

# List of Birds' Eggs found in Somersetshire,

WITH OBSERVATIONS.

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BY MR. W. D. CROTCH.

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## RAPTORES.

FALCONIDAE.

FALCO.

### 1.—*Falco subbuteo*.—*Hobby*.

Eggs of this species are rare in collections, and I am not aware of any other specimen, besides the one in my possession, having been obtained in this county; the egg is of a short oval form, 1 inch 8 lines in length, by 1 inch 5 lines in breadth, in colour a deep reddish brown, speckled with darker brown. My own specimen I obtained on the Steep Holmes in the Bristol Channel, on May 11th, 1849.

### 2.—*F. tinnunculus*.—*Kestrel*.

This poor persecuted bird still continues to supply the demand for eggs and skins, so unrelentingly imposed upon it, and in return for this unholy persecution does gamekeepers and farmers all the good in its power by devouring mice, rats, weasels, &c. in immense numbers; its eggs are very variable, but commonly of a pale brown, freckled and blotched with darker

brown, 1 inch 7 lines in length, and about 1 inch 3 lines in breadth. It more commonly takes possession of some deserted nest of the crow or magpie, than makes one for itself; the young are in general hatched by the beginning of May.

## ACCIPITER.

3.—*Accipiter fringillarius*.—*Sparrow Hawk*.

This bird is not perhaps more rare than its congener the kestrel, but is less likely to be observed from its habit of gliding noiselessly over low hedges, never hovering suspended in the air, like the before mentioned hawk. Its eggs are very beautiful, being of a pale blue ground colour, sparingly blotched with deep chocolate brown, in size the same as those of the kestrel; and like them this species seldom prepares a nest on its own account, preferring those of the crow.

## BUTEO.

4.—*Buteo vulgaris*.—*Common Buzzard*.

The ranks of this noble but destructive hawk, have been sadly thinned by game-keepers, to whom they prove a formidable enemy. A few may still however be seen among the ranges of the Quantocks. Wheeling and gliding at an immense height, with the extraordinary powers of vision these birds are known to possess, what a field of view must be opened to them! the mountains in Wales, and the lofty ranges of Yorkshire and Cumberland are before them; a few strokes of their powerful wings, and they would be beyond the reach of those who think a hawk fair game for every destructive contrivance invented. That these birds do at times breed on some inacces-

sible cliff in this county seems probable, but I am not aware of eggs obtained in this county being in any collection. Their size is 2 inches 3 lines in length, by 1 inch 10 lines in breadth; in colour a soiled white, slightly spotted with pale brown. In Scotland they breed on cliffs, but prefer trees when sufficiently commodious for their purpose.

## STRIGIDÆ.

## STRIX.

5.—*Strix flammea*.—*White or Barn Owl*.

The extraordinary peculiarity of incubation, confined, as I believe, to the strigidæ or family of the owls, is fully borne out by the species in question; I allude to the finding in the same nest, and at the same period, young birds in various stages of developement; and also eggs, some far advanced in incubation, others newly laid; so that the sole business of the parent birds, during the breeding season, must consist in rearing and providing for their progeny; and that this season is of considerable duration, seems proved by the fact of young birds being found in the nest so late as December. The eggs of this and of other owls are white; the size in this species is 1 inch 6 lines in length, by 1 inch 3 lines in breadth.

## SYRNIUM.

6.—*Syrnium Aluco*.—*Tawny Owl*.

Eggs of this species are larger in proportion than those of the preceding; they are smooth and white, in length 1 inch 10 lines, and in breadth 1 inch 6 lines; they are usually found in some hollow tree about the month of April. I however found some eggs of this species in a rabbit hole on the neighbouring hills.

## INSESSORES.

## DIVISION DENTIROSTRES.

## LANIADAE.

## LANIUS.

7.—*Lanius collurio*.—*Common Butcher Bird*.

The extraordinary size of nest used by these birds is worthy of notice ; itself not so large as a thrush, it makes a clumsy, large, cup-shaped nest of fibrous roots, lined with dry bents and a few hairs ; its eggs are readily distinguishable from those of any other bird, from the spots being disposed so as to form a zone, generally, though not always, on the large end of the egg ; their colour is variable, being frequently of a yellowish, greenish, or bluish tint, spotted with darker colour ; in length 11 lines, by 8 lines in breadth.

## MUSCICAPIDAE.

## MUSCICAPA,

8.—*Muscicapa grisola*.—*Spotted Fly Catcher*.

