

HEREFORDSHIRE
ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

ANNUAL
REPORT
1952

Together with Classified Notes
for Radnorshire

No. 2. Vol. 1.

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HEREFORDSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

No. 2.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE, 1952.

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HEREFORDSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB RULES.

- 1.—NAME. The Club shall be called the Herefordshire Ornithological Club.
- 2.—OBJECTS. The objects of the Club shall be (a) to further the study of birds in the field, and (b) to assist in their preservation.
- 3.—MEMBERSHIP. The Club shall consist of a President, a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, an Editor, five Committee Members and Ordinary Members. The Officers shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting and shall be eligible for re-election. Members may be elected at any meeting.

- 4.—CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP. Members shall be required to support and keep the laws concerning Bird Protection, as laid down in the Hereford County Council Order or Orders for the time being in force, and any members failing to support and keep such laws shall be required to resign. Members shall not divulge to unauthorised persons (*e.g.*, known collectors of skins and/or eggs) information in a manner likely to be detrimental to the objects of the Club.

- 5.—SUBSCRIPTION. (a) Ordinary Members:—18 years of age or over, 10s., payable on January 1st, or on election to membership. Any additional members of a family after the first, 7s. 6d.; such members receiving all the privileges of full membership.
Junior Members (under 18 years of age), 5s. per annum, payable as above.
Corporate Members:—Kindred bodies, Schools, etc.: Subscription one guinea per annum.
Honorary Members:—As approved by the majority present at the Annual General Meeting.
(b). All subscriptions, subsequent to those paid on admission, shall be due on January 1st each year. Where a Member has been elected on or after 1st September in any year, there will be no further liability to subscribe in the year immediately following that of his or her election. Any member whose subscription is twelve months in arrears shall cease to receive the Club's publications and, should the subscription not be paid during the ensuing twelve months, his or her name shall be deleted from the List of Members.

6. MANAGEMENT. The Secretary shall keep Minutes of the meetings and prepare such literature as shall keep members informed of the Club's activities.

7. MEETINGS. Meetings shall be held as often as deemed desirable at the discretion of the Officers.

8. REPORT. There shall be an Editorial Committee of at least three members, including the Secretary, appointed at an ordinary Committee Meeting. These shall prepare and present an Annual Report and such special reports as may be decided upon.

9. ALTERATION OF RULES. An alteration of the Rules may be made only if proposed at one meeting, printed on the agenda for the following meeting, and passed by a two-thirds majority of those present.

1952 REPORT

Membership. The Club has now entered the third year of its existence and although membership has not increased it has been well maintained. The south and east of the county are still barely represented. We are convinced that there must be many bird observers in Herefordshire who would join us if the Club were better known and we hope that members will do their best to encourage new interest.

One pleasing aspect is that this year we have had notes from roughly one third more members than last year.

Club Activities. Field days were held in the Honddhu Valley, Fownhope, Slimbridge and the Severn Estuary. Indoor meetings included "Any Questions" and lectures by Mr. H. R. Tutt and Dr. C. W. Walker, both of whom showed excellent films or slides.

Radnorshire. The inclusion of the county, which has no ornithological club, is a new feature.

The notes published may appear rather slim but this was only to be expected at the outset. No attempt at a survey has been made and only the more interesting birds, actually seen in 1952, have received notice. At present we have only two members who reside in Radnorshire but hope that new ones will join.

Mr. G. C. S. Ingram, M.B.O.U. was elected an Hon. Member at the last Annual General Meeting. He is a well-known ornithologist, with expert knowledge of the avifauna of South Wales, and it is he who has defined the county status of the birds given in the Radnorshire notes, besides supplying data for 1952, which he received from various sources.

1952. Has been a notable year in two respects.

Firstly for the very mild spring which induced early migration, resulting in some unusually early dates for first arrivals in Herefordshire, all of which may be found in the Classified Notes.

Secondly for the exceptionally heavy westerly gales at the end of October which caused the greatest known "wreck" of fork-tailed petrels. Five were picked up in Herefordshire and two more in Radnorshire.

Acknowledgements. Once again the Editor would like to thank the Editorial Sub-Committee (Dr. C. W. Walker and Messrs C. J. Brecknell, P. W. Hinde and G. C. S. Ingram) for their invaluable help and co-operation and all those who have sent notes whether or not they have been published in the Report.

Finally, thanks must go to Mrs. Hinde, who has very kindly typed the Mss.: a task which has taken up much of her valuable time.

C. J. BRECKNELL, Hon. Secretary.
R. H. BAILLIE, Editor.

HEREFORDSHIRE ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB.

HON. TREASURER'S CASH ACCOUNT—YEAR TO 31ST DECEMBER, 1952.

RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.	PAYMENTS.	£	s.	d.
To Balance—1st January, 1952	9	1	7	By Duplicating Notices	2	12	6
" Proceeds of Sale of Annual Report	11	10	0	" Advertisements	10	6	6
" Donations	1	2	6	" Typing copy for Annual Report	2	5	0
" Subscriptions in Advance	1	0	0	" Stationery	16	7	0
" Subscriptions for 1952	38	11	0	" Postages	5	6	1½
" Sales of Nesting Cards	40	13	6	" Printing Annual Report	25	1	8
			6	" Subscriptions to Affiliates:			
				Birmingham & West Midland Bird Club	10	0	
				British Trust for Ornithology	1	0	0
				Woolhope Club	1	0	0
					2	10	0
				" Gratuities	8	0	0
				" Lecturers' Expenses	3	8	0
				" Hiring Films and Apparatus	3	7	3
				" Film Catalogues	2	6	6
				" BALANCE—Cash in hand	14	17	5½
			<u>61</u>				
			5		61	5	7
			7				

I have audited the above accounts
and found them correct.

G. S. ORMISTON
(Club Member).

C. J. BRECKNELL,
Hon. Treasurer.

CLASSIFIED NOTES

(The number preceding the name of each bird is that used in **The Handbook of British Birds** (1938-41) where the scientific name can be found).

HEREFORDSHIRE

1. **RAVEN.** An unusual occurrence was of a pair nesting in the Berrington heronry. A heron's nest adjacent to two occupied heron's nests was utilised by the ravens. They constantly attacked and chivvied the heron population which took noisy and evasive action but did not retaliate. This heronry is hard by a rookery and the young of all three species were successfully reared (H.A.G.). Certainly three, and possibly four, pairs were present at Hampton Court Estate during the spring compared with three pairs seen there last year. Only one pair bred (S.M.D.A.). One seen flying northwards over Hereford on March 8th and another seen east of Bromyard, and good authority vouches that a pair has bred successfully in that area for the past five years (W.A.R.W.). No increase in Bircher area but four birds seen at Highwood on September 13th (P.W.H.). One pair Hereford part of the Malverns April 4th (L.S.).
4. **ROOK.** The freak referred to in last year's report was seen during the year at Dunfield. By August 11th the whole upper plumage was pigeon grey and the whole under body black (R.H.B.). On March 30th a bird was observed to bury its head in some four inches of snow, plough a path for two steps and then peck at the cleared space (C.J.B.).
14. **STARLING.** At the end of December and up to January 2nd, 1953, large flocks were noted flying out of Leominster area towards Stoke Lacy. Counts taken from Eaton Hill, where the view is restricted to birds travelling from north to west-south-west, amounted to 5,700 birds; the movement taking place between 15.48 and 16.20 hours G.M.T. The largest single flock being about 1,500 birds (S.M.D.A.).
18. **HAWFINCH.** A pair, suspected of nesting, seen near Colwall on May 16th (W.A.R.W.). A pair seen, obviously in nesting territory, on different occasions during June in Lemore Dingle (E.L.). Single bird Eardisley (per L.S.). A male, which was in poor condition and could not fly, was picked up in mid-December at Rosedale Court, Pudleston, and caged. It was fed on yew berries, rose hips and some seed. After a month it had regained its strength and was released. After staying a day in the open cage it flew. A hawfinch, believed to be the same bird, was seen in a yew on several subsequent occasions (H.I.).

19. **GREENFINCH.** In song Hereford, February 9th (W.A.R.W.). Staunton-on-Arrow, January 20th (J.E.) and Kington, March 9th (R.H.B.). Definite increase in breeding birds this season around Bircher (P.W.H.).
21. **SISKIN.** A flock of about a dozen feeding on larches at Kington on November 24th (R.H.B.). Three in alders at Aymestrey, November 30th (F.W.M.).
25. **LESSER REDPOLL.** A flock of 15 to 20 in a larch wood on Bircher Common on January 3rd (P.W.H. and R.H.B.).
42. **BRAMBLING.** Four seen in mixed flock of finches at Lucton on January 28th (P.W.H.). Single females seen Eywood, January 27th and Bradnor, March 9th (R.H.B.). Seen at Hampton Bishop with other finches between February 24th and March 25th; usually 6/12 birds, but maximum of 30 noted (I.M.). One flew in at a lighted window after dark at Leintwardine on March 26th (A.A.W.B.). Party of 6/8 with chaffinches on plough at Tupsley on October 25th (C.J.B.). Single bird noted Aymestrey area on October 19th and numbers increased up to 20/30 by November 29th, dropping to only two on December 6th when last seen. Birds feeding on crushed apple spread on field (F.W.M.).
62. **TREE-SPARROW.** Although rarely seen at Kington, a couple came to feed on lawn, with other birds, after heavy snow during first half of December (R.H.B.).
69. **WOOD-LARK.** A single bird watched singing in trees by Lucton School on February 20th (R.H.B.). A pair returned to Woonton about March 5th and remained till about the end of the first week of April but no evidence of nesting found this year (A.P.J.H.). Heard singing at Dinmore in April (L.S.). A single bird, watched singing, at Staunton-on-Arrow on October 25th and 27th (J.E.).
75. **TREE-PIPIT.** Bishopstone and Hereford, April 13th. (H.A.G. and Mrs. Polley).
88. **YELLOW WAGTAIL.** Hereford, April 13th (I.H.W.). A migratory flock of 50/60 seen on Bishop's Meadow, Hereford, September 9th (K.B.).
90. **PIED WAGTAIL.** Movement noted at Dales Sports Ground, Leominster, September 19th none, 22nd 40, 23rd 45, 24th 40. Immature birds predominated. Observer left area on 25th (S.M.D.A.).

