

## The Ornithological Section

*President*—The Rev. F. L. BLATHWAYT, M.B.O.U., Dyrham Rectory, Chippenham, Wilts.

*Vice-President*—Mr. BERNARD W. TUCKER, M.B.O.U., 9, Marston Ferry Road Oxford.

*Secretary and Treasurer*—Mr. H. ST. GEORGE GRAY, F.S.A., Taunton Castle.

*Committee*—The President, the Secretary and Treasurer, the Rev. C. J. PRING, Messrs. E. GERALD HOLT, EDMUND PAGE, H. TETLEY and B. W. TUCKER.

THE Annual Meeting of the Section for 1936 was held in the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, on 26 March, when Mr. B. W. Tucker, Vice-President, occupied the chair.

The Treasurer presented the financial statement for 1935, which showed a credit balance on 31 December of £6 17s. 2d. On the other hand there was the liability of the cost of the Report for that year to be taken into consideration. There was also on deposit at the bank the sum of £25 2s. 0d.

The President of the Section was re-elected; Mr. B. W. Tucker was re-elected Vice-President, and Mr. H. St. George Gray, Secretary and Treasurer. The Editorial Committee, consisting of the President, the Secretary and Mr. Tucker was re-elected, and the Rev. C. J. Pring added to their number. The Committee of the Section was re-elected to serve for the ensuing year, and the Rev. C. J. Pring was elected to take the place of his late father.

The Wild Birds Protection Committee was reformed, and the following members of the Section, recommended by the Section's Committee were elected :—Mr. E. G. Holt (*Chairman*), Sir Wm. Meade-King, Messrs. E. Page, Harry Cox and H. Tetley.

The Chairman raised the subject of possible new ways and means of stimulating interest in the Section, and the subject was discussed by some of the other members.

Attention was drawn to the mounting of the Great Bustards by Mrs. St. George Gray in a case kindly presented by Dr. R. L. Meade-King.

The Twenty-second Report on Somerset Birds (1935) had recently been issued by the Editorial Committee.

In the afternoon, Mr. J. Harry Savory gave an illustrated lecture on 'Lundy and its Sea Birds'.

The autumn meeting was held in the Wyndham Hall, at Weston-super-Mare, on 29 October, when the President was in the chair.

It was reported that Mr. B. W. Tucker's illustrated report on 'The Rookeries of Somerset', had been published in the Society's *Proceedings*, vol. lxxxi, for 1935, pp. 149-240.

In the afternoon Captain H. Morrey Salmon, M.C., M.B.O.U., gave an illustrated lecture on 'The Birds of Pembrokeshire and Islands'.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY

The following are some of the principal records for the year taken from the Annual Report published by the Section, to which reference may be made for fuller details. Two new 'forms' are added to the County List this year, the Northern Willow-Warbler and Iceland Redwing, both of which occurred some years ago, but the records of which are now published for the first time.

RAVEN, *Corvus c. corax* L.

A pair nested for the first known occasion, and reared three young in the Avon Gorge (*H.H.D.*, *H.T.*, and *others*). Four young were hatched at Cheddar Gorge (*D.B.G.*), three were reared on Brean Down (*H.C.*), and three on Steep Holm (*H.H.D.* & *F.L.B.*). Three tree nests reported on Exmoor (*C.J.P.*), and six occupied nests seen in that area (*F.H.*).

ROOK, *Corvus f. frugilegus* L.

A light grey bird with black bib and showing black under the wings reported from Minehead on Jan. 22 (*A.V.C.*).

STARLING, *Sturnus v. vulgaris* L.

The Starling roost near Bristol moved in July to a copse at Abbot's Leigh (*W.R.T.*). Another very large roost recorded in flooded withey beds in winter at Kingsbury Episcopi (*C.J.P.* & *W.J.C.*).



**HAWFINCH**, *Coccothraustes c. coccothraustes* (L.)

Reported again from Leigh Woods, near Bristol, where four broods were seen on June 30 (*C. Baker*, per *J.H.Sav.*). An adult with young also seen in a garden at Combe Florey (*G.B.B.*).

**SISKIN**, *Carduelis spinus* (L.)

Five were seen in Leigh Woods on Feb. 25, and one on Apr. 11 (*C. Baker*, per *J. H. Sav.*).

