

## The Ornithological Section

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*Committee*—The President, the Secretary and Treasurer, the Rev. C. J. PRING,  
Capt. H. L. COCHRANE, MESSRS. E. GERALD HOLT, H. TETLEY and B.W.  
TUCKER.

THE Annual Meeting of the Section was held in the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, on 11 April 1940, when the Rev. F. L. Blathwayt presided.

At the beginning of the meeting the President made special reference to the deaths the Section had sustained, and especially to the Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, Sir Wm. Meade-King, Miss A. Miller and Dr. A. L. Flemming.

The Treasurer presented the financial statement for 1939, which showed a credit balance of £1 9s. 5d. after the sum of £4 had been transferred from the Deposit to the Current Account. This statement did not include any payment towards the Bird Report for 1939. The balance in hand on the special deposit account amounted to £23 13s. 6d.

The President, the Vice-President, and the Secretary and Treasurer were re-elected. The Editorial Committee was increased from four to five members, viz., the President, the Vice-President, the Secretary, the Rev. C. J. Pring and Mr. H. Tetley.

The General Committee of seven were re-elected, and their names are given at the head of this report.

The Wild Birds Protection Committee was re-elected, but owing to the death of Sir Wm. Meade-King on the previous day, Capt. H. L. Cochrane was elected to fill the vacancy.

It was reported that the Bird collections in the Museum had

been added to considerably during 1939-40, as may be seen by the list of accessions on p. 28 of this volume. A card index of all the British Birds in the Museum was compiled in 1940. Previously there had been lists of only portions of the ornithological material.

In the afternoon, Mr. F. Hibberd, of Williton, gave a lantern lecture on 'Somerset Birds and their Nests'.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY

#### ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES, 1940

THE Ornithological Section published its twenty-seventh Annual Report in March; this report deals with records sent in for the year 1940. The following are some of the chief items of interest recorded, full details of which may be found in the report.

##### RAVEN, *Corvus c. corax* L.

A pair nested again in the Avon Gorge, this year on the Somerset side (*H.H.D.*). Two adults and three young seen at Brean Down, May 7 (*H.V.W.*). Three young in a new and very low cliff nest in West Somerset on Apr. 30 (*A.V.C.*)

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

Four very tame birds at sea-edge by Minehead golf links on Oct. 20 (*A.V.C.*)

##### WATER-PIPIT, *Anthus s. spinoletta* (L.)

A Pipit seen at close quarters by Mr. H. W. Neal at Hotwells, on the Gloucestershire side of the R. Avon, on Dec. 25 and 26, was confidently identified by him as this species (*H.H.D.*)

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

A cock on Brean Down on Apr. 18 (*E.G.H.*). Two pairs bred in the county this year (*G.H.E.Y.*)

##### HOOPOE, *Upupa e. epops* L.

One on the drive at Poundisford Park, near Taunton, on July 22, was seen at close quarters by Mr. A. W. Vivian-Neal (*H.St.G.G.*)

BRITISH GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER, *Dryobates major anglicus* (Hart.)

An extraordinary case of all three species of British breeding Woodpeckers nesting in the same apple-tree in an orchard at Stocklinch on May 11. The Green Woodpecker was sitting, and good views were obtained of the Great Spotted Woodpecker; the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was not seen, but the hole was new (C.J.P.)

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

Several at Berrow, also at Ashcott, in Nov. (E.G.H.)

HOBBY, *Falco s. subbuteo* L.

Good views of a pair on S. side of Blagdon reservoir on May 12; later one was seen hawking for butterflies (H.H.D.)

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

One killed on Cheddar moor on Jan. 3; several others noted in this area about this time (S.Lewis, per H.T.)

GREY GEESE, *Anser* sp. ?

During the great frost in Jan. and Feb., large numbers of Geese were reported from various districts. Many can only be recorded as 'Grey Geese', although it is probable that in many cases they were White-fronted Geese. Full details will be found in the report, but the following definite records are worthy of special note :

GREY-LAG GOOSE, *Anser a. anser* (L.)

Five at Brent on Jan. 27 (E.G.H.)

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, *Anser a. albifrons* (Scop.)

Of many recorded, about 400 in two equal flocks were seen near Langport on Jan. 25, and 500-600 near Bridgewater on Jan. 26 (C.T.Dalgety, per H.T.)

BEAN GOOSE, *Anser f. fabalis* (Lath.)

Five seen near Langport were fully identified on Jan. 25 (C.T.Dalgety, per H.T.)

BARNACLE GOOSE, *Branta leucopsis* (Bechst.)

A single bird near Warren Point, Minehead, on Jan. 21 (A.V.C.)

BRENT GOOSE, *Branta bernicla* sub sp. ? (L.)