This pretty bird is one of our latest summer visitors, seldom or never making its appearance till on or about May 20th, when it immediately commences the construction of its nest, which is frequently found in singular situations ; a bird cage accidentally left out in a garden, a lamp post in a street at Leeds, another near Portland Place, London, have been selected by this bird for a habitation ; the eggs are 9 lines in length by 7 lines in breadth, white, sometimes tinged with blue and spotted with pale red.

9.—*M. atricapilla*.—*Pied Fly Catcher*.

This rare bird is noticed in Yarrell's British birds, as breeding in Westmoreland, and even there in limited numbers, and peculiar localities ; it is therefore with great pleasure I record the occurrence of the nest

in our county, and in this immediate neighbourhood; the eggs are of a delicate pale blue, unlike those of the hedge sparrow, slightly resembling those of the redstart, but from which the plumage of the parents effectually distinguish them. The nest was placed in ivy against a wall, together with others of its congener, the fly catcher. The eggs vary in size, perhaps the average is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  lines long, by  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lines broad.

## MERULIDAE.

## CINCLUS.

10.—*Cinclus aquaticus*.—*Water Ouzel*,

This bird uses great art to conceal its large domed nest, which is composed of moss, closely interwoven and lined with dry leaves, having an aperture at the side, like that of the common wren: it has been found behind the sheet of water formed by a cascade, which it would be supposed would have effectually screened it from observation. The eggs are white, from four to six in number, oval and pointed, in length 1 inch, by 9 lines in breadth.

## TURDUS.

11.—*Turdus viscivorus*.—*Missel Thrush* or  
*Holm Screech*.

This bird may now be found in every orchard, though at the time of the immortal Berwick so rare, that it was with difficulty he procured a specimen for his work. Egg 1 inch 3 lines, by 11 lines, ground colour greenish white, spotted with brown, but variable both in size and in colour.

12.—*T. musicus*.—*Song Thrush*.

I once found an old deserted nest of this bird, the lining of mud was cracked, there was a hole through the

bottom, the entire fabric was in complete dishabille ; I hesitated as to whether I should demolish it, it had cost me scratched hands and a torn coat ; yet, a rotten thing, I thought it not worth the trouble. A week after, coming in a different direction and not recognizing the spot, I climbed up to the nest ; there were four eggs in it, one of which was lodged in the hole at the bottom, in such a manner that it must have puzzled the young bird to extricate himself when the eggs were hatched, as in due season they were. The eggs are of a beautiful blue, spotted with black, in length, 1 inch 1 line by 10 lines.

13.—*T. merula*.—*Blackbird*.

This bird's eggs are generally of a pale blue, freckled all over with brown, but occasionally of one pure blue tint, length 1 inch 2 lines, breadth 11 lines.

14.—*T. torquatus*.—*Ring Ouzel*.

This bird breeds sparingly on our high ranges of hills, the eggs are similar to those of the blackbird, but the spots are much clearer and more defined.

SYLVIADAE.

ACCENTOR.

15.—*Accentor modularis*.—*Hedge Sparrow*.

The eggs, colour bright greenish blue, length  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines by  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lines. Two broods are produced during the season.

ERYTHACA.

16.—*Erythaca rubecula*.—*Redbreast*.

The size of the egg  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines in length by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in breadth ; colour yellowish white, spotted with pale red.

PHÆNICURA.

17.—*Phœnicura ruticilla*.—*Redstart*.

This bird builds in hollow trees, eggs generally six in number, of a pale spotless blue,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  lines in length by  $6\frac{1}{4}$  lines in breadth.

## SAXICOLA.

18.—*Saxicola rubicola*.—*Stonechat*.

This bird builds early in April, its eggs are six in number, in colour a pale greyish blue, the large end minutely freckled with brown.

19.—*S. rubetra*.—*Whinchat*.

This bird in habits is very similar to the preceding; the nests are alike, the eggs are bluish green, very minutely speckled with brown. These birds are double brooded.

20.—*S. ænanthe*.—*Wheatear*.

Though seldom seen in this immediate neighbourhood, these birds may be found in great numbers, especially on their arrival in March, along our coast, on downs, and in warrens generally, where they build in April, usually placing their nest in some hole in a wall, or under the scattered rocks found on the downs they inhabit. The nest is commonly found beyond the reach of the arm, and their eggs, are in consequence procured with difficulty. They are of a very elegant shape,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  lines in length by 7 lines in breadth, and of a delicate pale blue colour.

## SALICARIA.

21.—*Salicaria locustella*.—*Grasshopper Warbler*.

