

The Ornithological Section

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

Vice-Presidents—The Very Rev. Dom. 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. D. J.
PRING, Messrs. E. GERALD HOLT, EDMUND PAGE, H. TETLEY and B. W.
TUCKER.

THE Annual Meeting of the Section for 1932 was held in the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, on 17 March, when the President occupied the chair. The attendance was not so good as in some recent years.

The Treasurer presented the financial statement for 1931, which showed a balance in hand on 31 December of £12 14s. 4d. 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 £22 16s. 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, were also re-elected. In place of the system of Recorders, the Committee recommended that all members for the present send their observations direct to the Editorial Committee. This was agreed to by the General Meeting.

The following Committee of seven were unanimously elected to serve for the ensuing year: The President, the Secretary, Preb. Pring, Messrs. E. G. Holt, E. Page, H. Tetley and B. W. Tucker.

The Eighteenth Report on Somerset Birds (1931) had recently been issued by the Editorial Committee. The compilation of the Report was very largely the work of Mr. B. W. Tucker.

It was reported that several stuffed birds from the neighbourhood of Ilminster had been given by the Rev. W. A. Newman.

The Secretary made reference to the condition of the collection of British birds in the Museum of the Frome Literary and Scientific Institution. The collection was deposited by the late John E. Daniel (see the first annual report of the Committee, 1844-45).

In the afternoon, Mr. J. Harry Savory gave a lecture on 'Birds of Texel: an example of how the Dutch look after their Birds', which was excellently illustrated by lantern slides from Mr. Savory's photographs.

The autumn meeting was held at Taunton Castle on 11 October, when the President was in the chair. The Committee had met on the same morning. On this occasion five new members were elected.

It was announced that the new Rules of the Section had been printed and circulated to all the members, and they would appear in the Bird Report for 1932.

After lunch Major Anthony Buxton, D.S.O., gave a Cinema Lecture at the Exchange Picture House, Taunton, on 'Birds of the Norfolk Broads' (the Bittern, Bearded Tit, Great Crested Grebe, Redshank, Montagu's Harrier and Marsh Harrier), in the arrangements for which the Taunton Field Club joined. The meeting was well attended and a great success.

The additions to the bird collections for the year ended 21 June 1931 are listed on p. lxxxiii of this volume.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY.

The following is a summary of the more interesting notes received for 1932. In some cases fuller details will be found in the separate Report of the Section.

STARLING, *Sturnus v. vulgaris* L.

A bird ringed in West Flanders on Sept. 9, 1931, was recovered in Somerset on Nov. 13 of the same year (*Brit. Birds*, xxv, 357).

HOUSE-SPARROW, *Passer d. domesticus* (L.)

Three albino House-Sparrows were seen at East Brent on June 1 by A.P.W., evidently all members of one family.

WHITE WAGTAIL, *Motacilla a. alba* L.

Adult seen near Clifton Bridge Station, Apr. 23, and two males at Portbury Wharf, May 15 (*H.T.*)

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

A male on passage was seen for two days in the spring in an orchard at Merriott (*H.B.E.*), and two were seen by a reliable observer at West Huntspill on May 8 (*B.W.T.*)

SONG-THRUSH, *Turdus philomelus clarkei* Hart.

Three instances of clutches of six eggs were noted in District VI, one at Closworth on April 4 and two in the same garden at Ilminster on April 29 and May 11 (*C.J.P.*)

WHEATEAR, *Enanthe æ. ænanthe* (L.)

An exceptionally early arrival of Wheatears was reported in the *Field*, Feb. 27, 1932, by Kenneth H. H. Baily, who saw a party on the Burnham and Berrow Golf Links on Feb. 13.

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

Again present at Blagdon in winter 1931-2 when more were noted than in previous seasons (*D. Carr—Report, Wells Nat. Hist. & Archæol. Soc.* for 1931). Female on Porlock beach, Mar. 27 (*P.A.D.H.*)

HOUSE-MARTIN, *Delichon u. urbica* (L.)

A singular case of a great number of Martins taking shelter in a room at a private hotel at Portishead on Sept. 15 is recorded by Charles Turner, of Easton-in-Gordano, in the *Field*, Dec. 3, 1932. The number was estimated at over 200, and full details are given.

PEREGRINE, *Falco p. peregrinus* Tunst.

Again bred successfully in the Avon Gorge: two young (*W.R.T.*). Nesting in the Wiveliscombe district, Mar. 28 (*H.B.E.*). Three pairs located in the Exmoor district in May (*R.J.C.*)

HOBBY, *Falco s. subbuteo* L.

One watched at Clevedon, Sept. 3 (*A.C.L.*). Occurred at Kingsdon in May (*E.G.H.*)

MERLIN, *Falco columbarius æsalon* Tunst.

Nest with three eggs found in old Carrion Crow's nest on Exmoor in May. All three hatched safely (*R.J.C.*). Reported on Tealham Moor by a competent observer in November (*E.G.H.*)

Miss M. Claridge, of Oxford, reports one seen in a garden at Weston-super-Mare on Dec. 17 and 18, 1927, on the latter occasion feeding on a Blackbird.

