

The Ornithological Section

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

Vice-Presidents—The Very Rev. Prior E. HORNE, F.S.A., and Mr. BERNARD W. TUCKER, M.B.O.U.

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

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

THE Annual Meeting of the Section for 1935 was held in the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, on 21 March, when the President occupied the chair.

The Treasurer presented the financial statement for 1934, which showed a credit balance on 31 December of £7 13s. 9d. 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 £24 10s. 0d.

The Officers of the Section were re-elected and thanked for their services. The Editorial Committee, consisting of the President, the Secretary and Mr. Tucker, and the Committee of seven were also re-elected to serve for the ensuing year.

The Twenty-first Report on Somerset Birds (1934) had recently been issued by the Editorial Committee.

A 'Handlist of the Birds of Somerset', compiled by the Rev. C. J. Pring, was brought to the notice of the meeting, and a suggestion made that it should be published under the auspices of the Ornithological Section. Further consideration of the matter was postponed.

In the afternoon Mr. B. W. Tucker gave an illustrated lecture on 'Heligoland and its Bird Observatory'.

The autumn meeting was held at Taunton Castle on 17 October, when the President was in the chair.

It was reported that Mr. B. W. Tucker's full report on 'The Rookeries of Somerset' would probably appear in the Society's *Proceedings* for the year 1935.

The Chairman brought forward the subject of the 'Wild Birds Protection Committee' which had fallen into abeyance. The meeting decided that a new committee should be appointed at the next annual meeting.

The following resolution, proposed by Mr. B. W. Tucker and seconded by Mr. Hugh Way, was passed by a large majority.

'That this Section deploras and strongly repudiates the impression which appears to have been conveyed in connection with recent legal proceedings, that this Section in any way supported or countenanced the collecting and offering for sale of the eggs of protected birds. The Section desires it to be generally known that its Rule no. 4 reads as follows: It is the declared policy of the Section actively to further the effective protection of birds in the county and to observe and support the law and county bye-laws on the subject. Any member, who being reported to have acted in a manner prejudicial to this declared policy or to the general interests of the Section fails . . . to give a satisfactory explanation of his conduct shall cease to be a member of the Section'.

In the afternoon illustrated talks were given in the Wyndham Hall. They were as follows:—

Rev. F. L. Blathwayt, 'Former Somerset Duck Decoys'.

Mr. B. W. Tucker, 'Some less known Bird Haunts in Holland'.

Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, 'Sea-Birds on the coasts of Lancashire and Cumberland, and of Ailsa Craig', illustrated by a fine set of slides from photographs by the Rev. C. J. Pring.

Mr. H. Tetley, 'Rare Wading-Birds on No. 1 Reservoir at Barrow Gurney'.

Mr. Harry Savory exhibited an interesting collection of bird photographs taken by himself in Holland.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY

The following are some of the principal records for the year extracted from the annual Report published by the Section, to which reference should be made for fuller details. The chief ornithological event of the year has been the appearance of an

American Pectoral Sandpiper at Barrow Gurney ; this adds a new species to the County list of birds.

RAVEN, *Corvus c. corax* L.

Three eggs seen in the nest at Brean Down hatched on Mar. 27 ; four young were reared on Steep Holm (*H.C.*). Two tree nests on Exmoor successfully reared broods ; two other cliff nests also occupied (*C.J.P.*)

ROOK, *Corvus f. frugilegus* L.

An albino bird seen in a flock at Crowcombe on Nov. 2 ; another bird in the same flock also had traces of albinism in the wings (*W. Ward*, per *C.J.P.*)

CHOUGH, *Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax* (L.)

One over Lympsham on Jan. 26 (*F. H. L. Whish*, per *H.T.*)

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

Again nested in Leigh Woods, near Bristol, but probably fewer than in 1934. Four nests reported, of which three are known to have reared successfully (*J.H.Sav.*)

CROSSBILL, *Loxia c. curvirostra* L.

The invasion which crossed the Southern Counties of England last summer had its full effect on Somerset, and reports of parties seen are to hand from many districts. The first were seen at Winscombe on June 24 (*D.B.G.*), and they were seen in various places up to the end of October.

WOOD LARK, *Lullula a. arborea* (L.)

Two pairs on Backwell Hill, May 26, also a party of five apparently young birds (*H.H.D.*). Observed at Crooks Peak (*K.D.S.* and at Axbridge (*A.Miller*). Four pairs also in the Ilminster district (*W.J.C.*)

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER, *Muscicapa s. striata* (Pall.)

A pair seen on Steep Holm, May 21 (*H.C.*)

MARSH WARBLER, *Acrocephalus palustris* (Bechst.)

Numbers well maintained in their old haunt (*C.J.P.*). Reported also from a new locality on the moors (*H.L.C.*)

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

One on Steep Holm, May 21 ; one on Brean Down, Oct. 2 (*H.C.*). A pair commencing to nest in an Exmoor combe could not be found after the May snowstorm (*F.H.*)

BLACK REDSTART, *Phœnicurus ochrurus gibraltariensis* (Gm.)

One seen at Porlock on Dec. 5 (per *F.L.B.*)

SWIFT, *Apus a. apus* (L.)

A young bird left the nest for the first time on Aug. 27 at Dowlish Wake (*W.J.C.*)

HOOPOE, *Upupa e. epops* L.

One seen near Larkbarrow, Exmoor, on Aug. 10, by G. L. Streeter (per *F.L.B.*)

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

Fairly plentiful on the flooded peat moors in Jan. and Feb.; seven seen in an area of 220 sq. yds. on Jan. 9 (*K.D.S.*). Frequent between Burtle and Mark; also seen at Greinton and near Weston (*V.G.*). One on Brean Down, Jan. 17 (*K.D.S.*), and one on Berrow Sand-hills, Mar. 29,—a late date (*E.G.H.*)

PEREGRINE FALCON, *Falco p. peregrinus* Tunst.