The eggs of this species are difficult to procure, from the exceedingly shy nature of the bird; they breed in May, the eggs are pale reddish white, freckled all over with red, in length 8 lines, by breadth 6 lines.

22.—*S. phragmitis*.—*Sedge Warbler*.

The eggs of this bird bear such a resemblance to those of the yellow water-wagtail as scarcely to admit of separation, if accidentally mixed; their size is however

a little inferior to that of the above mentioned species; the colour is a yellowish brown, mottled with darker brown, and size 8 lines long by 6 broad.

23.—*S. arundinacia*.—*Reed Warbler*.

The same unerring instinct which prompts these birds to build their nest among reeds, so supple as to be bowed to the water's edge with every breath of wind, has also provided a resource against danger, by teaching them to form it so long and deep, that the precious cargo it contains rides as securely in the storm as in the calm; this nest, suspended as it is from three or four reeds, and with its elegant cup-like shape, is, as may be imagined, a beautiful object; fortunately for the bird, even love of beauty is not always sufficient to induce the admirer to wade knee deep in mud and water for a sight of the object of his admiration. The eggs are greenish white, freckled and spotted with ash green and light brown, in length 9 lines by  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lines in breadth; they breed early in June.

PHILOMELA.

24.—*Philomela lusciniæ*.—*Nightingale*.

The colour of the eggs in this species is olive green, 10 lines in length, and  $8\frac{1}{2}$  lines in breadth, with which information I hope all well disposed hearers will be content, and suffer the queen of songsters to rear her brood unmolested.

CURRUCA.

25.—*Curruca atricapilla*.—*Blackcap*.

This is a splendid songster, second only to the Nightingale, but alas! the beauty of its eggs causes them to be found on every school boy's string, trophies of burglary. They are 9 lines long, by 7 lines broad. In colour reddish white, spotted with dark brown.

26.—*C. hortensis*.—*Garden Warbler*.

Eggs of this species are rare, they are of a greenish white, speckled and spotted with ash green and light brown, the length 9 lines, breadth  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lines.

27.—*C. cinerea*.—*Common Whitethroat*.

The colour of the egg of this bird is as that of the preceding, but more distinctly spotted.

28.—*C. sylviella*.—*Lesser Whitethroat*.

The eggs of this bird, which is uncommon, at least in this county, may be readily known from those of the preceding by the purer white of the ground and the more distinct character of the spots; their size is 8 lines in length, by 6 lines in breadth; they breed in May.

## SYLVIA.

29.—*Sylvia Sibillatrix*.—*Wood Warbler*.

*S. Trochilus*.—*Willow Warbler*.

*S. Hippolais*.—*Chiff Chaff*.

The distinction between the eggs of these birds, though slight, is very appreciable. The nest of the wood warbler may be distinguished from the two others by the absence of a lining of feathers, used by them; the spots also on the eggs of this species are very numerous, of a deep purple red colour on a reddish white ground, while those on the eggs of the willow warbler, are much smaller. The egg of the chiff chaff is sparingly spotted with purple red, and is slightly smaller than those of the foregoing, being 7 lines in length by  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lines in breadth. They breed early in May.

## REGULUS.

30.—*Regulus auricapillus*.—*Golden Crested Wren*.

The beautiful nest of this very elegant little bird will repay

attention ; it is composed of the softest moss, securely woven among the pendant leaves of the fir, and snugly lined with feathers. In this are deposited from six to ten eggs, 6 lines in length by 5 lines in breadth, of a pale flesh colour, or white spotted faintly with pale red.

## PARIDAE.

## PARUS.

31.—*Parus major*.—*Great Titmouse*.

Builds in holes. Eggs  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines long, by 7 lines broad, white speckled with red.

32.—*P. cæruleus*.—*Blue Tit*.

This bird has obtained the sobriquet of Billy biter among bird-nesting boys, from his determined valour in defending his habitation against intrusion ; perhaps the numerous progeny he has to defend may have something to do with this ; at all events from ten to fifteen eggs, far exceeding in bulk the parent bird, must necessarily require the greatest attention ; the eggs are white spotted with red, in size  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lines in length, by 6 lines in breadth.

33.—*P. ater*.—*Cole Tit*.

The hole chosen by this bird is in general situated at the roots of a tree, in which are deposited from six to eight white eggs, speckled with pale red, slightly smaller than those of the blue tit.

34.—*P. caudatus*.—*Longtailed Tit*.

