got in Norfolk early in the last century, and was erroneously considered by Temminck, to whom it was submitted, to be a variety of the Reed-Warbler, although later he seems to have had a confused impression that it was Cetti's Warbler. In 1824 the Italian naturalist Savi made it clear, from specimens obtained in Italy in 1821, that this was a distinct species, and it has, therefore, been named after him. In Europe this bird is found in the marshes of Holland, France, Spain, Italy, and portions of Russia.

In habits it is usually shy and retiring, but in the early morning the males utter their reeling grasshopper-like song from the top of some tall reed. Professor Newton says (Yarrell's *British Birds*, 4th ed., vol. i. p. 393): "It used to arrive in the Eastern Counties, according to Mr. John Brown's information, about the middle of April, and at its first coming was not shy; but, when settled in its home and during the breeding-season, was not much seen. Its song was a long, smooth trill, pitched higher, but possessing more tone than that of the Grasshopper-Warbler, and, like that bird's, chiefly heard early in the morning or at nightfall."

Colonel Irby, describing nests found in Andalucia, says (*The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar*, 2nd ed., p. 60): "The nests were all alike, loosely and clumsily built, solely constructed of dead sledge, often placed so close to the water that the base was wet; they were always in the open marsh, none, that we saw, under bushes or in tall rushes or reeds, and the single nest that was not in sedges was in a tuft of the spiky rush so common in wet ground."

The eggs, varying in number from four to five, are whitish, speckled with small spots of brown.

CETTI'S WARBLER.

Cettia cettii (Marmora).

PLATE 8.

This species, distinguished from other European Warblers by having only ten tail feathers instead of twelve, has twice occurred in Sussex, May 1904 and September 1906, the only records in Great Britain. Its home is in Southern Europe and North Africa, ranging eastwards to Central Asia.

Colonel Irby, describing the breeding habits of Cetti's Warbler, says (*The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar*, 2nd ed., p. 62): "These nests, extremely difficult to find, are built of bits of small sedges, intermingled with willow-cotton, and chiefly lined outside with strips of the stems of the *Epilobium*, inside with fine grass, a few hairs, and bits of cotton at the top. Those nests built in bushes are chiefly constructed with grass and cotton, and are entirely lined with hair."

The nest is cup-shaped, and generally contains five eggs, of a beautiful pink colour.

Its song, though short, is clear and melodious.

The sexes are alike in colour.

Subfamily REGULINÆ.

THE GOLDCREST.

Regulus cristatus, K. L. Koch.

PLATE 9.

The Goldcrest or Golden-crested Wren, the smallest of our British birds, is a common species in most parts of the country, wherever there are woods of larch and pine.

It is scarce or absent in the Outer Hebrides, Shetlands, and Orkneys. Abroad it has a wide range all over Europe and across Asia.

The beautiful spherical nest, generally suspended from the underside of a branch of the spruce, larch, yew, or cedar, is made of green moss and spiders' or other webs, with a lining of feathers and a few fine bents. I have one now in my garden, in a Deodar cedar, fixed to small bunches of its needles, which are fastened down by bands of caterpillar web to the sides of the nest, thus suspending it under the branch.

The eggs, varying in number from five to eight and occasionally ten, are brownish or reddish-white in ground colour, with minute specks of reddish-brown.

The Goldcrest is a hardy little bird, and even in the coldest weather seems content with the insect food it obtains in the shelter of plantations and gardens, where it may often be seen and heard till darkness begins to set in on winter evenings.

Being exceedingly tame and confiding, it will approach fearlessly within a few feet of anyone who remains still.

The high-pitched call-note, which is uttered incessantly while feeding and creeping about the branches, has been aptly described by Macgillivray as being like that of the Shrew-mouse.

It begins to sing early in the year, and its melodious though tiny song is very pleasing.

The Goldcrest is active and restless, sociable in its habits, and ranges through the woods in company with Tree-Creepers and various Tits.

In autumn large flocks of immigrants often arrive on the east coast of England and Scotland.

The female resembles the male, although the colours are less brilliant, the crest being lemon-yellow. This is absent in the young bird.



MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE FIRECREST.

Regulus ignicapillus (C. L. Brehm).

PLATE 9.

The Firecrest or Fire-crested Wren was first recorded as a British bird in 1832, an example having been killed by a cat in a garden near Cambridge. Although some doubt has since been expressed as to the genuineness of this occurrence, many Firecrests have since been recorded, mostly during the months from late autumn till spring; chiefly in the south and west of England and the east coast.

In Europe the Firecrest does not range so far north as the Goldcrest, but is found in the central and southern parts, and also in Asia Minor and Algeria.

The nest is composed of similar materials to those of the Goldcrest, and the eggs, varying from seven to ten in number, are redder in colour.

The Firecrest differs from the Goldcrest by having the black bands alongside the crest continued across the forehead, by a distinct dark streak passing through and beyond the eye, the ear coverts being slaty-grey, bordered by a dark line below. The crest is also of a deeper orange, and the general colour of a brighter olive-green.

The female is duller in colour than the male, and the young at first are without the crest, but show the black bands on the head.

Subfamily ACCENTORINÆ.

THE HEDGE-SPARROW.

Accentor modularis (Linnæus).

PLATE 9.

This familiar little bird, also called "Dunnock," is well known all over the British Islands, except in some of the Outer Hebrides and Shetlands. Although a resident throughout the year, a migratory movement has been observed in autumn and spring, and, according to Gätke, numbers visit Heligoland. It is also widely spread over Europe.

A glance at the head and bill will suffice to show that the Hedge-Sparrow has no relationship whatever to the House-Sparrow, and to emphasize this fact it has been named by some authors Hedge-Accentor.

Lord Lilford says (*Birds of Northamptonshire and Neighbourhood*, vol. i. p. 102) "in habits, food, and conformation this little bird has no affinity with what are properly called Sparrows, but I believe that in old times the term Sparrow was used merely to convey the idea of a small bird, as, for instance, Brook-Sparrow, Reed-Sparrow, and (a name I once heard) Moor-Sparrow, as applied respectively to the Reed-Bunting, Reed- and Sedge-Warblers, and Meadow-Pipit."

The nest, often begun in March, is placed in any low bush or hedge, very often in a pile of faggots or pea-sticks, and is made of twigs, roots, dead grasses, and green moss, with a lining of hair and wool. The beautiful turquoise-blue eggs vary in number from four to six.

The food consists of insects and larvæ, with seeds of grasses, &c., and in winter the birds fearlessly approach house doors in search of crumbs and refuse.

The song is short, but sprightly and pleasing, and is kept up through a great part of the year. Macgillivray mentions that it may sometimes be heard at night, a statement which I can confirm.

He also says: "In dry sunny weather in summer I have watched them basking on the road near a hedge. They would stand quite motionless, their legs much bent, their tail touching the ground, their wings spread a little, and their plumage all ruffled; and thus they remain a long time, seeming to enjoy the heat exceedingly, and suffering a person to approach very near them, before they fly off."

The sexes are alike in plumage.

THE ALPINE ACCENTOR.

Accentor collaris (Scopoli).

PLATE 9.

The first recorded examples in England of the Alpine Accentor were two birds seen in and about the gardens and buildings of King's College, Cambridge, in November 1822, one of which was shot.

A single bird had been previously killed in Essex in 1817, although not recorded until 1832.

There are altogether about twenty authentic records of this bird in Great Britain.

The Alpine Accentor is an inhabitant of the high mountain ranges of Central and Southern Europe, varying the altitude of its haunts according to the season, and it is always an exceedingly tame and confiding bird.

The nest is built in May among the rocks and stones, and according to Professor Newton (Yarrell's *British Birds*, 4th ed., vol. i. p. 299) "is formed of rootlets, grass, moss and wool, and lined with hair. The eggs are four to six in number, of a fine light greenish-blue."

Its food consists of seeds and insects.

Seebohm states in his *British Birds* (vol. i. p. 502): "The song is described as something like that of the Lark; and the male is said frequently to ascend thirty or forty feet into the air, and then descend again, singing like a Tree-Pipit or a Snow-Bunting. At other times they will sit motionless for a long time basking in the sun on a rock, with head drawn in, plumage puffed out, and wings and tail depressed." This basking habit, which Macgillivray noticed in the Hedge-Sparrow, seems common to both species.

The only personal acquaintance I have had with the Alpine Accentor was many years ago in Switzerland, near the top of the Rigi, where I had the opportunity of watching an old bird, followed by a fully-fledged young one. They were easily approached, and were hopping and flitting about among the rocks and patches of half-melted snow, where gentians were flowering.

The sexes do not differ in colour.

Family CINCLIDÆ.

THE DIPPER.

Cinclus aquaticus, Bechstein.

PLATE 9.

The home of the Dipper or Water-Ouzel is by the banks of rapid rivers and brawling streams, and wherever they occur the Dipper may be looked for along their margins.

In England and Wales it is resident where the surroundings suit its habits, while in Scotland it is plentiful.

The nest of the Dipper is placed on some ledge of rock over water, in a hole in a wall by a mill dam, or sometimes behind a waterfall. It is outwardly constructed of moss, with an inner structure of grasses lined with dead leaves. The five or six eggs are pure white.

The food of the Dipper consists of water-beetles, caddis worms, fresh-water molusca, and various insects, many of which are harmful to fish spawn. Macgillivray states: "As to the ova and fry of the salmon, there is no evidence whatever that the Dipper ever swallows them." Having closely studied from nature the habits of this bird, he says: "It plunges into the water, not dreading the force of the current, dives and makes its way beneath the surface, generally moving against the stream and often with surprising speed.

"It does not, however, immerse itself head foremost from on high like the Kingfisher, the Tern, or the Gannet, but either walks out into the water, or alights upon its surface, and then plunges like an Auk or a Guillemot, slightly opening its wings, and disappearing with an agility and a dexterity that indicate its proficiency in diving.

"I have seen it moving under water in situations where I could observe it with certainty, and I readily perceived that its actions were precisely similar to those of the Divers, Mergansers, and Cormorants, which I have often watched from an eminence as they pursued the shoals of sand-eels along the sandy shores of the Hebrides. It, in fact, flew, not merely using the wing from the carpal joint but stretching it considerably and employing its whole extent, just as if advancing in the air. . . .

"The assertion of its walking in the water, on the bottom, which some persons have ventured, is not made good by observation."

The male and female are alike in plumage.

The Black-bellied Dipper, *Cinclus melanogaster*, the Scandinavian form of our bird, has been several times recorded in England. In this, the chestnut on the breast is absent, or only slightly defined.

According to Dr. Hartert (Witherby's *British Birds*, vol. iv. p. 136), "Irish Dippers differ from English and Scotch ones."

Family SITPIDÆ.

THE NUTHATCH.

Sitta cæsia, Wolf.

PLATE 9.

This bird may be said to be common in localities suited to its habits, over central and southern England, becoming scarcer as one goes northwards, and is very rare in Scotland.

One individual seen in Ireland, in 1911, had probably been introduced.

When making its nest, this bird usually selects a hole in a tree, and cleverly fills in the entrance with wet clay, until the size suits its requirements. A rough nest is made within the cavity, composed of dead leaves, or scales from the bark of pine trees, which contains six or seven eggs, in colour creamy-white, blotched with reddish-brown.

According to Mr. J. G. Millais, "the call-note of the Nuthatch is a rather soft 'twit-twit,'" and another note is the loud "quoit-quoit," which has been accurately described by the Rev. C. A. Johns in his *British Birds in their Haunts* as being "precisely like the sound made by a pebble thrown so as to bound along ice." In spring, during the pairing season, the courting note is a long musical trill.

In autumn and winter its principal food consists of various nuts, acorns, haws, &c., and at other times of insects.

It has a characteristic habit of fixing a nut in some chink or crevice in a tree, and striking and hammering at the shell with its strong pointed bill, soon extracts the kernel. The noise made by this tapping will often betray its whereabouts.

The Nuthatch is an active, restless bird, creeping about the branches of tall trees, as much at ease when its head is pointing directly downwards as in any other position.

The female is slightly duller in colour than the male.

Family TROGLODYTIDÆ.

THE WREN.

Troglodytes parvulus, K. L. Koch.

PLATE 9.

This well-known and attractive little bird is common all over Great Britain and Ireland, while island forms, differing somewhat in size and colour, are resident in St. Kilda and the Shetlands. Its range also extends more or less throughout Europe.

The Wren usually begins its nest in April, and selects various sites, such as hedge-banks, overhung with roots of trees, or among ivy on walls, in crevices in rocks, and in evergreens. The structure is domed, with a small entrance at the side, and is made of moss, leaves, dead grass, &c., with a lining of hair and feathers. Some observers have noticed that the bird chooses materials which harmonise with the surroundings of the nest and help to conceal it. I have seen one, however, constructed almost entirely of the fronds of dead bracken, and built in a yew hedge.

Several more or less completed nests are often found in the vicinity of the one where the young are reared; for what purpose has never been satisfactorily explained.

The eggs vary in number, the usual complement being from six to eight or even nine. In colour they are white, generally dotted with red spots. The young remain in the nest until they can fly well, when, if alarmed, they will leave it and scatter in all directions.

The food consists mostly of insects, although fruit and seeds are sometimes eaten.

It seems to be able to obtain a living even when snow is on the ground; at such times it will creep among the shelter afforded by shrubs and plants in gardens and hedgerows, seldom appearing to suffer.

The song of the Wren is loud and penetrating, and is continued through the greater part of the year, its cheering notes being often heard on bright winter mornings.

The female is like the male in colour, but rather duller.



Marsh Tit
Coastal Tit

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

Family PANURIDÆ.

THE BEARDED TITMOUSE

Panurus biarmicus (Linnæus).

PLATE 10.

