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THE
'HOW TO
KNOW THEM'
SERIES

FOR REVIEW

OUR RESIDENT BIRDS





BLACK-HEADED GULL—Very Angry (See page 112)

OUR
RESIDENT BIRDS
AND HOW TO KNOW THEM

BY
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INTRODUCTION

THIS book has been written and compiled to enable the reader *to know our feathered friends on sight*.

Those who have made a study of birds can, by the exercise of trained observation, recognise them by their distinctive habits, language or peculiarity of flight. For the uninitiated, however, a simple and practical means of immediate identification is required. After careful consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the most satisfactory plan of arrangement is :

First, to group the birds under their main habitats, as follows :

- I. Birds of the gardens, orchards and cultivated districts.
- II. Birds of the woods and well-wooded districts.
- III. Birds of the commons, downs, moorland and mountainous districts.
- IV. Birds of the streams, rivers, lakes and marshy districts.
- v. Birds of the sea, seashore and cliffs.

Secondly, sub-divide these groups under :

- (A) Colour.
- (B) Size.

By this simple scheme it will be an easy matter for the observer to identify birds seen in the garden or in the course of a country walk. Naturally there are exceptions to the general scheme (woodland birds may occasionally visit gardens, for instance), but such cases are obvious in themselves, and do not affect the general arrangement.

My aim has been to formulate tables which may put one on the right track; then, by a process of deduction from the fuller information given in the body of the book, to identify the bird beyond doubt.

London.

E. F. M. ELMS.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

WHEN seeing a bird you do not know, first of all make a mental note of your environment. This will decide which of the five Habitat Headings you should look under.

At the same time try and visualise the colour-appearance of the bird, and also its size—whether small, medium or large.

Then turn to one of the appropriate Tables—see pages 12 to 14—and you should without much difficulty be able to place your bird or at any rate find a clue to its identity.

If at this stage you are not convinced as to the species turn to the body of the book and read carefully.

In addition to noting its colour and size, you may have observed some characteristic habit, in flight, gait or language, and reference to such will be found which will enable you to settle the question.

To take an example of one of our commonest birds :

Habitat—the garden. Observed a black-looking bird of medium size on the lawn.

Consult table of Resident Birds of the Garden, etc. Look under column “Black or dusky—medium,” and you will find blackbird or starling.

You saw one or other of these two birds.

Consult both blackbird and starling in the body of the book, and you should rapidly be able to decide which of these two birds you saw.

Repeat the process with any other birds you may see and wish to know, and with careful observation and scrutiny of the tables and information in the book you will soon find yourself readily able to identify the species.

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Resident Birds of the Garden, Orchard and Cultivated Districts

BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*).

Generally distributed, and common throughout Great Britain.

Plumage.—Glossy jet-black. Bill and eyelids orange-yellow. Legs and feet brownish black. Length 10 in. Female sooty brown, paler on under parts, and marked with dusky. Young like immature hen birds, but feathers have dark tips, and those of under parts are barred.

Language.—Song, mellow and fluty, uttered in a placid—almost dawdling—manner; generally breaks off abruptly, and is followed either by a mimicking echo in the minor key or an interlude of silence—maintained for a few moments. When alarmed it utters a harsh chuckling cry, especially at nightfall, thus “chink,” repeated several times; then “chacka, chacka, chack, chuck, chuck, chuck.” Call-note, a shrill “tzeet.”

Habits.—Pugnacious, and often fights desperately at mating time. Fond of skulking under thick bushes, and is never flushed without many loud and clattering remonstrances. In flight, fairly rapid and direct. On alighting it always throws up its long tail—almost at right angles to its body. It sometimes runs, though more usually it hops. It is a close sitter, and if driven from the nest is most vociferous.

Food.—Worms, spiders, snails, slugs, insects, and larvæ. Soft fruits in season. In winter—vegetable food and various berries.

Nest.—March onwards. Several broods.

Site.—Generally low down in centre of thick bush, in

trees, shrubberies, trained fruit trees, faggot piles, amongst ivy, etc.

Materials.—Twigs, roots, coarse grass, leaves, moss, &c., plastered with mud, and then lined with fine roots and dead grass, which the Song Thrush never does.

Eggs.—Four to six. Greenish blue, closely spotted, and mottled with red-brown. Variable; might be confounded with Ring Ouzel's, Fieldfare's, and possibly Missel Thrush's, and Jay's.

STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*).

Generally distributed and abundant; as ubiquitous as the House Sparrow.

Plumage.—Glossy black, beautifully shot with green, purple, violet, and Prussian Blue reflections, more especially on the head, mantle and breast; feathers to upper parts tipped with pale buff, under tail-coverts margined with white. Bill yellow. Legs ruddy brown. Length 8 in. Female, less brilliant reflections, and spotted below. Young, uniform greyish brown (hence Brown Starling).

Language.—Song, contains certain phrases like the notes of other birds. It is delivered in an energetic manner, and is a conglomeration of whistling, hissing, gargling, warbling, chattering, and squealing. It also makes a noise like the snapping of fingers. During the performance the head feathers become slightly erected, the throat distended, and the wings quiver. Another cry, probably that of anger, is a harsh "cah," whilst that of alarm is a shrill reedy whistle.

Habits.—In autumn and winter Starlings congregate in huge flocks. Flight straight and rapid. Fond of aerial evolutions performed with wonderful precision, especially when gregarious. On the ground it walks, or runs hurriedly about with bobbing head, poking its bill most indefatigably into every likely hole for food. It

constantly perches on sheep's backs to pick out parasitical ticks. Clamorous when settling down to roost.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, worms, and slugs. Soft fruits in summer; berries, seeds, and grain in winter.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In holes and trees, walls, &c., under slates of roofs, in rain-water down-pipes and chimneys, in crevices in ruins, church towers, sea cliffs, &c.

Materials.—Dry grass, straw, and other rubbishing materials, lined with wool and feathers. Loosely and untidily compacted.

Eggs.—Four to six. Uniform pale blue, and somewhat elongated.

JACKDAW (*Corvus monedula*).

Abundant in all suitable localities.

Haunts.—Ruins, church towers, sea cliffs, &c.

Observation.—Distinguish at once from Crow and Rook by smaller size and grey nape.

Plumage.—Upper parts glossy black, with green and purple reflections; ear-coverts, sides of neck and back of head grey; under parts dull black. Bill and legs black. Eye white. Length 14 in. Female slightly smaller. Young, dull black, and grey areas less distinct.

Language.—A sharp, impertinent "chack" or "jock."

Habits.—Very sociable, always breeding in communities, and passing much of the winter in company with Rooks. Fond of flight, and loves to manœuvre in the air, sweeping and circling about, and then returning to the same place it started from. Flight strong, and wings rapidly vibrated. On the ground almost as indefatigable as the Starling when searching for food, but walks more sedately.

Food.—Practically omnivorous and very fond of eggs.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In holes in ruins, trees, sea cliffs, and other similar situations.

Materials.—Sticks, dry grass, and an endless amount of rubbish ; lined with wool, fur, &c.

Eggs.—Four to six. Pale blue or bluish green, spotted and blotched with dark olive-brown and lavender-grey ; rather variable.

ROOK (*Corvus frugilegus*).

Abundant in all suitable localities ; more local in Scotland.

Haunts.—Well-timbered and cultivated districts.

Plumage.—Black, glossed with purple reflections. At base of bill a white, nude, warty patch. Bill and legs black. Length 19 in. Female, less glossy and slightly smaller. Young, still less glossy, and area round base of beak covered with bristly feathers.

Language.—The well-known and familiar cawing, sometimes sounding like "carr."

Habits.—Eminently gregarious, and always nesting in communities (rookeries). Flight, though powerful, is somewhat laboured. It walks sedately, and is a great delver, and, consequently, is much persecuted.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, snails, worms, grubs, and a little grain. Very fond of noxious wire-worms.

Nest.—March. One brood.

Site.—At the top of some tall tree, several nests being found in one tree. They frequent the same rookery annually.

Materials.—Stout sticks, twigs, turf, and mud plaster, lined with grass, roots, moss, and feathers. Large and compact.

Eggs.—Four to six. Pale blue or greenish blue, spotted and blotched with olive-brown and greyish purple. Like the Crow's, but slightly smaller.

LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE (*Acredula caudata*).

Rather local, but nevertheless tolerably common and generally distributed.

Haunts.—Plantations, orchards, shrubberies, &c.

Observation.—The predominating hue, when seen at a little distance, is grey. *Note*.—Long tail, with conspicuous white edges.

Plumage.—Head, neck, throat, and breast white. Back, wings, and portion of tail black. Black stripe over eye; under parts white, suffused with rose. Beak black, and very short. Black tail very long, with conspicuous white edges. Legs black. Length $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female similar. Young duller, and no rose tint on breast.

Language.—Song, a constant repetition of the call-note, "tse-tse," or "zit-zit."

Habits.—Very sociable, and usually seen in foraging parties. Like all Tits, exceedingly restless, and it performs graceful and engaging acrobatic feats among the branches of a tree when hunting for insects. Flight undulating—in fact, it looks like a feathery arrow skimming wavily in the air. Insects captured on the wing. Occasionally food is taken on the ground, but the tree branch is the rule.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ.

Nest.—March onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In middle of hawthorn hedge, or evergreen; in furze-bush, against trunk of tree, supported by a lateral branch.

Materials.—Moss, lichens, wool, hair, cobwebs, carefully felted together, lined with a profusion of small soft feathers. Nest domed (hence Bottle Tit).

Eggs.—Six to ten, sometimes more. White, sparingly speckled with lightly rusty red.

COAL TITMOUSE (*Parus ater*).

Generally distributed, but local in Scotland ; nowhere very abundant.

Haunts.—Woods, &c., near open commons and moors, gardens, &c.

Observation.—Note double white bars on wings and white splash on nape absent in the Marsh Tit.

Plumage.—Crown, throat, and front of neck black. Cheeks and spot on nape white ; upper parts grey. Wings bluish grey, with two white bars ; under parts white, tinged with grey. Bill and legs dark horn-brown. Length $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female duller, and white patches washed with yellow. Young more olive above and white patches yellow.

Language.—Song, “ tee-tzoo-tzoo-terry.” Another note, “ ick-hec ” quickly repeated.

Habits.—Sociable, and closely resembling other Tits in its curious antics when searching for food. Fond of coniferous trees, but feeds more readily on the ground than other Tits.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ : in winter, practically omnivorous.

Nest.—April onwards. Probably one brood only.

Site.—In hole in tree or wall, &c., always near ground.

Materials.—Grass, moss, wool and hair, felted together lined with feathers and fur.

Eggs.—Six to eleven. White, speckled and dotted with pale reddish brown.

PIED WAGTAIL (*Motacilla lugubris*).

Well-distributed and common ; rarer towards the north.

Haunts.—The vicinity of water, meadow-land, gardens, farm-yards, and near human dwellings.

Plumage.—Generally variegated with black and white

(hence Pied). Upper parts, scapulars, chin, and throat black; sides of neck and forehead white. Wing-coverts edged with white, conspicuous in flight. Tail black, two outer feathers white, conspicuous in flight. Belly white. Bill and legs black. Length $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. Female rather greyer above; in autumn both sexes lose the black throat and chin. Young, white areas washed with yellow.

Language.—Song seldom heard, but is loud and hurried, often uttered on the wing; not unlike the Swallow's warble. Call-note, a sharp "chizzic"; it also utters a shrill kind of whistle.

Habits.—Though not so quick and graceful as the Grey and Yellow Wagtails, it is most engaging with its see-sawing tail-waggings and its aerial evolutions when insect-hunting; always conspicuous. Flight undulating. It walks sedately, with bobbing head, or runs very nimbly and quickly. Fond of bathing (hence Dishwasher). Much more confiding than the other Wagtails.

Food.—Chiefly insects and their larvæ, spiders, and seeds.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In holes in banks, walls, or roof of open shed, and many other similar situations.

Materials.—Dry grass, roots, bents, lined with wool, hair, and feathers. Nest rather large and shallow.

Eggs.—Four to six. White or greyish white, speckled with grey and dark brown, like one variety of House Sparrow.

HEDGE SPARROW OR ACCENTOR

(*Accentor modularis*).

Abundant everywhere, except towards the extreme North.

Haunts.—Gardens, orchards, copses, shrubberies, hedgerows, &c.

Plumage.—Head smoke-grey, streaked with dark

brown; neck, upper breast, and scapulars bluish grey. Back and wings reddish brown, streaked with dark brown. Lores brown. Breast and belly buffish white, flanks with dark streaks. Bill brown. Legs yellowish brown. Length $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female has crown and flanks more distinctly streaked. Young, no grey on head or throat, and are browner and more spotted.

Language.—Song, a cheerful little performance, uttered in a rambling, hurried way. Call-note much like the Robin's—a short squeak.

Habits.—Fond of creeping about the bottom of a hedgerow. On the ground it both runs and hops, shuffling its wings as well (hence Shufflingwing). Flight hesitating.

Food.—Insects, beetles, spiders, worms; also seeds.

Nest.—March onwards. Often three broods.

Site.—In hawthorn hedge, furze bush, evergreens, ivy, piles of faggots, &c.

Materials.—Dry grass, roots, small twigs, moss and wool, lined with hair, wool and a few feathers.

Eggs.—Four to six. Uniform turquoise-blue.

MARSH TITMOUSE (*Parus palustris*).