The nest of this bird is perfect in its kind, it is a complete oval, finished off smoothly, and in the most regular manner, and there is a small hole in the side by which access is obtained to the chamber within, the outside being studded all over with silvery lichens ; but all this beauty is concealed by its being placed in the

centre of some bush which must be cut away before the nest can be secured. The eggs are white, 7 lines in length by 5 lines in breadth.

35.—*P. palustris*.—*Marsh Tit*.

This bird builds in holes, more frequently in decayed willows, in marshy places. Eggs resemble those of the cole tit.

MOTACILLIDAE.

MOTACILLA.

36.—*Motacilla Yarrellii*.—*Pied Wagtail*.

Eggs not unlike some varieties of the house sparrow, 9 lines by 7 lines, white speckled with ash colour.

37.—*M. flava*.—*Ray's or Yellow Wagtail*.

These eggs cannot be distinguished if accidentally mixed with those of the sedge warbler. They are yellowish white, mottled with brown of various shades,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 7 lines.

ANTHIDAE.

ANTHUS.

38.—*Anthus arboreus*.—*Tree Pipit*.

The eggs are exceedingly varied in colour, so much so that no casual observer would believe them to be the produce of the same bird. They are 10 lines by 8 lines, and in colour run through various shades of grey, green, brown, and red in their markings, on a paler ground.

39.—*A. pratensis*.—*Meadow Pipit*.

These eggs are as similar, as those of its congener, the tree pipit, are dissimilar, being of a greyish brown, mottled with darker, the markings forming a ring round the large end. The length 9 lines by 7 lines.

40.—*A. aquaticus*.—*Rock Pipit*.

Eggs 4 or 5 in number, of a greyish white, mottled with ash brown,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lines. Breeds on the coast.

## DIVISION CONIROSTRES.

## ALAUDIDAE.

## ALAUDA.

41.—*A. arvensis*.—*Skylark*.

Eggs greyish white, mottled with darker grey and ash brown, 11 lines by  $8\frac{1}{2}$  lines.

42.—*A. arborea*.—*Woodlark*.

These birds through the great demand for them as songsters are gradually becoming so rare, that a nest is in some parts a rarity. The eggs are pale reddish white, spotted and speckled with dull brown,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 7 lines.

## EMBERIZIDAE.

## EMBERIZA.

43.—*Emberiza miliaris*.—*Common Bunting*.

Breeds about the end of April, laying four or five eggs of a purplish white ground colour, streaked and spotted with dark purple brown, 1 inch by  $8\frac{1}{2}$  lines.

44.—*E. schoeniculus*.—*Black headed Bunting, or Reed Sparrow*.

The eggs of this bird are of a pale purple brown or smoke colour, streaked with darker brown, almost black,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 7 lines.

45.—*E. citrinella*.—*Yellow Ammer*.

The name of this bird should as its derivation appears to denote, be written without an "h," ammer being the German for bunting, as "Schnee-ammer," the snow bunting, "Grau-ammer," the common bunting, &c. Eggs pale purplish white, veined and speckled with dark reddish brown, length  $10\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 7 lines. They are hatched early in June.

46.—*E. Cirlus*.—*Cirl Bunting*.

The eggs of this species are similar to those of the preceding, perhaps a little whiter in their ground colour. They are rare and found mostly near the coast.

## FRINGILLIDAE.

## FRINGILLA.

47.—*Fringilla cœlebs*.—*Chaffinch*.

This bird, as are the finches generally, is remarkable for the beauty of its nest, besides the neatness of its construction, it being composed of moss, lined with wool, then with hair and feathers, and lastly studded on the outside with silvery lichens, to which adornment the bird is decidedly partial, for on one occasion some scraps of paper, perhaps forlorn remnants of a love letter, were adopted; but whether in lieu or in preference of the more usual ingredient, I am unable to say. The eggs are of a purplish buff colour, sparingly streaked and spotted with dark reddish brown, length  $8\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 6 lines.

48.—*Passer montana*.—*Tree Sparrow*.

The eggs of this bird differ but very slightly from those of the common house sparrow; with regard to the nest however, it has been observed, and I have repeatedly verified it, that the entrance to it is in this species from the outside of the thatch, by which contrivance, one would imagine they were inspired by pure spirit of mischief; for what advantage can accrue to themselves from a drenching from every shower, it is not easy to conceive.

## PASSER.

49.—*P. domesticus*.—*Common House Sparrow*.

Eggs exceedingly variable, both in size and colour, perhaps averaging 10 lines by 7 lines, white, spotted and streaked with green, grey or brown, and even, though rarely, of a pure white.

## COCCOTHAUSTES.

50.—*Coccothraustes chloris*.—*Greenfinch*.

