

GURNEY

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ORNITHOLOGICAL REPORT
FOR NORFOLK (1905)

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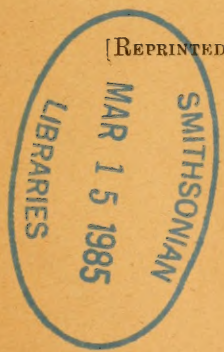
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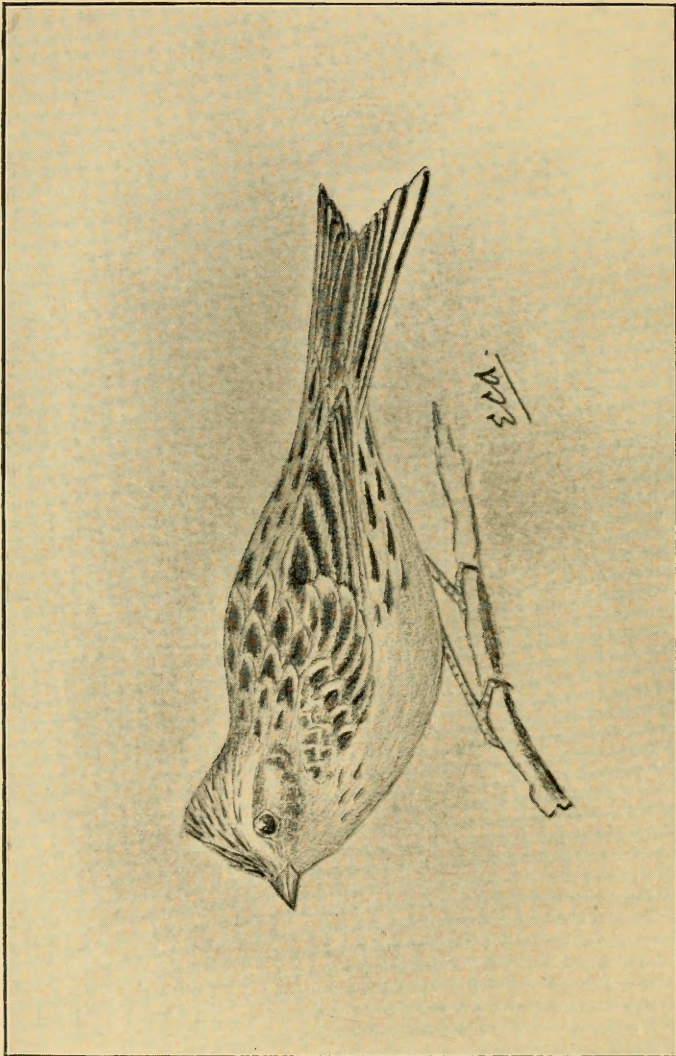
J. H. Gurney
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ORNITHOLOGICAL REPORT FOR NORFOLK
(1905).

By ^{*John Gurney*} J. H. GURNEY, F.Z.S.

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YELLOW-BREADED BUNTING (*Emberiza aureola*, Pall.).

ORNITHOLOGICAL REPORT FOR NORFOLK (1905).

BY J. H. GURNEY, F.Z.S.

(Assisted by several Norfolk Naturalists.)

(PLATE II.)

THE year 1905 produced two birds new to Norfolk, but it was a year devoid of much visible migration, except for the extended nocturnal movement of Aug. 25th, and that could hardly be called visible. There was not enough windy and unsettled weather to bring the movements of the birds under notice. The *Corvidæ*, which are always a criterion with us, have not been noticed in any such great numbers as sometimes occur. The chief autumn passage was that observed by Mr. F. Boyes in South Lincolnshire on Oct. 9th and 10th, which evidently extended to Norfolk, where it was recognized by the Rev. M. C. Bird.

Vernal Migration.—The spring migration of 1905 into England was studied by a Committee appointed by the British Ornithologists' Club, which has published a valuable Report, in which, referring to the east coast, it is pointed out (p. 58) that there is evidence of a departure northwards (probably to Norway) of Willow-Warblers from the coast of Norfolk at the end of April, and of Sedge-Warblers (p. 69) and Redstarts in the beginning of May. This I can readily believe, and should be inclined to add that the destination of spring migrants, which pass through Norfolk without halting, mainly depends on the wind, those which get a

S.W. wind going to Denmark or Norway, and those which meet with a S. or E. wind working up England.

What is really extraordinary about the emigration which takes place every spring from the east coast of England is its smallness, and the little notice it attracts, compared to the vast immigration in autumn. The departure of some of the *Corvidæ* is always seen in Norfolk, it is true, in spring, but very little besides. Where, it may be asked, are all those hosts of Sky-Larks which came last autumn from the north-east? Where are the thousands of Thrushes and Finches? Surely they ought to be returning in March and April, in diminished numbers, no doubt, but still in considerable bulk. This is one of the unsolved puzzles in ornithology, and only to be in part explained by a presumably large mortality among the birds during the winter.