100. **BRITISH BLUE TIT.** S.M.D.A. has sent in detailed notes of damage done by these birds in Leominster. In brief they show that the pecking of milk bottle tops, cardboard or tin-foil, has occurred regularly during the winter in 16 places. First noted in 1941. Up to and including this year the only years not recorded are the five years 1943, 44, 46, 47, 48. In one area, when the dairy changed from cardboard to tin-foil tops, there was no reduction in the regularity with which bottles were opened. Wallpaper tearing, in two adjacent houses, was noted in 1951. This year the same householders suffered depredations in their gardens on March 25th and 26th when heads of primroses were pulled off in the one garden and of red, mauve and yellow polyanthi in the others. In the Vicarage the heads of dark red polyanthi only were pulled off before being in full flower. Primroses were also attacked.
111. **BRITISH LONG-TAILED TIT.** Now common around Bircher where small flocks were seen throughout the winter of 1951/52 and eight nests were known this summer (P.W.H.).
119. **RED-BACKED SHRIKE.** A male bird seen on various occasions during July in Waldrist Garden, Hereford. The female was seen in August and, finally, young birds were seen with the adult male in the same garden. It seems certain that breeding took place nearby (F.P.L.-S.). A single bird seen near Storridge during the summer (per S.M.D.A.). A male seen within Hereford City limits where a pair bred last year (L.S.).
121. **SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.** Kington, May 8th (R.H.B.); Bircher, 10th (P.W.H.); Hereford, 11th (M.B.); Staunton-on-Arrow, 18th (J.E.). Building Hereford, May 31st, first egg June 7th, sitting on three eggs 11th, hatched 24th and flew July 6th (W.A.R.W.).
123. **PIED FLYCATCHER.** A male Kington, April 11th (R.H.B.). Hereford, 12th and a pair found nesting at Letton on April 27th. A nest at Titley, contained eight eggs (C.W.W.). A pair at Eywood on April 27th, the female of which was seen carrying feathers and nesting materials (P.W.H. and R.H.B.). A male reported to the observer at Lucton during second week of May but this the only evidence of this species there this year. At Bircher one pair was seen three times over a period of five weeks in the same area and presumed to have nested (P.W.H.). A pair known to have nested Aymestrey area this year against three pairs last year. Old woodpecker holes used (F.W.M.).

129. **CHIFFCHAFF.** Heard and seen Eaton Bishop, March 11th and Cagebrook, 12th (W.A.R.W.); Brienton, 12th (M.L.); Hereford, 13th (C.W.W.); Staunton-on-Arrow, 16th (J.E.); Bishopstone, 17th (H.A.G.); Bircher, 21st (P.W.H.). Present in some numbers at Kington on 20th but after a cold spell, which started on 26th, none was seen or heard until April 5th and they become well spread by 7th (R.H.B.).
132. **WILLOW-WARBLER.** Bircher, April 5th (P.W.H.); Hereford, 8th (C.W.W.); Staunton-on-Arrow and Hereford, two, 9th (J.E., M.B. and W.A.R.W.); Kington, 10th (R.H.B.). Arrived in a rush on 10th in Leominster area when 10 heard in four different localities (S.M.D.A.). A bird ringed at Lundy Bird Observatory on 22.4.51 was found nesting at Pontrilas on 4.7.51 (*British Birds*, vol. xlv., p. 271).
135. **WOOD-WARBLER.** Kington, April 18th (R.H.B.), and Bircher, May 4th (P.W.H.).
145. **GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER.** A few pairs in Haugh Wood as usual and a bird heard singing on Stockley Hill, May 11th (L.S.).
149. **REED-WARBLER.** One seen and several heard Shobdon, April 10th (W.A.R.W.).
150. **MARSH-WARBLER.** First noted May 23rd. Bred in four localities and five nests were seen (C.W.W.).
153. **SEDGE-WARBLER.** Hereford, April 27th (I.M.).
161. **GARDEN-WARBLER.** Hereford, May 1st (C.W.W.); Staunton-on-Arrow and Bircher, May 4th (J.E. and P.W.H.).
162. **BLACKCAP.** A male visited a bird table in Castle Street, Hereford, on many days in February and came to an untimely end, but another male was seen at the table on several occasions in December (F.W.A.); Hereford, April 9th (C.W.W.).
163. **WHITETHROAT.** Hereford, April 13th (C.J.B.); Staunton-on-Arrow, 18th (J.E.). Unusually scarce in Kington area (R.H.B.).
164. **LESSER WHITETHROAT.** Staunton-on-Arrow, April 20th. Remained some time but no nest found (J.E.). A pair with nest of five eggs found at Bredwardine, May 18th (W.H.M.).