Breeds towards the end of April, laying from four to six

eggs, of a pale greenish blue, spotted chiefly on the large end with dark brown and purple,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 6 lines.

## CARDUELIS.

51.—*Carduelis elegans*.—*Goldfinch*.

The nest of this bird is as remarkable for its neatness and elegance as is the little architect itself. Their choice of materials too is very amusing. A pair breeding in a garden were supplied with wool, with which they composed their nest, but on cotton being offered them they rejected the wool, and lastly the cotton also, on the introduction of fine down, with which they ultimately finished the structure. The eggs are pale bluish white, with a few spots and streaks of purple and brown,  $8\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 6 lines.

## LINOTA.

52.—*Linota cannabina*.—*Common Linnet*.

The eggs are similar in colour and size to those of the goldfinch, but occasionally varying, and have been frequently offered for sale as those of the lesser redpole, which bird however does not breed farther south than Yorkshire, and is a winter visitor only to our western counties. That a pair may now and then remain and breed, is possible; such however have never come under my notice.

## PYRRHULA.

53.—*Pyrrhula vulgaris*.—*Bullfinch*.

This bird retires during the breeding season to the most unfrequented woods in its neighbourhood, which accounts for the comparative scarcity of its eggs, considering the common appearance of this eminent devourer of buds, in whose gizzard I have never found the remains of a single insect: the rascal also

seems to choose such buds as contain embryo blossoms, rejecting those that produce leaves ; unlike the blue titmouse which only devours such buds as contain insects, and which on that account would never arrive at maturity. The eggs are of a pale blue, spotted and streaked with purple.

STURNIDAE.

STURNUS.

54.—*Sturnus vulgaris*.—*Starling*.

The eggs of a uniform pale blue, 1 inch 2 lines by 10 lines.

CORVIDAE.

CORVUS.

55.—*Corvus corax*.—*Raven*.

A pair of these birds for many seasons made their nest in Willet tower, in this neighbourhood ; it is however now deserted. A pair also have bred on Brean Down, near Weston-super-Mare. I obtained an egg from thence last season, or rather should have obtained it, for on being drawn up from the nest, which was built midway on the side of a cliff, the egg was unfortunately crushed in the pocket of the coat of the finder, and as it was addled, the perfume was not the most agreeable imaginable. The eggs are 2 inches by 1 inch 4 lines, of a pale green, spotted and speckled with a dark greenish brown.

56.—*C. corone*.—*Carrion crow*.

Eggs 1 inch 8 lines by 1 inch 2 lines, of a pale bluish green, spotted and speckled with ash green and various shades of brown.

57.—*C. frugilegus*.—*Rook*.

These birds are among our earliest breeders, commencing their task in March, repairing the nest of the previous year, and depositing four or five eggs, of a pale green, blotched with dark greenish brown, 1 inch 8 lines by 1 inch 2 lines.

58.—*C. monedula*.—*Jackdaw*.

The quantity of sticks amassed by these birds for their nest is really amazing; on one occasion having commenced on a step in a church tower, and being puzzled to make a firm basis, they added stick after stick as supports, till they arrived at a landing six or seven steps below the situation chosen. The eggs are 1 inch 7 lines by 1 inch  $\frac{1}{2}$  line, of a pale bluish white, spotted with ash-colour and clove brown.

PICA.

59.—*Pica caudata*.—*Magpie*.

Whether the obstacles enhance the pleasure of the attempt or not, it is astonishing that a nest so well defended against attacks, as is that of this bird, should be plundered as it is; for though built of thorns, all the points of which project outwards, and the entrance at the side not large enough to admit the hand, yet the eggs are as surely to be seen on the string of the school-boy as those of thrushes and blackbirds; they are 1 inch  $4\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 1 inch, of a pale greenish white, spotted all over with various shades of greenish brown.

GARRULUS.

60.—*Garrulus glandarius*.—*Jay*.

The eggs of a yellowish white, thickly speckled all over with light brown.

## SCANSORES.

PICIDAE.

PICUS.

61.—*Picus viridis*.—*Green Woodpecker*.

These birds make no nest, depositing their eggs on the soft particles of decayed wood in the holes of trees, which they excavate for themselves, carrying away the frag-

ments of wood which might otherwise betray their retreat. The eggs are of a pure shining white, 1 inch  $2\frac{1}{4}$  lines by  $10\frac{1}{4}$  lines. They breed in May.