The Bearded Titmouse or Bearded Reedling, though apparently much like the Titmice in many of its habits and actions, has no real relationship to that family, and according to Professor Newton (Yarrell's *British Birds*, 4th ed., vol. i. p. 512) "must be regarded as the representative of a separate family to which he would apply the name *Panuridæ*."

Before the drainage of the fens, this bird was common in many of the reed-beds and marshes of England, but it is now confined as a resident almost, if not entirely, to Norfolk, where it is called by the fen-men the "Reed Pheasant."

It is also found in parts of Central and Southern Europe, where the surroundings suit its habits, and was at one time very plentiful in the reedy marshes of Holland. Eastwards it ranges through southern Russia and Asia Minor to Mongolia.

The nest, begun about the end of March or beginning of April, is built low down among sedge and herbage near the water, and is made of the blades of the sedge and reed plants, with a lining of the feathery reed tops. The eggs, varying in number from five to seven, are white, with broken streaks or speckles of reddish-brown.

The Bearded Titmouse breeds twice in the year, and when the nesting time is over the birds collect and rove about the reed-beds in parties; flitting from one feeding ground to another, uttering the while their musical, ringing notes. As soon as the food in one clump of reeds is exhausted, they move on to a fresh cluster, climbing up and down the stems with great agility and searching them closely for insects. They also eat small molluscs, whilst in winter the seeds of the reed are sought for.

These birds show great affection, a pair often sitting close together while preening each other's feathers.

Family PARIDÆ.

THE LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE.

Acredula caudata (Linnæus).

PLATE 10.

The Long-tailed Titmouse has been separated by naturalists from the rest of the family, as it differs in many particulars, and is easily distinguished from the true Tits by its extremely long graduated tail.

The Long-tailed Titmice inhabiting Northern and Central Europe have the head pure white, without any black; this race was obtained on one occasion in Northumberland, and is said to have occurred once in Kent.

The Long-tailed Titmouse, also called Bottle-Tit, is resident and common throughout the greater part of the British Islands, with the exception of some of the northern and treeless districts. It is found abundantly in larch and birch woods, and about tall hedgerows and plantations, often coming into gardens in woodland neighbourhoods.

The nest is usually placed in some thick furze-bush or tall thorn-hedge, or it may be built in a fork on the stem of a birch tree. It is oval in shape, with a small hole at the side near the top of the dome, and is most beautifully constructed of lichens, green moss, and cobwebs, woven and felted together, and thickly lined with many feathers. According to Macgillivray, as many as 2379 have been found in one nest. The eggs vary in number from six to eleven or even more. These are white, finely speckled with red.

The birds feed on insects and larvæ, and when the young have left the nest, the families keep together until the following spring. Parties of a dozen or more may be seen at any time during the autumn and winter, constantly uttering their soft chirping notes as they make their way through the woods. They twist and climb all over the thinner twigs and branches, intent on food, and although often scattered, never seem to lose touch or get out of hearing of each other. These parties are often accompanied by other species of Tits, and also by Goldcrests and Tree-Creepers.

The female resembles the male in colour, but has more black on the head.

THE GREAT TITMOUSE.

Parus major, Linnæus.

PLATE 10.

The Great Titmouse or Ox-eye is more or less common over the greater portion of our islands, with the exception of the northern and western parts of Scotland, where it is rare. It is found throughout Europe from as far north as Lapland to the Mediterranean, and also in North Africa and Asia.

The Great Titmouse is a strikingly handsome bird, active and often aggressive in its habits, and is fond of wooded and cultivated districts, gardens, and orchards.

In early spring, before the leaves have opened, its loud and resonant song may constantly be heard. This is quite distinct from that of any other British bird, and has been compared to the sound of a file in sharpening a saw. The bird is also a mimic, and imitates the alarm notes of other species.

The nest is placed in many different situations, often in a hole in the trunk of a tree, or in a wall; sometimes in a pump or greenhouse chimney, while it is one of the first birds to take possession of a nesting-box. I have seen it turn a Blue Titmouse out of one of these boxes and drive the owner away.

The nest is made of a quantity of green moss, in which is placed a warm lining of hair, wool, and feathers. It contains from six to eleven or twelve eggs, which are white, with reddish spots. The female sits very close, and will allow herself to be touched with the hand without leaving the nest.

The chief food of the Great Titmouse consists of insects, but the bird is more or less omnivorous. In autumn it is fond of nuts, especially beech mast, picking them off the trees and flying to some convenient perch to open them. It is said to attack and kill smaller birds, and is partial to meat of any kind.

The colours of the female resemble those of the male, but are less bright, and the black stripe running through the centre of the breast and underparts, which distinguishes the Great Titmouse from its congeners, is narrower and less extended.

THE COAL-TITMOUSE.

Parus ater, Linnæus.

PLATE 10.

This Titmouse is found in most parts of the British Islands, and wherever pine woods occur it may be said to be abundant.

The Coal-Titmouse, or closely related races of the same species, is also met with over a great part of Europe and Asia.

The form of this bird with olive-brown back (the *Parus britannicus* of Messrs. Sharpe and Dresser) is the more common, while the grey-backed Continental race has occurred in Norfolk, and this or intermediate forms are found commonly in Scotland.

At a meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, in December 1910, Mr. W. R. Ogilvie-Grant exhibited and described a new species of Titmouse from Ireland (*Parus hibernicus*), two specimens of which he discovered among some birds forwarded to the Natural History Museum by Mr. Collingwood Ingram (*Bulletin, B.O.C.*, xxvii. p. 37). These differ principally from our Coal-Titmouse in having the light patches on the sides of the head and nape pale mustard-yellow.

It is, however, a matter of opinion as to whether this should be accepted as a new species or not.

The nest of the Coal-Titmouse, begun early in spring, is situated in a hole in a wall or tree, often underground in some disused burrow of mouse, rabbit, or mole, and is made of moss, wool, hair, and other materials. It contains from six to eleven eggs, which are white, dotted over with red.

The food consists mainly of insects, but it also eats seeds and nuts, and in winter it will come readily to bones and pieces of fat.

In spring it sings a pleasing little ditty, and, like the other Tits, is restless and ever on the move. Although mostly found in pine woods, it may often be seen among birches and alders, as well as in gardens and shrubberies.

The male is slightly brighter in colour than the female.

THE MARSH-TITMOUSE.

Parus palustris, Linnæus.

PLATE 10.

The Marsh-Titmouse, which, like the Coal-Titmouse, is subject to colour variations, though not by any means rare, is perhaps less frequently met with in England than most of its congeners.

In Scotland it is scarce and local, while in Ireland it has only rarely been recorded.

The Marsh-Titmouse inhabiting Scotland is apparently the race with a dull black crown to the head, known as the Willow-Tit, which form is also resident in England.

The nest is usually placed in a hole in the stump of an old willow or other tree, or sometimes underground in a disused mouse hole, and is composed of moss, willow-down, wool, and hair. It contains from five to eight eggs, which are white, spotted with red.

About the end of March 1914 a pair of Marsh-Titmice began to dig out a nesting hole in an old rotten post which had been used to support some netting in my garden. Near the top of this a shaft was carried downwards within the post, to the depth of several inches, with two small entrance holes about three inches apart, one above the other.

The numerous chips which were dug out during the operation were strewn about on the ground below, without any attempt at concealment. Unfortunately the birds abandoned the site before the excavation was completed.

Although frequenting willow trees near water, the Marsh-Titmouse is just as often found among woods and plantations in dry situations.

In spring this bird has some pleasing notes which may be described as a song, and its call-note is very distinct from that of the other Titmice. In actions and habits it very much resembles the rest of its family, clinging in various attitudes to the twigs and branches as it searches for insects.

The sexes are alike in plumage.

THE BLUE TITMOUSE.

Parus cæruleus, Linnæus.

PLATE 10.

This little favourite is resident and widely distributed throughout the country, becoming scarce or local in the Orkneys, Shetlands, and north-west of Scotland. Abroad it is spread over almost the whole of Europe, and it ranges eastwards as far as Persia.

It is the most common and best known member of the Titmouse family, and may be met with all the year round in gardens, orchards, and woodland country.

It nests in April, and usually chooses a hole in a tree or some cavity in a wall, though various other and often strange sites are selected in which to rear its young.

The nest is made of moss, wool, hair, and feathers, and contains from six to ten eggs—sometimes more—which are white, spotted with rusty-red.

The Blue Titmouse lives principally on insect food, and is of great service to the gardener in ridding the fruit trees of grubs and other pests. Expert and skilful in securing its prey, the larvæ hidden in buds and foliage have little chance of eluding its sharp eyesight.

In spring it produces, like the other Titmice, a little song, in addition to its usual alarm and call notes, and in autumn small parties may often be seen about the woods, mixed up with other Tits, Goldcrests, and Tree-Creepers.

The sexes are similar in colour, although the male is rather the brighter of the two.

THE CRESTED TITMOUSE.

Parus cristatus, Linnæus.

PLATE 10.

As a resident species the Crested Titmouse is confined to the natural pine forests which cover the valley of the Spey in Scotland, although it has occurred as a wanderer in other parts of that country. Several stray specimens have been also recorded in England, while it has a wide range over Europe.

Lord Lilford, in his work on British Birds, quoting a letter from Lieut.-Colonel Irby, says: "The Crested Titmouse is common in the Spey district, where there are old and decayed pine-trees, but is very local—found in one small valley and absent in the next. A hole about eight inches deep and enlarged at the bottom is excavated vertically in a rotten fir-stump or decayed alder, and the nest, which is very scant, consists of moss lined with hair or felt; the usual complement of eggs is four." The eggs are generally laid about the end of April or beginning of May, and are white, dotted with red.

It feeds on insects, larvæ, and berries. I have observed the bird in autumn on one or two occasions in its Scottish haunts; its actions and general bearing much resembled those of the Blue Titmouse, and it allowed a near approach.

The call-note is difficult to describe, but once heard, cannot be mistaken for that of any other Titmouse. According to Mr. J. G. Millais, it has a twittering note, like the call-note of the common Canary.

The sexes are alike in colour.

Family CERTHIIDÆ.

THE TREE-CREEPER.

Certhia familiaris, Linnæus.

PLATE II.

The Tree-Creeper is not uncommon in districts suiting its tree-loving habits throughout the British Islands, although rare in the Shetlands and Orkneys, and unknown in the Outer Hebrides. Either this species, or closely related races, also inhabit Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.

It breeds early in the year, and the nest may be looked for behind a piece of bark which has become more or less detached from the trunk of a tree, in thatch, wood-stacks, or in crevices under the eaves of buildings. It is usually composed of twigs, grasses, and moss, and lined with feathers, wool, and pieces of bark.

The six to nine glossy white eggs are spotted with rusty-brown and purplish-red. This tiny bird, one of the smallest of our native species, is retiring and unobtrusive in its ways, and may be found in wooded localities, wherever there are good-sized trees. Diligently searching the trunks and branches for the spiders and insects on which it lives, it begins operations near the roots and works its way upwards, moving round and round the tree as it ascends. As soon as one has been thoroughly explored, it quickly flits to another and repeats the same movements. It always appears to be absorbed in its occupation, paying little heed to anyone who does not approach too near, and constantly utters a rather shrill and squeaking cry.

The long curved claws and stiff pointed feathers of the tail are a great help to the bird when climbing up the trees and creeping along the branches.

The female does not differ from the male in plumage.



Richard M. Burn
1873

Wall Creeper, summer & winter.
 Pied Wagtail.
 White Wagtail.
 Grey-headed Yellow Wagtail.

Tree

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE WALL-CREEPER.

Tichodroma muraria (Linnæus).

PLATE II.

On October 30, 1792, Robert Marsham, of Stratton-Strawless in Norfolk, wrote to Gilbert White of Selborne, describing a specimen of the Wall-Creeper which had been shot by his man, whilst flying about his house. This was the first authentic record in England of this bird, which has since been obtained four times, viz. one in Lancashire, May 8, 1872; another near Winchelsea, about 1886; one near Hastings, December 1905; and the last, recorded by Mr. H. W. Ford-Lindsay in Witherby's *British Birds* (vol. vi. p. 218), was obtained within the ruins of Camber Castle, Sussex, on November 1, 1912.

Abroad the Wall-Creeper is found among the mountain ranges of Central and Southern Europe, and in winter may sometimes be seen climbing about the walls of old buildings in southern France and Italy. It is also met with in Asia and in Northern Africa.

The nest, placed in rock crevices which are often inaccessible, is described by Seebohm (*British Birds*, vol. i. p. 520), from a specimen in his collection, as follows: "Its chief material is moss, evidently gathered from the rocks and stones, intermingled with a few grasses, and compactly felted together with hairs, wool, and a few feathers. The lining is almost exclusively composed of wool and hair, very thickly and densely felted together." The eggs are white, minutely spotted with reddish-brown, and vary in number from three to five.

Lord Lilford, in his book on British Birds, says: "My own acquaintance with the Wall-Creeper was first formed high up in the Italian Alps during the month of August; I found it in small family-parties, generally frequenting precipitous faces of rock; the birds examine every nook and crevice, not, as in the case of the Woodpeckers, by continuous climbing, but by a series of short hops in some degrees resembling the method of progression of the Nuthatch; the birds thus observed by me appeared to be perfectly fearless of man, probably from their small acquaintance with him, and permitted a very close observation of their habits; they seemed to find abundant food in the crannies and small fissures of the limestone upon which I could hardly bear my hand in the full blaze of noon; after carefully examining one of these localities the bird would flit with a very peculiar butterfly-like flight to the lower end of another crevice in the rock. I never saw one of them progress head downwards or sideways, and the only sound that I heard from them was a rapidly repeated single note somewhat resembling that of the Wryneck."

The female resembles the male, but in summer has less black on the throat.

Family MOTACILLIDÆ.

THE PIED WAGTAIL.

Motacilla lugubris, Temminck.

PLATE II.