173. **FIELDFARE.** Scarce around Kington in the autumn of 1951 but came in in strength on January 27th with snow and hard frost. Last seen was a single bird on March 9th (R.H.B.). Last noted Staunton-on-Arrow on March 30th (J.E.). Five seen flying northwards at Kingsland on April 2nd (S.M.D.A.). Tidnor, October 11th (C.J.B.), and flock of 8/10, Breinton, 17th (W.A.R.W.). Common as usual Hereford, November, 1951 to March, 1952 (C.W.W.).
175. **BRITISH SONG-THRUSH.** A bird watched "anting" at Kington on July 22nd, was standing in a swarm of ants which were crawling over it, and was interestedly picking off the insects from the axillaries of the left wing, but flew on close approach (R.H.B.). The hard weather beginning November 20th caused a definite decrease of this species in the Bircher-Lucton area (P.W.H.).
178. **REDWING.** Movements in January identical with those of Fieldfares in Kington area though last date not noted (R.H.B.). Larger flocks seen in November (one of over 100 birds), than in previous years in the Bircher-Lucton area. General movement appeared to be from south to north (P.W.H.).
184. **BLACKBIRD.** In song Staunton-on-Arrow, February 11th (J.E.). A male at Kington on February 28th produced a very soft and creaky sub-song; head carried low and thrust straight forward with tail depressed vertically, giving a crouching attitude (R.H.B.). Building Hereford, March 10th and first egg 16th (W.A.R.W.).
186. **WHEATEAR.** Single male Kington, March 16th, but not seen in strength until April 7th (R.H.B.). Staunton-on-Arrow, 13th (J.E.). On August 7th five or six were noted by railway line near Grandstand Road, Hereford, where they stayed until latter half of September (K.A.M.).
197. **WHINCHAT.** More plentiful than usual around Kington (R.H.B.). Lugg Meadows, April 12th; building Tidnor, May 31st (W.A.R.W.). Pairs present, with cocks in song, at three localities in Lower Lugg Valley on May 9th and several young broods frequented the Wye banks at Hereford in July (C.W.W.).
198. **BRITISH STONECHAT.** A pair seen near the Bush Farm, Brillley, on March 8th (J.E.A.D. and R.H.B.).

201. **REDSTART.** Shelwick, April 9th (W.A.R.W.); Kington, 12th (R.H.B.); Staunton-on-Arrow and Hereford, 13th (J.E. and C.J.B.); Mansell Lacy, 14th (Mrs. Polley); Bishopstone, 14th (H.A.G.).
202. **BLACK REDSTART.** A female seen about old out-houses at Rock Farm, Lugwardine, on March 2nd (F.C.M.).
203. **NIGHTINGALE.** Bred annually at Hampton Court until 1951 (S.M.D.A.). Checkley, April 12th (A.V.H.).
208. **BRITISH ROBIN.** Building Hereford, March 7th (W.A.R.W.).
213. **WREN.** A pair brought off a small brood in a barn near Woonton which flew on or about Christmas Day (per A.P.J.H.).
220. **SWALLOW.** Hereford, April 7th (M.B.); Staunton-on-Arrow, 9th (J.E.); Bromyard and Hereford, 10th (W.A.R.W. and C.W.W.); Bircher, 12th (P.W.H.); Bishopstone, 16th (H.A.G.); Kington, 18th (R.H.B.). Last seen Trumpet, November 2nd (C.W.W.).
222. **HOUSE-MARTIN.** Staunton-on-Arrow, April 9th (J.E.); Bircher, 14th (P.W.H.); Leominster, 16th (S.M.D.A.); Kington 20th (R.H.B.); Bishopstone, 24th (H.A.G.). Last seen Hereford, November 3rd (C.W.W.).
223. **SAND-MARTIN.** Hereford, three on March 13th (C.W.W.); Bishopstone, April 12th (H.A.G.); Kingsland, 13th (S.M.D.A.). F.W.M. reports that he has on several occasions witnessed a kind of aerial game which these birds play with a large white feather. A bird carries it up to a considerable height and then lets it fall; it is then caught by another of the party. If the feather falls to the ground the birds make repeated swoops until it has been retrieved, when the game continues. These observations were made at a nesting colony at Aymestrey Gravel pits. The display generally took place close to the nest holes; the furthest distance from them being about 80 yards. Reference is made in *British Birds*, vol. xlv., p. 280, to two occasions in August, when birds were congregating prior to migrating, upon which single birds were observed to pick up small white feathers and drop them before joining the main group but no attempt at recovery was made.