Autumnal Migration.—Besides the annual migrations over the sea, there are certain coast movements in Norfolk, chiefly due to wind and weather, which must not be lost sight of by anyone who studies migration. These consist of passing bands of small birds, such as Swallows, Martins, Swifts, Wheatears, Sky-Larks, Finches, Redstarts, &c.; rarely more than five hundred yards from the sea, and often much nearer. It may be observed that they are nearly always going against the wind, the prevailing direction of which in September and October is west. They are not migrants in the restricted sense of the word, because they are often going the wrong way. This, I imagine, is because where the coast is bleak, as between Cromer and Mundesley, it is easier to move on against the wind than to remain stationary.

During October without doubt our ordinary visitants came over the sea, and the usual flights of large Gulls, following the shore-line in a north-westerly direction, took place at Cromer. This is a phenomenon of annual occurrence, but it is invariably to be noticed that they fly against the wind, and that as soon as it changes to E. or N.E. or S.E. the flocks of Gulls cease to pass (*cf.* 'The Ornithologist,' April, 1896, and 'Naturalist,' 1892, p. 360). That about one hundred thousand Gulls, chiefly Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, pass Cromer nearly every autumn, going N.W., I verily believe, but very likely the same individuals pass more than once, in which case the actual number would be less. Ten thousand have been seen to pass in a day, after a gale

from N.W., and that more than once. At first sight one might suppose a great migration was in progress, but it is only a temporary movement against the wind.

In some autumns so many Rooks and other migratory birds are to be seen coming in against a west wind that some people have concluded that they preferred it from that quarter for crossing the North Sea; but probably the truth is that it delayed them, and, had it been from the east, the greater part of the birds would have passed on inland before daybreak. The *Corvidæ*, however, like the Sky-Larks, seem to be in great part day migrants by choice, which the vast majority of our feathered visitors are not. Migration is still a mystery in spite of all which has been written and learnt about it; but this much is certain—the Woodcock likes an east wind to travel with, and if a Woodcock arrives after 8 a.m. it is a delayed bird.

We know little of what goes on overhead at night. Occasionally the distant cries of some passing birds catch the ear, but the travellers themselves are invisible. If one of our navy search-lights were placed on Cromer Lighthouse hills, and its rays directed upwards, there would not be many nights in October when it would not reveal nocturnal migrants.

The chief rarities during 1905 have been—January: Water-Pipit (new to Norfolk). April: Snowy Owl. May: White Stork, two Stilts. June: Sea-Eagle (the first adult), nine Avocets. July: Stork. September: Red-breasted Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Bunting (new to Norfolk).

The Pipit and the Bunting, new to the county, together with the Siberian Stonechat, erroneously given in last year's Report as a variety of the Common Stonechat, bring our list up to three hundred and fifteen. In this enumeration the Russian Bullfinch is included, but not the Short-toed Lark, which there is reason to believe was imported.

Neither the spring nor autumn migration of this year brought us a Hoopoe. This bird has become much rarer in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincolnshire, and the same is the case in the southern counties. The explanation of the gradual disappearance of this beautiful migrant seems to be this: those Hoopoes which used to come to England every spring were the birds which had wintered in France. Now these have all been

shot, and the Hoopoes which winter further south, *i. e.* in Spain, Algeria, and Italy, do not travel so far as England, for their migratory instinct tells them that their proper limit is the middle and north of France.

The rainfall for 1905 was 23.95 in. (E. Knight). The direction and force of the wind have been taken from the Daily Weather Reports for Yarmouth.

As many birds have been notified without exact dates, such are entered with D.U. (=date uncertain) against them.

JANUARY.

1st.—An Osprey seen over Hickling Broad, formerly a favourite resort of this fine fisher (A. Nudd); I never heard of one in January before.

5th.—The first snow soon passed away, and there was no weather hard enough to bring Whoopers. To-day, with a high wind (W., 4), my nephew saw about ten large "skeins" of Pink-footed Geese, some of them numbering over fifty, in Holkam Bay. Mr. A. Napier believes that the numbers on the Holkam and Burnham marshes exceed two thousand, surely the largest resort of Pink-footed Geese in Britain. A pair once remained as late as June, but generally they leave at the end of March.

20th.—E.N.E., 5. Fifteen Woodcocks on the coast at Runtton, probably just arrived. We often have a flight as late as this, and these winter flights often synchronise with the advent of Blackbirds, Snipe, Wood-Pigeons, &c., and are very profitable to the sportsman.

23rd.—A Bittern seen at Brancaster.

25th.—W. N. W., 3. A Water-Pipit † (*Anthus spipoletta*), female, shot near the beach; it closely resembles a Rock-Pipit, but has been pronounced by Mr. Howard Saunders to be of this species, as indicated by the outer pair of tail-feathers, which are more than half white, as are as the tips of the second pair. All the tail-feathers are worn, especially the two middle ones, which are greatly abraded in this example, the first identified for Norfolk. It has been added to Mr. Connop's museum (Pashley). I met with a good many of this species in Switzerland this summer (1905) at the Riffel Alp.

FEBRUARY.

2nd.—Great Northern Diver shot off Heacham ('Field').

6th.—Bittern at Ingoldisthorpe (R. Clarke).