**COMMON CROSSBILL**, *Loxia c. curvirostra* L.

After the invasion which crossed S. England in 1935, very few records are to hand for 1936. Reported in Jan. and Feb. in Leigh Woods (*C. Baker*, per *J.H.Sav.*), at Abbots Leigh on May 6 and 10 (*J.H.Sav.*), at Pitminster on Apr. 8 (per *H.St.G.G.*), and near Minehead on Mar. 3 (*W.C.*).

**SNOW-BUNTING**, *Plectrophenax n. nivalis* (L.)

One seen at Barrow Gurney, Nov. 24, by A. A. Adams, of Clifton College (per *W.R.T.*).

**PIED FLYCATCHER**, *Muscicapa h. hypoleuca* (Pall.)

Several reported on migration in April and early May. Two cocks and one hen in Leigh Woods on Apr. 18 (*J.H.Sav.*). Also recorded at Winscombe, Apr. 14 (*D.B.G.*), Brean Down, May 6 (*H.C.*), and Timberscombe, Apr. 20 (*W.C.*).

**NORTHERN WILLOW-WARBLER**, *Phylloscopus trochilus acredula* (L.) [= *eversmanni* (Bp.)]

A male obtained at Lympsham, Apr. 8, 1926. Identification has now been confirmed by Mr. H. F. Witherby, and the skin is in the Bristol Museum (*H.T.*).

**ICELAND REDWING**, *Turdus musicus coburni* Sharpe.

One, obtained at Clevedon on Nov. 17, 1899, is in the Liverpool Museum. It has been identified by C. M. N. White (see *British Birds*, xxx, 32).

**RING-OUZEL**, *Turdus t. torquatus* (Brehm.)

Two nests seen on Exmoor (*H.G.W.D.*).

**BLACKBIRD**, *Turdus m. merula* L.

A pure white cock reported at Walton in early April (*Western Gazette*, 10.iv.36). No less than four other partially albino birds reported at Cricket Malherbie (*W. Ward*, per *C.J.P.*), Williton, Stogumber (*F.H.*), and Minehead (*A.V.C.*).

DIPPER, *Cinclus c. gularis* (Latham.)

One dead and decomposed was found on Steep Holm, June 8 (H.C.).

SHORT-EARED OWL, *Asio f. flammeus* (Pontopp.)

One with a half-eaten rat at Clevedon, Apr. 11 (A.C.L.), and one in Dec. on the saltings at Berrow (E.G.H.).

PEREGRINE FALCON, *Falco p. peregrinus* Tunst.

Only one bird in the Avon Gorge in spring; no attempt to breed (H.T.). Three young reared at Steep Holm, and one on Brean Down (H.C.).

HOBBY, *Falco s. subbuteo* L.

A bird in fine plumage shot in mistake for a Sparrowhawk near Williton in April (F.H.).

MERLIN, *Falco columbarius aesalon* Tunst.

Reported from Brean Down on Dec. 7 (H.C.); possibly one at Martock, June 22 (J.H.S.). Breeding in old Crow's nest on Exmoor, May 17 (H.G.W.D.); three seen together near Exford in Easter week (F.H.).

COMMON HERON, *Ardea c. cinerea* L.

Two new Heronries recorded in the County; one of three nests at Uphill (per the owner, Mrs. Whitting), and the other at Midelney Wood, near Hambridge, where six pairs were breeding in March (W.J.C.).

GARGANEY, *Anas querquedula* L.

Proved breeding in Central Somerset Area (W.J.C.). Probably several pairs nested, as other birds were reported seen (C.J.P.).

SCAUP-DUCK, *Nyroca m. marila* (L.)

An adult male was at Barrow Reservoirs from the beginning of the year up to Apr. 19 (H.H.D. and others); one also there on Aug. 15 (A.C.L. & W.R.T.).

GOLDENEYE, *Bucephala c. clangula* (L.)

A drake at Barrow Reservoirs on Jan. 4 (H.T.) and Feb. 16, when two brownheads were also present (J.H.Sav.). Four brownheads also on Nov. 1 (H.H.D.). Several reported during the year from Blagdon Reservoir, the largest number being on Dec. 26, when seven or eight were seen (H.H.D.).



COMMON SCOTER, *Oidemia n. nigra* (L.)

An adult drake on No. ii Reservoir at Barrow Gurney on Sept. 26 (*H.T. & J.H.Sav.*).