225. **SWIFT.** Two Hereford, April 24th (L.S.); single over Hereford Cathedral, 25th (Committee); Bishopstone, 25th (H.A.G.); Bircher and Ross-on-Wye, May 1st (P.W.H. and W.A.R.W.); Staunton-on-Arrow, 2nd (J.E.). Breeding birds arrived Kington, May 8th and left overnight or very early on August 14th (R.H.B.). 200/300 over Hereford on August 5th, last bird seen August 12th (W.A.R.W.).
227. **NIGHTJAR.** Heard Bircher, June 7th (R.H.B.). Very scarce but regular on Ballgate Hill (F.W.M.).
234. **KINGFISHER.** Nested on the Arrow above Kington (J.E.A.D.).
238. **BRITISH LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER.** Single birds reported from Bredwardine, April 14th, Titley, October 12th and Hereford, November 8th (W.A.R.W.); Leominster, August 23rd and Lucton, August 26th (S.M.D.A.); Lucton in May (P.W.H.); Kington, August 27th to September 6th and December 24th (R.H.B.). Sparsely distributed Aymestrey area. One watched for over thirty minutes on November 16th, feeding mainly on oaks and chestnuts, did not once search upper side of boughs probably owing to heavy rain overnight driving insects to undersides (F.W.M.).
240. **CUCKOO.** Tupsley, April 7th (Mrs. Mason); Leominster, 9th (S.M.D.A.); Hereford, 10th (K.A.M.); Stretton Sugwas, 13th (M.B.); Bishopstone and Hampton Court, 15th (H.A.G. and S.M.D.A.); Kington, 16th (C.S.M.); Staunton-on-Arrow, 17th (J.E.). Hen bird Hereford, 27th (C.W.W.).
249. **LITTLE OWL.** Single birds Lyonshall, July 23rd and Wormesley, November 25th (R.H.B.); Kingsland, April 6th and Leominster, September 20th (S.M.D.A.). Fairly common Yatton area (F.W.M.).
254. **WHITE-BREASTED BARN-OWL.** Single birds reported Kington area February 16th and April 18th (R.H.B.); Eardisland and Stoke Prior, April 6th and 11th (S.M.D.A.). One resident at Brinsop during the summer (F.W.M.).
261. **HOBBY.** A pair of adults with one young bird seen in Kington district on August 11th by D.A.H. and R.H.B. The young bird, which could only just fly and was very unsteady on perching, was watched at close ranges for half an hour or more and it was considered that it must have been bred close by, though no nest was seen. These birds were last seen on August 30th by A.K.F.

269. **COMMON BUZZARD.** Appear to be more common than ever in north west. On May 1st, when doing a trip from Kington, which covered Knill, Harley Dingle and Water-break-its-neck area it was estimated that all of 40 birds were seen which included parties of eight (Kington), seven (Knill) and several of five or less (C.S.M. and R.H.B.). A nest, which was originally built in 1950, in a larch at Kington was seen to be re-lined on March 20th, and one bird was sitting alongside it demolishing some rabbit (R.H.B.). Breeding pairs at Hampton Court increased from three last year to four this (S.M.D.A.). A party of four seen diving on a flock of black-headed gulls for some time near Shobdon on March 18th (W.A.R.W.). Although now a common bird in the Bircher-Lucton area, fewer birds seem to have been seen this year and only three nesting areas known (P.W.H.). Population in Aymestrey area remained steady at 5/8 breed-pairs (F.W.M.).
- [272. **MONTAGU'S HARRIER.** A single harrier believed to be this species, seen at Paytoe on August 29th (J.V.L.)]
273. **HEN-HARRIER.** On November 16th an adult male was seen sitting on the bough of a partly dead poplar (a most unusual site) on the Lugg bank near Hereford. It appeared to be watching a party of three teal in the reeds (C.W.W.).
278. **KITE.** At one place on the county boundary it is most reliably reported that a single bird was seen on April 6th, a pair on 9th and a single on 14th. This pair may possibly have been disturbed when breeding elsewhere.
284. **OSPREY.** A single bird frequented the Lower Red Bank area of the Wye for two days in the spring and was identified by Major Astley Jones, of Tenbury (per H.A.G.).
289. **COMMON HERON.** Figures for occupied nests in heronries were noted as follows:—Aconbury none (C.W.W.), Berrington 41 (S.M.D.A.), Letton 3 (C.W.W.) and Tyberton 4 (C.J.B.).
304. **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE.** A single bird shot at Aymestrey on January 27th (F.W.M.). A skein of 12 seen flying north over Hereford on February 17th (C.J.B.). Numerous reports have been received of unidentified wild geese seen passing over the county; the greatest number was a flock of about 180 travelling north-east over Aston, near Leominster, on December 20th.

307. **PINK-FOOTED GOOSE.** One frequented stubble fields on the farm of Mr. Whittle, Sutton, for some days about February 16th. It allowed a near approach and did not fly far when put up. It was, therefore, probably an escaped tame bird (C.W.W.).
314. **CANADA GOOSE.** A pair took up residence and bred on lake at Brampton Bryan in April (H.F.L.H.).
323. **WIGEON.** 150/200 at Letton, January to March (C.W.W.); six on Flintsham Pool, Eywood, February 24th (R.H.B.); about 20 at Byton on April 6th (L.S.).
326. **SHOVELER.** Four at Byton, April 6th (L.S.).
328. **COMMON POCHARD.** A female on Flintsham Pool on February 24th; a drake and four ducks Eywood Pool, March 5th and a pair there on 21st (R.H.B.).
330. **TUFTED DUCK.** A pair Eywood, March 5th and April 6th (R.H.B. and L.S.). A pair Shobdon, March 12th (W.A.R.W.). One drake March 16th and a female November 23rd at Aymestrey (F.W.M.).
342. **GOOSANDER.** Single male only seen at Shobdon on April 10th though keeper reported a pair (W.A.R.W.).
346. **CORMORANT.** Eight seen flying along Wye at Ballingham on March 16th (C.J.B.).
351. **LEACH'S FORK-TAILED PETREL.** After the heavy gales at the end of October no less than five of these rare sea birds were found dead or dying in the county. Two were picked up at Pontrilas and the others at Stretton Grandison, Moreton-on-Lugg and at Watford, near Leintwardine (Messrs. Brooks, Chance, Mrs. Gadden, Miss Nott, A.A.W.B. and W.T.W.). There have been three previous records for the county, the most recent being on November 26th, 1929, when a dead bird was picked up at Kington after a gale, by Miss Lloyd of Empton, Kington.
370. **GREAT CRESTED GREBE.** Flintsham and Eywood pools each had one pair by March 5th. On August 11th Flintsham had one adult and one youngster; Eywood a pair with two juveniles (R.H.B.). Two pairs Shobdon pools, March 7th (W.A.R.W.).