Less common than Coal Tit. Rarer in Scotland and Ireland. Not by any means confined to marshy places, as its name implies.

Haunts.—Woods, orchards, gardens, &c.

Plumage.—Very like Coal Tit, but differs in having a black head and no white nape spot. Head, nape, and chin black; upper parts greyish brown. Wings darker. Cheeks and throat ashy white; under parts white, suffused with buffish. Bill black; legs lead-colour. Length $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female similar. Young browner on upper parts.

Language.—Its chief note is "chick-a-dee." It also has other notes much like the other Tits.



Photo

Berridge

STARLING (*page 18*)



Photo

Berridge

LONG-TAILED TIT (*page 21*)



WAGTAIL (*page 22*)



WREN (*page 35*)

Habits.—Closely resembling the other Tits, but rather shy in the breeding season.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, seeds and berries.

Nest.—April or May. Probably one brood only.

Site.—In decayed stump of a tree, in willows, in bank, hole sometimes excavated by the bird; always near the ground.

Materials.—Grass, moss, hair, and wool, felted together, lined with willow-down. *Note.*—None of the other Tits use this latter material.

Eggs.—Five to eight. White, speckled and dotted with pale red-brown.

WREN (*Troglodytes parvulus*).

Well distributed and common.

Haunts.—Hedges, woods, &c.

Plumage.—Upper parts reddish brown, transversely barred with dusky brown; whitish streak over eye. Wings barred alternately with black and brown and buff on outer webs. Tail dusky, barred with black, stumpy and cocked up; under parts pale reddish brown. Bill dark brown above and paler below and rather long. Legs light brown. Length $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. Female slightly smaller, duller and browner beneath. Young more rufous and less distinctly barred.

Language.—Song, rapid, and loud for so small a bird; somewhat like the Hedge Sparrow's, but more varied, and terminating with a little trill. Alarm-note, a sharp clicking "chit," like the noisy winding up of a clock.

Habits.—In winter more confiding, otherwise a skulker, creeping about the bottom of hedges, and coming up to the top of a small bough to fire off its rapid notes at intervals. It is most jealous of its nest and makes many false ones known as "cock-nests." Flight rapid and peculiar, the wings being most rapidly vibrated in a whirring manner like the Partridge.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, spiders, &c.; in winter, more omnivorous.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—A variety of places, usually amongst ivy, against tree-trunk, in grassy bank, in thatch or side of rick, in furze, brambles, &c.

Materials.—Varying according to site, as the nest is usually composed of materials harmonizing with its surroundings. Dead leaves, grass, moss, bents, fern-fronds, &c., lined with moss, hair, and feathers. Domed nest.

Eggs.—Five to eight or more. White, thinly spotted with red.

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*).

Common everywhere.

Plumage.—Crown, nape, and lower part of back slate-grey. Lores black. Back and chest nut-brown streaked with black. Wings brown with white bar on middle coverts. Tail blackish brown. Throat and breast black. Cheeks and sides of neck white; under parts dingy white. Bill bluish black. Legs pale brown. Length 6 in. Female, duller; no black on throat and breast; white bar on wings less distinct; under parts browner. Young, like female but paler.

Language.—A variety of notes, none of which are really musical. Usually a chirping kind of "chissic," and others like "chow, chow, chivi, chivi, chow-chivi."

Habits.—Gregarious even at nesting-time, and usually seen in foraging parties of half-a-dozen or more. In towns it performs the useful office of a scavenger, but in the country it is apt to become a pest in the farmer's estimation. It hops on the ground. In the love season the male has a curious habit of puffing out his feathers and drooping his wings, all the while pirouetting round chirping gaily, apparently for the delectation of the female. It will fight very desperately with others of its

kind at this season. If often takes possession of Martins' nests and drives them away. Flight strong and direct. Fond of a dust bath.

Food.—Practically omnivorous. In the garden it is a nuisance, and is fond of tearing various flowers to pieces. If not kept under it becomes a pest, devouring large quantities of grain and seeds.

Nest.—April onwards. Several broods.

Site.—Various, usually in the thatch of some farm-building, amongst ivy, in trees, in and under eaves-gutters &c.

Materials.—Nothing comes amiss. Generally dry grass, and other rubbishing materials, like rags, string, &c., lined with feathers. Nest domed, or more correctly bag-shaped, with entrance near the top; always untidy.

Eggs.—Four to six. Bluish white, speckled and spotted with grey and dark brown. Very variable.

TREE SPARROW (*Passer montanus*).

Most abundant in the eastern and midland counties, and in the east of Scotland and Ireland, but distinctly local. Being shyer than the last, it is seldom met with near houses, preferring the open country.

Plumage.—Closely resembling the last, but differing in its slightly smaller size, chestnut-brown head, white collar almost surrounding the neck, and the two (instead of one) white transverse bars on the wing; otherwise lores and throat black. Upper and under parts like the last. Length $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, similar. Young have black markings replaced with brown, and wing-bars washed with buff.

Language.—Much like the last, but, if anything, its chirrupings are rather more tuneful.

Habits.—More shy and active than the last, and more partial to trees, seeking its food there as well as on the ground.

Food.—Insects, caterpillars, and spiders. Various kinds of seeds in winter.

Nest.—April onwards. Two or three broods.

Site.—In holes in trees, preferably pollards, growing near water, in holes in walls, sometimes in the outside of thatched roofs.

Materials.—Dry grass and straw lined with feathers, wool, and hair. In shape like the last, and untidily and flimsily constructed.

Eggs.—Four to six. Much like the last but smaller. Greyish white, speckled and spotted with various shades of brown and dark grey. Variable.

CORN OR COMMON BUNTING

(*Emberiza miliaria*).

Generally distributed, but decidedly local, and found most abundantly in well-cultivated districts.

Haunts.—Fields, more particularly where cereals are growing.

Plumage.—Upper parts yellowish brown with blackish centres to the feathers. Wings darker brown margined with buff. Tail lighter brown with pale edges; under parts buffish white marked with dusky streaks. Bill yellowish brown. Legs flesh colour. Length 7 in. Female, slightly smaller and greyer. Young, more richly coloured.

Language.—Song, two or three energetic chirps followed by a jumbled-up sound like the smashing of glass as heard from some distance, or the crunching of a bunch of keys in the palm of the hand, thus: "tees-tees-tees-tis-is-is-s-s-r-r-re." Call-note, "tzit" or "tzit-kaak," having a metallic sound.

Habits.—Sedentary, and fond of sitting on the top of a hedge, telegraph wire, &c., uttering its curious, monotonous song. Flight laboured and clumsy, with dangling legs. In autumn gregarious. On the ground it hops.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ ; also peas, beans, and unripe corn. In winter, grain and seeds.

Nest.—May or June. One brood.

Site.—Close to or on the ground, amongst growing herbage, in hollow of grassy bank, among brambles.

Materials.—Dry grass, straw, roots, and a little moss, lined with fibres, grasses, and horsehair. Nest-cup deep.

Eggs—Four to six. Pale purplish or creamy white, blotched, streaked, and scribbled, in characteristic Bunting fashion, with dark purplish brown.

SKYLARK (*Alauda arvensis*).

Abundant throughout Great Britain, though more local in the extreme North.

Haunts.—Arable and pasture lands.

Plumage.—Head feathers somewhat erectile. Upper parts varied with three shades of brown, with blackish centres to feathers. Faint whitish superciliary streak over eye. Throat white. Under parts buffish white, spotted and streaked with blackish brown. Outer tail-feathers white and conspicuous. Bill dark brown above, paler below. Legs yellowish brown. Length 7 in. Female, slightly smaller. Young, similar, but with buff tips to the feathers.

Language.—The well-known song is delivered as the bird soars, but sometimes it sings on the ground. Call-note, "worryou."

Habits.—Distinct, on account of its propensity for soaring up into the air singing until it becomes a mere speck in the sky, then descends, still singing, but just before coming to ground ceases, and with closed wings drops down into the grass. Flight undulating, fluttering, and powerful. It roosts on the ground, seldom perching in trees. It is fond of dusting itself. On the ground it runs or walks.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, spiders, worms ; in winter, seeds and the like.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In natural depression in the ground, in cart-rut, &c. Always well sheltered by growing herbage.

Materials.—Dry grass, bents, and moss, lined with fine grass, fibres, and hair.

Eggs.—Four to five. Dull white, thickly mottled and clouded with olive-brown; often zoned; variable.

MISSEL THRUSH (*Turdus viscivorus*).

Found throughout Great Britain; less common towards the North. Abundant in Ireland.

Observation.—Our largest Thrush, in appearance greyer than Song Thrush.

Plumage.—Upper parts greyish olive-brown; under parts buffish white with dark fan-shaped spots; under wing-coverts white, conspicuous in flight, as are also the white tips to tail feathers. Bill dark brown. Legs pale brown. Length 11 in. Female rather lighter than male. Young, under parts buff, which in adult become buffish white.

Language.—Song, loud, wild, disconnected, and abrupt; may be heard almost throughout the winter (hence Stormcock); when alarmed it utters angry screeches (hence Screech Thrush). Call-note, "tuc," several times repeated.

Habits.—On the ground the movements are rapid, with moments of motionless attention. Flight strong but undulating; when disturbed from nest it becomes extremely excited, and noisy, dashing wildly about, and almost buffeting the intruder with its wings. Usually shy, but often assumes more temerity at breeding time.

Food.—Snails, slugs, worms, insects, and their larvæ. In winter—berries of various kinds, especially those of the mountain-ash and holly (hence Holm-screech), and mistletoe (hence Mistletoe Thrush). Small soft fruits in season.

Nest.—February or March onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In fork of some tree, on lateral branch ; seldom in bushes, except sometimes in shrubberies.

Materials.—Small twigs, roots, dry grass, and moss, firmly compacted with mud, lined with dry grass and rootlets. Rather bulky and often untidy.

Eggs.—Four to five. Pale greenish blue, spotted and blotched with rich ruddy brown and pearl-grey or violet under-markings. Variable.

SONG THRUSH OR THROSTLE (*Turdus musicus*).

Abundant throughout Great Britain ; rarer towards the North.

Haunts.—Pleasure-grounds, gardens, orchards, woods, and well-cultivated districts.

Plumage.—Upper parts olive-brown ; wing-coverts tipped with buff, forming two bars ; under parts buffish white, well spotted with dark fan- or wedge-shaped markings. Bill dark brown. Legs pale brown. Length 9 in. Female rather smaller. Young, upper part mottled with buff.

Language.—Song, loud and inspiriting, though rather tending towards monotony as the same phrase is frequently practised over and over again. A persistent singer—often from October right through winter (on mild days) to June. Song may be syllabised thus : "How d'ye do ; bo-peep ; bo-peep ; Judy ; Judy ; pretty Dick," &c., according to the listener's fancy and imagination. Call-note, "chick." When alarmed it utters loud chirps and screams.

Habits.—It takes incredibly long hops or straight quick runs. When searching for worms it stands quite still with its head slightly on one side, then suddenly pitches upon some unwary worm and pulls it forcibly from its hole. It smashes snail shells against stones. It is not easily flushed from its nest.

Food.—Insects, slugs, snails, and earthworms. Soft fruits in season. In winter—seeds, berries, and grain.

Nest.—February or March onwards. Two or three broods.

Site.—In forks of trees, in centre of thick bushes, non-deciduous trees often favoured, among ivy on wall or tree, in pile of faggots, &c.

Materials.—Twigs, dry grass, roots, and moss. Internally neatly plastered, like a small bowl, with mud, cow dung, and decaying wood fibres.

Eggs.—Four to six. Greenish blue, spotted with deep brown and black; spottings variable; sometimes unspotted.

WHITE OR BARN OWL (*Strix flammea*).

Generally distributed throughout England, Wales, and Ireland, but rare in north of Scotland.

Haunts.—Ruins, church-towers, barns, &c.

Plumage.—Upper parts tawny yellow, speckled with grey, white and blackish. Face (heart-shaped) and under parts white. Bill white. Legs covered with white hair-like feathers. Length 14 in. Like all Owls, it is grotesque and comical in appearance. Female larger and darker above. Young covered with white down; at a later stage they are similar to, though rather darker than, the adults.

Language.—A loud weird shriek, resembling "keck." The young make a snoring sound, and snap their beaks.

Habits.—The large eye is always a sign of a nocturnal bird, and this Owl is strictly so, sleeping away the day in the umbrageous shelter of some dark place, and sallying forth on noiseless wing at sundown to prey on small mammals, &c. Like other Owls, it casts up the indigestible portions of its food in pellets. Flight buoyant, noiseless and rapid. It is a most useful bird, and should be protected and not persecuted.



BARN OWL (*page 32*)



KESTREL (*page 33*)



BLUE TIT (*page 41*)



GOLDFINCHES (*page 41*)

Food.—Mice, rats, voles, and moles ; also small birds, and insects, and occasionally fish.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In hole in a tree, in church-tower, ruins, barns, and similar places.

Materials.—None.

Eggs.—Three to six. White, unglassy, and almost spherical in shape. Like other Owls it has a curious habit of laying two or three eggs, and then after incubation has begun it lays another batch, and perhaps another, so that one may find young and more or less incubated eggs in the same nest.

KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*).

Pretty common everywhere, not seeming to prefer any particular kind of country. The commonest of our Birds of Prey.