Eight at Huntspill on Jan. 30 (E.G.H.). F. H. L. Whish reports a huge flock, estimated at 3000, flying over Rooksbridge on Feb. 28 (per H.T.)

CANADA GOOSE, *Branta c. canadensis* (L.)

23 at Huntspill on Feb. 2, and 17 on Mar. 15 (*E.G.H.*).  
9 about Brean on Mar. 12 (*F.H.L. Whish*, per *H.T.*) 86  
near Langport on Feb. 17 had been there about ten days  
(*M.J.I.*)

GADWALL, *Anas strepera* L.

A duck disturbed in reeds at Blagdon reservoir on Apr. 14  
(*H.H.D.*). A drake shot near Langport on Jan. 1 (*M.J.I.*)

PINTAIL, *Anas a. acuta* L.

Four flying near Dunster beach on Feb. 4 (*A.V.C.*)

SCAUP, *Aythya m. marila* (L.)

One, a female, on R. Avon above Sea Mills on Jan. 30  
(*H.W.Neal*, per *H.T.* & *H.H.D.*)

COMMON SCOTER, *Melanitta n. nigra* L.

An adult male at Blagdon reservoir on Apr. 14 (*H.H.D.*).  
A male killed at Langport on Feb. 15 (*M.J.I.*). One on  
Durleigh reservoir on July 27 (*R.R.Clarke*, per *H.St.G.G.*)

SMEW, *Mergus albellus* L.

Two adult males and one juvenile at Blagdon reservoir on  
Jan 2 (*H.T.* & *B.K.*), and five 'redheads' on Feb. 25  
(*H.H.D.*). A female shot at Cocklake on Jan. 8, and a  
male shot from flock of three near Langport on Jan. 16  
(*H.T.*). A female on old claypit ponds near Minehead  
from Feb. 8 to 21 (*A.V.C.*)

RED-NECKED GREBE, *Podiceps g. griseigena* (Bodd.)

Two on floods near Martock for two weeks in Feb. before  
one was shot; this bird was identified by the late Rev.  
F. C. R. Jourdain (*G.H.E.Y.*)

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

One at Blagdon reservoir on Sept. 15 (*H.H.D.*)

RED-THROATED DIVER, *Colymbus stellatus* (Pontopp.)

A badly oiled bird on Chard reservoir on Apr. 10 (*F.L.B.*  
& *C.J.P.*); a second bird was with it a few days later  
(*W.J.C.*)

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

20 Godwits in flight and at rest in Woodspring Bay on  
Mar. 25 were almost certainly this species (*H.T.*). 14 on  
Dunster beach on Feb. 11 (*A.V.C.*)

LITTLE STINT, *Calidris minuta* (Leisl.)

One at Tickmouth, Clevedon, on Sept. 9 (A.A.A.). One at Berrow on Jan. 3; only the second record of this species wintering in Somerset (E.G.H. & H.T.)

SANDERLING, *Crocethia alba* (Pall.)

Five on Minehead beach on Jan. 21 (A.V.C.)

GREEN SANDPIPER, *Tringa ochropus* L.

Two flushed from a rhine near Rooksbridge on Feb. 10 (F.H.L. Whish, per H.T.). One flushed from stream-side at Dowlish Wake on Jan. 3 (C.J.P.)

GREY PLOVER, *Squatarola squatarola squatarola* (L.)

Two or three at Woodspring Bay, Feb. 4 (H.T.). Three near Warren Point, Minehead, from Jan. 6-21 (A.V.C.)

AVOCET, *Recurvirostra avocetta* L.

The bird recorded in the introduction to the 1939 Report was seen and carefully watched on the Steart Flats, opposite Burnham-on-Sea, on July 30, 1939, by Mr. David McClintock, a keen ornithologist and friend of the late Miss A. Miller, of Burnham (F.L.B.)

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

One immature bird at Blagdon reservoir on Sept. 15 (H.H.D.) and Sept. 18 (H.T.)

LITTLE GULL, *Larus minutus* Pall.

One juvenile at Blagdon reservoir on Sept. 11 was compared with a nearby Black-headed Gull (H.T.)

GLAUCOUS GULL, *Larus hyperboreus* Gunn.

An immature bird at Cumberland Basin, Bristol, on Jan. 2 and 11 was undoubtedly the same bird as that seen in Dec. 1939 [cf. 1939 Report] (H.T. & H.H.D.). It was also recorded on Jan. 9 and 11 by members of the Clifton College N.H.S.

The following are contributors to the above notes, and may be identified by their initials: A. A. Adams; Rev. F. L. Blathwayt; W. J. Churchill; A. V. Cornish; H. H. Davis; H. St. G. Gray; E. G. Holt; M. J. Ingram; B. King; Rev. C. J. Pring; H. Tetley; H. Vicars Webb; G. H. E. Young.

C. J. PRING