375. **LITTLE GREBE.** Two pairs and a single bird on Shobdon pools March 7th and a pair at Lugg Mill on October 24th (W.A.R.W.).
383. **TURTLE DOVE.** Arrived Staunton-on-Arrow, May 6th (J.E.). Single and only bird seen at Kington on 8th (R.H.B.). Hereford, 9th (C.W.W.). Common Backbury Hill area (W.A.R.W.). One pair Aymestrey which did not appear to breed (F.W.M.).
388. **COMMON CURLEW.** Bishopstone, Lucton and Bircher Common February 24th (Mrs. H.A.G., P.W.H. and L.S.); Kington, March 2nd (A.K.F.); Staunton-on-Arrow, 8th (J.E.). In the Lucton area breeding pairs considered about the same as last year (seven to eight pairs) but birds suffered heavy casualties mostly due to egg robbery (P.W.H.). A single bird seen flying southwards over Brilley on November 8th (J.E.A.D.).
395. **COMMON SNIPE.** Breeding on Wigmore Moor (L.S.).
398. **JACK SNIPE.** Single bird Bush Farm, Brilley, January 6th (R.H.B.).
421. **COMMON SANDPIPER.** Bishopstone, April 12th (H.A.G.). Single bird Eywood, 27th (P.W.H. and R.H.B.). Bred on Wye at Hereford, where first noted on April 20th. Parents with one full fledged young seen June 19th and subsequent dates (C.W.W.). Common summer visitor to Aymestrey pools (F.W.M.).
428. **BRITISH REDSHANK.** Three displaying at Byton, April 6th; two or three pairs Wigmore Moor, May 4th (L.S.). One seen flying northwards, and calling, over the Wye at Hereford on August 1st (C.W.W.).
435. **RINGED PLOVER.** A single bird, watched at close range, in Aymestrey Gravel Pits on August 23rd (F.W.M.). There are only two previous records for the county, the last occurrence being that of an immature bird which remained at Hereford Sewage Works for three weeks in October 1948.
478. **BLACK-HEADED GULL.** There were 30/40 birds at Hereford Sewage Works until April 6th when only one was seen. Absent thereafter until a few non-breeding returned in mid-June but numbers small until September (C.W.W.).

481. **COMMON GULL.** About 50 at Moreton-on-Lugg, April 7th, and about 12 at Aston on 9th (S.M.D.A.). Present by day all winter near Hereford and further up both Wye and Lugg until last seen on April 12th. Returned October 24th. Their roost is in Severn Mouth (C.W.W.). Numbers at King's Acre varied from about 100 on March 1st to about 500 on April 5th and 6th. Then none until 11th when 150 reappeared and left next day (J.H.W.).
482. **HERRING-GULL.** One adult bird seen on several occasions in February at Hereford Sewage Works. It was in company with a few Lesser Black-backs and 30/40 Black-headed gulls. It was seen performing mutual courtship antics with a lesser Black-backed gull (I.M.). One was again present at the Works on November 16th in company with those already mentioned (C.W.W.).
485. **BRITISH LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL.** More prevalent at Kington this year. Birds seen flying westwards on March 1st (one) and April 11th (two). On evening of May 8th, northward movement of three, one and 15/20 birds seen. Four flying westwards over Knill on August 20th (R.H.B.). One seen flying north east over Bircher on January 20th (P.W.H.). Never entirely absent near Hereford. Even in summer one or two to be seen daily over the Wye or at Sewage Works, but more in winter months (C.W.W.).
504. **CORN-CRAKE.** One killed by a cat, during the summer of 1951, at Hampton Court (per S.M.D.A.).
509. **WATER-RAIL.** These have been noted annually, as winter visitors only, at the three Aymestrey pools since December, 1947. The birds keep in pairs or singles and do not congregate. This year they were first noted on November 29th, when three were seen and a fourth was noted on December 2nd. One of these birds, watched at close range through field glasses, had legs which were predominantly green in colour. On December 4th, during hard weather and the pools frozen, one bird was watched 10/15 feet up an elm tree searching crevices in the bark (F.W.M.). Single bird seen in observer's garden at Bircher during hard snowy weather on January 28th (P.W.H.).
514. **BRITISH RED GROUSE.** A single bird was shot near Dorstone on November 9th (J.E.M.M.).

519. **RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.** Out of a covey of 16 birds which spent the winter near Shobdon, only two pairs remained to breed, but only one pair reared and then only three young (T.R.A.). A nest of 14 eggs on outskirts of Hereford (L.S.). Ten to fourteen birds seen near Burrington on September 13th, several of which were immature (S.M.D.A.).
520. **QUAIL.** Heard whistling in a field of growing barley near Bridstow in early summer. The birds were watched and a pair seen. It is not known if they nested (C.A.). On July 15th, near Shobdon, a bird thought to be a quail was heard, but not seen, calling from a field of wheat; three notes, six to eight bars, every 30 seconds (T.R.A.).