Plumage.—Head, lower back, and tail bluish grey. Tail broadly banded with black and tipped with white ; remaining upper parts buffish red, with small, black triangular markings. Wings blackish brown ; under parts pale yellowish red, spotted and streaked with dusky. Moustachial streak indistinct. Bill blue. Cere and legs yellow. Length 13 in. Female : upper parts reddish brown, with bluish black transverse bars ; wings darker ; under parts paler ; length 15 in. Young, like female, but paler. Nestlings, greyish-white down.

Language.—A sharp scream, like " kee-kee-kee."

Habits.—It hovers (hence Windhover) when on the look-out for its prey—a distinctive habit. On spying some quarry, it falls plumb to the ground and seizes it. Wings rather short, but flight is rapid and graceful.

Food.—Mice chiefly ; also small birds, frogs, and various kinds of insects.

Nest.—April. One brood.

Site.—Very often in some old Crow's nest, among ruins, or on ledge of sea-cliffs, &c.

Materials.—If any—sticks, grass, &c.

Eggs.—Four to six. Reddish white, spotted and blotched with brick-red ; variable.

COMMON OR GREY PARTRIDGE (*Perdix cinerea*).

Abundant in all well-cultivated districts, though more local in Scotland.

Plumage.—Grey on neck and forechest ; otherwise generally variegated with grey and reddish brown. Dark chestnut horse-shoe patch on lower breast. Wings marked longitudinally with buff. Bill olive-brown. Legs and feet bluish grey. Length 12½ in. Female, almost similar, but markings on wings crossed and not longitudinal. Young, like female, but legs yellowish brown. Young in down, yellowish buff marked with dark brown above and on flanks ; paler below.

Language.—Call-note, "kee-ash." Alarm-note, "gug-ug-ug," somewhat like the Guinea Fowl's well-known cry.

Habits.—Essentially a ground species. In winter they consort in coveys, but they pair off in very early spring. A splendid runner, but when forced to take to the wing it flies rapidly with whirring wings for some distance, then skims along, and soon alights again. The parents often feign injury when the nest or young are in danger. Occasionally two hens share one nest.

Food.—Insects, snails, grain, green leaves, &c.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In some depression in the ground ; under some bush or herbage.

Materials.—A few dead grasses and leaves.

Eggs.—Eight to twelve, often many more. Olive-brown.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE OR FRENCH PARTRIDGE (*Caccabis rufa*).

Common in many parts of England, especially in the eastern counties ; unknown in Scotland and

Ireland. More partial to uncultivated districts than the last.

Plumage.—Throat and cheeks white, bordered by black band. Gorget black, sides of neck and breast grey, spotted with black; upper parts reddish ash-colour. Flanks barred with greyish crescentic markings. Tail-feathers chestnut; under parts fawn-colour. Bill, legs, and feet bright red. Length $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, rather smaller and duller. Young have no grey on throat, and very little black on gorget. Young in down like common Partridge.

Language.—A grating “chuk-chuk-chukar”; but it is said to utter a piping cry.

Habits.—Even more of a runner than the last. Very similar to last, but perches more readily on trees or fences, &c., than it.

Food.—Insects, seeds, green leaves, &c.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In shallow depression in the ground, among thick herbage, &c.

Materials.—Dead grasses and leaves.

Eggs.—Ten to eighteen. Yellowish white, spotted, usually speckled with dark brown. Shell thick, hard, and minutely pitted.

GOLDEN-CRESTED WREN (*Regulus cristatus*).

Generally distributed throughout Great Britain.

Haunts.—Well-wooded localities and gardens; especially fond of coniferous trees.

Observation.—Our smallest bird.

Plumage.—Top of head bright yellow, shading into orange at the back, bounded by a dark streak, below which comes the whitish superciliary eye-streak. Cheeks ashy. Upper parts yellowish olive-green. Wings greyish brown, with two distinct white bars. Tail ash-brown, with yellowish margins; under parts greyish brown, whitish on abdomen. Bill dark brown. Legs brown.

Length $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, duller crown, browner and less defined black streak round same. Young, crown minus yellow and black border.

Language.—Song, not extensive and very weak. Call-note, a thin, wiry squeak, rather like the noise produced by a damp wash-leather on a pane of glass.

Habits.—It spends nearly all its life fluttering about seeking its food amongst the feathery branches of some non-deciduous tree. Very Tit-like in its antics. Sociable and often seen in parties.

Food.—Small insects and spiders ; in winter, seeds and small berries.

Nest.—April onwards. Probably two broods.

Site.—Nearly always built on to a lateral branch of some non-deciduous tree, suspended from one bough and supported by another, or made fast to the smaller twigs of the bough from which it hangs, especially spruce trees.

Materials.—Dry grass, leaves, moss, lichens, fir-needles, wool, cobwebs, &c., all wonderfully interwoven and felted together into an almost spherical ball, lined with a profusion of small soft feathers. A beautiful nest.

Eggs.—Six to ten. Creamy white, closely mottled with reddish brown, especially at large end.

GREENFINCH (*Ligurinus chloris*).

Abundant throughout Great Britain, except in the extreme North.

Haunts.—Shrubberies in gardens, orchards, outskirts of woods, &c.

Plumage.—Yellowish green, variegated with yellow and ash-grey. Bill flesh-coloured and rather massive. Legs horn-brown. Length 6 in. Female, rather smaller and browner. Young, much like female.

Language.—Song, bright and clear, but always terminating with a monotonous "zshweer." Another note is "did-it-it."

Habits.—Sociable, even in the breeding season. It likes to hide among the leaves of some moderately tall tree, where, for hours, it will utter its “zshweer” note, especially in sultry weather. In autumn and winter they go about in foraging parties. In flight the yellowish margins of the primaries are rather conspicuous, as is also the yellower green of the tail.

Food.—Grubs, caterpillars, and various kinds of seeds.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods or more.

Site.—In the middle of thick hawthorn hedge in dense evergreens; in trees, amongst ivy, &c.

Materials.—Variable; generally small twigs, roots, dry grass, straw, and moss, lined with fine grass, hair, feathers and wool.

Eggs.—Four to six. Like Linnet's, but larger. Greenish white, spotted and speckled chiefly at large end with purplish red and reddish brown.

YELLOW BUNTING OR YELLOW HAMMER

(*Emberiza citrinella*).

Abundant throughout Great Britain.

Haunts.—Open country and well-cultivated districts.

Plumage.—Head, neck and under parts bright yellow, more or less streaked with blackish; upper parts chestnut streaked with dusky; white edges of tail conspicuous in flight. Bill bluish. Legs pale brown. Length $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, much less yellow, and more streaked with reddish brown. Young, like female in non-breeding dress, *i.e.*, more ashy on upper parts.

Language.—Song, the familiar “Little bit of bread and no cheese,” with the last syllable drawn out. Call-note, “chick-chick-churr.”

Habits.—Fond of perching on the top of a hedge or gate-post, &c., to sing. Rather sedentary, but flight fairly rapid and undulating. In autumn gregarious, often consorting with the Finches. On the ground it hops.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ ; in winter, grain and seeds.

Nest.—April onwards. Two or three broods.

Site.—Near or on the ground, in side of hedge amongst herbage, at base of low bush, among brambles ; seldom in furze-bushes.

Materials.—Straw, dead grass, stalks, roots, and moss, lined with fibres and horsehair. Cut fairly deep.

Eggs.—Four to five. Pale purplish white, streaked, veined, and scribbled (hence Writing Lark) with purplish red and greyish lavender ; variable.

CIRL BUNTING (*Emberiza cirlus*).

Local, being most abundant in the South. Rarer towards the North. Unknown in Ireland.

Haunts.—Cultivated districts where there are plenty of trees bordering the fields.

Observation.—Distinguish from last by the black throat and yellow band round eyes.

Plumage.—Crown olive, streaked with black. Throat, neck, and band through eyes black ; stripe above and below eye, and collar bright lemon-yellow. Breast greyish olive ; flanks chestnut. Belly dull yellow. Otherwise very like the Yellow Hammer. Length $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, duller and more streaked below. Young, duller than female.

Language.—Song, similar to last, but without the thin terminal note. Call-note, "Zizi."

Habits.—Rather like the last, but more shy, keeping to the tops of trees, from which it sings. Rather skulking, gregarious in winter.

Food.—Grasshoppers, beetles, insects, and spiders ; in winter, various seeds and grain.

Nest.—May onwards. Two broods.

Site.—Like last.

Materials.—Like last.

Eggs.—Four to five. White, faintly suffused with lilac, streaked, dotted, and scribbled with purplish black or brown.

REDBREAST OR ROBIN (*Erithacus rubecula*).

Everywhere abundant, except in the extreme North.

Haunts.—Essentially a bird of the garden, and only quits the society of mankind during the autumn moult.

Plumage.—Upper parts olive-brown. Forehead, lores, chin, throat, and breast red edged with grey. Belly white. Bill black. Legs brown. Length $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. Female, similar but duller. Young, feathers above and below, spotted with buff and tipped with black.

Language.—Song, most cheerful and pleasing and familiar to all. Note of anxiety, "lit-it-it-it," sounding somewhat metallic. Call-note, a short kind of squeak.

Habits.—Eminently of a confiding and also extremely pugnacious nature. On the ground it takes long hops, punctuated every now and then by a curious stoop of the head, a flick of the wings, and a jerk of the tail. Flight undulating and never sustained for long.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, spiders, small worms, soft fruits, berries and seeds, and crumbs and scraps in winter.

Nest.—March onwards. Several broods.

Site.—A variety of places. Usually in hole in wall, in grass bank, in cleft in tree, amongst ivy, &c.

Materials.—Dry grass, skeleton leaves, rootlets, and moss, lined with finer grass, hair, and sometimes feathers. Somewhat untidy, and not unlike the Nightingale's.

Eggs.—Four to six. Pinky white (pinkiness disappears after blowing), spotted and freckled with pale reddish brown. Variable.

GREAT TITMOUSE OR OX-EYE

(Parus major).

Common and well distributed except in extreme North.

Haunts.—Woods, plantations, orchards, gardens, &c.

Observation.—Our largest Tit—about the size of a Sparrow. Note black head and white cheeks, and black streak down breast.

Plumage.—Head, throat, and band on centre of breast black; upper parts olive-green. Cheeks and nape white, under parts yellow. Wings bluish grey, tipped with white. Tail-feathers slate-grey; outer pair tipped and edged with white. Bill black. Legs lead-coloured. Length $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. Female rather duller, and less black on the breast. Young duller, and white cheeks washed with yellow.

Language.—The well-known rasping noise (hence Saw-sharpener), like “che-chi-che-chi.” Also it sings “tzoo-tzoo-werry-tzoo-tzoo-werry-tzee-tzee.” Call-note, “chick-chick,” rather like Chaffinch. Alarm-note, “werry-urre,” with the r’s vibrated.

Habits.—Always restless and shifting about from one tree to another, indulging in various acrobatic performances all the while. Pugnacious, and will attack weakly small birds and split their skulls. Sits tight on nest and hisses and pecks at intruders.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ; also seeds, fruits, scraps, suet, nuts, &c.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In holes in walls or trees, in squirrel’s drey, or rook’s nest, &c.

Materials.—If in an open situation, moss, grass, hair, and wool; if in a cavity, less external material; lined with feathers, hair, and wool.

Eggs.—Six to twelve. White, spotted with reddish brown; like other Tits, only larger.

BLUE TITMOUSE (*Parus cæruleus*).

Well distributed and common; rarer in the North of Scotland. Found well nigh everywhere, even in large cities.

Plumage.—Crown blue encircled with white. Cheeks white bounded with blue; upper parts olive-green. Wings and tail blue; under parts yellow. Bill nearly black. Legs bluish grey. Length $4\frac{1}{4}$ in. Female duller; cheeks ashy. Young less blue throughout and yellower.

Language.—Song, "pim-im-im-im-im." First two syllables pitched about two tones above the rest, and rather metallic in tone. Call-note, "tzee"; also a chiding, scolding note.

Habits.—One of our prettiest small birds. It is a kind of acrobatic harlequin, and seems quite as much at home hanging head downwards from a bough as in any other position. Flight undulating. It readily goes to the ground to feed if necessary. On the nest the bird sits tightly, hissing, and pecks intruding fingers (hence Billy-biter).

Food.—Insects and their larvæ; but, failing this, practically omnivorous.

Nest.—April onwards. Probably two broods.

Site.—A variety of places, quaint and otherwise, usually in hole in wall or tree or other suitable cavity.

Materials.—Moss, leaves, grass, feathers, and cobwebs, lined with wool, hair, and many feathers.

Eggs.—Five to nine. White, speckled and dotted with pale reddish brown.

GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis elegans*).

Pretty generally distributed, but less abundant than formerly.

Haunts.—Woods, plantations, gardens, orchards, and waste lands.

Plumage.—Back of head, nape, and region round base

of bill black. Forehead and throat blood-red. Cheeks, fore part of neck, and under parts white. Back dark brown. Wings variegated with black, white, and yellow. Tail black, tipped with white. Bill whitish tipped with black. Legs flesh-colour. Length 5 in. Female, slightly smaller and duller. Young, no black or crimson on head, under parts brownish white.

Language.—Although a favourite cage-bird, the song is neither brilliant nor extensive. It is really a repetition of the call-note with variations: thus, “whee-e-ur, whee-e-ur, too-oo-ee, ti-weer, ti-weer, whit-wea, chi-whit-chi-wit, chi-whit, wheec-wheec-wheec.” Call-note, “twit-it-it.”

