

The Ornithological Section

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

Vice-President—Mr. BERNARD W. TUCKER, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.,
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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 was held in the Wyndham Hall, Taunton Castle, on 6 April 1937, when the Rev. F. L. Blathwayt, President, occupied the chair.

The Treasurer presented the financial statement for 1936, which showed a credit balance on 31 December of £1 3s. 10d. 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 14s. 6d.

The President, the Vice-President and the Secretary and Treasurer were re-elected; also the four members of the Editorial Committee and the seven members of the Committee of the Section. The Wild Birds Protection Committee was also re-elected.

It was reported that the Twenty-third Report on Somerset Birds (1936) would be issued by the Editorial Committee in the course of a few days.

The Secretary informed the Section that, through the generosity of Dr. R. Liddon Meade-King, the Society would, in the course of a year or two, be in a position to re-floor the Great Hall preparatory to the re-arrangement of the Bird Collections.

In the afternoon Mr. G. K. Yeates gave a lecture on 'The Hobby and some Neighbours'; and Mr. B. W. Tucker a talk entitled 'Some Observations on Corsica'. Both these contributions were illustrated by lantern slides.

The autumn meeting was held at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery on 14 October, when the President was in the chair.

The new *Handbook of British Birds*, in 5 vols., price 21s. a vol., was ordered for the Section—the cost to be met by the Wiglesworth Fund.

In the afternoon Mr. H. A. Gilbert, M.B.O.U., gave a lecture on 'Ducks-decoys and Migration' in the Museum Lecture Theatre. Afterwards a visit was made to the Bird Rooms under the guidance of Mr. H. Tetley, curator of Zoology.

The Museum authorities not only lent their rooms, but invited the members to tea in the Museum refreshment room, and the Director and Deputy-Director were cordially thanked.

H. ST. GEORGE GRAY

SOMERSET BIRD NOTES, 1937

The following are some of the chief items of interest from the Ornithological Section's report for 1937. For fuller particulars, reference should be made to the report.

RAVEN, *Corvus c. corax* L.

Again nested in the Avon Gorge at Clifton (Glos. side) and reared four young (*H.H.D.*, *H.T.*, etc.). Four young reared in new quarry site at Brean Down (*H.V.W.*). Three tree and five cliff nesting-sites seen in West Somerset (*F.H.*)

CARRION CROW, *Corvus c. corone* L.

Two nests built in the tops of electric 'grid' standards near Brent Knoll (*E.G.H.*)

CHOUGH, *Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax* (L.)

One previously reported as seen, was found dead and decaying on the Minehead marshes on Jan. 28 (*A.V.C.*)

STARLING, *Sturnus v. vulgaris* L.

A ringed bird picked up dead at Stoke St. Gregory in March was ringed as a nestling on 11 Aug. 1934, at Bouchout-les-Anvers, Belgium (*C.J.P.*)

BRITISH GOLDFINCH, *Carduelis c. britannica* (Hart.)

Two on Steep Holm, May 1; apparently the first authentic record for the island (*H.H.D.*)

LESSER REDPOLL, *Carduelis linaria cabaret* (P.L.S.Müll.)

A nest with four eggs found in a small clump of withies in Central Somerset (*H.L.C.*)

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

One cock, seen at Abbots Leigh, Apr. 20 (*J.H.Sav.*)

RING-OUZEL, *Turdus t. torquatus* L.

A cock in fine plumage on hedge adjoining B.B.C. Station at Washford on Nov. 2. Three or four pairs in Exmoor combes in spring (*F.H.*)

GREENLAND WHEATEAR, *Oenanthe œ. leucorrhœa* (Gm.)

At least five (both sexes) on Steep Holm on May 1 (*H.H.D.*)

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

One on Brean Down, Mar. 14, and one at Burnham brewery, Nov. 15—20 (*E.G.H.*). Another on Brean Down, Nov. 29 (*H.C.*). Reported numerous in Porlock district in Oct. and Nov. (*F.L.B.*)

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

Two albino nestlings hatched in a nest at Brympton d'Evercy, near Yeovil; only one survived (*C.J.P.*)

SNOWY OWL, *Nyctea nyctea* (L.)

Mr. S. Lewis reports in the *Field* that a Snowy Owl was taken with a damaged wing in Cheddar Gorge on 15 Sept. 1933. Mr. H. G. Thornton, of Yarcombe, also reports one on Haddon Hill, Exmoor, about 1927.