RADNORSHIRE

18. **HAWFINCH.** A scarce local resident breeding species. Adults and juveniles seen near Llandrindod Wells early in August (J.O.O.).
69. **WOOD-LARK.** A somewhat uncommon and local breeding species. A pair seen Crossgates area on October 17th (R.H.B.).
75. **TREE-PIBIT.** Pentre Tump, April 6th (L.S.).
88. **YELLOW WAGTAIL.** A somewhat rare summer visitor breeding in a few restricted areas. One seen near St. Harmon, August 10th (R.H.W.).
90. **PIED WAGTAIL.** Autumnal gathering was noted first on August 11th, when a party of 16 immature birds was seen at Llyn Hilyn. On September 6th, near Walton, a long line of mostly immature birds was seen on overhead wires and 72 were counted before a passing lorry put them to flight (R.H.B.).
- [108. **BRITISH WILLOW-TIT.** Scarce resident breeding species. One, probably this species, heard near Stapledon on August 24th (L.G.P.).]
145. **GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER.** Summer visitor and breeding species, but very local and easily overlooked. A pair at Rhos-goch on August 13th (D.A.H. and R.H.B.).

153. **SEDGE-WARBLER.** A summer visitor, breeding regularly in a few restricted localities. Noted at Rhos-goch and Llan Bwch-llyn on August 13th (D.A.H. and R.H.B.).
182. **RING-OUZEL.** A regular visitor not uncommon as a breeding species in the hills west of New Radnor. A male watched singing from the summit of a fir tree near Llyn Hilyn, April 30th (C.J.B. and R.H.B.).
198. **BRITISH STONECHAT.** A resident breeding species scarce and very local. A pair, suspected of nesting, was seen by L.S. in the Llyn Hilyn area on July 20th and the nest found by R.H.B. on 22nd, when two of the three young birds were ringed. This family was last seen on August 10th by D.A.H. and R.H.B. A single bird seen near Plas-Warren on October 18th (R.H.B.). A nest with eggs, Elan Valley, April 11th/14th (W.F.I.).
202. **BLACK REDSTART.** A single male seen near St. Harmon on August 10th at an altitude of 800 feet (R.H.W.). The only other county record is of a pair seen near Llan-drindod Wells in September, 1923.
227. **NIGHTJAR.** A not uncommon summer visitor and breeding species. Noted in Presteigne area (W.H.H.).
249. **LITTLE OWL.** A resident breeding species which has decreased in numbers of recent years. One seen in Elan Valley on May 10th (W.F.I.).
250. **LONG-EARED OWL.** A local resident breeding species, scattered pairs being found throughout the county, more especially in the Radnor Forest area. A single bird seen near St. Harmon on August 10th, when excellent views were obtained (R.H.W.).
254. **WHITE-BREASTED BARN-OWL.** A scarce resident breeding species. A pair flushed out of a barn in which they had nested, on October 17th, near Crossgates (R.H.B.).
259. **PEREGRINE FALCON.** Perhaps half a dozen pairs are resident in the hills. In an area where a nest was robbed in 1948, a pair was seen by L.G.P. on August 26th; after travelling some distance they were joined by a third bird but the range was too great for identification.

- [261. **HOBBY.** Rare. A single bird seen at Erwood on **May** May 25th was actually on the Brecon side of the Wye but probably hunted both banks (R.H.B.).]
262. **MERLIN.** A somewhat scarce resident breeding species on the moors. One nest noted this year (L.S. and A.B.).
273. **HEN-HARRIER.** Rare. A pair nested in 1903. A female seen on the Radnorshire/Cardiganshire border at the junction of the Claerddu and Claerwen on October 23rd (T.C.E.H.).
278. **KITE.** Several birds reported from various reliable sources. Recent attempts at breeding have been foiled by egg thieves.
289. **COMMON HERON.** Eighteen nests counted in the Heronry at Devanor, Abbey-Cwmhir (J.O.O.).
323. **WIGEON.** Not uncommon winter visitor. A flock of thirteen seen at Llyn Hilyn on February 22nd (R.H.B.).
328. **COMMON POCHARD.** A regular but not numerous winter visitor. Four seen on Hindwell Pool, January 30th (R.H.B.).
330. **TUFTED DUCK.** A regular winter visitor in fair numbers. About 12 birds at Hindwell Pool on January 30th and a single female there on September 25th (R.H.B.).
351. **LEACH'S FORK-TAILED PETREL.** One picked up at Cabalva on October 26th (C.M.) and one at Newbridge-on-Wye at the end of that month (H.M.S.). Both were victims of the greatest "wreck" of this species ever recorded, which took place on October 25th and 26th following a succession of severe gales. There are two previous records, one at Erwood, November, 1881, and one on the Teme near Knighton in October, 1891 (G.C.S.I.).
370. **GREAT CRESTED GREBE.** Has bred at Llan Bwch-Ilyn, where a pair was seen on August 13th (R.H.B.).
375. **LITTLE GREBE.** A resident and very local breeding species. As many as ten birds have been noted at Hindwell Pool in the autumn. Thought to have bred Llyn Hilyn as a single bird was first noted there on July 18th and there were three adults and two youngsters present on August 29th (R.H.B.).