The Pied Wagtail, although common and resident throughout the British Islands, is subject to a partial migration southwards in autumn. According to Lord Lilford, "its range appears to be virtually limited to our islands and the extreme west of the continent of Europe."

The nest, built of moss, grass-stalks, and roots, and lined with hair, is placed in a cavity under some bank or rock, in thatch, or perhaps more often in thick ivy against a wall. It is usually begun in April, and contains from four to six eggs, in colour white, speckled with grey.

The food of this bird consists mainly of insects, and it is a most expert flycatcher.

On June 7, 1913, I observed one which was feeding its young in a nest placed close to my window, cleverly seizing these insects, although its bill already held a plentiful supply. Sometimes only half a minute elapsed between the visits of the female to the nest, and she occasionally wetted the food in a drinking pan before taking it to the young.

The Pied Wagtail is met with in fields and gardens; riverside meadows are also favourite haunts, and in autumn many feed along the seashore.

It is a strikingly beautiful bird, the various tones of black, white, and grey being strongly contrasted.

In spring it has a pleasing though short song.

This Wagtail may be distinguished in summer plumage from the so-called White Wagtail—the next species to be described—by having the back black instead of grey. In winter the black mantle of the former changes to grey, when both species are much alike.

The female has the back grey, marked with dark feathers.

THE WHITE WAGTAIL.

Motacilla alba, Linnæus.

PLATE II.

This species is a fairly common spring visitor to our shores, passing southwards again in autumn, and is found over the greater part of Europe, where it is the common form of Pied Wagtail. Apparently, from want of observation, it was unknown as a British bird until Mr. Bond found it nesting at Kingsbury Reservoir, near London, in May 1841.

The situations selected for the nest are like those chosen by the Pied Wagtail, and the eggs are very much the same.

In habits it is not to be distinguished from the other, and their notes are also alike.

The female has the colours duller, and less black on the head than her mate.

THE GREY WAGTAIL.

Motacilla melanope, Pallas.

PLATE II.

This very graceful bird, though smaller than the Pied Wagtail, has greater length of tail, and its elegant shape and beautifully contrasted colours make it one of the most attractive of the family.

It is resident in the British Islands, having a partial migration southwards in autumn. It is also not uncommon on high ground in Central and Southern Europe, its most northerly range on the continent being south Sweden.

During summer the usual haunts of the Grey Wagtail in our islands are the wild and hilly parts of the northern and western counties of England, as well as in Wales; also over the greater part of Scotland, where it may be found nesting by the sides of rocky burns, often far up among the hills. It is likewise common in Ireland.

The nest is placed in a hollow under an overhanging rock, or among grass and stones, and is made of grasses, moss, and wool, with a lining of hair. The five or six eggs are greyish-white, spotted with greyish-brown.

Macgillivray says: "Its flight is rapid and performed in large curves. When alighting it spreads out its tail, displaying the lateral white feathers, which then become very conspicuous, and when standing it vibrates its body continually, so that the tail, which it now and then spreads by a sudden jerk, is always in motion. . . . Its food consists of insects of various kinds, which it usually picks up from the ground, although it often performs a short aerial excursion in pursuit of them."

Its sharp and clear note somewhat resembles that of the Pied Wagtail.

The female is duller in colour than the male, and has little or no black on the throat, both sexes being much alike in winter.

THE BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL.

Motacilla flava, Linnæus.

PLATE II.

It was first made clear by Gould in 1832 that the Blue-headed Wagtail, which is the Continental form of our common Yellow Wagtail, was distinct, and he therefore separated the two birds.

It has a wide range over Europe, and is also found in Asia and America, wintering in Africa.

The Blue-headed Wagtail is now known to be a more or less regular spring visitor to our islands, a few remaining to nest, especially in parts of Sussex and Kent. It has also been known to breed in Durham and Wiltshire.

Mr. Dresser states (*Birds of Europe*, vol. iii.): "The present species (*Motacilla flava*), which may be considered the typical form, is during the breeding season found in Central Europe, while in the high north *Motacilla viridis* alone occurs."

The food of this Wagtail consists of flies and other insects, and in its habits it is very like the others, haunting marshy ground and grass lands, especially where there are cattle. It has a twittering song.

The nest, built in May, is made of roots, bents, dry grasses, and moss, with a lining of hair and some feathers. It is placed on the ground among long grass and other herbage, and contains from four to six eggs, which are buffish-white, clouded with yellowish-brown.

A variety of this Wagtail, the *Motacilla beema*, Sykes, known as Sykes' Wagtail, has once occurred at Rottendean, Sussex, in April 1898. This has the cheeks and lower part of the ear-coverts white, and the grey on the top of the head and nape are paler than in the Blue-headed Wagtail.

The other forms of this Wagtail, which have visited the British Islands, and are all closely related, are as follows:

The Grey-headed Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla viridis*, Gmelin), (figured on Plate II), a northern race, found in Scandinavia and ranging across Russia to Siberia; it has the top of the head dark slaty-grey, almost black ear-coverts, and is without the eye-stripe. Several examples have been recorded.

The Black-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla melanocephala*, Lichtenstein), a southern form inhabiting South-eastern Europe and Asia in summer, and spending the winter in Africa and India.

This has the crown, sides of the head, and back of neck black, without any eye-stripe. The first example in England was shot in Sussex in 1903, and two or three others have since been recorded.

The Ashy-headed Wagtail, *Motacilla cinereicapilla*, Savi. This form has a slaty-grey crown, ear-coverts black, and is without the eye-stripe. It inhabits the Mediterranean countries, and winters in Africa. Two English examples have been recorded.

THE YELLOW WAGTAIL.

Motacilla raii (Bonaparte).

PLATE II.

This species is a common summer visitor to many parts of the British Islands, reaching our shores in spring, leaving in the autumn, and wintering in Africa.

It is the representative in Western Europe of the Blue-headed Wagtail, previously described, only differing from it in the colour of the head, the crown being of a yellowish-green.

Its habits are precisely the same, usually seeking its food in fields among grazing cattle, where a plentiful supply of flies and other insects may be found.

The nest, placed on the ground, is built of dead grasses and fine roots, and lined with hair. The five or six eggs are greyish-white, mottled with yellowish-brown.

Describing its notes, Lord Lilford says (*Birds of Northamptonshire and Neighbourhood*): "The Yellow Wagtail has more of a song and altogether more musical notes than either the Pied or Grey species.

The female is browner on the back than the male, paler on the underparts, and has the eye-stripe more of a buff-colour.



Rock Pipit
Common Pipit
Heath Pipit

Field Pipit

Tree Pipit

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE TREE-PIPIT

Anthus trivialis (Linnæus).

PLATE 12.

The family of Pipits, closely related to that of the Wagtails, contains a large number of species.

The first of these to be considered is the Tree-Pipit, a regular summer visitor, more or less common in many parts of the country, with the exception of western Cornwall and the northern parts of Scotland. It has not been recorded in Ireland. Over Europe and Asia it has a wide range, and winters in the southern parts of Europe, Africa, and India.

The Tree-Pipit usually arrives about the middle of April; the earliest date on which I have observed it, in Surrey, was the third of that month.

It likes a more or less open, though wooded country, with good-sized trees; and also frequents orchards.

The same or succeeding pairs of birds return year by year to certain spots, near which they nest, with extraordinary regularity.

The nest is cleverly concealed and placed on the ground. It is made of dead grasses, moss, and rootlets, and lined with fine grass and some hair. The eggs, numbering from four to six, vary much in colour. Howard Saunders says (*Manual of British Birds*, 2nd ed., p. 132), "some being greyish-white, mottled with deep brown; others rich reddish-brown; some almost lilac pink; and again a not uncommon variety resembles the egg of the Reed-Bunting."

The Tree-Pipit soon makes its presence known by its striking and characteristic song. Perched on the upper branch of a tree, it suddenly springs upwards and outwards in a slanting direction, remaining quite silent until about the turning point, when it begins its song. This is continued as the Tree-Pipit descends with open wings, outspread tail directed upwards, and feet hanging down below the body, until it regains its footing, close to the branch from which it started; or on another at some distance. As far as I have observed, this point is left undecided until after the bird has begun to sing. It is also often heard singing while perched upon a tree.

The actions of the Tree-Pipit are nimble and active, and it runs swiftly along the ground after insects, on which it feeds.

The sexes are much alike in colour.

THE MEADOW-PIPIT

Anthus pratensis (Linnæus).

PLATE 12.

The Meadow-Pipit or Titlark is resident and well known all over the British Islands, being also widely distributed throughout the greater part of Europe and in many portions of Asia. Some winter in North Africa. It is a common bird on our pastures, wastes, and moorland country; in winter leaving the high ground and bleak hillsides for lower and more sheltered localities. Some pass out of this country in autumn, returning in spring.

The nest, usually placed in some hollow on a bank, or on flat ground, and concealed among grass and heather, is made of grasses, and lined with finer material of the same kind and hair. The five or six eggs vary a good deal in colour, but usually have a brownish- or greyish-white ground, dotted with purplish-grey or reddish-brown.

Though often seen on a wall or rock, the Meadow-Pipit seldom perches on trees, and seeks its food of insects, small worms, and snails, and also seeds on the ground.

It sings while descending after an upward flight, in the manner of the Tree-Pipit, although it sometimes utters a few *cheeping* notes during the ascent. The song is distinctly inferior to that of the Tree-Pipit, and may occasionally be heard while the bird is perched on a stone. Its ordinary call is a shrill and rather melancholy squeaking note, frequently uttered.

The Meadow-Pipit is slightly smaller than the other, and may be distinguished from it by its much longer and straighter hind claw.

The sexes are alike in colour.

THE RED-THROATED PIPIT.

Anthus cervinus (Pallas).

PLATE 12.

The first authentic occurrence of the Red-throated Pipit was one obtained on Unst, Shetlands, in 1854, and not identified until many years afterwards. Two other supposed examples, one captured near Brighton in March 1884, and the other shot at Rainham, Kent, in April, 1880, are now considered to be only brightly-coloured specimens of the Meadow-Pipit (Witherby's *British Birds*, vol. ii. p. 278).

A number of undoubted examples, however, have since been noted.

In summer the Red-throated Pipit inhabits the far north of Europe and Asia, wintering in India, China, and North Africa.

Seebohm found it plentiful in Siberia, and describes the nest as being "placed in recesses on the sides of the tussocky ridges which intersect the bogs," and "entirely made of dry grass, the coarser pieces being used for the foundation and the finest reserved for the lining." According to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palæ-arctic Birds*, p. 214): "The eggs vary considerably, some having the ground colour greenish grey, others brown, some are rich reddish-brown, the colour of old mahogany, others dull brown, and others again greenish grey, closely spotted with brown, and I have seen some with large brown scratches like those on the eggs of the Lapland Bunting."

The food is similar to the Meadow-Pipit's, but it has a finer song than that species.

In the female the reddish-chestnut colour is confined to the throat, and does not extend to the breast, as in the male.

THE TAWNY PIPIT.
Anthus campestris (Linnæus).

PLATE 12.

This species is an irregular autumnal migrant to England, some thirty or forty examples having been obtained, mostly in Sussex.

It is said to visit the north of France and Holland annually in summer, and is also found over the greater part of Europe, and ranges eastwards into Asia, wintering in India and North Africa.

It is a bird of the desert wastes and uncultivated country, and, according to Lord Lilford: "In comparison with the other species of the genus *Anthus*, this is a shy and retiring bird, chiefly remarkable for its loud single alarm-note."

He describes a nest he found in Spain as follows—"it was placed between two large clods of sandy earth, near a horse-track, was composed of dry root-fibres, lined with goat's-hair, and contained four eggs of a dull creamy white profusely blotched and streaked with ash-grey markings."

The male and female are alike in colour.

RICHARD'S PIPIT.

Anthus richardi, Vieillot.

PLATE 12.

This Eastern species of Pipit breeds on the steppes and marshy lands of Central and Northern Asia, wintering in China and India. Although not breeding in Europe, it has a wide range there, and has occurred many times in England, seldom in Scotland, and only twice in Ireland.

According to Seebohm, it nests late in May or early in June, as its breeding-grounds are covered with snow until that time.

It builds its nest on the ground, and the five or six eggs are dull white, spotted and blotched with different shades of brown.

It feeds on worms and insects.

In habits Richard's Pipit is said to be very shy and wary, and difficult to approach within gunshot.

It is partial to well-watered country, being frequently found in wet meadows and grass-lands.

It is by far the largest of the Pipits visiting Great Britain, and has a very long hind claw.

The female does not differ from the male in plumage.

THE ALPINE PIPIT.

Anthus spipoletta (Linnæus).

PLATE 12.

A few years ago the Alpine or Water-Pipit was considered an unusual visitor to England, but of late it has been frequently seen and obtained on migration, mostly in Sussex.

Its summer home is among the mountains of Central and Southern Europe, and across Asia, while in winter it visits Africa, India, and China.

When its high summer haunts are free from snow, the Alpine Pipit returns to them, and there on the ground, among rocks and stones, the nest is placed. It is made of dead grasses, moss, and small roots, and lined with hair or wool. The four or five eggs are greyish-white in ground colour, and blotched with olive-brown.

Seebohm compares its song to that of the Meadow-Pipit, but says it "is louder though not so sweet."

The sexes do not differ in colour.

Referring to the name of Alpine Pipit, Lord Lilford, in his work on British Birds, says: "I have adopted the above designation for this species in preference to that of *Water-Pipit*, for the simple reason that all the European species of the genus *Anthus* frequent the sea-shores and alluvial flats in autumn and winter, and are, with very few exceptions, at all seasons fond of the neighbourhood of water, whilst the present bird, during the breeding-season, is seldom, if ever, to be met with, except among mountains of a considerable elevation."

An example of the American Water-Pipit (*Anthus ludovicianus*) occurred in St. Kilda in the autumn of 1910.