Habits.—Very sociable in winter. Fond of perching on thistle plants, tearing the down out and scattering it upon the breeze, in its endeavours to get at the seeds. Flight undulating and fairly rapid; it twitters whilst flying.

Food.—Aphides, caterpillars, and many kinds of seeds.

Nest.—May onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In apple and other fruit trees; sometimes in evergreens and hawthorn hedges.

Materials.—Small twigs, rootlets, bents, moss, wool, and lichens. lined with thistle-down, hair, and feathers. A beautiful nest.

Eggs.—Four to five. Greenish or bluish white spotted and streaked with reddish or purplish brown and lilac-grey shell markings. Much like Linnet's but rather smaller.

CHAFFINCH (*Fringilla cœlebs*).

Generally distributed throughout Great Britain.

Haunts.—Well-wooded districts, gardens, etc.

Plumage.—Forehead velvety black. Crown and nape bluish grey. Mantle bright chestnut. Rump yellowish green. Breast chestnut-red passing into white on the belly. Wings black with two white conspicuous bars.

Tail black ; two middle feathers grey, two outer feathers broadly banded with white, conspicuous in flight. Bill lead-colour. Legs brown. Length 6 in. Female : back and crown buffish brown ; under parts buffish grey. Young, like female but paler.

Language.—Song, bright and joyful though tending towards monotony, as it is repeated again and again without the slightest variation. It pitches deliberately on the highest note and energetically rattles down the scale in a staccato manner, thus : “ tsip-tsip-tsip-tsip-turrrrl-turrrrl,” terminating with “ tissi-ear ” or “ de-ur.” Alarm note, “ whit ” or “ twit.” Call-note, like “ pink ” or “ spink,” rather metallic.

Habits.—Sociable in winter, but the sexes usually keep apart until early spring (hence “ cœlebs ”). It both runs and hops when feeding on the ground. Flight undulating.

Food.—Chiefly insectivorous in summer ; in winter, seeds of various kinds and grain.

Nest.—April onwards. Two or three broods.

Site.—In fork of some lichen-clad fruit-tree, on lateral bough of elm tree, in thick hedge, in beech and birch trees, sometimes in evergreens.

Materials.—Lichens, moss, grass, cobwebs, and wool felted together, lined with hair, down, and feathers. A beautiful nest.

Eggs.—Four or five. Greenish blue, spotted, dotted, clouded, and streaked with reddish and purplish brown.

LAPWING OR PEEWIT (*Vanellus vulgaris*).

Resident ; but in winter there is a partial emigration from the North. Well distributed and common. Partial to low hills, sheep pastures, arable and meadow-land.

Plumage.—Crown of head and crest greenish black. Stripe over eye and sides of face white. Upper parts cupreous green. Throat and chest bluish black. Under parts white. Tail white, conspicuous in flight, tipped

with black. Tail-coverts chestnut. Bill black. Legs and feet reddish. Length $12\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female: smaller crest, and duller; in winter both sexes have white throat. Young: no black on throat, and white areas of head buffish. Nestling: covered with down, mottled with buff and black, white below, with dark band on breast. As with other Plovers, the young are soon able to run after emerging from the egg.

Language.—The familiar “Pee-wit,” often heard by night as well as by day.

Habits.—More sociable in winter than in summer. It runs nimbly. When disturbed from the nest, the female slips off her eggs, and runs some distance before taking wing. The male becomes most excited, and dashes about in the air like a mad thing. The parents may feign death or injury if the eggs or young are in danger. Flight peculiar, being jerky, and the blunt, recurvate wings produce a noise much like a winnowing machine. When showing off to the female, the cock-bird makes a series of false nests by turning himself round on the ground as though on a pivot.

Food.—Insects, worms, slugs, &c.

Nest.—April. One brood.

Site.—On the bare ground, usually unsheltered, sometimes on grass, sometimes on ploughed land.

Materials.—A few grasses, bents, and roots.

Eggs.—Four. Olive-green, stone-colour, or buffish brown, well spotted and blotched with brownish black. Pyriform shape. These are the delicacies known as Plovers' eggs.

Resident Birds of the Woods and Well-Wooded Districts

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER.

(*Dendrocopus major*).

Rarer than the Green Woodpecker, but found fairly abundantly in the midland and southern counties; still rarer towards the north; very rare in Ireland.

Observation.—In general appearance distinctly spotted.

Plumage.—Upper parts and head black; nape crimson. Spot each side of neck, scapulars, lesser wing-coverts, and under parts white. Vent and under tail-coverts crimson. Bill slaty black. Legs dark grey. Length $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female smaller, and no crimson on nape. Young, crimson areas duller.

Language.—"Chik," or "gick," a noise such as a driver makes with his tongue to encourage his horses; it also calls to its mate by rapping its beak on a bough.

Habits.—Far more silent than the Green Woodpecker, and confines its attentions more to the smaller branches of trees; otherwise very similar.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ; spiders, worms, acorns, nuts, seeds, &c.

Nest.—Mid-May. One brood.

Site.—In a hole in a tree, usually made by the bird.

Materials.—None.

Eggs.—Five to seven. Shining creamy white.

LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER

(*Dendrocopus minor*).

Fairly abundant in the southern and midland counties; much rarer farther north; very rare in Ireland.

Plumage.—Much like last, but smaller, being about the size of a Sparrow. Distinctly barred rather than spotted on the back and wings. Length $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, crown whitish, and not crimson as in male, and under parts more striated. Young, much like the adults.

Language.—A short sharp chirp; also "tick-tick."

Habits.—It keeps to the smaller branches like the last, and, on account of its small size, is difficult to observe; otherwise similar to the last.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, principally.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In hole in a tree, excavated by the bird.

Materials.—None.

Eggs.—Five to eight. Glossy creamy white, and almost exactly like those of the Wryneck.

MAGPIE (*Pica rustica*).

Fairly common, though irregularly distributed in some districts. Not so much a bird of the woods as the Jay.

Plumage.—Head, throat, and back velvety black, showing purple and green reflections. Rump whitish grey. Scapulars and under parts white. Primaries black, glossed with green. Tail black and very long, with greenish cupreous and purple reflections. Bill and legs black. Length 18 in. Female slightly smaller and duller. Young still duller.

Language.—A harsh chattering, rather reminding one of the noise produced by a policeman's rattle, only not so powerful.

Habits.—In disposition active, shy, crafty, alert, and noisy. Always distinct on account of its long tail, frequently flirited, skimming, arrowy flight, and quick beatings of its short wings. On the ground it runs, and, at intervals, takes surprisingly long hops.

Food.—Practically omnivorous. Much persecuted in

game-preserving districts on account of its fondness for eggs.

Nest.—April. One brood.

Site.—Among the smaller branches at the top of some tall tree ; sometimes in a thick hawthorn hedge.

Materials.—Sticks and turf plastered with mud, lined with mud and fine grass. Cup deep, over which a basket-like dome of thorny sticks is placed.

Eggs.—Six to nine. Pale bluish green, thickly spotted and speckled with olive-brown and blotched with faint ash-grey.

CARRION CROW (*Corvus corone*).

Pretty well distributed in well-wooded districts ; commoner in Scotland, and rare in Ireland.

Haunts.—Well-wooded districts, estuaries, sea-cliffs, &c.

Observation.—Distinguish from Rook by absence of white nude patch at base of the bill.

Plumage.—Black, with green and purple reflections. Bill and legs black. Length 19 in. Female, less lustrous. Young, still duller.

Language.—A hoarse "horr," rather like the Rook's, but rougher.

Habits.—Somewhat resembling the Raven. Flight laboured, but nevertheless strong and rapid. At a distance indistinguishable from the Rook, but always seen singly or in pairs—never in flocks.

Food.—Carrion principally, but it will kill birds and small mammals too weak or sickly to defend themselves.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—In a tall tree or on a ledge in a cliff.

Materials.—Sticks, twigs, plastered with mud, and lined with grass, roots, fur, wool, hair, feathers, &c.

Eggs.—Four to six. Bluish green, spotted and blotched with olive-brown and some markings of purplish grey. Like the Raven's, but smaller.

HOODED CROW ; ALSO GREY CROW AND
ROYSTON CROW (*Corvus cornix*).

Resident to some extent, but chiefly a visitor in autumn and winter. In Scotland and Ireland well distributed, resident and breeding there. A few pairs remain to breed in suitable localities in England.

Haunts.—Well-wooded districts near estuaries and the sea-coast.

Plumage.—Head, throat, front of breast, wings, tail, and thighs black, with green and purple reflections; remainder of plumage ash-grey. Bill and legs black. Length 19 in. Female slightly smaller. Young duller.

Language.—A harsh "cra."

Habits.—Like the last.

Food.—Like the last.

Nest.—End of March.

Site.—Like the last.

Materials.—Like the last.

Eggs.—Four to six. In colouring and markings identical with the Carrion Crow's.

NUTHATCH (*Sitta cæsia*).

Well distributed generally; commoner in southern and midland counties; much rarer towards the north. Unknown in Ireland.

Haunts.—Well-wooded districts.

Plumage.—Upper parts slaty grey. Black stripe from base of mandibles through eye and down sides of neck. Cheeks and throat white; under parts buffish chestnut. Outer tail-feathers black with white spot near end. Tail short. Bill horn-colour. Legs brown. Hind claws hooked. Length 5½ in. Female duller. Young duller still.

Language.—Song, a bubbling twitter, and reminds one of the noise produced by throwing a stone across the



NUTHATCH (page 48)



SPARROW HAWK (page 49)



JAY ON NEST (page 61)



Photo

LONG-EARED OWL (page 55)

Berridge

frozen surface of a pond. Call-note, a sharp shrill "whit."

Habits.—It spends most of its time creeping about tree-trunks searching bark crevices for food. It proceeds in a series of quick jerks, and is not particular whether it goes upwards or comes down head first. It wedges nuts into the interstices of the bark and hammers sharply at them with its beak until the kernel can be extracted. When alarmed it usually places the trunk between itself and the spectator, and consequently is more often heard than seen. Flight undulating and not very rapid.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, nuts, kernels, beechmast; in winter it feeds like, and often in company with, Sparrows and Tits, on scraps and refuse found near houses.

Nest.—April. Probably one brood only.

Site.—In hole in wall or tree, &c., usually near the ground. If the hole is too large it will cement up the orifice with mud mixed in the beak with adhesive saliva.

Materials.—Dead leaves, grass, and scraps of bark.

Eggs.—Five to seven. White, spotted with brownish red, and sometimes grey shell-spottings. Much like the Great Tit's, but rather larger.

SPARROW-HAWK (*Accipiter nisus*).

Well distributed throughout Great Britain in all well-wooded parts; essentially a woodland bird.

Plumage.—Upper parts slate-blue, with white patch on nape. Under parts rufous white, transversely barred with dark brown. Wings short. Tail greyish brown, barred with brownish-black. Bill blue; cere greenish yellow. Legs yellow. Length 13 in. Female; upper parts brown, with white spot on nape; under parts greyish white, barred with dark grey. Length 15½ in. Young, at first covered with white down; afterwards

much like the female. The plumage of this species varies considerably.

Language.—A sharp, shrill cry.

Habits.—Fearless and dashing. When seeking its prey it flies quickly along a hedgerow near the ground, dropping down suddenly on some unsuspecting small bird or mammal. It usually feeds on the ground, although it is very arboreal.

Food.—Small birds chiefly ; also young rabbits, mice, and moles.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—At the top of some tall fir, or other tree, in a wood.

Materials.—Sticks and twigs, lined with moss. It often adapts old Crows', Magpies', and Ring Doves' nests.

Eggs.—Four to six. Bluish white, blotched and spotted with reddish brown of various shades.

RING DOVE OR WOOD PIGEON

(*Columba palumbus*).

Common, and found in all well-wooded districts.

Plumage.—Upper parts bluish grey ; neck emerald-green glossed with violet and green, a white patch (no complete ring) on each side of neck. Wings grey with white bar, conspicuous in flight. Tail dark slaty grey ; under parts reddish purple. Bill orange. Legs and feet bright red. Length 17 in. Female, smaller and slightly duller. Young, at first have no white neck patches, and are duller than adults.

Language.—The well-known plaintive "coo-roo-coo-coo."

Habits.—Flight rapid and direct. When alarmed it dashes off its perch with loud clappings of its wings ; on the ground it walks deliberately. In the love season

the male shows off before the female, puffing out his feathers, bowing, and raising his tail in a spasmodic manner. At this time it also indulges in undulating flights, rising and falling through the air very gracefully. In autumn and winter gregarious. A most voracious feeder. Like all Doves, the callow young are fed on a curdy secretion (Pigeon's milk) brought up from the parent's crop; at a later stage on regurgitated food.

Food.—Various green stuffs, like turnip-tops, acorns, beech-mast, grain, peas, clover, berries, &c.

Nest.—March onwards. An irregular breeder, and has several broods in the year.

Site.—Among the smaller branches of some tree or hedge, in tree-fork, &c.

Materials.—Twigs and small sticks laid crosswise, like a platform.

Eggs.—Two. Pure white and glossy.

STOCK DOVE (*Columba œnas*).

Less common than the last, being found more especially in the midland, southern, and eastern counties. Much rarer in Scotland and Ireland.

Haunts.—Well-wooded districts.

Plumage.—Generally much like the last, but about one-third smaller; rather bluer in colouring, and has no white patch on the neck or bars on the wings. Under wing-coverts grey. Bill yellow, red at the base. Legs and feet red. Length $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, rather smaller and duller. Young, much like female.