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

Reports indicating the spread of the Buzzard outside West Somerset continue to come to hand. One was seen circling over Barrow Gurney on Apr. 2 (*A.C.L.*) and another over Mells on Sept. 14 (*C. Russell*). Several have been seen during the year in the Somerton district, where the species is said to have nested (*E.G.H. & E.P.*), but fuller details are awaited. Birds were unfortunately trapped and killed at Cudworth and Churchstanton on Jan. 5 and Sept. 30 respectively, but another trapped at Whitelackington in January was released (*G. Sparrow & H.St.G.G.*).

HERON, *Ardea c. cinerea* L.

The small heronry at Marston Bigott, which was deserted in 1931, was re-occupied in 1932, when at least 3 pairs bred. At least 64 (probably rather more) bred at Somerton and 16 at Etsome Wood. At Halswell Park 29 pairs bred, an increase of 9 on the 1931 figure, while at Fivehead there was a decrease, about 24 pairs nesting.

BITTERN, *Botaurus s. stellaris* (L.)

A bird stated to have been picked up dead on Sedgemoor in the second week of February was exhibited in a poulterer's shop in Taunton (*C.J.P. & H.St.G.G.*)

GARGANEY, *Anas querquedula* L.

One drake, probably accompanied by a duck, at Blagdon, Apr. 10 (*L.A.H.*)

PINTAIL, *Anas a. acuta* L.

A drake, probably accompanied by duck, in Woodspring Bay, Apr. 12 (*W.R.T. & A.C.L.*)

POCHARD, *Nyroca ferina* L.

Stated to have bred at Blagdon in 1931 (*D. Carr—Report, Wells Nat. Hist. & Archæol. Soc.* for 1931).

TUFTED DUCK, *Nyroca fuligula* (L.)

Attempted to breed at Litton in 1931, but nest was destroyed by a dog after two eggs had been laid (*A. Tyte per C.R.S.*). This appears to be the first authenticated record of breeding in the county in a locality other than Blagdon.

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

An immature bird observed at Barrow in January remained until Apr. 5, when it had assumed full drake plumage. It had gone by Apr. 24, but it or another was back by Oct. 13. Two drakes were seen on Nov. 20 and 24 (*A.C.L.*, *H.T.*, & *W.R.T.*)

LONG-TAILED DUCK, *Clangula hyemalis* (L.)

One shot at Blagdon in 1931 (*D. Carr—Report, Wells Nat. Hist. & Archæol. Soc.* for 1931).

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

One washed in in a dying condition at Brean, Sept. 11 (*D.B.G.*). One dead on shore at Steart, Sept. 12 (*F.L.B.*)

GREAT CRESTED GREBE, *Podiceps c. cristatus* (L.)

Seventeen pairs were found breeding in Somerset in the *British Birds* Grebe census in 1931, distributed as follows: Blagdon, 12 pairs; Chew Magna, 1 pair; Litton, 2 pairs; Orchardleigh, 2 pairs.

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

One to two present at Barrow up to Apr. 2, and one, Dec. 24–26 (*A.C.L.* & *W.R.T.*). One in full plumage at Barrow, Aug. 2 (*F.L.B.*)

RED-THROATED DIVER, *Colymbus stellatus* Pont.

An oiled copse on Porlock beach, Mar. 27 (*P.A.D.H.*)

REDSHANK, *Tringa t. totanus* (L.)

About 300 on the shore at Weston-super-Mare, Mar. 15 (*F.L.B.*). Breeding definitely proved on West Sedgemoor, May 4 (*C.J.P.*)

GREENSHANK, *Tringa nebularia* (Gunn.)

Several at Blagdon for a short time in autumn, 1931 (*D. Carr—Report, Wells Nat. Hist. & Archæol. Soc.* for 1931). Two on Porlock Marsh, Aug. 16 (*F.L.B.*). One (probable) at Barrow, Aug. 17 (*A.C.L.*)

PHALAROPE, *Phalaropus* sp.

A Phalarope, said to have been a Red-necked (*P. lobatus*) visited Blagdon in the autumn of 1931 (*D. Carr—Report, Wells Nat. Hist. & Archæol. Soc.* for 1931). A small bird, evidently a Phalarope was also seen by H.T. swimming on the water at Barrow Reservoirs on Sept. 24.

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

One at Clevedon, Sept. 3 and 8 (*A.C.L.*)

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT, *Limosa l. limosa* (L.)

Two at Steart, Sept. 12 (*F.L.B.*)

WHIMBREL, *Numenius ph. phaeopus* (L.)

Many very tame birds on Tadhham Moor on May 7 (*D.B.G.*)

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL, *Larus marinus* L.

One immature bird at Barrow, Aug. 2 (*F.L.B.*). The species is infrequent inland.

RICHARDSON'S SKUA, *Stercorarius parasiticus* (L.)

One picked up dead at Brean, Sept. 10 (*D.B.G.*)

SOUTHERN GUILLEMOT, *Uria aalge albionis* With.

An oiled bird in a moribund condition was found by a pond at Yeovil by Mr. S. J. Hayne on Jan. 19, following heavy gales (*C.J.P.*)

The contributors of the above notes can be identified from the following list :—

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B. W. TUCKER.