- 404/405. **DUNLIN.** Has bred on one or two occasions. An irregular passage migrant, probably both races, mostly in spring. One in full summer plumage was seen at Llandrindod Hall bog in August (J.O.O.).
421. **COMMON SANDPIPER.** A regular summer visitor but much decreased as a breeding species in recent years. Very few breeding pairs seen this year (A.B. and H.M.S.).
424. **GREEN SANDPIPER.** Occurs at Llyn Hilyn during autumn migration. August 11th/12th one (D.A.H. and R.H.B.), 24th two and 29th one (R.H.B.).
428. **BRITISH REDSHANK.** A resident breeding species in small numbers. A pair was seen at Llyn Hilyn on April 20th but not seen again (R.H.B.).
432. **GREENSHANK.** A single bird at Llyn Hilyn, August 24th/31st. Also noted on 26th by L.G.P. No other record (R.H.B.).
446. **DOTTEREL.** A "trip" of five was seen on the moors above the Elan Valley on May 10th, when they landed within ten yards of observer's car and were watched for some time (W.F.I.).
462. **BLACK TERN.** Two birds found at Llyn Hilyn on August 9th by D.A.H. and R.H.B., where they were present for over six hours but were not there on 11th. In plumage they were half way between that of breeding and winter and spent most of their time beating over the water into the wind, catching insects and small fish. The latter were always carried lengthways in the bill and never across it. These they sometimes dropped and recaptured and were eventually swallowed after vigorous shaking. The only other record is of a single bird, thought to have been a male, seen at Llanwefr Pool on May 11th, 1949.
482. **HERRING-GULL.** Seen occasionally on the Wye. Some seen to pass over St. Harmon on August 6th (R.H.W.).
485. **BRITISH LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL.** Frequently seen on the Wye in the breeding season, especially in the early spring. Several seen flying westwards over Llyn Hilyn Pool on August 11th (D.A.H. and R.H.B.).
509. **WATER-RAIL.** A somewhat scarce resident breeding species. One shot at Llandrindod Wells Sewage Farm in June and one seen at Llandrindod Hall bog in August (J.O.O.).

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A CUCKOO EPISODE

On the morning of May 5th, 1952, I was walking in a rough field on the eastern edge of Kington Golf Course, when I noticed a cuckoo which suddenly flew down and pitched on the ground some 30 paces from me. As I raised my field glasses it was mobbed by a meadow pipit. The cuckoo proceeded to stagger about with clumsy hops, and its wings held rather untidily: neck feathers were puffed out, giving the head an abnormally fat and rounded appearance. I presumed the bird to be a female since the throat was of a fawny buff colour. The clumsy gait was, I think, akin to "injury feigning" and done to draw the female pipit from her nest into the attack. In the event the hen soon attacked the cuckoo. The cuckoo then walked about a yard to the nest site where she squatted and was largely obscured by a bent bracken frond. She next appeared with an egg in her bill and pointing her head into the air she juggled the egg into her gape and swallowed it whole: I could see the shape of it as it passed down her throat.

She returned to the nest and came out with a second egg which she disposed of in the same way. One pipit, meantime, was attacking her head and face, the other flitting about in the offing nearby. The cuckoo brought out a third egg; carrying this in her bill she flew towards me and swung back across my front, landing, with the pursuing pipits, in a small leafless ash tree some 40 yards on the further side of the pipit's nest. She then swallowed this egg in the same manner as the others.

This episode took place between 10.35 and 10.45 B.S.T. and took some five minutes to enact. The nest, which I visited at once, was empty but in perfect condition, as was the case over an hour later. It is probable that such wanton destruction on the part of the cuckoo was due to her not yet being ready to lay her own eggs. Thus, by destroying those of the pipits, she hoped that a second clutch would be laid later, when she would have one of her own eggs to add to it.

R. H. BAILLIE.

“ IN THE SLIPS ”

On the afternoon of September 9th, 1952 there was a gathering of house-martins accompanied by a few swallows, hawking insects in Kington Churchyard. Most of the birds were flying very low and many of them used a flyway under a heavy overhanging bough of a beech tree. By stationing myself under the tree it seemed possible that I might catch some of them. I soon found that, after an ineffectual grab or two, any chance of success must lie in concentrating on a single bird that appeared likely to come within reach. I managed to touch one or two either with my hand or coat sleeve, and one grazed my left eyebrow in an evasive swerve. I then dropped a left handed catch and overbalanced. In taking care not to fall on the bird, I was slow in recovery and the bird flew away. Soon afterwards, however, I made a clean left handed catch; I carried the bird into my house, ringed it and let it fly happily away. Returning to my stand I executed a left handed dropped catch on the very next bird to come within reach. This I gathered before it had time to fly off: I ringed it and released it unharmed.

Subsequent efforts for a short while produced no more captures, though one or two birds were touched. Both the house-martins ringed were birds of the year and presumably just that shade slower on the wing than the older birds. I had, however, proved both to myself and to my friend Col. I. C. Byrne, who was at first rather sceptically watching my efforts, that, under favourable conditions, it is possible to catch martins in flight.

R. H. BAILLIE.

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