This species breeds in the Arctic portions of north-eastern Siberia and Northern America, and winters as far south as Central America.

It is rather larger than *A. spipoletta*, and more tawny on the underparts.

THE ROCK-PIPIT.

Anthus obscurus (Latham).

PLATE 12.

This bird is resident and common along all the rocky parts of our coasts, inhabiting the mainland as well as the islands, and during the autumn and winter months it also frequents the low-lying shores and mud-flats. It is found, in suitable localities, over the greater part of Europe.

The Scandinavian race of Rock-Pipit, visiting our shores on migration, has a vinous-chestnut tint on the breast, and the throat less spotted during the breeding season, but otherwise does not differ from the ordinary form.

The nest is placed close to the sea, among tufts of thrift, or under a stone, and is composed of dead grass—sometimes partly of seaweed—and often, but not always, lined with hair. The eggs vary in number from four to five, and varieties of colour occur. They are often of a greyish or greenish tint in ground colour, blotched with olive-brown.

The food consists of insects, larvæ, and tiny shellfish; the little black flies, so plentiful about decaying seaweed, forming a large part of its diet.

The song is delivered on the wing, the bird rising in the air and then descending, after the manner of the Meadow-Pipit.

The shrill call-note also resembles that bird's, and is frequently uttered as it flits about the rocks and seaweed with an unsteady wavering flight.

The sexes are alike in colour.

THE GREAT GREY SHRIKE.

Lanius excubitor, Linnæus.

PLATE 13.

The Great Grey Shrike is a not very uncommon autumn and winter visitor along the eastern parts of England and Scotland, occasionally occurring in spring, and very rarely during summer.

It is also found over a great part of Europe, ranging eastwards as far as western Siberia.

The large and bulky nest is made of twigs, dead grass, and moss, with a lining of wool, hair, and feathers, and is placed in a fork of a branch, at some distance from the ground. It contains five or six eggs, greenish-white in ground colour, and blotched with olive-brown and purplish-grey.

The Great Grey Shrike is in character bold and aggressive, and preys largely on small birds and mice, besides beetles, moths, and grasshoppers.

It has a habit, in common with the other members of the Shrike family, of fixing its victims on a sharp thorn or between two twigs, and, in consequence, has acquired the name of "Butcher-bird."

When on the lookout, it usually perches on some bare branch of a tree or tall hedge, ready to avoid danger or to pounce on any prey within reach.

According to Seebohm (*British Birds*, vol. i. p. 600): "The song is something like that of a Starling"; and it has also a rather harsh alarm-note.

There are two forms of the Great Grey Shrike, both visiting this country, viz. *Lanius excubitor*, the one drawn on the plate, having white bases to the quill feathers of the wing, which extending to the secondaries, make a double bar.

In the other form, known as *Lanius major*, the white is confined to the primary quills alone.

The female resembles the male, but has faint greyish-brown bars on the breast.



6. Kingbird (Turdus migratorius) - 2. Kingbird (Turdus migratorius) -
3. Kingbird (Turdus migratorius) - 4. Kingbird (Turdus migratorius) -
5. Kingbird (Turdus migratorius) - 6. Kingbird (Turdus migratorius)

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE SOUTHERN GREY SHRIKE.

Lanius meridionalis, Temminck.

One example of this species was obtained in Sussex in January 1911.

It is resident in Spain, Portugal, and southern France, and resembles the bird just described, but has the white above the eye extended to the base of the bill, and the breast tinged with pink.

THE LESSER GREY SHRIKE.

Lanius minor, J. F. Gmelin.

PLATE 13.

Of much rarer occurrence than the Great Grey Shrike, the present species has been recorded sixteen times in England, and once on Fair Isle, Scotland.

The Lesser Grey Shrike is a summer visitor to many parts of Central and Southern Europe, with the exception of Spain, ranging eastwards into Asia, and wintering in South Africa.

The nest, built of twigs, roots, grasses, and flowering plants, with a lining of wool, hair, and feathers, is often placed in a fruit tree or poplar, and contains from five to seven eggs, which are a delicate bluish-green in ground colour, spotted and blotched with brown and grey.

The song is described by Seebohm (*British Birds*, vol. i. p. 604) as "a not unmusical chatter, something like the twitter of the Swallow or Starling, but louder and mixed with some harsher notes."

This bird is easily distinguished from the Great Grey Shrike by its smaller size, pale salmon-tinted breast and flanks, and by having the forehead black. In the female this part has less black, but otherwise the sexes are much alike.

THE RED-BACKED SHRIKE.

Lanius collurio, Linnæus.

PLATE 13.

The Red-backed Shrike is a regular summer visitor in England, arriving in May, being rather unevenly distributed over the central and southern counties, and is not uncommon in Wales. It is rare in Scotland, and has only thrice occurred in Ireland.

The nest, which is rather large, is composed of roots, stout grass-stalks, and moss, and lined with wool and hair. It may be sought for in some thick thorn-hedge or bush, and contains from four to six eggs; these vary in colour, being often greenish-grey, blotched with brown, or with the ground colour salmon-pink, with purplish and red markings.

The Red-backed Shrike feeds on various beetles, humble-bees, grasshoppers, and other insects; often on mice and small birds, and, like the other Shrikes, frequently fixes its prey on a thorn, before tearing it to pieces.

It usually takes up its station on an exposed branch or twig in a tall hedge or bush, watching with sharp eyes any passing quarry and darting after it in pursuit. While perched it frequently flirts its tail from side to side, and upwards and downwards, at the same time spreading and closing the feathers.

When crossing a field from one high thorn fence to another, the Red-backed Shrike will fly in a straight course, not far from the ground, and on arriving at the opposite hedge, darts suddenly upwards to the topmost branches.

The alarm-note is harsh, but the song is not unpleasing.

THE WOODCHAT.

Lanius pomeranus, Sparrman.

PLATE 13.

Over forty examples of this Shrike have been recorded in the British Islands, most frequently in the south-eastern parts of England.

It is not uncommon in France and Germany, becoming abundant in Spain and other portions of Southern Europe, and winters in Africa.

The nest, constructed of grass and other herbage, is conspicuously placed on a branch or in a fork, usually not far from the ground, and contains about five eggs. These are very like those of the Red-backed Shrike, but the red variety is not often met with.

The Woodchat is by no means shy or wary, and its strongly-contrasted colours make it conspicuous, as it sits on some exposed branch in a tree.

Like the other Shrikes, it has a harsh call-note, but the song is low and pleasing.

The female is not so brightly coloured as the male, the upper parts, which are black in the latter, being brown tinged with reddish.

THE MASKED SHRIKE.

Lanius nubicus, Lichtenstein.

PLATE 13.

A specimen of the Masked Shrike was obtained in Kent in July 1905. This is a summer visitor to South-eastern Europe, Asia Minor, and south-western Persia, wintering in Africa, to the eastward of Tripoli, and in Arabia.

It builds a compact and neatly-made nest of roots and grasses, lined with finer materials, which contains four to seven eggs, in ground colour dull olive-green, spotted with brown.

The Masked Shrike is insectivorous, feeding mostly on beetles, and is shy in its habits, keeping to the thick cover of bushes.

It is said to have a pleasant song.

The female resembles the male, but has the dark parts browner in colour.

Family ORIOLIDÆ.

THE GOLDEN ORIOLE.

Oriolus galbula, Linnæus.

PLATE 14.

The Golden Oriole, one of the most beautiful of our birds, is a regular summer visitor to the south-western portions of England, occurring more sparingly in other parts.

A fair number usually reach the Scilly Islands during the month of May.

It is common in many parts of Europe, and winters in Africa.

The Golden Oriole has been known to breed several times in England, and would do so more frequently if left alone.

Lord Lilford describes the nest (*Birds of Northamptonshire and Neighbourhood*, vol. i. p. 86) as "very unlike that of any other European bird, being composed entirely of wool and long sedge grass, and placed in the horizontal fork of a branch, generally but not always, at a considerable height from the ground, and difficult of access, from being at or near the extremity of a long and slender bough." The four or five glossy white eggs are marked with reddish-purple spots.

The food consists of insects, grubs, and various fruits.

The Golden Oriole has a loud flute-like call, with a much harsher note at times, and haunts the open parts of shady woods and trees in gardens and shrubberies.

In the female, the upper parts are olive-green, becoming yellower near the tail, the throat and underparts whitish with dark streaks, and the wings of a dark brown; the flanks and under tail coverts being yellow.



Prunella monticola (American Robin)
1892

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

Family AMPELIDÆ.

THE WAXWING.

Ampelis garrulus, Linnæus.

PLATE 14.

The summer haunts of the Waxwing are the forests of northern Scandinavia, Russia, and Asia, whilst a more or less extended southward and westward movement takes place in winter.

It has long been known as a visitor to our islands, having been first mentioned by Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich, who, writing to his friend Merrett on September 16, 1668, says: "Garrulus Bohemicus probably you haue a prettie handsome bird with the fine cinnaberin tipps of the wings some wch I haue seen heere haue the tayle tipt with yellowe wch is not in the discription" (*Notes and Letters on the Natural History of Norfolk*, with notes by Thomas Southwell, p. 68. Jarrold & Sons, 1902).

Nothing was known about the nest and eggs of the Waxwing until the year 1856, when John Wooley obtained them from his collectors in Russian Lapland.

The nest is placed on the branch of a fir or birch, and is principally made of the lichen called tree-hair and twigs; and the eggs, varying in number from five to seven, are described by Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palearctic Birds*, p. 250) as "pale blue with pale purplish shell-markings and black surface-spots, but occasionally the ground colour is warm pinkish."

In summer the food of the Waxwing consists of insects, and in autumn and winter of hips and haws, the fruit of the berberry and other trees.

Seebohm compares the note of this bird to that of the Blue Tit.

The female resembles the male in colour.

Family MUSCICAPIDÆ.

THE SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

Muscicapa grisola, Linnæus.

PLATE 14.

This is one of the later summer migrants, usually arriving about the middle of May. It is fairly common in most parts of the British Islands, and has a wide distribution throughout Europe, wintering in Africa.

The nest of the Spotted Flycatcher is usually placed in a creeper or fruit tree trained on a wall, or on the trunk of a large tree; but various and sometimes curious sites are selected.

It is composed of fibrous roots, moss, &c., and lined with wool and hair; and contains from four to six eggs. These are bluish-white or greenish in ground colour, marked with reddish-brown.

Its food consists of flies and other insects, although in autumn berries are sometimes eaten.

The Spotted Flycatcher has a little low-toned song, which is not often heard, but its rather sharp call-note is frequently uttered. This bird is fond of gardens and parks where there are tall, old trees, and when feeding, takes up its station on a bough or post, from which it darts after any passing insect, the snap of its bill being often heard as the prey is secured.

The sexes are alike in colour.

THE BROWN FLYCATCHER.

Muscicapa latirostris, Raffles.

PLATE 14.

The Brown Flycatcher has only once been taken in England, an example having been shot near Lydd in Kent, May 21, 1909. This is also the first occurrence of the bird in Europe.

According to the late E. W. Oates (*Fauna of British India*, vol. ii. p. 35): "It occurs in Ceylon and the Andamans. On the Himalayas it is a summer visitor as far west as Chamba, and it is found in the other portions of the Empire chiefly in winter, but some birds appear to be resident in certain parts all the year round, for I have seen a specimen obtained in Ceylon in June.

"This Flycatcher has a wide range, being found from Japan and Eastern Siberia to the Philippines and Java."

The sexes do not differ in plumage.

THE PIED FLYCATCHER.

Muscicapa atricapilla, Linnæus.

PLATE 14.

The Pied Flycatcher is much less common than the Spotted Flycatcher, and is very local in its distribution. It seems to be more frequently met with in the Lake Districts of Westmorland and Cumberland, and in parts of Wales, where it breeds regularly every year.

It is rare in Scotland, whilst in Ireland only a few examples have been taken, mostly at the lighthouses, on migration.

It is widely spread over Europe during summer, and winters in Africa.

The Pied Flycatcher usually builds its nest, composed of grass and roots, with a lining of hair, in a hole in a tree or wall, and lays five or six very pale blue eggs. Sometimes these are spotted with tiny specks of reddish-brown.

Seebohm, describing this species in his book on *British Birds* (vol. i. pp. 329-330), says: "In many of its movements the Pied Flycatcher resembles its dingy congener.

"Far more of a restless species than a shy one, it may frequently be seen hovering, in butterfly-like flight, in the air. Sometimes it sits quietly on some decayed limb, ever and anon uttering its call-notes and incessantly jerking its tail and half opening its wings, as though anxious to sally into the air. Its food consists almost entirely of insects, especially flies and gnats, which it often takes from the leaves of the forest-trees whilst hovering daintily above them."

THE COLLARED FLYCATCHER.

Muscicapa collaris, Bechstein.

PLATE 14.

This is a near ally of the Pied Flycatcher, and, as may be seen on looking at the plate, differs from it in having a broad white collar right round the neck, and the patches of white on the forehead and wing primaries are larger.

Only two examples of this bird have been recorded in England, both having been shot at Winchelsea, one on the 12th, and the other on the 13th May 1911. It is a summer visitor to Central and Southern Europe and Asia Minor, spending the winter in Africa.

The females of the two species closely resemble each other.

THE RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER.

Muscicapa parva, Bechstein.

PLATE 14.

This little bird, which in colour much resembles a Robin, occasionally reaches our islands while migrating.

The first example obtained was shot near Falmouth in January 1863.

It is found during summer over a great part of Central and Southern Europe, ranging eastwards to Siberia, and wintering in Africa and India.

The nest, placed in a hole in a tree, is built of moss and lichen, and lined with grass and hair. It contains from five to seven eggs, in ground colour a pale bluish-green, speckled with reddish-brown.