9th.—Bittern near Hickling (E. Saunders). Others reported (D.V.) in the neighbourhood of Lowestoft (Bunn). This is not too early for their spring "booming" to be heard.

20th.—N.N.E. In spite of snow and a cold "north-easter," Mr. J. Cox found a Hedge-Accentor's nest containing two eggs at Gresham, and another nest complete without eggs. A pair of Black Swans belonging to Mr. Knight have two eggs,† and Mr. Southwell informs me of another pair which have three (D.V.). Mistle-Thrush's nest at Brunstead (Bird). This is the month in which Blackbirds fight, and Partridges pair; Kestrels look out for breeding-sites, and the note of the Lapwing is heard.

27th.—Wild Duck flushed from nest (M. Bird). Five days later Mr. Bird knew of another nest containing twelve eggs of this always early species. At this season the Garganey Teal which I usually keep on my pond give utterance to a most peculiar note, which can be best described by the word "crick." It is quite unlike the note of any other wildfowl, resembling more that of one of the Crakes. It is only made by the drake Garganeys, and lasts for several weeks.

28th.—Mr. Pashley tells me that in the last week of February (D.V.) three Scandinavian Rock-Pipits were detected on passage, and it is not unlikely that this vinous-tinted race is less rare than has been supposed (*cf.* Zool. 1897, p. 128), and may be looked upon as an early spring visitant.

MARCH.

23rd.—S.E., 4. Ray's Wagtail already in Norfolk (Bull. B. O. C., xvii. 73).

29th.—*Hybrid Linnet*.—A Linnet × Greenfinch hybrid†—a male, of course, or it would not have been detected—taken near Yarmouth whilst consorting with Greenfinches (E. Saunders). It exhibits very distinctly the double parentage, closely resembling a bird of this cross in the Museum, with which Mr. Saunders and I compared it. Possibly it had escaped, as this cross is occasionally bred by bird-fanciers. Similar hybrids were caught at Yarmouth in 1882, and August, 1889, and were recorded at the time.

APRIL.

Early in April (D. U.) a Snowy Owl had the misfortune, as I learn from Mr. W. Clarke, to put its foot in a rat-trap at Cocley Cley, near Swaffham. The owner of the soil intended sending it to the Zoological Gardens, but, though not damaged, it refused to feed in confinement, and did not long survive. It was probably the sharp cold of the 5th, 6th, and 7th, accompanied by snow, which brought this Norwegian stranger over; but April is a late date for it. It is always a more difficult bird to keep in confinement than the Eagle-Owl, and I am not surprised that Mr. Taylor was unsuccessful.

14th.—S., 4. A Black Redstart at the Inner Dowsing light-vessel (Bull. B. O. C. xv. p. 99).

17th.—E.N.E., 6. Grey Shrike at the Newarp lightship off Yarmouth (Bull. B. O. C. xvii. p. 125), where the wind blew a gale. I have had both these species from light-vessels before.

19th.—E.N.E., 6. More than thirty Red-legged Partridges discovered on the sand-hills near Yarmouth harbour-mouth, after a gale from the north-east (A. Patterson), in which quarter the wind had been for some time. I cannot believe in there being any immigration of this species, although some have thought so; but I certainly never heard of so many by the shore before. It has the same habit of appearing on the coast in Sussex, where I have seen one perched on a breakwater with the waves lapping against it.

26th.—N.W., 3. Nine Dotterel seen on Yarmouth "denes" (Patterson).

MAY.

1st.—A Grasshopper-Warbler, a Sedge-Warbler, a Blackcap, and a Willow-Warbler killed against Happisburgh lighthouse (M. Bird).

2nd.—S.W., 4. Four Wheatears† appeared within the precincts of the Castle of Norwich, in the centre of that city.

17th.—A Teal's nest at Westwick, from which the keeper had taken seven eggs, apparently a completed clutch, was comfortably ensconced in heather in a large wood near a lake. The number of Teals' nests in East and North Norfolk is now very small, and the few Garganey which remain are dwindling, but Mr. Bird

knew of one nest for certain. Black Redstart at Brancaster (R. Clarke).

19th.—N.N.E., 4. Mr. Jary saw a pair of birds flying over Breydon, which he thought to be Avocets; and on the same day a White Stork was unfortunately shot at South Wootton, which is close to the Wash ('Field').

22nd.—Five Herons' nests† at Wheatacre, which is five miles from the larger heronry at Reedham, where, Mr. Southwell was told on a recent visit, there were eighty-five nests.

24th.—A "trip" of seven Dotterel on passage seen near Yarmouth (B. Dye).

25th.—A Dunlin, catching mudworms on Breydon flats, was seen by Mr. Patterson to walk several feet down to the water with the worms dangling from between its mandibles, wash them, and return for more.

26th.—Hundreds of Whimbrel on Breydon (G. Jary).

27th.—Some Starlings observed by Mr. Patterson to be hovering over Breydon Broad like Gulls, in order to snatch up black flies which were floating drowned by thousands on the surface.

28th (D. V).—Two Black-winged Stilts and a Red-necked Phalarope on the Broads (M. Bird). These Stilts may have been the birds mistaken for Avocets on the 19th.