Language.—A low simple cooing; has been described as a "grunting."

Habits.—Very like the last; but, if anything, the flight is lighter and more rapid.

Food.—Like the last.

Nest.—March onwards. Several broods.

Site.—Never in trees like the last, but in hole in tree,

in rabbit-burrows, among gnarled tree-roots, under thick bush.

Materials.—If any, twigs and sticks.

Eggs.—Two. Pale creamy white.

CRESTED TITMOUSE (*Parus cristatus*).

Rare and strictly local, and confined—at least as a breeding species—to certain pine forests in Scotland.

Plumage.—Feathers of head black edged with greyish white and forming a crest; a black streak from eye to back of head, continuing round cheeks, and ending in the black throat and chest. Back and wings olive-brown. Tail brown; under parts dull, more buffy on the flanks. Bill black. Feet lead-colour. Length $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female less defined crest and less black on throat. Young like female, but no crest.

Language.—Call-note, “see-see-see,” then “tur-re-re-re,” given in a trilling manner.

Habits.—Very like the other Tits, and confining its attentions chiefly to fir-trees and the like.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, seeds and berries.

Nest.—April onwards. Probably two broods.

Site.—In hole in fir-tree excavated by the bird, behind bark on a decaying tree and the like.

Materials.—Dry grass, moss, feathers, fur, hair, &c., felted together.

Eggs.—Five to eight. White, well-spotted, speckled, and often zoned with reddish brown.

TREE CREEPER (*Certhia familiaris*).

Pretty well distributed; affecting well-wooded districts.

Plumage.—Upper parts dark brown, mottled with yellowish brown; pale streak over eye. Throat and breast white, more dingy on the belly. Wings brown,

tipped with white and barred with brownish yellow. Tail reddish brown; rather long stiff pointed feathers acting as fulcrum or prop when climbing. Beak rather long and curved; dark brown above and yellowish below. Legs light brown. Length 5 in. Female similar. Young more rufous, and shorter and less curved beak.

Language.—Song not often heard, a pleasing but brief twitter. Call-note, a low “cheep,” and a plaintive “syou.”

Habits.—It may be called a parasite on trees, as it spends its whole life climbing spirally upwards on trunks, staying its progress every now and then to probe some crevice for insects with its bill, much like a mouse creeping, and most unobtrusive. When watched it at once jerks round to the other side of the tree. It never descends the trunk when climbing, but on reaching the top flies down to the base and again winds spirally up, and so on. Flight undulating.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, spiders, and seeds, especially those of the Scotch fir.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—Behind bark on a decaying tree, in crack in tree, and the like.

Materials.—Bark-strips, small twigs, rootlets, and grass, lined with ligneous fibres, moss, fine grass, feathers, and hair.

Eggs.—Six to nine. White, spotted with reddish brown, sometimes with grey underlying marks, like some of the Tits.

LESSER REDPOLL (*Acanthis rufescens*).

Occurring most abundantly in the north of England and Ireland. It nests in most of the counties, but more sparingly towards the South. In Scotland, very local.

Haunts.—Well-wooded districts. Partial to birch and alder trees.

Observation.—Our smallest Finch, and distinct on account of its darker and rosier colouring.

Plumage.—Lores and throat black. Crown crimson; upper parts reddish brown, streaked longitudinally with blackish. Wings and tail dark brown with pale margins. Breast rose-red. Belly and under tail-coverts sordid white, streaked with brown on flanks. Bill dark brown at tip, otherwise yellowish. Legs blackish brown. Length 5 in. In autumn rosy tints less distinct. Female slightly smaller and duller, with rose colour only to head. Young, duller than female, and no rose-colour on head.

Language.—Song, a short clear twittering, not unlike the Linnet's but much coarser. Call-note, "tit-it-it."

Habits.—Much like the Linnet, but more Tit-like and engaging in its movements. It seldom feeds on the ground, except in winter, when it is gregarious. Rather a confiding bird.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, and seeds, especially those of the birch and alder.

Nest.—May onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In the fork of a tree or hedge, in low bushes and tufts of grass, in alders, willows, &c.

Materials.—Small twigs, roots, stalks, and moss, lined with vegetable down, hair, wool, and feathers.

Eggs.—Four to six. Pale greenish blue, spotted and speckled with reddish and purplish brown.

COMMON CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra*).

Resident only in the North, and breeding only in certain pine-woods in Scotland and Ireland; elsewhere met with irregularly in winter, usually in small flocks.

Plumage.—Variable, according to age, sex, and season. Wings and tail brown; otherwise brownish red is the

usual colouring. Bill dark brown, having the mandibles crossed (hence name). Legs dark brown. Length $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, more or less streaked, and brownish red colouring of the male replaced by greenish yellow. Young, more of a greyish green and more streaked below.

Language.—Song, a low warble. Call-note, "gip-gip" or "chip-chip." Shrill and clear, usually uttered in flight.

Habits.—Gregarious. When climbing about the branches of a fir it is distinctly parrot-like in its actions, helping itself along with its beak. Flight strong and undulating. Tame and easily approached.

Food.—Caterpillars in summer, but chiefly berries, and especially seeds of the fir and pine, extracted from cone with scissor-like bill.

Nest.—February or March. Probably one brood only.

Site.—At varying altitudes, in a fork or on lateral branch of a fir-tree.

Materials.—Fir twigs, grass, and lichen, lined with fine grass, moss, wool, and feathers.

Eggs.—Four to five. Greyish white, spotted and speckled rather sparingly with dark reddish brown and paler underlying markings.

LITTLE OWL (*Athene noctua*).

Really a visitor, but a good many have been brought from abroad and turned loose, and it has been found breeding in several counties.

Plumage.—Upper parts brown, with triangular white markings on head, and spotted with white on nape and wings. Tail marked with four white bands. Facial disc ill-developed and greyish; under parts white, streaked with brown. Bill yellow. Legs covered with yellowish white hair-like feathers. Toes covered with bristles. Length 9 in. Female, larger and rather paler. Nestling first covered with greyish down; later like adults, but more rufous.

Language.—A monotonous "cu-cu."

Habits.—Rather diurnal. It resembles the other Owls very closely, but is, if anything, even more grotesque and comical, and is consequently a favourite pet.

Food.—Small birds and mammals, also insects.

Nest. May.

Site.—Hole in wall, tree or ground.

Eggs.—Four or six. White and round in shape.

LONG-EARED OWL (*Asio otus*).

Fairly well distributed in England; common in the pine woods of Scotland, and in Ireland.

Haunts.—Woodland districts.

Observation.—Distinguish from Tawny Owl by "long ears."

Plumage.—Two tufts of feathers on the head (hence Long-eared). Upper parts buffish, speckled and vermiculated with dark brown, ashy, and white. Facial disc yellowish brown with blackish margin. Wings and tail barred with brown and grey; under parts buff streaked with brown. Bill blackish. Legs covered with fawn-coloured feathers. Length 15 in. Female, larger and darker. Young, at first covered with yellowish grey down, faintly barred with brown.

Language.—Rather a silent bird, but it gives a mellow kind of hoot; also another utterance like the mewling of a cat.

Habits.—Flight buoyant and noiseless; when alarmed the tufts are erected. It closely resembles the Barn Owl, but more arboreal.

Food.—Small birds and mammals, moths and beetles.

Nest.—February or March. One brood.

Site.—Never in holes. Usually it selects an old Crow's or Magpie's nest or squirrel's drey, patches it up, and lines it with feathers and down.

Eggs.—Four to six. White, smooth, and nearly spherical in shape.

TAWNY OR BROWN OWL (*Syrnium aluco*).

Pretty common in all well-wooded localities ; unknown in Ireland.

Haunts.—The densest parts of woods (hence Wood Owl).

Plumage.—Upper parts reddish brown, mottled, and longitudinally streaked with dark brown : white spots on the wings and scapulars. Facial disc large and complete, greyish white bordered with brown. Wings long and rounded ; under parts reddish white, transversely barred, and longitudinally streaked with dusky brown. Bill whitish. Legs feathered to the claws. Length 16 in. Female, similar, but larger. Young, at first covered with greyish down ; later, more rufous than adults.

Language.—The familiar "Hoo-hoo, hoo-too-vit," or "che-wick."

Habits.—Strictly nocturnal, and much resembling the other Owls. It will defend its nest if necessary.

Food.—Small mammals and birds · sometimes insects, and fish.

Nest.—In March or April. One brood.

Site.—Usually in a hole in a tree ; sometimes, though less often, in similar situations to the Barn Owl.

Materials.—None.

Eggs.—Three to five. White, smooth, glossy, and nearly spherical in shape.

KITE (*Milvus iclinus*).

Once a common resident, but nowadays, owing to pitiless persecution, it has become rare, and will probably become extinct if proper protection is not afforded it. A few pairs breed in Wales and Scotland.

Haunts.—Woodland districts near rivers.

Observation.—Note pointed wings and forked tail.

Plumage.—Head and neck white, streaked with blackish; upper parts reddish brown, feathers having paler edges. Primaries blackish. Tail rufous brown, and very forked; under parts rusty red, streaked longitudinally with brown; under wings whitish, with dark patch conspicuous in flight. Bill horn-colour. Cere and legs yellow. Length 25 in. Female, rather larger and duller; tail not so forked. Young paler, and more mottled above and below. Nestling covered with white down.

Language.—A shrill “whew-heh-heh-heh.”

Habits.—Flight powerful, rapid, and gliding. Fond of soaring at a vast height. The tail is incessantly brought into action, performing the function of a rudder. Although mainly a carrion-eater, it will pounce upon and kill small mammals, birds, &c.

Food.—Carrion, garbage, small mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—Usually in some tall tree; occasionally on a ledge of a cliff.

Materials.—Sticks and all kinds of rubbish; lined with wool, moss, &c.

Eggs.—Two or three. Dull bluish white, spotted and blotched with reddish brown; much like the Buzzard's.

HAWFINCH (*Coccothraustes vulgaris*).

Decidedly local, but occurring in most countries; rarer in Wales, the West and the North; rare in Ireland.

Haunts.—Well-wooded districts; seldom seen near human habitations.

Plumage.—Lores, throat, and line round base of bill black. Crown and cheeks reddish brown. Nape ash-grey. Back dark reddish brown. Wings bluish black.

Median coverts white, conspicuous in flight ; under parts light purplish red, fading into white on under tail-coverts, noticeable in flight. Bill blackish at tip, lead-colour towards base ; very massive. Eye white. Legs flesh-colour. Length 7 in. Female, duller throughout, and white areas more dingy. Young, no black on throat or grey on nape ; head yellower ; under parts paler ; upper parts more or less mottled ; breast and flanks barred with dark brown.

Language.—Song, rather like the Bullfinch's, but inferior to it. It is usually a silent bird. Call-note, a sharp clicking sound like "sit" three or four times repeated.

Habits.—Being very shy it seems rarer that it really is. Flight rapid and undulating. Sociable in winter.

Food.—Chiefly seeds and berries of many kinds ; sometimes caterpillars and insects. Fond of peas and visits gardens to get them.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In thick hedge or tree in a wood.

Materials.—Twigs, stalks, roots, and lichens, lined with fine roots, grass, and some hair. In form rather like the Bullfinch's, but flatter and larger.

Eggs.—Four to six. Pale bluish green, spotted and streaked with dark olive-brown, and faint grey underlying.

SISKIN OR ABERDEVINE (*Chrysomitris spinus*).

Resident in Scotland and some parts of Northern Counties. Chiefly confined to the fir-woods of the North, but it has bred sparingly in some of the southern counties. In winter more generally distributed.

Plumage.—Crown, chin, and lores black. Yellow stripe at back of eye. Upper parts olive-green, with

darker shaft margins. Wings black with greenish yellow bar. Rump yellow. Tail black towards tip, yellower towards base. Two central feathers dusky. Throat and breast yellow. Belly white streaked with dusky on flanks. Bill light brown. Legs brown. Length $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, a little smaller, duller, and no black on head; under parts more streaked. Young, still duller.

Language.—Song, a rapid and irregular twitter, finishing with a harsh “chair.” Call-note, “hoote-lee.”

Habits.—Very active, and almost Tit-like in some ways. Sociable. In the love-season the male soars up from his perch and then descends to it with fluttering wings and outspread tail.

Food.—Seeds of weeds, aphides, and caterpillars.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—At the top of some fir-tree, or at end of lateral branch; less frequently in bushes.

Materials.—Small fir-twigs, bents, heather, rootlets, and moss, lined with fine grass, vegetable down, hair, and sometimes feathers.

Eggs.—Four to six. Pale bluish green, spotted and dotted with dark reddish brown. Much like Goldfinch's, but rather smaller and bluer.

BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula europæa*).

Generally distributed in well-wooded localities. More local in Scotland.

Haunts.—Districts abounding in thick bushes and hedges, near woods. Gardens and orchards in spring.

Plumage.—Head, throat, wings, and tail black. Back bluish ash-grey. Sides of neck and under parts salmon-red, except under tail-coverts, which are dull white. Rump white and conspicuous in flight. Broad white conspicuous band across wings. Bill black. Legs dark brown. Length 6 in. Female, duller on upper parts; under parts dove-brown. Young, like female,

but without black on head, and wing-bars sordid white.

Language.—The natural song is poor, being short in duration and feeble and sad in utterance, but in captivity its notes are capable of development, when it becomes a good songster. Call-note, a plaintive whistling "wheoo."