62.—*P. major.* *Great Spotted Woodpecker.*

Though this bird is said to be our commonest species of woodpecker, after the one before mentioned; I have never succeeded in finding the eggs, and indeed I have but seldom met with the bird itself in this county. The eggs are white and shining, 1 inch by 9 lines.

63.—*P. minor.*—*Lesser Spotted Woodpecker.*

The eggs of this bird are very similar to those of the wryneck, but are not deposited on a nest, like those of that bird; they are white and shining,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 7 lines.

CERTHIADAE.

YUNX.

64.—*Yunx torquilla.*—*Wryneck.*

This bird when surprised in its nest in some hollow tree, hisses loudly, elevating its crest, and writhing its head, so as to resemble a snake, when, taking advantage of a moment of hesitation, it starts out and escapes from a retreat whence egress seemed impossible. The eggs are white and smooth, from six to ten in number,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 7 lines.

CERTHIA.

65.—*Certhia familiaris.*—*Common Tree Creeper.*

This bird is an early breeder, laying from seven to nine eggs in April, they are white, with a few pale red spots at the large end, sometimes forming a ring, 8 lines by 5 lines. The nest is composed of small twigs lined with hair and dark coloured wool, and is usually situated on the inner side of some partially detached

portion of bark, though sometimes it may be found in a hole of a tree, which in this case generally has a very small aperture.

## TROGLODYTES.

66.—Troglodytes vulgaris.—*Wren*.

How, in a nest, the neatness and beauty of which every one has admired, composed of moss and lined with the softest feathers, provided with an entrance not large enough to admit two fingers, and which contains from seven to eleven young ones, the parent can distinguish among so many claimants for food, to which the turn of favor belongs, is indeed wonderful. The old bird seldom enters the nest with her provision, merely clinging to its side; a dozen heads are instantly at the aperture, each greedy as may be; how she distinguishes between those already fed, and those requiring food, has always appeared to me a great mystery. The eggs are  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 6 lines, white or slightly speckled with pale red.

## SITTA.

67.—Sitta Europæa.—*Nuthatch*.

The situation chosen by this bird for its nest, is some hole in the tree, usually one with a large entrance, which it ingeniously plasters with mud till the hole is but large enough to admit its diminutive self. The eggs greatly resemble those of the greater titmouse, in length 9 lines by 7 lines, white with a few pale red spots.

## CUCULIDAE.

## CUCULUS.

68.—Cuculus canorus.—*Cuckoo*.

Eggs of this bird have now been found in nests of hedge-sparrows, robin, redstart, wagtail, whitethroat, the warblers, meadow titlark, rock pipit, skylark, yellow-

ammer, chaffinch, greenfinch, linnet, and blackbird, of which those of the hedge-sparrow and titlark have the preference. They are very small, equalling exactly in size the eggs of the skylark, though the difference of the birds is four to one. Colour of the egg a reddish grey, size 11 lines by 8 lines.

## INSESSORES.

## FISSIROSTRES.

## HALCYONIDAE.

## ALCEDO.

69.—*Alcedo Ispida*.—*Kingfisher*.

The eggs of this species are nearly globular in shape,  $10\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 9 lines, of a pure and shining white, deposited in some hole in a river bank, occasionally on a layer of fish-bones.

## HIRUNDINIDAE.

## HIRUNDO.

70.—*Hirundo rustica*.—*Swallow*.

Egg  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lines by  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lines, white speckled with ash colour and dark red. These birds have two broods in the season, the first in June, the other in August.

71.—*H. urbica*.—*Martin*.

Eggs smooth and white, 9 lines by 6 lines, three or four broods in the season.

72.—*H. riparia*.—*Sand Martin*.

Eggs as the preceding, but smaller, 8 lines by 6 lines.

## CYPSELUS.

73.—*Cypselus murarius*.—*Swift*.

The nest of these birds seems glued together, probably by some secretion from themselves. Eggs from two to four in number, white, 1 inch by 8 lines.

## CAPRIMULGIDAE.

## CAPRIMULGUS.

74.—*Caprimulgus Europæus*.—*Nightjar*.

The eggs of this bird are perhaps the most beautiful of any

in Britain, in shape they are a perfect oval, 1 inch 2 lines by 10 lines, white, beautifully clouded and veined with blueish grey and brown. They make no nest.

### RASORES.

#### COLUMBIDÆ.

#### COLUMBA.

##### 75.—*Columba palumbus.*—*Ring Dove.*

The nest of this bird is so slight that the eggs may not unfrequently be discerned through it; they are white and oval, 1 inch 8 lines, by 1 inch 2 lines.