30th.—Four Hooded Crows, two of them apparently young ones, on Cromer Lighthouse hills (Birch).

31st.—A Water-Rail passing over the town of Yarmouth struck a telegraph-wire, and fell into a yard; and a fortnight later a Kingfisher was picked up among some houses (Patterson). Such accidents are not very uncommon.

JUNE.

1st.—*Utility of Finches.*—Nearly all my gooseberry-bushes, which were covered over with permanent wire-netting to protect them from birds, have been attacked by the larvæ of *Nematus ribesii*, whilst those outside the netting, which have been exposed to the birds, and consequently cleared of caterpillars by Chaffinches, &c., have borne fruit as usual. It is clearly better to cover the fruit-bushes only for a few weeks in summer, when the fruit is ripening, which I intend to do in future.

4th.—N.E., warm. A pair of Spoonbills were seen by the watcher to fly over Breydon Broad, but not to alight, it being high water, after which they passed out of sight in the usual direction—north-east. These are the only Spoonbills seen during 1905, with the exception of one reported in May at Hickling.

9th.—E.N.E., 6. After five days of continuous north-easterly winds (velocity 5–6), amounting to a gale, an adult Sea-Eagle,† with a good white tail, turned up at Hanworth, some five miles from the coast, where it was speedily peppered with small shot by a too zealous gamekeeper. Norfolk has produced many Sea-Eagles at different times, but an adult has never been recorded before, and an effort has been made to secure the specimen for Norwich Museum. The date of its appearance was also very late, but for this the gale was accountable. Compared with the series in the Museum, its plumage is not very good, being decidedly faded, and the feathers abraded, like a bird which has missed its spring moult. The whole of the tail is white, except the upper tail-coverts, which are edged with brown; the tone of the head is very pale, and the wings from the carpal joint to the body are also pale. Male, proved by the dissection of the late Mr. J. A. Cole, who stuffed it.

12th.—Dabchick's nest with one egg near Twyford (C. Hamond), and another nest with three eggs at Stoke Holy Cross, which has long been an occasional breeding haunt of this species. The accompanying photograph by Mr. E. L. King shows its position, with the eggs uncovered (*cf.* p. 129).

13th.—*Utility of the Barn-Owl.*—A Barn-Owl's tub, put up in an oak-tree to encourage this "farmer's friend," contained on examination a young Starling and a Greenfinch, and the usual collection of pellets. These, being soaked in water and carefully examined, further yielded one Blackbird's skull, eight Sparrows' or Finches' skulls, and the remains of fourteen small Rats, thirteen Shrews, twenty-five Mice, and one Mole. While this testimony to the Barn-Owl's utility was being displayed, there might have been seen a few miles off two keepers' gibbets with Barn-Owls nailed up as vermin, as I am assured by friends who could not be mistaken. A copy of the leaflet on the Barn-Owl, published by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (No. 51), was sent in both cases to the head-keeper on the estate, and it is

to be hoped he read it, and realized the ignorance which had allowed him or his assistants to destroy a useful ally. The weird shriek of the quaint bird is not so often heard as formerly, but there are a few landowners who do their best to preserve this useful Mouse-hunter.

14th.—E., 5 (E., 4 the preceding evening). Nine Avocets on Breydon Broad, and seven Sheld-Ducks (Jary). Last year the



DABCHICK'S NEST.

Avocets came with a north-west wind, but this year with an east wind, which had been blowing from that quarter for ten days. Probably it would be more accurate to say they were delayed in England by this east wind, which prevented their going on to Holland. I believe the same to be the case with Spoonbills when they visit Breydon.

15th.—E.N.E., 4. The Avocets seen again on Breydon muds by Mr. Patterson and Mr. Dye.

16th.—E. The nine Avocets† still on Breydon, all standing on one leg except a single bird, which was perhaps a cripple; but soon some of them began to feed, which they did with great avidity, advancing quickly with eager sweeps, and finally, when disturbed, flying away in a compact flock. When first viewed there was just enough water where they were standing to give their reflections very prettily, together with those of four Black-headed Gulls, which were their only companions. Mr. Hamond and I longed to get near them, but a close approach was not permitted us. Mr. Patterson, who succeeded in getting rather nearer, watched them until the rising tide floated them off their feet, after which they had a lengthy swim, undulating as the moving water passed beneath them. He believes they were feeding on a small univalve (*Hydrobia ulvæ*). The news of their presence soon got abroad, and created some excitement, while that night the watcher had a hard task, as there were two non-respecters of the law in gun-punts following the Avocets about until 11 p.m., when it was too dark to see them; no shot was fired, I am glad to say.

17th.—S.E., 3. The Avocets were last seen in the moonlight at 10 p.m., and were quite visible to the watcher, but he thinks they must have left that night; and Mr. Dye believes they took their departure in a thunderstorm. Next morning the wind had changed to the west.