MERLIN, *Falco columbarius œsalon* Tunst.

A pair nested in an old Raven's nest in a low tree on Exmoor (*W.C.*)

BEWICK'S SWAN, *Cygnus b. bewickii* Yarr.

Four swans seen by Mr. S. Lewis flying over Cheddar on Nov. 13. Later they settled on Cheddar reservoir, where they were identified as this species owing to their size and lack of a black knob on the bill (*S.Lewis, per H.T.*)

BRENT GOOSE, *Branta bernicla* subsp. ? (L.)

Six came in to Dunster Beach on Jan. 6; they prepared to alight, but saw observer, and flew off towards Watchet (*A.V.C.*)

GADWALL, *Anas strepera* L.

An adult drake on Barrow Gurney reservoirs from mid-Aug. to end of year (*H.H.D. and others.*)

GARGANEY, *Anas querquedula* L.

Seen on several occasions on flooded land on Sedgemoor in spring ; almost certainly nested (*C.J.P.* & *F.H.*)

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

The large number of fifteen seen on Blagdon reservoir on Apr. 5 (*F.L.B.*)

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

Two adult drakes at Barrow Gurney, one on reservoir ii, and one on res. iii, on Apr. 11. One, a female on res. iii on Dec. 12. One adult drake on R. Avon on Apr. 18 (*H.H.D.*)

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER, *Mergus serrator* L.

A female on Blagdon reservoir on Apr. 4 (*H.H.D.*). One also at same place on Sept. 27 (*C.H.K.*)

RED-THROATED DIVER, *Colymbus stellatus* Pontopp.

One at Butcombe end of Blagdon reservoir from mid-March to early April (*J.H.Sav. and others.*)

DOTTEREL, *Charadrius morinellus* L.

A very tame bird seen at close quarters on top of Brean Down on Aug. 16 by Mr. Harry Cox and Midshipman R. Stainer, R.N. (*F.L.B.*)

ARCTIC RINGED PLOVER, *Charadrius hiaticula tundrae* P.R. Lowe.

Two skins in the Bristol Museum from Portishead and Gore Sands have been identified as this species (*H.T.*)

RUFF, *Philomachus pugnax* (L.)

One at reservoir iii at Barrow Gurney on Sept. 26 (*H.H.D.*)
One at Blagdon reservoir, Aug. 27 (*F.L.B.*), and another on Dec. 12 (*C.W.G.Paulson.*)

SANDERLING, *Crocethia alba* (Pall.)

Seven on Berrow Sands, Feb. 28 (*E.G.H.*), and three on Dunster Beach, Jan 6 (*A.V.C.*)

PURPLE SANDPIPER, *Calidris m. maritima* (Brünn.)

A party of four on Dunster Beach, Jan. 27 (*A.V.C.*)

SPOTTED REDSHANK, *Tringa erythropus* (Pall.)

Two at Blagdon reservoir on Aug. 27 (*F.L.B.*)

GREENSHANK, *Tringa nebularia* (Gunn.)

One at Barrow Gurney on Sept. 5, 19, and Oct. 12 (*A.A.A.* & *H.H.D.*). One at Blagdon reservoir on Aug. 27 (*F.L.B.*)

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

Three seen at Blagdon reservoir on Sept. 27 (C.H.K.)

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

One at Blagdon on Sept. 18 (A.A.A. & H.T.)

SCANDINAVIAN LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL, *Larus fuscus fuscus* L.

Excellent telescopic views obtained of one on reservoir iii at Barrow Gurney on Aug. 22 (H.H.D.). At least one at Sea Mills on R. Avon on Apr. 17 (H.T.)

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

Five found dead on Brean Sands, Feb. 28 (E.G.H.)

BRITISH RAZORBILL, *Alca torda britannica* Ticehurst.

One dead on Gore Sands, Feb. 21 (E.G.H.)

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

Found breeding on the Brendons on May 19 (F.H.). Full notes on the status of this species are given in the report.

Contributors to the above notes can be identified by their initials from the following: A. A. Adams; Rev. F. L. Blathwayt; H. L. Cochrane; A. V. Cornish; W. Copp; H. Cox; H. H. Davis; F. Hibberd; E. G. Holt; C. H. Kaye; Rev. C. J. Pring; J. H. Savory; H. Tetley; and H. Vicars Webb.

C. J. PRING