None reared in Avon Gorge; reason unknown (*J.H.Sav.*). One reared on Brean Down and three on Steep Holm (*H.C.*)

MERLIN, *Falco columbarius æsalon* Tunst.

One seen on Steart, May 28 (*E.G.H.*). Breeding in an old haunt on Exmoor in June (*C.J.P.*)

BUZZARD, *Buteo b. buteo* (L.)

Continues to be reported from various parts, and now definitely extending its breeding range. A pair successfully reared three young near Chard (*W.J.C.*). Also seen during the year at Stanton Prior, Aug. 6 (*G.H.J.F.*); Crooks Peak, Jan. 2 (*K.D.S.*); Brean Down, Mar. 18 and 29 (*H.C.*); Cheddar Gorge, June 16 (*G.H.J.F.*); Otterford, Nov. 4 (*Brig.-Gen. R. Lock*, per *C.J.P.*). Five together over Dowlish Wake, Nov. 24 (*W.J.C.*). Abundant all over Exmoor (*C.J.P.*)

HEN-HARRIER, *Circus c. cyaneus* (L.)

One seen between Mark and Edington Station, Feb. 8 (*J.G.*). A male also reported from Kewstoke (*H.C.*)

TEAL, *Anas c. crecca* L.

Large numbers reported. One thousand counted at Barrow Reservoirs by H. H. D. and H. T. on Dec. 15; 1500–2000 in bay off Brean Down in Jan. (*H.C.* & *K.D.S.*)

POCHARD, *Nyroca f. ferina* (L.)

Twelve hundred at Barrow Gurney Reservoirs on Dec. 28 (*H.T. and others*).

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

An adult drake present at Barrow Reservoirs from Jan.-Apr. ; one again present in December (*H.T. and others*).

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

An adult drake at Barrow Reservoirs from Feb.-Apr., and again on Dec. 28 (*H.T. and others*). Two at Blagdon on Jan. 7, and three on Jan. 22 (*K.D.S.*)

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

Numbers breeding on Steep Holm show a substantial increase over 1934. Observations by H. H. D., H. T., and H. C., show about twenty pairs present this year.

GANNET, *Sula bassana* (L.)

Three off Brean Down on Oct. 10 after the great gale (*H.C.*)

STORM PETREL, *Hydrobates pelagicus* (L.)

One near Brean Down on Oct. 10 after the gale ; one found dead on Weston sands, Nov. 26 (*H.C.*)

LEACH'S FORK-TAILED PETREL, *Oceanodroma l. leucorrhoa* (Vieill.)

Three or four off Berrow during gale on Sept. 18 (*F. H. L. Whish*, per *H.T.*)

MANX SHEARWATER, *Puffinus p. puffinus* (Brünn.)

One picked up at Clutton, Sept. 18 (*H.T.*) ; several off Berrow during gale on Sept. 18 and 19 (*F. H. L. Whish*, per *H.T.*)

SLAVONIAN GREBE, *Podiceps auritus* (L.)

One seen at close range at the Ubley end of Blagdon Reservoir, Jan. 7 (*K.D.S.*)

BLACK-NECKED GREBE, *Podiceps n. nigricollis* Brehm.

A few at Barrow Reservoirs up to Apr. 7, and again on from early Sept. (*H.T. and others*).

RUFF, *Philomachus pugnax* (L.)

One, probably a reeve, at Barrow Reservoirs from Sept. 28-30 (*H.T.*, *J.H.Sav.*, & *F.L.B.*) A reeve at Blagdon on Oct. 6 (*H.H.D.* & *B.W.T.*)

LITTLE STINT, *Calidris minuta* (Leisl.)

One on Berrow Sands, Feb. 10 (*K.D.S.*), and one at Porlock, Nov. 6 (*F.L.B.*)

AMERICAN PECTORAL SANDPIPER, *Calidris maculata* (Vieill.)

One at No. 1 Reservoir, Barrow Gurney, from Sept. 28–Oct. 3. This very rare wader was identified by H. T., and seen by many observers from Bristol [see also *British Birds*, xxix, 183–5].

SPOTTED REDSHANK, *Tringa erythropus* (Pall.)

One seen up the R. Yeo, near Clevedon, in Jan. and Feb.; two also at same place on Nov. 12 and 18 (*K.D.S.*)

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

One adult at Blagdon Reservoir, Oct. 6 (*B.W.T. & H.H.D.*).

One juvenile at Barrow Gurney, Sept. 14, and two adults, Sept. 23 (*H.T.*)

COMMON TERN, *Sterna h. hirundo* L.

ARCTIC TERN, *Sterna macrura* Naumann.

A flock of fifty, including both species, off Berrow on Sept. 18 after the great gale (*F. H. L. Whish*, per *H.T.*)

ICELAND GULL, *Larus glaucoides* Meyer.

The Bristol Iceland Gull was seen on Jan. 27, and again on Feb. 3, about which date it left (*H.T.*)

ARCTIC SKUA, *Stercorarius parasiticus* (L.)

Two Skuas, probably this species off Berrow on Sept. 18 during the gale (*F. H. L. Whish*, per *H.T.*)

The contributors of the above notes can be identified by their initials from the following list: Rev. F. L. Blathwayt; W. J. Churchill; Capt. H. L. Cochrane; H. Cox; H. H. Davis; G. H. J. Fursdon; V. Goodwin; D. B. Grubb; J. Grubb; F. Hibberd; E. G. Holt; A. Miller; Rev. C. J. Pring; J. H. Savory; K. D. Smith; H. Tetley; B. W. Tucker.

C. J. PRING