Habits.—Never gregarious. In the breeding season it keeps strictly to woods; obtains its food usually in trees and bushes, seldom on the ground except in winter. Flight jerky and undulating.

Food.—In summer, aphides, caterpillars, and small seeds. It is said to devour buds of fruit-trees, and is much persecuted on this account.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In a thick non-deciduous tree, in hawthorn hedges, &c.

Materials.—Small twigs, roots, and bents, lined with fibres and horsehair. Nest rather flat.

Eggs.—Four to five. Greenish blue, spotted, blotched, and streaked with red and dark purplish brown.

JAY (*Garrulus glandarius*).

Rather rare in Scotland; otherwise pretty commonly met with in woodland districts. Essentially a bird of the woods.

Plumage.—Crest fairly well-defined and greyish white, streaked with black; moustachial streak black. Plumage generally grey tinged with rufous, and darker above than below. Rump and upper tail-coverts white—conspicuous in flight. Chin and throat buffish white. Primaries blackish, secondaries deep black and white; greater wing-coverts barred with black, white, and bright blue. Tail black. Bill horn-colour. Legs pale brown. Length 14½ in. Female and young similar.

Language.—A harsh scream like "chaik." It has certain imitative powers.

Habits.—It shuns mankind, and always seeks concealment among the tree tops. Very active, alert and exceedingly inquisitive if no danger appears to be at hand. When perching it incessantly flirts its tail and erects and depresses its crest. Flight not very rapid and direct. On the ground it hops.

Food.—Worms, spiders, insects, eggs, young birds, &c. In winter, berries, &c. Practically omnivorous.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—At the top of some thick bush, in fork of sapling or small tree.

Materials.—Sticks, twigs, and roots, lined with dry grass, rootlets, and a little hair. Cup well shaped.

Eggs.—Four to seven. Pale green or greenish blue, thickly mottled with olive-brown. Usually a black, irregular line at the large end.

GREEN WOODPECKER (*Gecinus viridis*).

Generally distributed, though rather local; rarer further north, and very rare in Ireland.

Haunts.—Well-wooded districts.

Plumage.—Upper parts olive-green. Crown of head and moustachial streak bright carmine; sides of face black. Wings smoky brown, with outer webs of primaries barred with white and blackish. Rump yellowish, conspicuous in flight, under parts greyish green. Bill slaty black, and rather long. Tail-feathers stiff and pointed. Legs slate-grey. Length 13 in. Female, no carmine on the cheeks, but black. Young, under parts barred, no black lores. Cheeks spotted with carmine in the male and pale brown in the female.

Language.—A ringing kind of laugh, like "plui-plui-plui."

Habits.—Like all Woodpeckers, it is practically a

parasite on trees, in which it finds its food and lays its eggs. The tapping of the Woodpecker is a familiar woodland sound. Flight strong and undulating. On the ground it walks or hops; on the tree-trunk it ascends spirally and by means of a series of jerks, aided by its stiff tail-feathers and tenacious claws.

Food.—Insects, and especially ants; also nuts and acorns in winter.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In a hole in some tree, excavated by the bird itself, and used yearly if not disturbed.

Materials.—None.

Eggs.—Five to seven. Pure glossy, creamy white.

CAPERCAILLIE (*Tetrao urogallus*).

Found in considerable numbers in the central counties of Scotland. Almost exclusively a bird of the forest.

Plumage.—Pendant feathers of throat black. Head and neck dusky; above eyes a bare red skin-patch; upper parts slaty grey. Wing-coverts, rump, and flanks chestnut, finely lined and vermiculated with black and ash. Breast lustrous green; under parts and tail blackish, with some white spots. Bill brownish white. Legs covered with brown hair-like feathers. Length 35 in. Female: much smaller, and generally brown, mottled with black, white, and tawny red; neck and breast brownish red; tail dark red, barred with black, and tipped with white. Young like female. Young in down generally buff, tinged with rufous and marked with dark brown.

Language.—Several utterances which are almost impossible to syllabise; they have been given as follows:—(1) "pellep" or "peller," repeated two or three times; (2) "klickop"; (3) "hede."

Habits.—Polygamous, and at mating-time very pugnacious, fighting most desperately for the supremacy

of the hens ; the male puffs out his plumage and struts about in a most frenzied manner. Flight powerful and rapid. It perches on trees.

Food.—Berries, acorns, &c. ; especially the shoots of the Scotch fir and fir-needles.

Nest.—May or June. One brood.

Site.—In hollow in the ground, among heather or under tree or bush.

Materials.—If any, a few pieces of grass.

Eggs.—Five to twelve or more. Pale reddish yellow or buffish, spotted and speckled with reddish brown. Like Black Grouse's, only larger.

PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*).

Common and found in woods, coming out into the open to feed. Nowadays Pheasant-rearing has assumed such gigantic proportions that many birds are semi-domesticated. A Chinese species—the Ring-necked Pheasant—has been introduced in countless numbers, and these have interbred so much with our wild Pheasant that one rarely finds a true type of British bird. Our Pheasant has no ring at all round the neck.

Plumage.—Head and neck radiant with green and purple reflections. Sides of face nude and scarlet, minutely speckled with black ; otherwise plumage richly variegated with black, brown, green, purple, red, and yellow. Bill, horn colour. Tail long. Length 36 in. Female, smaller ; light brown, marked with darker brown ; sides of face feathered. Young in down yellowish buff marked with dark brown ; paler below.

Language.—A loud squawk, like "gurrig."

Habits.—On the ground it runs very rapidly ; when flushed it shoots up with much noise, like a rocket. Flight powerful and rapid. Polygamous ; the males fighting for the hens.

Food.—Practically omnivorous.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In a hollow in the ground, in tuft of grass, under brambles, &c.

Materials.—A few dry grasses.

Eggs.—Seven to twelve, or more. Olive-brown or olive-green.

Resident Birds of the Commons, Downs Moorland and Mountainous Districts

BLACK GROUSE (FEMALE, GREY HEN)

(*Tetrao tetrix*).

Most abundantly met with in Scotland; found also in Devon and Somerset, and in smaller numbers in other suitable parts of England and Wales.

Haunts.—Woods, and moors where rushy places abound.

Plumage.—Generally black with violet reflections. Bluer on the neck and rump. White bar on wings. Lower tail-coverts white. Above eye a naked vermilion patch. Tail lyre-shaped. Legs feathered. Length 23 in. Female smaller, chestnut-brown barred with black. Young, like female. Young in down, buff mottled, with darker above, paler below.

Language.—A powerful, harsh, gurgling cry.

Habits.—Flight rapid. Polygamous, and in early spring the cocks engage in most desperate combats, the hens looking on. They also show off before the hens, going through many curious antics for their delectation.

Food.—Buds and green shoots, seeds, berries, and grain.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—Under a bush or among grass, in a slight depression, usually not far from water.

Materials.—A little dry grass.

Eggs.—Six to ten. Yellowish white, spotted with orange-brown.

MERLIN (*Falco æsalon*).

Fairly well distributed, but rarer in the South; most abundant in Wales, North of England and Scotland; fairly common in Ireland.

Haunts.—Moorland and mountainous districts.

Observation.—Our smallest Falcon; note absence of moustachial streak.

Plumage.—Upper parts slaty grey, with dark shaft to each feather; under parts rufous, longitudinally streaked with dark brown. Broad black bar near tip of tail; tip white. Bill bluish, darker at the tip. Cere and legs yellow. Length 10 in. Female: dark brown above, with dark shafts to each feather; tail dark brown, with six ruddy buff bands, and tipped with buffish white; chin and throat white; under parts white, striped with dark brown; length 12 in. Young resemble female, but more rufous. Nestling covered with white down tinged with buff.

Language.—A sharp, shrill cry, much like the Kestrel's.

Habits.—Courageous and fearless. It flies near the ground with rapid, skimming flight. It is fond of perching on rocks.

Food.—Small birds chiefly.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—On the ground among heather, rarely in trees.

Materials.—A few sprigs of heather.

Eggs.—Four to six. Reddish, well spotted, and marked with brick-red. Much like the Kestrel's, but smaller.

HEN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*).

Nowadays extremely local and rare.

Haunts.—Moorland country.

Plumage.—Upper parts, throat, and breast bluish grey. Rump white. Primaries black. Under parts

white. Bill dark horn-colour. Cere and legs yellow. Length 19 in. Female: upper parts reddish brown; under parts pale ruddy yellow, streaked and spotted with yellowish brown. Tail brown, with five darker bars (hence Ringtail). Length 21 in. Young, resemble female, only more rufous. Nestling covered with white down.

Language.—A scream rather like the Kestrel.

Habits.—Flight buoyant, and rather like a Gull's. It methodically quarters the ground, flying low for the purpose, when hunting for its prey.

Food.—Small mammals and birds, frogs and snakes.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—On the ground, usually among heather.

Materials.—Sticks, dry grass, bits of heather, lined with dry grass.

Eggs.—Four to six. White, faintly suffused with blue; occasionally marked with rusty brown.

DARTFORD WARBLER OR FURZE WREN

(*Sylvia undata*).

Very local and uncommon. Breeds in most of the southern counties, more especially in Hants, Surrey, Sussex and Kent; much rarer further north.

Haunts.—Furze-grown commons.

Plumage.—Upper parts dark greyish brown, more slaty on the head; under parts chestnut-brown, paling into dull white on the belly. Tail dark grey, long and fan-shaped, two outer feathers broadly tipped with brownish white. Bill horn-brown, paling into yellowish at the base. Legs pale brown. Length 5 in. In appearance much like a dark-coloured long-tailed Wren. Female smaller and paler; after autumn moult, throat, breast, and flanks spotted and streaked with white. Young, paler than female and whiter under parts.

Language.—Song, hurried and impetuous like the Wren's, but feebler. Call-note, a loud "pitchoo" repeated two or three times; scolding note, a harsh "cha."

Habits.—A most skulking bird, and seldom seen; extremely restless and full of curious antics, fanning its long tail and perching on the topmost sprays of gorse. Flight fairly rapid and undulating.

Food.—Insects principally, also fruits.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—Always low down in thick furze-bush, and carefully concealed.

Materials.—Dead pieces of furze and bents intertwined with moss or wool, lined with finer materials and, perhaps, some horsehair. Cup deep, but flimsily compacted.

Eggs.—Four to six. Greenish white, closely speckled with reddish brown and olive. May be confounded with those of the Whitethroat.

MEADOW PIPIT OR TITLARK

(*Anthus pratensis*).

Common pretty well everywhere, haunting moors, commons, pasture-lands, and the like.

Plumage.—Upper parts ashy olive-brown, each feather having a dark centre. Dull white eye-stripe; wings darker and primaries edged with yellowish. Tail also darker, with two outer feathers whitish, conspicuous in flight; under parts buffish white, with many elongated brown markings. Bill dark brown above, paler below. Legs pale brown. Length $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. Female less strongly marked below. Young yellower, and under markings darker.

Language.—Song delivered when flying, and consists of "chu-wick," repeated several times in the ascent, and "see-see," repeated often in the descent. Call-note, "ist." Alarm-note, "peet."

Habits.—Much resembling the migrant Tree Pipit, but not arboreal, confining its attentions to low bushes, from which it frequently rises, singing and returning to same or an adjacent one with expanded wings and tail. Food taken on the ground. Flight rather wild and jerky, somewhat like the Wagtail's.

Note.—Practically indistinguishable from the Rock Pipit, but this species never quits its grass-land haunts.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, spiders, worms, small beetles, and small seeds.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—On the ground, in some cavity concealed by growing herbage.

Materials.—Dry grass, bents, and moss, lined with fine bents, fibres, and hair.

Eggs.—Four to six. Greyish white mottled with olive-brown; usually a hair-like streak at the large end. Like Rock Pipit's, but smaller.

LINNET (*Acanthis cannabina*).

Well-distributed through Great Britain, except in the more mountainous parts.

Haunts.—Furze-grown commons, uncultivated lands, &c.

Plumage.—Variable according to age, sex, and season. Forehead and centre of crown crimson; other parts of head and sides of neck brownish grey. Mantle chestnut-brown. Wings blackish with outer edges white, giving a conspicuous bar in flight. Tail-feathers black-edged with white. Chin and throat dull white striped with greyish brown. Breast crimson. Belly sordid white. Bill horn-colour. Legs brown. Length $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. In autumn, feathers of crown and breast bordered with grey, almost hiding the crimson. Under parts more striated. Female, slightly smaller, no crimson colour-

ing, and altogether duller and more striated. Young, like female.

Language.—Song, a chuckling “turra-tit-turra-turra-turra,” generally delivered in an irregular manner on the wing; also “chick-chick-a-chock-chick-chick-a-chick, chick, chick, chick-achoo.” Call-note, “twit,” rapidly repeated, especially when flying.

Habits.—Flight fairly rapid and undulating, more aerial than other Finches, and in the love season the male delights in rising up into the air a few yards and then gracefully descending, singing his best notes. Gregarious, even in the breeding season.

Food.—Aphides and caterpillars in summer. Its diet, however, is chiefly various kinds of seeds; berries and grain in winter.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—Preferably in a furze-bush; in evergreens, and garden shrubberies sometimes, in hawthorn hedges and bushes.

Materials.—Dry grass, small twigs, stalks, moss, and wool, lined with wool, down, hair, and feathers.