It is said to be fond of shady woods where beech and fir abound, and in its habits is active and restless.

This Flycatcher has a pleasing song, and, like its relations, captures flies and other insects on the wing.

The female has the breast reddish-buff, and lacks the bluish-grey on the sides of the head, which contrasts so well with the reddish-orange on the breast of the male.



Red-rumped Swallow.
Swallow.
Goldfinch.

MCE LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

Family HIRUNDINIDÆ.

THE SWALLOW.

Hirundo rustica, Linnæus.

PLATE 15.

The Swallow arrives in our islands early in April, about the 10th of that month being the usual time; and takes its departure in September and October.

It is widely distributed over Europe, ranging eastwards as far as Manchuria, wintering in South Africa, India, China, and southward to the Malay peninsula.

In May the Swallow begins its nest, which is placed in various sites, often on the rafters of sheds and outbuildings, or in chimneys. The eggs vary in number from four to six, and are white, marked with brownish-red spots.

Gilbert White, who has given one of the best descriptions of the habits of this bird, says: "In general with us this *hirundo* breeds in chimneys; and loves to haunt those stacks where there is a constant fire, no doubt for the sake of warmth. Not that it can subsist in the immediate shaft where there is a fire; but prefers one adjoining to that of the kitchen and disregards the perpetual smoke of that funnel, as I have often observed with some degree of wonder.

"Five or six or more feet down the chimney does this little bird begin to form her nest about the middle of May, which consists, like that of the house-martin, of a crust or shell composed of dirt or mud mixed with short pieces of straw to render it tough and permanent; with this difference, that whereas the shell of the martin is nearly hemispheric, that of the swallow is open at the top, and like half a dish: this nest is lined with fine grasses and feathers, which are often collected as they float in the air."

The song consists of a succession of soft twittering notes.

The insect food on which it subsists is taken during flight, as the bird sweeps along, sometimes just above the ground.

The sexes are alike in colour.

THE RED-RUMPED SWALLOW.

Hirundo rufula, Temminck.

PLATE 15.

Two examples of this very handsome Swallow have been obtained in Great Britain, the first shot on Fair Isle, Shetlands, in June 1896, and recovered ten days later, and the second on Romney Marsh in May 1909.

It is found in the southern and south-eastern parts of Europe, in Asia Minor, and over a great portion of Asia, as well as in Africa.

Canon Tristram says (*Ibis*, 1867, p. 362): "The nest is a beautiful structure, composed of the same materials as that of the House-Martin, but is invariably attached to the flat surface of the underside of the roof of a cave or vault. It is of the shape of a retort, with a bulb of the size of a Thrush's nest, large and roomy, the neck or passage for entrance being sometimes a foot or more in length; the inside of the clay chamber is warmly lined with feathers."

The eggs, four or five in number, are pure white, without spots.

THE MARTIN.

Chelidon urbica (Linnæus).

PLATE 15.

The Martin, which haunts the eaves of our houses, very often in the midst of towns and villages, and hence often called the House-Martin, is easily distinguished from the Swallow by its conspicuous white rump, and arrives shortly after the other bird. It is found throughout the greater part of the British Islands, becoming less frequent and more local in the north and north-western portions, and in Ireland.

Abroad it has a wide range from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean, and ranges eastwards into Asia. It winters in Africa, south of Abyssinia.

A short time after their arrival the Martins either take possession of their old nests of the previous year, repairing them where necessary, or begin the work of building new ones. Great care and labour is bestowed on the foundations of the new nest, the birds first examining various sites, apparently testing them by fixing small pieces of mud to different parts of the walls of the house they have chosen on which to place their nest.

This is composed of mud, strengthened with grass-stalks or pieces of straw, with a lining of straws, feathers, and other soft material.

If provided with small pieces of cotton wool, thinned out and made very light so that they float away in the air, the Martins will readily take these on the wing, usually rising to the wool from below.

From their manner of seizing this material, it is probable that they take their prey in a similar way, as small gnats and flies would be more easily seen against the sky from beneath.

The eggs are pure white, and vary from four to five in number.

The Martin has a soft and very pleasing twittering song.

The sexes are alike in colour.

THE SAND-MARTIN.

Cotile riparia (Linnæus).

PLATE 15.

This little bird usually arrives before any of its congeners, often before the end of March, and is easily distinguished from them by its smaller size, duller colour, and uncertain wavering flight—"wheeling and gliding in untraceable mazes" as Macgillivray puts it. It is widely distributed over the British Islands and through the greater part of Europe, being also found in Asia. It winters in Africa, India, and in South America.

Sand-Martins nest in colonies, and selecting some steep bank or cutting, excavate holes, digging into the sand or earth with their tiny bills, which seem inadequate tools for such a purpose. On attaining a depth of about two feet, sometimes more, sometimes less, in a dug-out recess at the end of the shaft, the nest is placed. It is made of dried grasses, with a lining of feathers, and contains four or five pure white eggs.

Like the other members of its family, it lives on insects, and is fond of the neighbourhood of water. When the time approaches for their departure, great numbers collect together, roosting on trees by the river sides, and leave early in September.

The female does not differ from the male in colour.

Family FRINGILLIDÆ. Subfamily FRINGILLINÆ.

THE GREENFINCH.

Ligurinus chloris (Linnæus).

PLATE 15.

This is a common and abundant species in almost every part of the British Islands, and is also widely distributed in Europe.

The nest, usually begun in April, is situated in a hedge or thick bush, and is composed of roots, twigs, green moss, and wool, with a lining of finer materials of the same kind, feathers, and hair. The five or six eggs are a delicate greenish-white in ground colour, spotted and marked with rusty-brown and purplish-grey.

The song of the Greenfinch is rather poor and feeble, but to some ears is not unpleasing; it is sometimes delivered while the bird is on the wing. It has also a curious prolonged call-note.

This is a useful bird in the garden, destroying a great number of caterpillars and harmful insects, and during the winter months it feeds on seeds and berries of various kinds.

Its favourite summer haunts are gardens and shrubberies, whilst in autumn and winter it collects in flocks about the fields and farm steadings.

In colour the female is much duller than the male.

THE HAWFINCH.

Coccothraustes vulgaris, Pallas.

PLATE 15.

The Hawfinch, at one time considered a rare bird in many parts of England, though local, has greatly increased in numbers of late years, and according to Howard Saunders (*Manual of British Birds*, 2nd ed., p. 171) "the nest has been found in every county in England, excepting Cornwall." It is also resident, but rarer, in Scotland, and only known as a wanderer to Ireland.

The rather level nest, usually placed in some fruit tree, is made of twigs and lichen, with a lining of rootlets and some hair. The four to six eggs are in ground colour greenish-blue or light olive-green, with spots and streaks of dark brown.

The Hawfinch is a shy and retiring bird, and likes well-timbered and sheltered ground. It will often enter gardens, especially at the time of year when green peas are ready, of which it is extremely fond. It also feeds on the hard seeds of various trees, such as beechmast and haws, eating only the kernels of these.

The song is feeble, but it has a very distinct call-note.

In winter the bill of the Hawfinch is of a pinkish horn colour, changing in the breeding season to a steely-blue, with dark tip.

Most authorities give the colour of the eye as greyish-white, but this appears to be incorrect, as far as the living bird is concerned.

My friend, Mr. Robert J. Howard, of Shearbank, Blackburn, first drew attention to the fact, and I therefore give below his notes on the subject, which were published in the second edition of Mr. F. S. Mitchell's *Birds of Lancashire*, edited by Howard Saunders (p. 66): "The irides, in a live bird, are not greyish-white but vinaceous. On August 7th, 1884, my male Merlin dashed from his bath at the Hawfinch which Billington brought from Redscar. I picked the bird from the cage-floor, as it was dying, and paid particular attention to the colour of the irides; the bright madder-brown got gradually lighter, until at last—before the bird was cold—it had faded away, and the colour could only be described as a greyish-white. I had often held the bird in my hand, so that I could closely examine the eyes, and found the colour arranged in concentric circles, those near the pupils being brightest; the intensity of colour varied when I teased the bird."

In an adult living bird I myself examined, the irides were a pale rather chocolate-coloured brown, which at times changed in intensity; and it would be interesting to know if at any period during life these are greyish-white.

The female is duller in colour than the male, and has less black on the throat.

THE GOLDFINCH.

Carduelis elegans, Stephens.

PLATE 15.

In former days, when less land was under culture, and in consequence thistles and other seed-bearing weeds were more numerous, the Goldfinch was a common bird in most parts of Great Britain.

Owing to the higher cultivation of the land, and also to the ravages of bird-catchers, its numbers rapidly decreased, until it was practically extinct in many places.

However, of late years it seems to be again on the increase in most parts of the country, except in Ireland.

It is found throughout the greater portion of Europe, as well as in Asia and Africa.

The nest of the Goldfinch is a beautiful structure of moss, lichens, rootlets, and grass, woven together and lined with down, feathers, and hairs; and is placed in a fruit tree or in some shady oak, chestnut, or plane. The four or five eggs are greyish- or bluish-white, marked with brownish-purple.

During summer the Goldfinch feeds principally on insects and larvæ, and in the autumn and winter months on seeds of various kinds, such as those of the knapweed, thistle, dandelion, and other weeds.

The teasel is a great attraction to the Goldfinch, and it makes a charming picture to see a flock of these dainty little birds busily engaged in extracting the seeds while clinging to the prickly tops; then suddenly flitting with twittering notes to another plant. In autumn a good many birds cross the Channel and winter abroad.

The song, begun early in spring, is sweet and pleasing.

The female is much like the male, but is duller, with less red on the throat.

THE SISKIN.

Carduelis spinus (Linnæus).

PLATE 15.

In England and Wales this small Finch is best known as a winter visitor, although nesting in some localities.

It is more numerous in Scotland, breeding freely in many places; and is also resident in Ireland.

The skilfully concealed nest is usually placed in a fork on the branch of a pine or spruce, at some height from the ground, and is composed of twigs, rootlets, and moss, and lined with feathers and hair.

The five or six eggs are pale bluish-green, with speckles and markings of reddish-brown and pinkish-grey.

According to Seebohm (*British Birds*, vol. ii. p. 94): "The song of the Siskin is not very powerful but is very pleasing—a succession of very rapid notes, some possessing considerable melody. It is an extremely industrious singer, and may be heard all the year round except in the moulting season."

The food consists mainly of seeds and buds of trees, especially those of the birch and alder, varied with insects in summer.

The Siskin resembles the Goldfinch in many of its actions, and, like that bird, is very easily tamed.

The female is less brightly coloured than the male, having altogether less yellow in her plumage, and lacking the black on the head and throat.



LESSON 11
Sparrows
W. J. M. G.

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

THE CITRIL FINCH.

Chrysomitris citrinella (Linnæus).

PLATE 16.

This species is resident in the mountainous parts of Southern and Central Europe, and one example was taken in Norfolk in January 1904. This is the only occurrence in the British Islands.

Mr. Dresser, in his *Birds of Europe* (vol. iii.), quoting some notes received from Howard Saunders, says: "The nest is warmly lined, but larger than, and quite different from, that of the Serin Finch; the eggs are nearly as large as those of the Goldfinch, but somewhat resemble miniature Greenfinches' eggs."

In summer the Citril Finch is found high up in forest districts among the mountains, and is common in Switzerland, and also in Baden and other parts of Germany.

The female resembles the male in colour, but is duller.

THE SERIN.

Serinus hortulanus, K. L. Koch.

PLATE 16.

Over twenty examples of this little Finch have been noted in the British Islands, while it is common in many parts of Central and Southern Europe, and also in North-west Africa.

The nest, according to Seebohm (*British Birds*, vol. ii. p. 85), "is generally built in fruit-trees, but frequently in other small trees and shrubs." It is neatly built of rootlets, stalks of grass, thistle-down, and wool, with a softer lining of similar materials. The four or five eggs are white, with a greenish tinge, spotted and marked with reddish-brown.

Lord Lilford, in his work on British Birds, says: "The Serin is exceedingly common in Southern and Central Spain, and in general habits somewhat resembles the Goldfinch; the nest, however, is composed of different materials, and the song consists of a sharp sibilant murmur, much inferior to the pleasant notes of that bird."

In colour the female is duller than the male, and is more streaked with brown.

THE HOUSE-SPARROW.

Passer domesticus (Linnæus).

PLATE 16.

The House-Sparrow may be said to be the best known of our British birds, and no one, either in town or country, need be without the opportunity of studying its appearance and habits.

It is found almost everywhere in the British Islands, although absent in some of the high bleak districts in Scotland and Ireland. It is also widely spread over Europe.

The large and bulky nest, made of any suitable material that may come to hand, such as straws, grass-stalks, shreds of carpet, rags, &c., with a soft lining of feathers, is placed either in trees or in some hole, cavity, or any snug recess in a building, high enough to be out of the reach of anyone standing on the ground. The five or six eggs are greyish-white, blotched and spotted with pale grey and greyish-black.

There is no doubt the House-Sparrow hinders the increase of the Martin. Having had the nests of the latter bird under observation for some years, I have noticed that the attacks of the Sparrow are usually begun very early in the morning by the males, who appropriate the nests before they are quite completed, and if it has been so far finished, as to be inconvenient to the intruder, the entrance is enlarged.

During the summer months the House-Sparrow destroys great numbers of insects and grubs, for the food of themselves and young, which in autumn and winter principally consists of seeds and grain. At harvest time, when most of the young birds can fly well, large flocks of these and their parents leave the neighbourhood of houses and betake themselves to the corn-fields.

The House-Sparrow is a bold clever bird, and in spite of many enemies holds his own.

THE TREE-SPARROW.

Passer montanus (Linnæus).

PLATE 16.

This species may easily be distinguished from the House-Sparrow by the uniform reddish-brown colour on the crown of the head, dark spot in the centre of the white cheeks, and also by its smaller size. Unlike the House-Sparrow, the sexes do not differ in colour.