GOOSANDER, *Mergus m. merganser* L.

Two, male and female at Blagdon Reservoir on Apr. 5 (*H.H.D.*).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER, *Mergus serrator* L.

A female Sawbill on No. iii Reservoir at Barrow Gurney on Apr. 10 was most probably this species. Details of plumage noted all point to its being a Merganser (*H.H.D. & J.H.Sav.*).

CORMORANT, *Phalacrocorax c. carbo* (L.)

Twenty-eight young were counted in the Steep Holm colony (*H.C.*).

GANNET, *Sula bassana* (L.)

An oiled bird found on the sands near Brean Down on Aug. 8 was sent to the Bristol Zoo for treatment, but soon died (*H.C.*).

SLAVONIAN GREBE, *Podiceps auritus* (L.)

One in almost full breeding plumage at Barrow Gurney on Apr. 7 (*G.H.J.F. & W.R.T.*) and Apr. 10 (*H.H.D.*).  
One also at Blagdon, Apr. 11 (*W.R.T. & J.H.Sav.*).

RED-THROATED DIVER, *Colymbus stellatus* Pontopp.

A male in juvenile plumage was washed ashore at Burnham-on-Sea on Dec. 20 (*H.T.*).

LITTLE STINT, *Calidris minuta* (Leisl.)

Two (one juvenile and one adult in winter plumage), by the flooded edge of No. ii Reservoir at Barrow Gurney on Sept. 26 (*H.T. & J.H.Sav.*).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT, *Limosa l. lapponica* (L.)

Seven in company with Curlews at Portbury Wharf on Sept. 20 (*J.H.Sav.*).

JACK-SNIPE, *Limnocyptes minimus* (Brünn.)

Two at Barrow Gurney on Mar. 1 (*H.T. & H.H.D.*) and one on Feb. 2 (*H.H.D.*). Four flushed together on Sedgemoor on Nov. 14 (*E.G.H.*).

BLACK TERN, *Chlidonias n. niger* (L.)

Four at Barrow Gurney on May 5 (*J. F. Kelsall, per W.R.T.*), and three on Sept. 12 (*J.H.Sav.*). One at

Blagdon on May 19 (*Mrs. K. E. Evetts*, per *B.W.T.*); four on Sept. 12 (*H.T.*), and two on Sept. 13 (*H.H.D.*).

COMMON TERN, *Sterna h. hirundo* L.

One at Portishead dock on Sept. 8 (*D. G. Bruce*, per *H.T.*); five at Blagdon on Sept. 12 were either this or Arctics (*H.T.*).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL, *Larus fuscus grællsii* Brehm  
[? & *L. f. fuscus* L.]

One at Speckington on Jan. 6 was quite definitely not *fuscus fuscus*, being a palish bird answering to *grællsii* in appearance, although, as Continental birds from south of the range of the typical *f. fuscus* seem to be paler, the possibility of its being one of these cannot be excluded (*B.W.T.*). One also recorded on Minehead beach on Dec. 13 (*A.V.C.*), the late date of which suggests the Scandinavian race.

KITTIWAKE, *Rissa t. tridactyla* (L.)

One on Reservoir iii at Barrow Gurney on Aug. 9 was in the 'tarrock' plumage. Apparently the first record for Barrow Reservoirs (*H.H.D.*).

RAZORBILL, *Alca torda* L.

Two off west side of Steep Holm on June 12 (*Miss K. Paterson*, per *H.T.*).

SPOTTED CRAKE, *Porzana porzana* (L.)

The 'piston-like' note of this bird heard on Catcott Moor on Aug. 9 (*V.G.*).

BRITISH BLACK GROUSE, *Lyrurus tetrix britannicus* With. & Lönn.

Five cocks displaying to one hen near Exford on May 2; two sucked eggs also found on the Brendons (*F.H.*).

Contributors of the above notes can be identified by their initials from the following list: Miss G. B. Batchelor; Rev. F. L. Blathwayt; W. J. Churchill; W. Copp; A. V. Cornish; H. Cox; H. H. Davis; Dr. H. G. W. Dawson; G. H. J. Fursdon; H. St. G. Gray; Miss V. Goodwin; D. B. Grubb; F. Hibberd; E. G. Holt; A. C. Leach; Rev. C. J. Pring; J. H. Savory; J. H. Symes; W. R. Taylor; H. Tetley; B. W. Tucker.