Eggs.—Four to six. Bluish or greenish white, spotted and speckled, and sometimes streaked with reddish and purplish brown.

TWITE OR MOUNTAIN LINNET

(*Acanthis flavirostris*).

Resident, but migratory to some extent in winter. Occurring locally in the northern midlands and the North; common in North Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.

Haunts.—Mountain and moorland districts.

Observation.—Distinguish from Linnet and Redpolls by absence of rose tint on head and breast and slimmer appearance.

Plumage.—Upper parts dark brown. Feathers margined with lighter brown. Rump rose-red. Wings dark

brown margined with whitish, and conspicuous in flight. Cheeks and throat reddish buff. Breast and belly dingy white, streaked on the flanks with dark brown. Bill light yellow. Legs dark brown. Length 5 in. In winter much greyer in colouring. Female, no rose-red rump. Young, duller.

Language.—Song, not unlike the Linnet's, but inferior to it. Call-note, "twah-it" (hence Twite).

Habits.—Much like the Linnet, and more shy than it. Gregarious in winter.

Food.—Small caterpillars and various seeds.

Nest.—May onwards. Two broods.

Site.—Very low down, or on the ground in bunch of heather, tuft of grass, or furze-bush.

Materials.—Dry grass, rootlets, heather-sprigs, and moss, lined with hair, wool, feathers, and sometimes thistle-down.

Eggs.—Four to six. Pale greenish blue, speckled and spotted with reddish and purplish brown.

WOODLARK (*Alauda arborea*).

Much rarer and more local than the skylark. Found principally in the South and West of England and Wales; rare in Scotland and Ireland.

Haunts.—Uncultivated districts, commons and heaths. It is not a bird of the woods as its name implies.

Plumage.—In general appearance like a lesser Skylark with a shorter tail and much more striking eye-stripe. Upper parts reddish brown, with blackish brown centre to each feather; yellowish white streak over eyes; under parts yellowish white, streaked with dark brown. Conspicuous dark brown patch, tipped with buffish, on the great wing-coverts. Bill dark brown above, paler below. Legs light horn-brown. Length $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, slightly smaller. Young, rather more rufous above, and



MERLIN (*page 67*)



LINNET (*page 70*)



Photo

DARTFORD WARBLER (*page 68*)

Knight



Photo

RED GROUSE (*page 73*)

Berridge

feathers tipped with buff; yellower below, and more spotted.

Language.—Song resembles the Skylark somewhat, but sweeter and more flute-like in tone and not so powerful. Call-note, "lu-lu."

Habits.—It sings whilst soaring, but does not usually soar so high as the Skylark. It ascends in a series of circles. It also sings from a tree-top, especially a dead branch near top. Although fond of perching, it obtains most of its food and builds its nest on the ground.

Food.—Like the Skylark.

Nest.—March onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In slight depression in the ground, under a bush, or, sheltered by growing herbage, in tussock of grass.

Materials.—Dry grass, bents, and moss, lined with finer grass and a little hair.

Eggs.—Four to five. Greenish or buffish white, spotted and freckled with reddish brown and brownish lilac, and purplish grey under-markings. Always more ruddy than Skylark's.

RED GROUSE (*Lagopus scoticus*).

The only species exclusively British. Abundant in Scotland; found also in the northern counties of England and in Wales. Rarer in Ireland. Essentially a moorland bird.

Plumage.—Variable. Head and neck reddish brown; above eye a naked patch of vermilion; upper parts chestnut-brown barred with black. Breast nearly black, with white tips. Bill dark horn-colour. Feet and toes covered with grey hair-like feathers. In winter the under parts more or less mottled with white. Length 16 in. Female smaller, and lighter in colour. Young moult completely their first autumn, and assume adult plumage, but they are usually whiter below than the

adults. Young in down brownish buff, with darker markings above, paler below.

Language.—The male makes a crowing sound, and when alarmed utters a loud "ko-bek." Female makes a croaking noise.

Habits.—Strictly monogamous. When alarmed it usually runs some little distance before taking to wing. Flight powerful and rapid. It often feigns injury when the nest or young are in jeopardy. Very seldom perches on trees.

Food.—Heather-shoots and shoots of other plants, berries, and grain.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In some little hollow in the ground under tuft of heather.

Materials.—A few grasses and heather-stalks, perhaps a few feathers.

Eggs.—Six to twelve, or more. Yellowish white, clouded, blotched, and spotted with dark umber-brown.

PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus mutus*).

Unknown in England and Ireland. Fairly common on some of the high moors and mountains of Scotland.

Plumage.—Summer: head, breast, and upper parts ash-brown, barred, waved, and pencilled with dusky. Wings, under tail-coverts, and two central tail feathers white. Belly white; outer tail feathers black, more or less tipped with white; over eye a bright vermilion skin-patch. Bill, blackish brown. Legs and feet covered with white feathers. Length 15 in. Female, orange-tawny, barred with black. Winter: both sexes pure white; the male having a black line from bill through eye (absent in the female), and outer tail-feathers black. Young in down much like Red Grouse.

Language.—A harsh croak.

Habits.—When alarmed it generally crouches motionless, and usually escapes observation, as the plumage harmonizes with the ground both in summer and winter. Flight somewhat like the Red Grouse's. In winter they congregate, and frequent lower elevations than in summer.

Food.—Green shoots and various berries.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In a hollow in the ground. Often among stones on a mountain top.

Materials.—If any, a few heather-stalks and pieces of grass.

Eggs.—Eight to ten, or more. Yellowish white, blotched and spotted with rich dark brown. Much like the Red Grouse's, but less marked.

COMMON BUZZARD (*Buteo vulgaris*).

Rare and decreasing. Still found in the West, Wales and Scotland.

Haunts.—Mountains and wild forests.

Plumage.—Upper parts dark brown, mottled with darker brown. Wings blackish brown. Tail dark brown, with twelve transverse lighter bars; under parts yellowish white, longitudinally marked with brown. Bill blackish horn-colour. Cere and legs yellow. Length 20 in. Female, altogether lighter; length 22 in. Young, much like female. Nestling covered with greyish white down. The plumage of this species varies considerably.

Language.—A melancholy kind of mewing.

Habits.—Rather sedentary, remaining perched motionless for long periods of time. On the wing somewhat sluggish, but it delights in soaring upwards in a series of graceful gyrations.

Food.—Small mammals, beetles, worms, grasshoppers, snakes, and lizards.

Nest.—April. One brood.

Site.—On some inaccessible ledge on a mountain or sea-cliff, sometimes in a forest-tree.

Materials.—Sticks and twigs, lined with wool and green leaves.

Eggs.—Two to four. Bluish white, spotted, blotched, and streaked with reddish brown; under markings purplish grey. Rather variable.

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetus*).

Resident only in the Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland; rarely met with in England.

Haunts.—Mountainous districts.

Plumage.—Head, back of neck, and legs fulvous brown; other parts dark chocolate-brown. Primaries blackish. Tail brownish black, variegated with bars of grey. Bill bluish towards base, otherwise black. Cere yellow, partly covered with bristly feathers. Legs feathered to the toes. Length 33 in. Female similar, but larger; length 36 in. Young, brown, with basal half of tail white. Nestling covered with white down.

Language.—A shrill squealing cry, almost like a bark.

Habits.—Flight majestic and powerful, and it is fond of soaring and circling at a great height with outspread wings and tail. It pounces on its prey, but does not usually pursue it.

Food.—Hares, rabbits, birds of many kinds up to the size of a grouse; also lambs.

Nest.—April. One brood.

Site.—On some inaccessible ledge of a mountain; sometimes in a tree.

Materials.—Sticks and heather, lined with tufts of grass, &c.

Eggs.—Two or three. White suffused with bluish, spotted, blotched, and clouded with ruddy brown, and purplish grey under markings. Variable.

STONECHAT (*Pratincola rubicola*).

Rather local and confined to furze-clad commons.

Note.—Black head and white patch on wings.

Plumage.—Head and throat black; upper parts black, with feathers edged with brown. Tail and wings dark brown, with conspicuous white patch on the latter; tail-coverts white, spotted with brown. Sides of neck white. Breast bright chestnut-red paling into almost white on the belly. Bill and legs black. Length $5\frac{1}{4}$ in. Female, duller in colour throughout, with smaller white wing spot; tail-coverts reddish brown; throat black, with small dingy white and reddish spots. Young spotted above and below; no dark throat or white patches.

Language.—Song, soft, sweet and varied though short, uttered on the wing and when perched. Call-note, "chat-chat," like two pebbles being knocked together. Note of anger or alarm, "huett-jurre," with the r's rolled.

Habits.—It loves to perch conspicuously on the topmost spine of a gorse-spray, fanning and twitching its tail nervously and fidgeting the whole time. Flight undulating. Insects captured on the wing. When alarmed it skulks in dense cover. Nest difficult to locate owing to the deceptive wiles of the parents.

Food.—Insects chiefly; spiders, small worms, grubs, and beetles. In winter, seeds.

Nest.—April or May. Sometimes two broods.

Site.—On or very near the ground at the base of furze-bush, well concealed by growing herbage.

Materials.—Dry grass, rootlets, and moss, loosely compacted, lined with finer grass, hair, feathers, and sometimes a little wool.

Eggs.—Four to six. Pale greenish blue; speckled, chiefly at large end, with reddish brown.

GOLDEN PLOVER (*Charadrius pluvialis*).

Breeds sparingly in Wales, Devonshire and Somersetshire, and, more abundantly, in the North of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Haunts.—Moorland districts.

Plumage.—Forehead and stripe over eyes white, continued down sides of neck to flanks. Lores and cheeks black. Upper parts prettily mottled with black, golden, and creamy white; under parts black; axillaries white, conspicuous in flight. Bill, legs, and feet black. Length 11 in. Female similar, but black areas more sooty. In winter, adults lose the black on under parts, which then become whitish, spotted with yellowish brown. Young: upper parts more spotted, and with browner golden; under parts grey. Nestling: upper parts mottled with black, grey, and golden down; under parts greyish white.

Language.—A melodious double whistle like "lou-ee, lou-ee," especially noisy in wet weather. In the love season it utters a trilling whistle like "tirr-pee-you."

Habits.—In winter and when on migration this species is gregarious. Largely a night feeder. It runs well, like all true Plovers. Flight rapid, and when in flocks they wheel about in the air in graceful, regular and wonderful evolutions.

Food.—Insects, worms, slugs, crustacea, &c.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—On the ground, among heather or grass.

Materials.—A few grasses and heather-stalks.

Eggs.—Four. Stone-colour or buff, spotted and blotched with deep brown and purplish grey. Large for the bird's size. Pyriform shape.

Resident Birds of the Streams, Rivers, Lakes and Marshy Districts

DIPPER OR WATER OUZEL (*Cinclus aquaticus*).

Most common in the mountainous districts of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and in the northern, central, and south-western counties of England.

Haunts.—Inseparable from rushing mountain torrents.

Plumage.—Upper parts slaty grey, each feather being margined with brown. Head brown. Chin, throat, and breast pure white; under parts chestnut-brown. Bill blackish. Legs brown. Length 7 in. Female similar. Young greyer above, with no chestnut on under parts.

Language.—Song, neither extensive nor powerful, and slightly reminiscent of the Wren's. Another note often uttered is "chick."

Habits.—Flight much like the Kingfisher's, *i.e.*, straight and swift. It loves to perch on a rock in mid-stream, warbling and jerking its stumpy, Wren-like tail. It dives into the water with facility, using both wings and feet to propel itself along.

Food.—Insects and larvæ, especially those kinds found at the bottom of a stream; spiders, worms, molluscs, and seeds.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—Among rocks, in crevices in stone bridges, in holes in river bank, &c.

Materials.—Mosses and leaves felted together, lined with grass, rootlets, leaves, and sometimes feathers. Nest domed.

Eggs.—Four to six. Pure white, and oval in shape.



DIPPER (page 80)



Erridge

HERON (page 83)

Photo



REED BUNTING (*page 84*)



LITTLE GREBE (*page 87*)

MOORHEN OR WATER HEN

(Gallinula chloropus).

Common throughout the British Isles; wherever there is water and a bit of cover the Moorhen will find a home.

Plumage.—Frontal disc bright red; upper parts dark olive-brown. Head; neck, and under parts slate-grey; some white streaks on flanks; margin of pure white on the first primary, and under tail-coverts white and conspicuous. Bill yellow. Legs and feet greenish yellow. Toes long. Length 13 in. Female rather larger and brighter. The feathers of this species are peculiar, giving a somewhat hairy appearance rather than feathery. Young, greyish olive above, and ash-grey below. Bill, frontal disc, and legs dull green. Nestling covered with black down.

Language.—Call-note a loud “crek-rek-rek.” Alarm note, “whirro,” rather like a frog’s croak.

Habits.—It runs nimbly on the ground, often using the wings at the same time. It swims and dives well, and, if alarmed, will submerge the body, leaving only the beak above the water. It takes to wing reluctantly, and usually allows its legs to dangle in the water. Both when walking and swimming it bobs its head, and spasmodically jerks its stumpy tail. Pugnacious, and often fights desperately. Usually shy and wary.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ; slugs, worms, grass, grain, &c.

Nest.—March onwards. Two or three broods.

Site.—Among rushes growing in or near water, and in other similar situations; sometimes in hedges and trees.

Materials.—Dry grass, reed-leaves, and bits of sedge.