Cuckoo Notes.—June 22nd. The gardener discovered a Cuckoo's egg in a Hedge-Accentor's nest, deftly built in a currant-bush on our garden-wall. Very likely this egg had been laid by the Cuckoo whose offspring and their proceedings formed the subject of a previous paper (Zool. 1905, p. 164). With the Cuckoo's egg were also two Accentor's eggs, while about ten yards from the nest there lay the blue shell of another broken Accentor's egg, presumably removed by the old Cuckoo, and dropped on the ground. The Cuckoo's egg, being tried in water, was found to be fresh, and, as I concluded it could not hatch for a week, we did not disturb the nest any more.

July 4th.—11 a.m. One Accentor hatched, and the young Cuckoo also. The little Cuckoo is pale flesh-colour, and already

very restless, though probably only about six hours old ; it gapes for food, but cannot see.

5th.—9.30 a.m. The young Cuckoo alone in the nest, and the Accentor's egg and nestling both lying on the ground—the egg unbroken and the nestling alive—one foot distant from the wall. As it is a drop of three feet three inches, it is incredible that the egg could have fallen or been thrown out of the nest without breaking ; therefore, I suppose both it and the nestling Accentor were lifted out in the feet of the parent Accentor. I at once replaced the young Accentor, and, after waiting quite still for about five minutes, saw the tiny Cuckoo—not yet thirty hours old—edge itself beneath it, and lift it quite to the rim of the nest, which was a rather unusually deep one. It almost got the Accentor over, but, failing to do so, after a few seconds fell back exhausted, and, although I waited some time, it did not try again. The skin of the young Cuckoo is rapidly becoming much darker, and in this short space of time it has doubled its size. Before leaving I also replaced the Accentor's egg in the nest.

Same day.—10.45 a.m. The Accentor's egg is still in the nest, but during my short absence the nestling Accentor has been taken out, and is not to be found anywhere. This is probably the work of the Accentor parent, as no Cuckoo has been seen by the gardeners working near the nest. 6.30 p.m. The Accentor's egg has now been thrown out, and is cracked, which from its position seems to have been done by the young Cuckoo. It was replaced, but the next morning it was found hanging in a branch of the currant-bush, having been for the second time ejected.

JULY.

2nd.—S.W., 3. A White Stork seen by Mr. Patterson on the mud-flats of Breydon ; it was very restless, and soon passed on, happily more fortunate than the one at Wootton. Possibly both of them were released or escaped birds.

16th.—Mr. Bird noticed a young Robin in the speckled plumage singing, which is surely unusual.

28th.—A Spotted Redshank and some Greenshank on Breydon (Jary). This is a very early date for the Spotted Redshank.

AUGUST.

23rd.—W., 4. Three Black-tailed Godwits identified on Breydon Broad by Mr. Jary, and many other birds of that class.

25th.—E., 5, cloudy. On the night of the 25th a large number of birds, consisting of Redshanks, Ringed Plovers, Grey Plovers, Lapwings, and Curlew (to judge from their notes), were arrested on their nocturnal migration by the bright glow from the street-lamps of Norwich, and their varied cries were listened to from soon after 9 p.m. until past midnight, and may have gone on until the lights were extinguished. At the same time similar cries, probably intended to keep the birds together, were heard in the darkness over the towns of Yarmouth (A. Patterson), Felixstowe (W. Clarke), Bury St. Edmunds (H. Buxton), Cambridge (Sir L. Jones), and at Beverley (F. Boyes) and Redcar (T. H. Nelson), in Yorkshire. The night was rough and very dark, but in spite of that Mr. Buxton could at intervals plainly see large flocks high in air over Bury, which appeared to be proceeding west, but occasionally dashed down as if attracted by the electric arc-lights in the streets (*cf.* 'Field,' 2, ix. 1905). The wind had risen that evening to force 5, and it may be mentioned that at 6 p.m. the temperature was 67°, 51° for Lowestoft, and 65° for South Lincolnshire. There was a fall of the barometer during the night, and the following morning, when the migrants were presumably winging their way over the English Channel, it was still going down, having at 8 a.m. the coast of Wales for its centre of depression. The circumstance of the birds being heard simultaneously at seven towns, or eight—for Mr. Caton Haigh believes Grimsby may be added—shows the extent of the migration, and that it all lay within the area of depression.

27th.—The gamekeeper at Northrepps disturbed a Honey Buzzard engaged in clearing out a wasps' nest. He refrained from putting down a trap, and the hungry bird, which may have just landed, soon came back, and ate the rest of the grubs. As its demise was not reported it probably escaped, and had probably been brought by easterly gale of the day before. Another, less fortunate, was subsequently trapped at Snettisham (R. Clarke).

29th.—Hobby at Thetford (W. Clarke).

SEPTEMBER. (Prevailing wind W. and N.)

2nd.—N.W. to W., 2. A young Gannet,† a bird of about ten weeks old, caught in a cabbage-field at Weasenham, fifteen miles from the sea (Buxton). I do not remember such a young one being picked up in Norfolk, or anywhere inland before.

4th.—S.W., 1. Two Great Crested Grebes, one of them with a full crest, seen in Blakeney estuary by Mr. Arnold. [Barred Warbler in Lincolnshire, C. Haigh.]