##### 76.—*C. Cœnas.*—*Stock Dove.*

This bird is rare in our western counties, the eggs are deposited in hollows in trees, shewing a preference for pollards, they are white, 1 inch  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 1 inch 2 lines.

##### 77.—*C. livia.*—*Rock Dove.*

Eggs of this bird are more pointed than those of its fellows, white, 1 inch 5 lines by 1 inch  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lines. The nest is formed in some crevice, on the face of a cliff, and usually beyond the reach of the hand.

##### 78.—*C. turtur.*—*Turtle Dove.*

Eggs white and pointed, 1 inch  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 11 lines, builds generally in the oak in June.

#### PHASIANIDÆ.

#### PHASIANUS.

##### 79.—*Phasianus Cholchicus.*—*Pheasant.*

On account of the semi-domestication of these birds, the eggs are subject to variation, both in size and colour, usually however they are olive brown, 1 inch 10 lines by 1 inch 5 lines.

#### TETRAONIDÆ.

#### TETRAO.

##### 80.—*Tetrao tetrix.*—*Black Grouse.*

Eggs yellowish white, spotted and speckled with orange brown, 2 lines by 1 inch 5 lines.

## PERDIX.

81.—*Perdix cinerea*.—*Common Partridge*.

Eggs of a uniform olive brown, 1 inch 5 lines by 1 inch  $\frac{1}{2}$  line.

82.—*P. rubra*.—*Red-legged Partridge*.

Eggs of a yellowish white, spotted and speckled with reddish brown, 1 inch  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lines by 1 inch 3 lines.

## COTURNIX.

83.—*Coturnix dactylisonans*.—*Common Quail*.

Eggs from seven to twelve in number; of a yellowish white, blotched and speckled with umber brown.

## GRALLATORES.

## CHARADRIIDAE.

## CHARADRIUS.

84.—*Charadrius hiaticula*.—*Ringed Plover*.

This bird deposits its eggs on the bare shingle on our coasts, from which, owing to their peculiar colour, it is extremely difficult to distinguish them; they are of a pale cream colour, spotted with ash blue and black, 1 inch 5 lines by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch.

## VANELLUS.

85.—*Vanellus cristatus*.—*Lapwing*.

Eggs four, ground colour olive, spotted and blotched with blackish brown, 1 inch 11 lines by 1 inch 4 lines.

## HÆMATOPUS.

86.—*Hæmatopus ostralegus*.—*Oyster-catcher or Sea Pie*.

Eggs of a yellowish stone colour, spotted with ash grey and dark brown, 2 inches 2 lines by 1 inch 6 lines.

## ARDEIDAE.

## ARDEA.

87.—*Ardea cinerea*.—*Common Heron*.

There are, I believe, two heronries in this county, one at Brockley Woods, and the other at Picton. The eggs are of a uniform sea green, 2 inches 3 lines by 1 inch 9 lines.

An interesting illustration of the affection of the white stork for its progeny may be inserted here. At the conflagration at Delft a pair of these birds, whose nest was on the summit of one of the burning houses, made numerous but unavailing efforts to bear away their young ones, but being unable to succeed, forgetful of former and future offspring, they remained on the nest till both it and themselves were consumed.

## SCOLOPACIDAE.

## TOTANUS.

88.—Totanus Hypoleucus.—*Common Sandpiper, or Summer Snipe.*

The nest of these birds is very difficult to find, and it is a curious fact, that when it contains eggs, the female, if disturbed, quits it in silence, avoiding observation, but when there are young ones, she on the contrary tries every means to court attention, feigning to be unable to fly, screaming, and even rolling on the ground. They breed in holes in river banks. The eggs are four, reddish white, spotted and speckled with amber brown, 1 inch 4 lines by 1 inch.

## SCOLOPAX.

89.—Scolopax rusticola.—*Woodcock.*

A pair or two of these birds yearly build in this county. Young birds have been seen in July by the keeper of the Right Hon. H. Labouchere. The eggs are of a pale yellow, blotched and spotted over the large end with ash grey, and various shades of yellow brown, 1 inch 9 lines by 1 inch 4 lines.

90.—S. gallinago.—*Common Snipe.*

The eggs of this bird equal in size those of the rook, a bird of three times its weight. They are pear-shaped,

as are eggs of most of the wading birds; 1 inch 6 lines by 1 inch 1 line, of a greenish white, the large end spotted with two or three shades of brown.

## TRINGA.

91.—*Tringa maritima*.—*Purple Sandpiper*.