The Tree-Sparrow is widely spread over the British Islands, though local, and is not nearly so common as the other species. It is also found throughout the greater part of Europe, and has a wide range in Asia.

It usually nests in some hole, high up in a decayed tree, several pairs often associating together. The nest, composed of dead grasses and feathers, contains about six eggs; these are greyish-white in ground colour, mottled with brown.

In its habits the Tree-Sparrow is lively and active, though somewhat shy; in winter often frequenting stackyards in company with other birds.

According to Lord Lilford (*Birds of Northamptonshire and Neighbourhood*, vol. i. p. 182), "The ordinary notes of the Tree-Sparrow are sharper and more shrill than those of the House-Sparrow, to which, however, they have a great resemblance; at the pairing-season we have occasionally heard a sort of prolonged chatter from the male bird."

The food consists of seeds and insects.

THE CHAFFINCH.

Fringilla cœlebs, Linnæus.

PLATE 16.

This gay and sprightly bird is very common in every part of the British Islands, wherever woods and cultivated country are found. In late autumn our home-bred birds form flocks and roam about the country, while large numbers arrive at the same time from abroad.

It is also found plentifully throughout Europe.

The nest, which is a beautiful structure, is composed outwardly of green moss, grey lichens, and grasses, deftly woven together, with a lining of wool, feathers, and hair; and is placed in a fruit or other tree, not far from the ground. The four, five, or six eggs are in ground colour a pale blue with a greenish tinge, spotted and marked with reddish-brown.

The Chaffinch during the summer months feeds largely on insects and grubs, whilst in winter seeds of various kinds are eaten. It is of the greatest service to the gardener, and in early summer may be seen searching for caterpillars on the trees in orchards and gardens.

Its blithe and joyous song is continued throughout the spring and early summer, and though short, is repeated many times in succession.

It was long ago observed by Gilbert White and others, when the flocks of Chaffinches were about in the autumn and winter, that a separation of the sexes had occurred. It was due to this fact that the name of *cœlebs*, or bachelor, was given by Linnæus, on account of the large companies of cock birds seen consorting together.

The general colour of the female Chaffinch is brownish-olive, tinged with grey, the bars on the wings being less distinct than in the male.

THE BRAMBLING.

Fringilla montifringilla, Linnæus.

PLATE 16.

The Brambling is a more or less regular winter visitor to our shores, usually arriving on our north-east and east coasts in October, and leaving again in spring.

Abroad the summer haunts of this species are far to the north, and its nest may be looked for among the forests and birch-clad hillsides in Scandinavia and northern Russia. This is placed on a fir or birch, usually in a fork, and resembles in appearance that of the Chaffinch, although somewhat larger.

It is composed of birch bark, green moss, and lichens, with a lining of wool, hair, and feathers. The eggs, usually six in number, are the same in colour and markings as the Chaffinch's.

According to Seebohm, the song of the Brambling is "a short low warble," and it has also a prolonged call-note, which has been compared to that of the Greenfinch.

The number of Bramblings which visit us varies from year to year; sometimes large flocks make their appearance, frequenting the beech-woods along with Chaffinches, and feeding on the fallen beechmast.

They also eat insects and seeds.

As may be seen from the plate, the winter and summer plumage of the male Brambling differ a good deal, the rich blue-black head and mantle of the breeding season being replaced by duller and more patchy feathers in autumn.

The female is altogether duller and greyer than the male, the back and head being brownish instead of black.

THE SNOW-FINCH.

Montifringilla nivalis, Linnæus.

PLATE 17.

This Alpine bird, an inhabitant of the mountains of Southern Europe, has twice been shot in England, the first at Rye Harbour, Sussex, in February 1905, and the other at Paddock Wood, Kent, in December 1906.

The nest is placed in some crevice of a rock or building, and is composed of dead grass-stalks and fine roots, lined inside with hair, feathers, and wool, and contains four or five pure white eggs.

It feeds principally on insects and seeds ; and the bird may often be seen flitting about among the rocks and stones on the barren mountain slopes which it frequents.

The female resembles the male, but is duller in colour, and has less black on the throat.

THE LINNET.

Linota cannabina (Linnæus).

PLATE 16.

The Linnet is a common and well-known bird in the British Islands, and may be observed in most parts of the country where there are large furze-covered commons and waste lands. After the breeding season a good many of our birds move southwards and cross the Channel.

It has a wide range in Europe, Asia Minor, and Asia.

The nest is usually placed in a thick furze-bush, sometimes in a hedge of yew or other evergreens in gardens, and is made of grass-stalks, wool, and moss, lined with hair. It contains from four to six eggs, in ground colour bluish-white, with blotches, spots, and streaks of ruddy-brown and purplish-grey.

The Linnet has a pleasing modulated song, and a rather plaintive call-note.

The food consists of various seeds and berries.

Although this bird is known as the Red, Grey, or Brown Linnet, these different names refer to one and the same species, and it is difficult to say why so much variety of colour should occur. In autumn the crimson on the breast and head of the brightly-coloured males almost disappears, whilst the female has none of that colour in her plumage at any time of the year.

THE MEALY REDPOLL.

Linota linaria (Linnæus).

PLATE 16.

The Mealy Redpoll, which is subdivided by naturalists into several subspecies or forms, inhabits the northern portions of both hemispheres, and visits more or less irregularly the northern and north-eastern parts of Great Britain in autumn and winter.

Its breeding haunts are among the birch woods or about the boundaries of forest growth in the northern districts of Europe and Asia, which it leaves in autumn for warmer climates.

According to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palearctic Birds*, pp. 315-316), "It breeds in the high north, and places its nest, which is a neat structure of fine birch-twigs, vegetable stems, and moss, carefully lined with plant-down and feathers, in a tree generally about 10 feet from the ground, but rarely on or close to the ground." The five or six eggs are greenish-blue in ground colour, marked with rufous-brown.

Other Arctic races of the Redpoll are: The Greenland Redpoll, *Linota hornemanni*, nesting in Greenland, Iceland, and Spitzbergen, which is larger and altogether paler in colour than the one just described.

Also *Linota holboelli*, *Linota rostrata*, and *Linota exilipes* (Holboell's, Greater, and Hoary Redpoll), all closely related to each other, and occasionally visiting us during the autumn and winter months.

The female of the Mealy Redpoll is smaller than the male, and has only a small amount of red on the head, without any on the breast.

THE LESSER REDPOLL.

Linota rufescens (Vieillot).

PLATE 16.

The Lesser Redpoll, a resident species in the British Islands, is smaller and more ruddy in colour than the Mealy Redpoll, and although local in its distribution is widely spread over the country.

Some of our birds are said to migrate in winter, and in Europe it has not been recorded north of the Baltic.

The nest is placed in a bush or tree—often an alder or willow—and is composed of twigs, stalks of dead grass, and moss, and is warmly lined with willow-down or cotton grass. The eggs, varying in number from four to six, are of a pale bluish or greenish colour, spotted with reddish-brown.

The food of the different races of Redpoll consists of buds of trees, especially those of the birch and alder, and also of various seeds.

Seebohm, in his *British Birds*, describes the song of the Lesser Redpoll “as a short monotonous trill, clear, shrill, and not altogether unmusical.”

In winter large flocks visit the birch and alder trees, where they may be seen climbing about the twigs, picking out the seeds and buds, incessantly uttering their twittering notes.

After moulting in autumn, the male shows hardly any crimson in the colour of his plumage.

The female is duller in colour, the red being confined to the crown of the head.



Common Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Song Sparrow

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

THE TWITE.

Linota flavirostris (Linnæus).

PLATE 17.

Compared with the Lesser Redpoll in breeding plumage the Twite is a much more sober-coloured bird, having none of the crimson tints on the head and breast, and at all times may be distinguished by its more lengthened tail and proportionally slimmer form.

The Twite, sometimes called the Mountain-Linnet, is an autumnal visitor to the southern parts of England, though resident and breeding in the northern counties; whilst in Scotland and Ireland it is more or less common. Abroad it breeds in Scandinavia, and on migration occurs in many parts of Europe.

The Twite usually builds its nest either on the ground or close to it, and in its construction uses as material fine roots and grass-stalks, lining it with wool, feathers, thistle-down, and hair. The four to six eggs are pale greenish-blue, marked and streaked with reddish-brown.

Its food usually consists of seeds of various kinds, and its twittering call-note may be frequently heard as it flits among the grass and heather on moors and rocky hillsides.

Macgillivray says: "In the Hebrides it is plentiful and in winter frequents the corn-yards in large flocks, clinging to the stacks of oats, and picking out the seeds. . . . Its flight is rapid and undulated, and it wheels over the fields previous to alighting, uttering a soft twitter at intervals."

The female resembles the male in colour, but has none of the carmine tint on the rump.

THE BULLFINCH.

Pyrrhula europæa, Vieillot.

PLATE 17.

The Bullfinch is resident and more or less common in those parts of the country suited to its habits, throughout the British Islands. In the northern and eastern portions of Europe, and in Siberia, a larger and more brilliantly coloured race is found, known as the Northern Bullfinch, the *Pyrrhula major* of Brehm, which has been recorded several times in Great Britain; although doubts have been expressed as to the genuineness of some of these occurrences, owing to the number of birds imported by dealers.

On the continent of Europe our smaller bird may also be found in the central, southern, and western portions.

The nest of the Bullfinch is of peculiar construction, being composed of slender twigs and fine roots, intertwined so as to form a kind of platform, in the centre of which is a cup-shaped depression, and occasionally a little wool or hair is placed within this interior.

It is generally built in an evergreen bush or tree, not far from the ground, and contains from four to six eggs, in ground colour greenish-blue, with spots and streaks of violet-grey and dark purplish-brown.

The food consists of the young buds of the larch and other trees, varied with the seeds of wild plants, such as the dandelion, chickweed, groundsel, &c.

The song of the Bullfinch is low and very soft in tone, and so is its piping call-note.

The bird is shy and retiring in its habits, haunting thick copses and well-timbered ground, shrubberies, and gardens; the pairs usually keeping company throughout the year.

THE SCARLET GROSBEAK.

Pyrrhula erythrina (Pallas).

PLATE 17.

Of late years a good many examples of the Scarlet Grosbeak—till recently only known as a very rare visitor to Great Britain—have been observed or obtained. Its breeding grounds appear to be Russia, Siberia, and the mountainous parts of Central Asia, whilst in winter it is found throughout a great portion of India and China.

The nest is placed in the forked branch of a bush, and is composed of dead grass-stems and small roots, with a lining of hair. The eggs, varying in number from four to six, but usually five, are greenish blue, marked with spots of reddish-or blackish-brown.

Seebohm, in his *British Birds*, describes the song as “a loud clear whistle,” and the food consists of various seeds, berries, and buds.

The red colouring is absent in the plumage of the female, which is in general of a neutral brownish tint, the wings and tail being darker, the throat and underparts dull white or buffish, with dark streaks on breast and flanks.

THE PINE-GROSBEAK.

Pyrrhula enucleator (Linnæus).

PLATE 17.

The Pine-Grosbeak is an irregular and very uncommon visitor to Great Britain from the forests of pine and spruce in Scandinavia, northern Russia, and Siberia, where in summer it nests and rears its young, moving as winter approaches to more temperate regions.

The nest is generally placed on the branch of a fir, close to the trunk, and is constructed much in the same manner as the Bullfinch's, of intertwined twigs, with the interior lining of roots or grasses and lichen. The eggs, usually four in number, are greenish-blue in ground colour, marked with brownish-purple or dark brown.

The food of the Pine-Grosbeak consists of the seeds of the pine and fir, berries and buds of various trees, and also of insects.

Seebohm, who studied the bird in its native haunts, describes its song (*British Birds*, vol. ii. p. 43) as "very melodious, not very loud or long, but flute-like," and the call-note as "a plaintive single note."

Although apparently shy and retiring in its disposition, the Pine-Grosbeak is said to be easily approached, and its character is tame and unsuspecting.

The female differs from the male in having none of the carmine-red in her plumage, the edges of these feathers being of a golden yellow, and the back of the bird a slaty-grey.

THE CROSSBILL.

Loxia curvirostra, Linnæus.

PLATE 17.

The Crossbill is best known in England as an irregular visitor during the autumn and winter months, often arriving in large flocks, and keeping more or less to districts where there are woods of larch and pine. At times, however, the birds remain and breed in suitable localities.

In the northern parts of Scotland the Crossbill is resident throughout the year, and it is also widely spread over Europe.

The nest, begun very early in the year, is usually placed on the branch of a pine or fir, and is built of twigs and lined with grass and wool. The four, occasionally five, eggs are in ground colour whitish or pale greenish-blue, marked with different shades of reddish-brown.

The main food supply of the Crossbill consists of the seeds of the larch and spruce fir, as well as berries, pips, and insects.

The song is soft and low in tone, and the call-note, as the birds flit from tree to tree, is sharp and clear.

The points of the Crossbill's upper and lower mandibles are placed athwart each other, in some individuals crossing to the right, in others to the left, and form a well-adapted tool wherewith to open the cones and extract the seeds of conifers.

According to Professor Newton (*Dictionary of Birds*, p. 115), the young "on leaving the nest have not the tips of the bill crossed."

Mr. Knox, in his *Autumns on the Spey* (pp. 34-35), has happily described the actions of a flock of Crossbills as follows: "After close observation, I noticed that they seldom attempted to operate upon a cone on the exact spot where it grew, but after snapping one off from a slender terminal twig, each bird would hop or fly to the central part of the branch, and in parrot-like fashion hold it in his foot, but more frequently *under* it, as a hawk holds a small bird when in the act of devouring it, and quickly inserting his bill between the scales, split them open by means of that wonderful tool, and extract the seeds with the greatest facility. Occasionally a cone would fall to the ground just as it was snapped off; but, in such a case, a fresh one was instantly selected, no further notice being taken of the one that had dropped."