6th.—S.S.E., 2. Two Gannets off Blakeney "bar" (Arnold). Rooks coming inland (Bird).

13th.—S.S.W., 1. From an early hour in the morning continuous flocks of House-Martins were passing Sidestrand and Overstrand under the shelter of the cliffs, and all going W.N.W. This no doubt was a direction taken in order to fly against the wind, which was very light, and it is to be presumed there was a return journey eventually. In five minutes (not consecutive ones) the Martins which passed numbered thirty-two, thirty-seven, sixteen, seventy-three, forty-eight, which would be at the rate of nearly two thousand five hundred an hour. At what o'clock this movement commenced I am not sure, but I was on the cliff at 8 a.m. The "passage" continued until 11.30 a.m., after which it slackened, and at 12.30 had ceased, but I imagine that not less than fifteen thousand Martins had passed; and the Martin is no longer a very common species in East Anglia. The following morning (wind N.) I looked as early as 6 a.m. to see if there were any more, and again at 7, 8, 9, and 10 a.m.; but not a Martin was to be seen; they had all passed, and for five or six days afterwards there were only straggling flocks at rare intervals, while I was on the watch, which was often. Possibly these House-Martins, which were following our Norfolk coast-line, were the same which three days afterwards (Sept. 16th) were seen by Mr. W. Gyngell passing south along the Yorkshire coast in flocks (Zool. 1906, p. 31). They were going in his direction when they passed Overstrand.

19th.—N.W., 1. A Land-Rail on the shore (E. Arnold).

20th.—N.W., 3. Influx of Wheatears; a Red-breasted Flycatcher identified near the sea by Mr. E. Arnold, who had a good view of it. This is the sixth for Norfolk. In Heligoland it

generally appears with a rather strong N.W. wind (Gätke). [Lesser Grey Shrike at Whitby ('Naturalist,' 1906, p. 70).]

21st.—N.E., 4. A Yellow-breasted Bunting (*Emberiza aureola*, Pall.), immature, and probably a female, shot on the coast close to the shore, where it had most likely arrived that morning, as recorded briefly by Mr. E. C. Arnold (Zool. 1905, p. 466). He noticed its flight to be much more buoyant than that of a Yellowhammer, from which his example chiefly differs in having the lower part of the back streaked. If it had come three days earlier it would have been on the same date as the first Heligoland example. As this is its first detected visit, I am glad to be able to take advantage of the offer of a drawing made of it by Mr. Arnold (*cf.* Plate II.). Its occurrence on the day following the Red-breasted Flycatcher and Lesser Grey Shrike is interesting, probably all of them were from Eastern Europe.

25th.—Eighty-five House-Martins sitting, in heavy rain, on the ledges of my house. I think these birds have been commoner this year, or less persecuted by their arch-enemy, the Sparrow. Two of my correspondents write of large numbers roosting on the reeds of the Broads.

26th.—A good deal of migration reported as the result of yesterday's rain and easterly gale (force 6 at Yarmouth), *viz.* Peregrine Falcon at Fleggburgh (Lowne), Grey Shrike at Sprowston (E. Gurney), Bluethroat at Wells (Gunn), Solitary Snipe at Ringstead, Icterine Warbler at Blakeney, and an arrival of Teal, acceptable to shooters.

28th.—E.N.E., 3. Mr. Patterson picked up a Manx Shearwater, the result probably of the gale on the 26th, and saw some boys stoning a Red-throated Diver in the breakers; Mr. Dye heard of another Diver. Ring-Ouzel at Northrepps.

30th.—An adult Gannet taken on a farm at Weasenham, within half a mile of where the young one was picked up on Sept. 2nd (Buxton); a high wind the preceding day from N.E.

OCTOBER. (Prevailing wind N.)

1st.—A number of Siskins near Yarmouth (W. Lowne), and, later, a nice quantity at Keswick.

3rd.—Mr. R. Clarke received a Fulmar from Lynn, probably caught or picked up; the only one this year.

4th.—W.S.W., 5. Eleven Jack-Snipe shot on East Ruston Common (Bird), and a Fork-tailed Petrel caught on a fishing-boat (Lowne).

5th.—Grey Phalarope on Breydon (Patterson). Quail at Lopham (Rev. J. Sawbridge).

6th.—A young Red-necked Phalarope† shot on a pond at St. Faith's (Roberts). Received an adult Gannet† from Holme, which I believe was found alive on the shore. Mr. R. Clarke had another at the same time from Congham, and also heard of a young one being washed ashore.

7th.—Several Sky-Larks struck Happisburgh Lighthouse, and the following day four Golderests and some Starlings (Bird).

8th.—A Storm-Petrel flew on board a "lugger" (Patterson).

9th, 10th, 11th.—Many Grey Crows coming in (Bird). The hedgerows in South Lincolnshire teeming with Blackbirds, Thrushes, Redwings, Tree-Sparrows, Chaffinches, Bramblings, &c. (F. Boyes, 'Field'). Quail shot at Tunstead.

12th.—Received from Mr. Patterson a young Guillemot,† which had been hooked from Gorleston Pier, but I could not induce it to feed, and it soon died. Storm-Petrel caught on a fishing-boat (Lowne).