This bird till within the last few years, bred on the little island of Birnbeck, at Weston-super-Mare, but I fear does so no longer; at least neither rewards nor ardent search have been able to procure them; the eggs are 1 inch 6½ lines by 1 inch, in colour yellowish grey, irregularly spotted with pale brown.

## RALLIDAE.

## CREX.

92.—*Crex pratensis*.—*Landrail*.

This bird breeds in June, laying from seven to ten eggs, of a reddish white, spotted with grey and brown, 1 inch 6 lines by 1 inch 1 line.

## RALLUS.

93.—*Rallus aquaticus*.—*Water-rail*.

Though well known as a species, going by the provincial name of skitty, this bird is by no means common, and consequently the eggs are rare; they much resemble those of the landrail, but smaller, being 1 inch 4 lines by 1 inch; cream coloured, speckled with ash grey and reddish brown.

## GALLINULA.

94.—*Gallinula chloropa*.—*Water Hen*.

Eggs reddish white, spotted and speckled with orange brown, 1 inch 8 lines by 1 inch 3½ lines.

## LOBIPEDIDAE.

## FULICA.

95.—*Fulica atra*.—*Coot*.

Eggs 2 inches 1 line by 1 inch 6 lines, of a stone colour, speckled with pale brown.

## NATATORES.

ANATIDAE.

TADORNA.

96.—*Tadorna vulpanser*.—*Shelldrake*.

This bird breeds annually in various cliffs on our coasts, laying ten or twelve eggs, 2 inches 9 lines by 1 inch 11 lines, of a smooth shining white.

COLYMBIDAE.

PODICEPS.

97.—*Podiceps minor*.—*Dabchick*.

Eggs white when first laid, but soon becoming stained with various colours, from contact with decayed rushes and other herbage, 1 inch 7 lines by 1 inch 3 lines.

ALCADAÆ.

URIA.

98.—*Uria troile*.—*Common Guillemot*.

This bird lays a single egg of a large size, and very variable and beautiful colours, commonly of a fine blue or green, blotched and streaked with very dark brown, pear shaped,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches by 1 inches 11 lines.

99.—*U. grylle*.—*Black Guillemot*.

These birds are scarce at all seasons, and only occasionally remain to breed; the eggs are greenish white, blotched and spotted with grey, brown and black, 2 inches 3 lines by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch.

ALCA.

100.—*Alca torda*.—*Razor bill*.

Though this bird closely resembles the common guillemot, in habits and general appearance, yet the distinction of their eggs is very obvious; they want the beautiful tint, and the elegant shape of those of the last mentioned bird; they are white, blotched and spotted with reddish brown and black,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches by 1 inch 10 lines.

## PELICANIDAE.

## PHALACROCORAX.

101.—*Phalacrocorax carbo*.—*Common Cormorant*.

A few of these birds breed on some of the islands in the Bristol channel. They produce five or six eggs, 2 inches 9 lines by 1 inch 7 lines, of a pale skimmed milk blue, covered with a white chalky substance which may be easily scraped off.

102.—*P. cristatus*.—*Shag or Green Cormorant*.

Eggs as those of the preceding, but differing in size, being only 2 inches 5 lines by 1 inch 5 lines.

## LARIDAE.

## STERNA.

103.—*Sterna hirundo*.—*Common Tern*.

Eggs of yellowish stone colour, blotched and spotted with ash grey and dark brown, 1 inch 8 lines by 1 inch 2 lines.

104.—*S. arctica*.—*Arctic Tern*.

Eggs precisely similar to those of the preceding bird except in size, these being 1 inch 7 lines by 1 inch 1 line.

## LARUS.

105.—*Larus ridibundus*.—*Black-headed Gull*.

Eggs extremely variable, in shape, size and colour; collected for food in various parts of England, especially at Scoulton Mere, in Norfolk.

106.—*L. rissa*.—*Kittiwake*.

The eggs of this common bird are three in number, of a stone colour, thickly spotted with grey and light brown,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches by 1 inch 7 lines.

107.—*L. canus*.—*Common Gull*.

Eggs of a dark blue brown, spotted with darker brown and black,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches by 1 inch  $1\frac{1}{2}$  line.

108.—*L. argentatus*.—*Herring Gull*.

Breeds annually, though I fear in decreasing numbers, on the Steep Holmes, eggs hardly to be distinguished from those of the lesser black-backed gull, the egg of which however has the larger spots of the two.

109.—*L. fuscus*.—*Lesser Black-backed Gull*.

This species breeds also on the Holmes; the eggs are greyish brown, spotted and blotched with darker,  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches by 2 inches in breadth.

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