The colour of the female is a yellowish-green, and the males, after moulting in captivity, never regain their red plumage.

A form of our Crossbill, distinguished by having a larger and stouter bill, and known as the Parrot-Crossbill (*Loxia pityopsittacus*, Bechstein) has been obtained in the British Islands. This is an inhabitant of the pine regions of Scandinavia and the northern parts of Russia.

THE TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL.

Loxia bifasciata (C. L. Brehm).

PLATE 17.

The Two-barred Crossbill, whose summer home is in the pine-forest regions of northern Russia and Asia, has occurred a good many times in the British Islands, and may be distinguished from our bird by the double bars on the wings.

Mr. Dresser writes in his *Birds of Europe*: "The nest closely resembles that of *Loxia curvirostra*, but is smaller, and somewhat slighter in structure; and the eggs are somewhat darker in ground-colour than those of that species, and smaller in size, but otherwise closely resemble them."

In habits these two species are very much alike.

The female has no red in her plumage, being principally of a greenish-grey, tinged with yellow on the upper parts, and greyish-white and yellowish below.

Subfamily EMBERIZINÆ.

THE BLACK-HEADED BUNTING.

Emberiza melanocephala, Scopoli.

PLATE 17.

Some eight or more examples of this rare Bunting have been recorded as occurring in the British Islands, the first having been shot near Brighton in November 1868.

The summer home of the Black-headed Bunting is in South-eastern Europe, where it is common in many parts; it ranges also through Asia Minor as far as Baluchistan, and winters in India.

Seebohm writes (*British Birds*, vol. ii. p. 167): "The nest of the Black-headed Bunting is seldom placed at any great height above the ground; it is very frequently in a small bush, but the favourite situation is amongst trailing plants such as clematis, briars, and vines. In the gardens near Constantinople it is built principally amongst the rows of peas and beans.

"Canon Tristram states that he has frequently found it on the ground. It is rather a bulky structure, and though neatly finished inside, has a somewhat loose and ragged appearance outside. The foundation is made of dry grass, thistle-leaves, and other coarse material; but the main portion of the nest is constructed entirely of the yellow dry stalks of various small flowering plants, the seed-capsules on which are the most prominent object, and conjoined with the stiffness of the stalks, which prevents them from bending easily, gives the nest a very slender and unfinished look." The lining is of finer material and hair.

The four or five eggs are greenish-blue, marked with ashy-brown, without the lines and scratches found on those of the other European Buntings.

The food consists of insects, seeds, and fruit, and its song, though short, is said to be more musical than that of the Yellow Bunting.

In the female the upper parts are brown, with darker streaks; rump tinged with yellow; throat and belly whitish; breast and flanks buff, with dark streaks; and the under tail coverts suffused with yellow.

THE YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING.

Emberiza aureola, Pallas.

PLATE 18.

Three examples of this brilliantly coloured wanderer to Europe have been obtained in England, all having been shot in Norfolk: the first on September 21, 1905, at Cley; the second on September 5, 1907, near Wells; and the last on September 4, 1913, again at Cley.

The breeding range of this bird stretches from northern Russia right across Siberia as far as Kamchatka, whilst in winter it migrates as far to the south as the Malay Peninsula.

According to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palæarctic Birds*, p. 349), it "frequents bush-covered plains on the outskirts of the forests, willow-thickets in damp places, and occurs in the mountains to an altitude of 5000 to 6000 feet, and in the winter frequents reed- and rush-beds.

"Its song, which is short but pleasant, is uttered from the top of a bush or a plant-stem, and it is said to be a most industrious songster."

The nest, built either on the ground or in some shrub, is composed of dead grasses and roots, with a lining of hair. The four or five eggs are grey tinged with green, obscurely shaded with a darker tint, and marked with a few indefinite brown scratchy lines.

The female has none of the rich black and chestnut on the head which distinguish the male.

The upper parts of the bird are greenish-brown, with dark stripes on the back, whilst the lower portions are pale yellow, streaked on the flanks.

She has also a broad yellowish-white eye-stripe.

THE PINE-BUNTING.

Emberiza leucocephala, S. G. Gmelin.

PLATE 17.

One example of the Pine-Bunting was obtained on Fair Isle, Shetlands, in October 1911. In summer it breeds in Siberia, from the Ural eastwards, migrating southwards to spend the winter in China and among the Himalayas. It only rarely visits Europe.

The nest, composed of the stems of grasses and other plants, with a lining of hair, is placed on the ground beneath a bush or clump of grass. The eggs, varying in number from four to six, are described by Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palearctic Birds*, p. 360) as "dull white, pale bluish white, or rose-white, with faint violet-grey shell-markings and marblings, and blackish brown surface-lines or spots."

It haunts the edges of birch and pine woods and bushy ground.

The general colour of the female is composed of different shades of brown and grey, and she has none of the beautiful chestnut on the head and throat which decorates the male.

THE CORN-BUNTING.

Emberiza miliaria, Linnæus.

PLATE 17.

The Corn-Bunting, sometimes called the Common Bunting, although only common in those parts of the country which suit its habits, is nevertheless widely spread throughout our islands.

It is also found over the greater part of Europe, from southern Scandinavia to the Mediterranean.

The nest, which is usually placed on the ground and hidden under a tussock of grass, or sometimes in young corn, is rather large, and is loosely constructed of grass-stalks, roots, and moss, with a lining of hair. The five or six eggs are dull white, shaded with lilac, and blotched and streaked with dark brown.

This Bunting does not usually lay its eggs until late in May.

In summer the food consists chiefly of insects, but later in the autumn and winter seeds of weeds, and also grain, are eaten.

The song, delivered while the bird is perched on a tall thistle or other plant, often from a wall or telegraph wire, consists of a succession of rather harsh scraping notes, the last one prolonged.

The Corn-Bunting haunts open arable land, particularly if near the sea, and is fond of dusting itself on roads.

The sexes do not differ in the colour of their plumage.



Pacific Bunting *Little Bunting*
Girl Bunting *Yellow-billed Cuckoo*
Song Sparrow *Chipping Sparrow*

A. Wetmore 1912

MOZART
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE YELLOW BUNTING.

Emberiza citrinella, Linnæus.

PLATE 18.

The Yellow Bunting or Yellow Hammer is resident and common in most parts of the British Islands, and is widely spread over Northern and Central Europe and Asia.

The nest is generally placed on or close to the ground, hidden among grass and herbage, and is composed of dead grasses, roots, and moss, with a lining of fibrous rootlets and hair. The four or five eggs are purplish-white, marked with curious dark streaks and scribbles, and clouded with reddish-purple.

In summer the food of the Yellow Bunting consists principally of insects, at other times seeds of different weeds and grain are eaten.

The song is less harsh than that of the Corn-Bunting, and is a pleasing ditty, though rather monotonous. Late in summer, during hot weather, when the singing of most birds has ceased, it is often the only music to be heard, and is delivered while the bird sits on a wall or tree.

The Yellow Bunting is partial to cultivated ground, and in winter large flocks visit the farm-steadings, along with various Finches.

The female resembles the male, but is much duller, and more darkly streaked on the upper parts.

THE CIRL BUNTING.

Emberiza cirrus, Linnæus.

PLATE 18.

In Great Britain the Cirl Bunting is more or less confined to the southern parts of England, and only occurs in Scotland and Ireland as a rare vagrant.

On the Continent it is found over Central and Southern Europe.

The nest, sometimes placed in a furze-bush or juniper, at others in a roadside bank amongst shrubs and vegetation, is composed of grasses and moss, with a lining of hair. It generally contains five eggs, in ground colour white, tinged with lilac, and spotted and streaked with brownish-black.

The food of the Cirl Bunting is similar to that of the other species of this family, and the song resembles the Yellow Bunting's, but lacks the prolonged drawn-out note at the end.

In habits it is not so sprightly and brisk as that bird, and is easily approached ; it frequents enclosures and cultivated land, and in winter may sometimes be seen in flocks.

The female is not so brightly coloured as her mate, having only a pale yellow streak over the eye, without the black and yellow on the head and throat.

THE ORTOLAN.

Emberiza hortulana, Linnæus.

PLATE 18.

The first British specimen of the Ortolan was taken in Marylebone Fields in the year 1776 or thereabouts. Since that time a good many have been obtained in England on the eastern and southern coasts.

On the mainland of Scotland it is very rare, although it appears to visit Fair Isle, Shetlands, regularly during the spring and autumn migrations, whilst in Ireland it is said to have been taken once, but the record is doubtful.

Abroad it is a summer visitor to many parts of Central, Eastern, and Western Europe, making its way to Africa to spend the winter.

The nest is placed on the ground, hidden among corn, grass, or other vegetation, or sometimes beneath a bush.

It is constructed of dead grasses and roots, with a lining of finer materials and hair, and contains four or five eggs: in ground colour pale grey, with a purplish tinge, spotted and blotched with purple-brown.

Its food consists of seeds and insects, the young being reared on the latter.

Seebohm describes its "plaintive monotonous song," which, he says, "begins somewhat like that of the Yellow Hammer, but ends quite differently" (*British Birds*, vol. ii. p. 154).

The Ortolan frequents open wooded country, roadsides, and gardens; and during migration large numbers are caught in nets, and fattened on oats and millet, to be used as a table delicacy.

The female resembles the male, but the colours are duller and paler, and the head is streaked.

THE MEADOW-BUNTING.

Emberiza cia, Linnæus.

PLATE 18.

This species inhabits the central parts of Europe and the countries bordering the Mediterranean, ranging westwards as far as Portugal.

Five examples have been taken in England, four of these in Sussex and one in Kent.

Colonel Irby, describing the habits of the Meadow-Bunting in his work, *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar*, 2nd ed., p. 110, says: "It is a common and, like most of the Buntings, a stupidly tame bird, as far as my experience goes, living about stony, rocky, and hilly ground. . . . In April they frequent the slopes and tops of the sierras, nesting during that month."

The Meadow-Bunting builds its nest, which is similar to the Yellow Bunting's, on the ground, and lays four or five eggs, greyish in ground colour, and darkly marked with undulating lines running into each other.

Like its congeners, it feeds on seeds and insects, and its song also resembles that of the Yellow Bunting.

The female is much duller in colour than the male, whilst the stripes on the side of the crown and face are absent.

THE SIBERIAN MEADOW-BUNTING.

Emberiza cioides, Brandt.

PLATE 18.

One example of this Eastern species was obtained at Flamborough, Yorkshire, in November 1886.

It inhabits eastern Siberia, and is also widely spread through Turkestan, Mongolia, Manchuria, and Corea, spending the winter in China.

According to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palearctic Birds*, p. 365): "The nest is a light but tolerably strong structure of dry grass-bents lined with finer bents, horse- or cattle-hair, and is placed on the ground in a depression and usually at the foot of a bush." The four or five eggs have the ground colour violet-white, marked with spots and broken lines of dark brown.

This Bunting is said to have a pleasing song.

The female is more soberly coloured than the male, and has not the bright chestnut tints on the head and gorget.

THE RUSTIC BUNTING.

Emberiza rustica, Pallas.

PLATE 18.

About a dozen examples of this rare Bunting have occurred at different times in the British Islands, the first near Brighton in October 1867, and the latest on Fair Isle, Shetlands, in May 1913.

The breeding haunts of the Rustic Bunting reach from Finland across northern Russia to eastern Siberia, whilst in autumn it makes its way southwards to spend the winter in China, Japan, and Turkestan.

It frequents wet forest ground, and according to Mr. Dresser (*Manual of Palæarctic Birds*, p. 363) it makes "a rather loose nest of wiry grass-bents and depositing in June 5 to 6 eggs greenish grey in colour with olivaceous brown blotches and without any scratchy lines."

Von Middendorff describes its song as rich and melodious.

In the female the black portions of the head and ear-coverts are dark brown, broken with buff; and the plumage is altogether duller than in the male.

THE LITTLE BUNTING.

Emberiza pusilla, Pallas.

PLATE 18.

The first specimen of the Little Bunting obtained in the British Islands was one caught near Brighton in November 1864. It has since occurred a good many times, and seems now to be a more or less regular autumn visitant to Fair Isle, Shetlands.

This is an Arctic species; in summer breeding in northern Russia and Siberia, passing southwards in autumn as far as China, India, and the Andaman Islands.

Seebohm, describing its habits, writes (*British Birds*, vol. ii., p. 145): "It was most common in the pine- and birch-forests, and was frequently seen feeding on the ground on the mossy and marshy open spaces in the woods, on the swampy edge of the forest tarns, searching for insects in company with Green and White Wagtails, Temminck's Stints, Fieldfares, Blue-throated Warblers, and other Arctic birds."

The nest, the same author says, "was nothing but a hole made in the dead leaves, moss, and grass, copiously and carefully lined with fine dead grass," and the five eggs were in ground colour "pale grey, with bold twisted blotches and irregular round spots of very dark grey, and equally large underlying shell-markings of paler grey."

The Little Bunting feeds on seeds and insects, and the song has more resemblance to a Warbler's than a Bunting's.

In the female the plumage generally is duller than that of the male.

THE REED-BUNTING.

Emberiza schoeniclus, Linnæus.

PLATE 18.

The Reed-Bunting, sometimes misnamed the Black-headed Bunting, and also known as the Reed-Sparrow, is a resident species and is found in localities suited to its habits in most parts of the British Islands. It has also a wide range throughout Europe.

The Reed-Bunting is an early breeder, the nest being sometimes begun in March. This is usually placed on the ground, though I have once found it in Scotland built in a fir, a few feet above the ground.

It is composed of dead grasses, flags, and moss, with a lining of the feathery tops of reeds, fine grasses, and hair. The five or six eggs are pale brown, blotched and streaked irregularly with dark brown or black.