15th.—*Utility of Starlings.* Large flocks of young Starlings about, which later on were very busy on the wheat-fields, apparently attacking the blade wherever it had appeared above ground; but in reality what they are after is the wireworm lurking at the root of the wheat, which is a very small grub when young. The only harm that Starlings do is the loosening of the plant itself, thereby letting in drought or frost. Starlings have a curious habit of pecking with their mandibles apart, and this, I think, must help to loosen the wheat-plant. On the whole they do much more good than harm, but they are not above helping themselves to whiteheart cherries. I cannot so readily acquit the Rooks, which in September were carrying off walnuts at Cringleford in a provoking way, and later on were to be seen in great flocks on newly-sown wheat, where they were not wanted. Many of our farmers would not be sorry if the Act of Henry VIII. for their destruction was in force again. It must be confessed, however, that they take a great many wireworms and grubs of all sorts.

16th.—N., 2. Numerous flocks of Herring-Gull† passed over Northrepps, going north; in fifteen minutes about five hundred passed, travelling against the wind. Drake Shovelert on the pond at Stratton.

17th.—W.N.W., 4. A Woodcock† flew into a blacksmith's shop in the middle of Cromer about 2 p.m. The forge has a large door which faces in the direction of the sea, but there are many houses over which the Woodcock must have passed before descending into the street.

22nd.—Glaucous Gull shot on Breydon Broad ('Field'). I learn from Mr. E. Saunders that this Gull is in the white plumage, a transition stage which has occurred on the Norfolk coast before, but which is decidedly rare. Mr. Dye was informed that it had frequented the south beach for a fortnight. It has been the only Glaucous Gull in Norfolk during 1905, but an Iceland Gull is reported from Cley.

28th.—A Storm-Petrel taken on a fishing-boat (E. Saunders).

NOVEMBER. (Prevailing wind S. and W.)

1st.—During the autumn Bearded Tits were repeatedly seen by Mr. Barclay at Hoveton, where they are safe, and small roving parties were met with at Belton (Buxton), and Beccles (Patterson). But their breeding area is so small that their total number must be very limited, and it is desirable that all protection should be extended to them. Probably the total hatch would not exceed sixty broods, and they now breed nowhere else in England.

3rd.—A Storm-Petrel allowed itself to be caught on or by a fishing-boat (Patterson), the fifth caught in this manner. Spotted Rail at Catfield (Bird).

5th.—Several late Sand-Martins still at Cromer (F. Barclay).

8th.—Sharp frost. A Sand-Martin† picked up by my son.

9th.—Swallow† at Trowse. A Little Owl captured at Kelling (Pashley), doubtless one of the many turned out. Mr. Pashley says there was another with it.

10th.—Ringed Guillemot at Yarmouth (Patterson), where about this time two Lapland Buntings were seen (B. Dye), and some more (D.V.) at Blakeney.

W.N.W., 2. At about 6.30 a.m., by a strange coincidence, a

second Woodcock flew into the same forge where one was taken on Oct. 17th, both of them having chosen exactly the same line, and entered by the same doorway, which, it is true, is wide. For two to have taken exactly the same line of flight seems rather singular, but the wind was in both cases the same. Another flew into the railway station. They were all three caught, and the two in the forge were taken alive to Mr. Barclay, who gave me one of them, but I was not very successful with it. On the same day continuous flocks of Fieldfares were seen by Mr. Caton Haigh arriving in North Lincolnshire, their "passage" lasting from daylight until the afternoon, but it probably began long before daybreak.

13th. — Bittern "booming" at Catfield, and quantities of Jackdaws arriving about this date (Bird). The Bittern's "booming" is generally considered to be a spring cry.

14th.—E.N.E. Three Martins at Keswick, one scarcely full-grown. November Martins are of such annual occurrence as to excite but little comment; probably it is in consequence of so many of their earlier nests being usurped by Sparrows, which make their broods very late.

19th.—E., 6. Female Eider-Duck picked up in a meadow near Downham Market (W. Clarke), no doubt carried inland by the high wind.

23rd.—Swallows at Raveningham (Gray).

DECEMBER.

9th.—Shoveler near Yarmouth (Dye).

13th.—Pied Wagtail at Keswick.

15th.—W. A Dartford Warbler, which has always been a rare bird in Norfolk, on the sea-bank at Wells (A. Napier).

19th.—S.S.W., 4. An arrival last night apparently of Woodcocks, Snipe, and Jack-Snipe. A few days afterwards (D.V.) forty-two Woodcocks were killed at Haverland, the best bag of the season. It is marvellous how their numbers keep up, for there is no bird in Europe so persecuted; from two thousand to four thousand are usually killed in Norfolk every year. There is an idea that when they arrive they are very thin, but as a matter of fact the reverse is generally the case.

21st.—Grey Shrike seen at Swaffham (W. Clarke).

26th.—Norfolk Plover at Ridlington (C. Gurney); an even later one than that recorded last year.

The year 1905 has passed without the record of a single Wild Swan; neither has the Waxwing shown itself, without which a winter seldom passes.