The food, like that of the other Buntings, consists of seeds and insects.

During the summer months this species frequents the banks of sluggish streams and marshy reedy ground; and the rather harsh song, consisting of several notes, with the last one prolonged, is uttered as the bird clings to a tall reed or willow sapling.

In winter a good many Reed-Buntings leave their summer haunts and betake themselves to the fields, where they feed with other species.

The head of the male at this time of the year has the black more or less obscured by brownish margins to the feathers.

The female is by no means so brightly coloured as the male, the head being reddish-brown, streaked with darker brown, and having a whitish eye-stripe.

THE LARGE-BILLED REED-BUNTING.

Emberiza pyrrhuloides, Pallas.

This large race of Reed-Bunting, with a thicker and heavier bill than our bird, and paler in colour, has twice been taken in England, viz. near Lydd, Kent, in May 1908, and again at Rye, Sussex, in April 1912. The former appears to belong to the Western, and the latter to the Eastern form of this Bunting.

THE LAPLAND BUNTING.

Calcarius lapponicus (Linnæus).

PLATE 18.

The first occurrence of the Lapland Bunting in England was noted by Selby in the year 1826. Since that time, however, it has often been taken, while in autumn flocks have been observed on the east coast.

The summer home of this Bunting is in the far north, where it breeds within the circumpolar regions, moving southwards in autumn to pass the winter in warmer latitudes.

The nest is placed in some depression on the ground by the side of a hillock or tuft of grass, among marshy wastes, beyond the region of forest trees; with here and there a few stunted birches or willows. It is built of dead grass-stems, moss, and roots, and, according to Seebohm, is "profusely lined with feathers." The eggs vary in number from four to six, and in ground colour are pale brown or grey, blotched and streaked with darker brown.

The food of the Lapland Bunting, like that of its allies, consists of seeds and insects, and the song is usually delivered while the bird is in the air.

In the female those parts of the head and breast which are black in the male are streaked with dark brown or black on a ground of buff; the chestnut at the back of the neck being duller, and also streaked.

THE SNOW-BUNTING.

Plectrophenax nivalis (Linnæus).

PLATE 18.

This truly Arctic species, whose summer home is in the circumpolar regions, and which has been found breeding further north than any other bird, yet nests, at high elevations, as far southwards as the Grampian Mountains in Scotland.

Captain Fielding found a nest and eggs as near to the Pole as Grinnell Land, and during summer it is widely spread over Iceland, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, and the barren Arctic wastes.

On the mainland of Scotland the nest is placed high up on the mountainsides, under stones or in some cleft in a rock, and is built of dry bents and moss, with a lining of hair and feathers. The eggs, varying in number from four to six, are in ground colour white, with a bluish tinge, spotted and marked with brownish-red and black.

Mr. J. G. Millais tells me that the song of the Snow-Bunting "is very wild and sweet and has more continuance and variety than any of the other Buntings. In the long summer evenings in Iceland I have heard the male Snow-Buntings singing for hours. They usually sit on a high rock and sing in close vicinity to the sitting female."

In late autumn and winter large flocks of these birds arrive on our coasts, and feed along the sandy beaches, among the stranded seaweed.

Dr. Saxby writes: "Seen against a dark hillside or a lowering sky, a flock of these birds presents an exceedingly beautiful appearance, and it may then be seen how aptly the term 'snowflake' has been applied to the species. I am acquainted with no more pleasing combination of sight and sound than that afforded when a cloud of these birds, backed by a dark grey sky, descends, as it were, in a shower to the ground, to the music of their own sweet tinkling notes."

The food of the Snow-Bunting consists principally of insects and the seeds of various grasses.

In breeding plumage the female has broad grey margins to the black feathers of the head, neck, and back, which give a dull look to the bird compared to the male.

Family STURNIDÆ.

THE STARLING.

Sturnus vulgaris, Linnæus.

PLATE 19.

The Starling is widely distributed over the British Islands, and is one of our most common birds. Abroad it is found in the Faroes—where a broader-billed race than ours occurs—and from northern Scandinavia southwards to the Mediterranean countries.

The large and rather slovenly nest is placed in a hole in a trunk of a tree, wall, or cliff; in thatch, under the eaves of houses and outbuildings; sometimes even in thick ivy growing on the walls of a dwelling. It is composed of dead grasses, straws, roots, and moss, roughly lined with some feathers and hair. The eggs, varying in number from four to six or seven, are pale blue, without any markings.

The song, often heard during the winter months as well as at other times, is delivered as the bird sits perched on some tree or building, and consists of various chattering notes, combined with some which are really musical.

As he sings the Starling has a habit of flapping and closing his wings, at the same time expanding his crest and the feathers of the throat.

During the past fifty years this bird has greatly increased in numbers, and although at times helping itself freely to cherries and other fruit, any damage done is more than paid for by the destruction of countless insects and larvæ.

In autumn vast numbers of Starlings find their living in the fields and pastures, and as evening deepens the flocks resort to some favourite roosting-place, such as evergreen shrubberies or reed-beds.

As the various packs unite, they perform wonderful aerial evolutions before finally settling down for the night.

The female resembles the male, but the tints are duller, and the light spots are larger. For some time after leaving the nest the young are of a uniform blackish-brown colour, marked underneath with greyish-white.



A. Thorburn
1913

Naticopsis
75

MCZ LIBRARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE, MA USA

THE ROSE-COLOURED STARLING.

Pastor roseus (Linnæus).

PLATE 19.

This beautiful bird, an irregular wanderer to our shores, was unknown as a British species until 1742. Since that date it has frequently been noticed as a visitant to our shores.

Its breeding headquarters are in Western Asia, although sometimes vast numbers nest in Southern Europe, and migrating eastwards, pass the winter in India.

The favourite food of the Rose-coloured Starling, or Rose-coloured Pastor as it is sometimes called, is the locust, which accounts for the erratic movements of this species.

An account is given in the *Zoologist* for 1878, p. 16, furnished by Edoardo de Betta, of a great visitation of these birds to the castle of Villafranca in Italy during the summer of 1875.

Arriving at first in small numbers, they rapidly increased until it was estimated that some twelve or fourteen thousand birds had occupied the building.

They at once began their nests, and as soon as the young were able to fly, disappeared as suddenly as they came.

The nest, loosely constructed of dead grasses, is sometimes placed in a cranny or recess in a wall, at others among heaps of stones on the ground, and contains five or six smooth and shining bluish-white eggs.

The notes of this bird are very like the Starling's.

The female resembles the male in colour, but is duller.

Family CORVIDÆ.

THE CHOUGH.

Pyrrhocorax graculus (Linnæus).

PLATE 19.

This bird, unfortunately rapidly decreasing as a British species, still lingers on some of the sea cliffs in the south-western parts of England and Scotland, on the coasts of Wales and Ireland, and in the Isle of Man and other islands.

It also occurs in many parts of Europe, where it can find localities suited to its habits, and in Africa and Asia.

The nest, placed in some recess or fissure in rocks, or among ruins, is built of sticks, with a lining of wool and hair. The four or five eggs are dull white, marked with streaks and spots of ashy-grey and light brown.

The food consists of grubs, insects of various kinds, and seeds.

The birds have a shrill and penetrating cry.

It is one of the most beautiful members of the Crow family, on account of its elegant shape, velvety plumage shot with purple and green reflections, and scarlet bill and legs.

The plumage of the sexes is alike.

THE NUTCRACKER.

Nucifraga caryocatactes (Linnæus).

PLATE 19.

The earliest known occurrence of the Nutcracker in the British Islands was one obtained in Wales in October 1753, and recorded by Pennant. Since that date a good many have been noticed, mostly in England.

Abroad it breeds among the pine forests in the mountainous parts of Central and Southern Europe, and ranges eastwards across Siberia.

The Siberian form has a longer and more slender bill than the one inhabiting Europe, and as it is apparently this race which most commonly visits England, I have represented it in the plate.

Little was known of the nest and eggs of the Nutcracker until 1862, when they were obtained on the Danish island of Bornholm, lying to the south of Sweden in the Baltic; although an egg had been procured in the lower Alps by the Abbé Caire as far back as 1846.

Like the Jay, the Nutcracker becomes extraordinarily shy and silent during the nesting time, which begins very early in the season before the winter's snow has melted in the forests, where the nest is built on the bough of a pine, at a moderate height from the ground.

The nest, composed of sticks, with a lining of grasses and moss, contains from three to five eggs, pale bluish-green in ground colour, spotted and freckled with olive-brown.

The Nutcracker feeds on the seeds of coniferous trees, nuts, berries, and insects, whilst in manner of flight and tone of voice it resembles the Jay.

The female is indistinguishable from the male in colour.

THE JAY.

Garrulus glandarius (Linnæus).

PLATE 19.

The Jay is a resident and fairly common bird in the woodland districts of England and Wales, though much scarcer and more local in Scotland and in Ireland. Over the greater part of Europe it is also found, where the surroundings suit its habits. It is said to have been more plentiful formerly in our country, before the days of game preservation; nevertheless, owing to its intelligence and wariness, it still holds its ground, wherever there are large tracts of wood and coppice.

I have lately had under observation a nest of the Jay, which was placed in a Scotch fir, about ten feet from the ground, and built in a fork where the branches join the trunk. It was composed of twigs of the birch and other trees, with a lining of finer twigs of birch and roots. The five or six eggs are greenish-white, minutely speckled with olive-brown.

While the nest is being made, and until the young have left it, the parent birds are never heard and seldom seen, approaching it silently by roundabout ways, unless the nestlings are interfered with, when the female utters harsh screams and at times a curious cat-like call.

In the nest which I observed the young were also absolutely silent, unless handled or alarmed by anyone climbing their tree. The colour of their eyes was a bluish-grey, not brown, as it is sometimes said to be.

The food of the Jay consists of various nuts and berries, also of the eggs and the young of other birds.

Its usual call-note is harsh and strident, and sometimes the notes of other birds are imitated.

The female is rather duller in her plumage than the male.

In Ireland the general colour of this species is said to be of a warmer tint.

THE MAGPIE.

Pica rustica (Scopoli).

(*Frontispiece.*)

This handsome bird is a resident species and widely distributed in many parts of the British Islands, though scarce and rapidly diminishing where game preserving is general.

Abroad it is found over the greater part of Europe, from northern Scandinavia to the Mediterranean.

The Magpie, like the Jay, breeds early in the year, usually in March, and builds its large domed nest of sticks arranged on a groundwork of earth and clay with a lining of rootlets or grasses, which is placed in the fork of a tree, or in some tall thorn hedge. The eggs vary in number from six to nine, and are generally of a pale bluish-green, speckled with umber brown.

The food consists of grubs, eggs, young birds, rats, mice, and carrion of various kinds.

The notes of the Magpie, softer in tone than those of the Jay, are, as Macgillivray describes them, "a sort of chuckling cry or chatter." Always shy and watchful, and never off its guard, it frequents woods, meadows, and cultivated ground, especially those fields surrounded by trees and tall hedges, to which it retreats on the first suspicion of danger.

In thick covert, if a fox be about, its presence is often betrayed by the incessant chattering of the watchful bird.

The male and female are alike in colour, though she may be a little duller.

THE JACKDAW.

Corvus monedula, Linnæus.

(*Frontispiece.*)

The Jackdaw is a common and well-known bird throughout the greater part of the British Islands, often to be seen in company with Rooks. It is also found all over Europe, in Asia, and North Africa.

It makes its nest in hollow trees, crannies and holes in the stonework of churches, ruined castles, and other buildings; sometimes in cliffs, or even underground in rabbit burrows.

This is usually a large structure composed of sticks, snugly lined with wool and fur, and holds from four to seven eggs, greenish- or bluish-white in ground colour, marked and blotched with black or purplish-brown.

The call-note of the Jackdaw is a sharper and shorter caw, or rather *cae*, than that of the Rook, and the birds may easily be distinguished when flying in company overhead by their smaller size and different note.

It lives on much the same diet as its larger relation, viz. insects, worms, grubs, &c., and also on eggs when they can be obtained.

The Jackdaw is a sociable bird, seeking its food in fields and meadows, as well as by the sea, in companionship with its fellows.

The female is very like the male in colour, except that she has a less noticeable collar of grey.

THE RAVEN.

Corvus corax, Linnæus.

(*Frontispiece.*)

The Raven still lingers as a breeding species in some of its ancient haunts along the southern and south-western coasts of England, nesting also in Cumberland and Wales, as well as in some of the wilder parts of Ireland.

In Scotland it is much more numerous, especially in the western islands and among the wilds of the Highland deer forests.

This wanderer over the face of the earth is found all over Europe, and has a wide range in Asia and America, it also inhabits Greenland.

The nest, begun in February, is usually placed on an inaccessible ledge of rock, although in former days, when the Raven bred in the wooded districts of England, it was generally built in some tall tree, and so situated that it could hardly be reached from below.

It is composed of dead sticks of various sizes, with a warm lining of wool, feathers, fur, or the hair of deer. The eggs, varying in number from three to six, on rare occasions seven, are bluish-green in ground colour, marked and blotched with greenish-brown and grey.

The Raven's voice is distinct and may be recognised at a great distance, the harsh double croak being often heard when the bird itself seems a mere speck against the sky.

Its food consists of carrion of all kinds, such as sheep and lambs which have died on the hill or fallen over a precipice, dead fishes cast ashore by the sea, and also sometimes of grain, nothing coming amiss to this omnivorous bird.

In character and intelligence the Raven stands first among his kind, and endowed with wonderfully keen eyesight and a hardy constitution, he is able to find a living where most birds would starve.

The male and female are alike in colour, and pair for life.

END OF VOL. I.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
at Paul's Work, Edinburgh







Date Due

DO NOT CIRCULATE