VARIETIES.

Notices have been handed in of the following varieties:—

Jan. 3rd.—Pied Sky-Lark at Runham (Lowne). *7th.* Yellowhammer† with canary-coloured head and wings of the same at Booton (Cole). *? 18th.* Tawny Moorhen† at Bury (J. Tuck); young bird without frontal shield or garter; plumage of the usual hair-like texture (*cf.* Norwich Nat. Trans. iii. 581; plate of this variety). *30th.* Pied Moorhen† at Mautby; feathers of the usual texture (Roberts).

February.—A white Moorhen at Stoke Ferry (W. Clarke).

April.—Cock and hen pied Blackbirds seen at Ingham (R. Gurney).

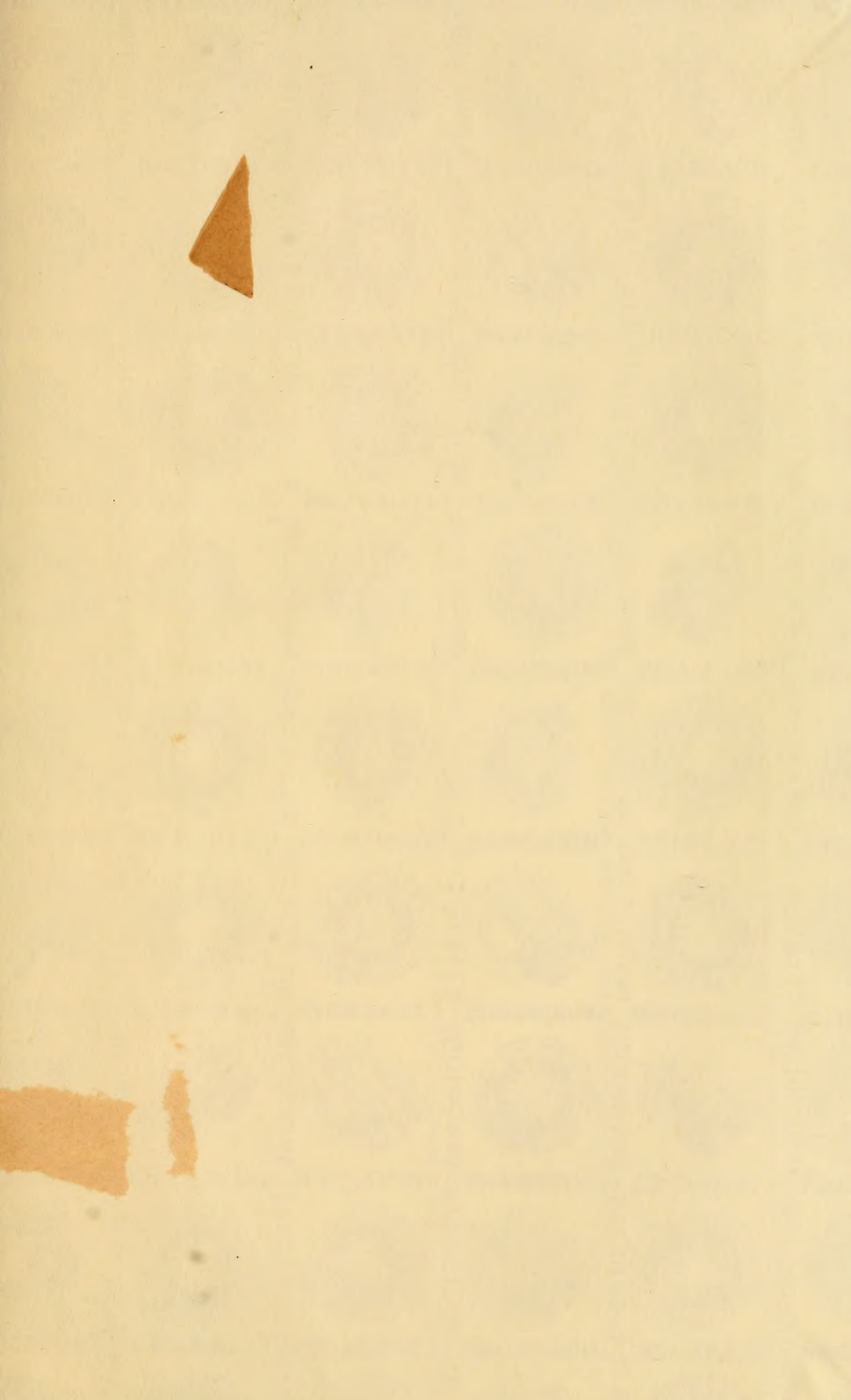
August.—A white Sand-Martin sent to Norwich (Roberts). Pied Wheatear (D.V.) near Thetford. White Swallow at Sheringham.

September.—White Hedge-Accentor at Stoke (E. Gunn).

October.—White-winged Partridge and white-winged Rook (B. Dye).

November.—French Partridge with white breast at Barningham (Barelay). Pied Chaffinch at Fleggburgh.

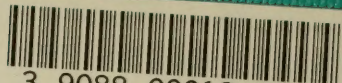
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