Eggs.—Six to ten, or more. Reddish, buffish white, or clay-colour; sparingly spotted and speckled with reddish (almost orange) brown, and greyish under-markings.

COOT (*Fulica atra*).

Generally distributed and fairly common wherever there are sheets of open water and sluggish flowing rivers.

Plumage.—Frontal disc white, and always conspicuous (hence Bald Coot) ; upper parts slaty-grey, narrow white bar across wings ; under parts sooty black. Bill flesh-colour. Legs green. Feet green and lobate. Length 15 in. Female similar. Young : frontal disc smaller ; throat dingy white, and under parts grey. Nestling covered with black down.

Language.—A loud, shrill cry like “ kow,” which may be likened to a dog’s bark.

Habits.—More thoroughly aquatic than the last, diving a great deal for its food, and by means of its lobate feet able to explore oozy places with ease. Flight fairly powerful, the legs being stretched out behind, Heron-like ; otherwise, much resembling the last, but gregarious.

Food.—Insects, worms, slugs, aquatic weeds and plants.

Nest.—April onwards. Two or three broods.

Site.—Among reeds or rushes, and more or less floating on the water.

Materials.—Reeds and other aquatic plants, lined with finer materials of a similar kind.

Eggs.—Seven to ten, or more. Pale buff or stone-colour, speckled and dotted with dark brown and some grey under-markings.

MUTE SWAN (*Cygnus olor*).

Common on some of our rivers, lakes, and sheets of water in a more or less domesticated state.

Observation.—Distinct from other Swans on account of black tubercle or “ berry ” at base of bill.

Plumage.—White. Bill reddish orange ; nail and

basal tubercle black. Legs black. Length 60 in. Female smaller, and tubercle less developed. Young (cygnet), greyish brown above, paler below. Bill and legs lead-coloured.

Language.—Loud and like a trumpet.

Habits.—Flight strong and powerful with the long neck outstretched. It frequents shallow waters and feeds by thrusting its long neck down to the bottom where the food is found. When angry half raises its wings and hisses. A powerful swimmer like all Swans. On land very awkward and ungainly.

Food.—Aquatic plants and insects and grain.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—On a small island or secluded part of a river or lake bank.

Materials.—Reeds and water-plants, piled together into a bulky mass.

Eggs.—Three to six. Dull greenish white.

COMMON HERON (*Ardea cinerea*).

Rather local, but usually met with in the vicinity of water.

Plumage.—Crest white, except two long black plumes; upper parts slaty grey. Forehead, cheeks, neck, under parts, and under tail-coverts white. Neck streaked with bluish grey, from which depend long white feathers. Bill and legs long and yellow. Length 36 in. Female smaller, rather duller, and plumes shorter. Young: first covered with greyish brown down above, and white below; later dusky brown above, striped on flanks and breast with blackish.

Language.—A hoarse croaking "honk" or "kronk." Rather silent generally.

Habits.—Sociable, always breeding in heronries. It loves to stand with the water rippling round its lanky legs, quite motionless, on the look-out for fish, which

are speared by the long bill. It rises at first rather clumsily from the ground, but soon assumes a leisurely majestic flight, more rapid than it appears. In flight the legs trail behind—note rounded wings. A shy bird.

Food.—Fish, frogs, reptiles, &c., sometimes small mammals and young water-fowl. It is voracious and little comes amiss.

Nest.—February or March. Two broods.

Site.—At the top of some tree, not far from water; often several nests in one tree. Sometimes on rocks and ruins. Rarely on the ground.

Materials.—Sticks, lined with twigs, grass-sods, moss, wool, &c. A bulky structure.

Eggs.—Three to five. Uniform greenish blue.

REED BUNTING, ALSO REED SPARROW

(*Emberiza schæniclus*).

Generally distributed. Never found far from rivers or marshy places except when frozen out, when it consorts freely and wanders about the country with Finches.

Plumage.—Head, throat, chin, and gorget black; nape, collar and moustachial streak white; upper parts variegated with reddish brown and blackish. Tail blackish; two outer feathers white, conspicuous in flight; under parts dull white, and streaked with black on flanks. Bill and legs brown. Length 6 in. Female: head reddish brown with dusky spots, white areas less pure. Young, like female.

Language.—Song, a brief performance, and may be rendered "cheo-cheo-chee-chee-chee-chee," ending with a harsh "zshwee," not unlike the Greenfinch's terminal note. Call-note, "tschee."

Habits.—It sings from the top of some reed-stem, and, if disturbed, flies on a few yards, perches again and sings, and so on. Flight slow and rather clumsy. It hops on the ground.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ. Small mollusca and various seeds in winter.

Nest.—May onwards. Two or three broods.

Site.—On or close to the ground, and always near water, among rushes at side of a ditch, among osiers, &c.

Materials.—Dry grass, bits of aquatic plants, and moss, lined with fine grass and horsehair.

Eggs.—Four to five. Brownish lavender or purplish grey.

SHORT-EARED OWL (*Asio accipitrinus*).

Resident only in the northern counties, but generally dispersed over the country in autumn and winter. Essentially a ground Owl, inhabiting moors and marshes and open country.

Plumage.—Tufts on head much shorter than in Long-eared Owl. Upper parts dark buff, broadly streaked and blotched with dark brown. Facial disc buff, streaked with dark brown. Wings barred with brown; under parts dull yellow, streaked with dark brown. Bill black. Legs covered with buff feathers. Length 15 in. Female, larger and darker. Young, much darker above and more tawny below. Nestling covered with grey down.

Language.—A variety of noises; one like the barking of a dog, another a kind of hiss, and another a sharp clicking sound.

Habits.—Much resembling the other Owls, but less nocturnal, frequenting more open country and living on the ground.

Food.—Small mammals and birds; also bats, fish, insects, and reptiles.

Nest.—Usually in May. Sometimes later.

Site.—On the ground, under a small bush or amongst growing herbage.

Materials.—A little dry grass roughly arranged round the eggs.

Eggs.—Four to seven or more. White and smooth.

WATER RAIL (*Rallus aquaticus*).

Resident but partially migrant. Generally distributed, though local and rather uncommon.

Haunts.—Fens, marshes, rivers, &c.

Observation.—Distinguish from Land Rail (migrant) by longer bill, greyer under parts, and dark flanks well barred with white.

Plumage.—Upper parts olive-brown, with black streaks to centre of feathers. Cheeks, neck, and breast dull grey. Flanks blackish, distinctly barred with white. Bill red, and longer than in other Rails. Legs and feet brownish flesh-colour. Length $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female duller, and sometimes barred with white on the wing. Young, more olivaceous above than adult; dull buffish white below, with speckles on throat and dark brown bars on flanks. Nestling covered with black down.

Language.—A harsh cry resembling "creek."

Habits.—Shy and elusive, always skulking on the slightest alarm; flies most reluctantly, and with dangling legs. Although not web-footed, it swims and dives with facility. Preferably, however, it runs about with extreme rapidity among the rank dense herbage of its marshy home, and is seldom seen.

Food.—Snails, slugs, worms, aquatic plants, &c.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—In tufts of sedges, or rushes; amongst coarse, rank, aquatic herbage, always well concealed and near water.

Materials.—Coarse grass, bits of sedge, reed-leaves.

Eggs.—Seven to ten. Creamy white, sparsely speckled and spotted with reddish brown and ash-grey.

COMMON SNIPE (*Gallinago caelestis*).

Resident; but many migrants arrive in winter. Fairly well distributed, breeding most abundantly in Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, Scotland and Ireland.

Haunts.—Marshy and fenny districts.

Plumage.—Crown dark brown with one central and two buff stripes. Upper parts mottled with black and chestnut-brown. Flanks whitish, barred with dusky; under parts white. Bill long and brown, darker at tip. Legs and feet greenish brown. Length $10\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female similar. Young altogether duller. Nestling covered with chestnut-brown down above, mottled with black and grey; greyish brown below.

Language.—The well-known and curious drumming produced by the vibrations of the wings and tail. Also another sharp cry, two or three times repeated, like "scape."

Habits.—Feeds like the Woodcock, probing the ooze with its sensitive bill. At pairing time the male practises his curious aerial performances, rising to some considerable height, then hurling himself earthwards with tremendous velocity, all the time drumming or bleating. When flushed, it flies off in a rapid, erratic, zigzagging fashion. Crepuscular in habits. Feigns injury when nest is in danger.

Food.—Worms, insects, &c.

Nest.—April or May. Sometimes two broods.

Site.—Among rank aquatic herbage on boggy land.

Materials.—A few leaves and stalks.

Eggs.—Four. Pale olive, spotted and blotched with rich dark brown, other shades of brown, and purplish grey. Pyriform shape.

LITTLE GREBE OR DABCHICK (*Podiceps fluviatilis*).

Resident. Widely distributed in these islands, wherever there are large ponds, lakes, meres, and sluggish-flowing rivers.

Plumage.—Head, back of neck, and upper parts dark brown. Cheek, throat, and sides of neck chestnut, chin black; under parts greyish white, browner on the flanks. Bill horn-colour. Legs and toes dull green. Length $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female similar, but slightly smaller. In winter the chin is white, and the general appearance is paler. Young: duller than adults, streaked with dusky on sides of head. Nestling: covered with down; black on head, neck and upper parts, striped with rufous; under parts white.

Language.—Usually rather silent. In the breeding season it utters a rapid chattering cry like "weet," many times repeated.

Habits.—Exceedingly wary, it at once dives for safety if alarmed, taking, if need be, its young ones down with it under the wings. It dives with wonderful abruptness, pursuing fishes under water with remarkable celerity. It seldom flies, but when it does so it skims along just over the surface of the water with rapidly beating wings. Its nest is moored to some reeds or the like, and only just projects above the water, consequently it is simply steeped in water. The eggs are always covered over with wet weeds by the bird before leaving the nest.

Nest.—Early May onwards. Two broods.

Site.—Moored among rushes or reeds.

Materials.—Rotting aquatic herbage of some kind, piled together, and roughly worked into shape.

Eggs.—Three to six. Chalky white when newly laid, but they soon become discoloured and muddied to a dirty brown; in shape elongated and more or less equally pointed at either end.

MARSH HARRIER (*Circus æruginosus*).

Formerly an abundant resident, but now very rare and local. It may still breed very sparingly in Norfolk and some of the southern counties.

Haunts.—Moors and marshy places.

Plumage.—Head creamy-white, streaked with umber-brown. Back brown. Primaries black, otherwise wings and tail grey; under parts buff, streaked with brown. Bill horn-colour. Cere and legs yellow. Length 21 in. Female larger, and tail and under parts brown. Young dark chocolate-brown; the male having crown of head buffish white, and the females yellowish nape streaked with brown. Nestling covered with white down.

Language.—Rather like the Kittiwake's cry, "keew, keew."

Habits.—It flies low over the ground, swooping down on its prey. It is also said to catch surface-swimming fish. Rarely perches on a tree.

Food.—Small mammals and birds. Fond of eggs, and consequently always shot when possible. It preys to a large extent on young water-fowl of all kinds.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—On the ground, in a swamp amongst reeds.

Materials.—Dry grass, reeds, and rushes, lined with finer grass. A large and loose structure.

Eggs.—Three to five. Very pale bluish-white and rather round in shape.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*).

Uncommon and local. It breeds on inland waters chiefly in the midland and eastern counties; also in Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

Plumage.—Crown, crest, and ruff dark brown and chestnut. Stripe over eye and cheeks white. Upper parts dark brown. Secondaries white, and conspicuous in flight; under parts silky, silvery white, practically tailless. Bill pinkish. Legs and lobate toes blackish green. Length 21 in. Female similar, but slightly smaller, and has less developed ruff and crest; both these ornaments are lost in winter. Young have little

crest or chestnut colouring. Nestling in down: head, neck, and under parts white; marked on head and neck with blackish brown stripes; upper parts, wings, and flanks brown, striped with blackish brown.

Language.—Call-note, a harsh kind of croak. Alarm-note, "kek-kek."

Habits.—Essentially aquatic, and is rarely seen on the wing. It flies just above the water with quick-beating wings, and soon takes to that element again, where it swims powerfully and dives splendidly, literally flying under the water after its finny prey. When alarmed it submerges its body, leaving only the bill above the surface. On leaving its nest, it always covers the eggs with wet weeds.

Food.—Fish, crustacea, and frogs.

Nest.—May or June. One brood.

Site.—In a bed of rushes or reeds. It is a floating nest, moored to some convenient reeds, and the rim only just projects above the surface of the water.

Materials.—Pieces of decaying rushes, or reeds, or other aquatic herbage heaped together.

Eggs.—Three or four. Pure chalky white when fresh, but they are speedily stained and muddied to a dirty brown. In shape elongated and pointed at both ends.

BEARDED REEDLING OR TITMOUSE

(*Panurus biarmicus*).

Strictly local, and much rarer than it used to be. Chiefly found in eastern counties.

Haunts.—Reed-beds.

Plumage.—Head bluish grey; black loreal patch in the shape of a moustache. Nape, back and rump tawny yellow; upper parts orange-brown. Wings marked with black, white and rufous. Tail very long and orange brown; outer feathers variegated with black and white. Bill yellow. Legs black. Length $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. Female, head

brownish fawn, no black moustache. Young like female, but streaked on head and back with black.

Language.—Somewhat like the Blue Tit's, but call-note "ping-ping," rather like the twang of a banjo. Alarm-note, "chi-arre."

Habits.—Very Tit-like in its active climbing about the reed-stems. In appearance graceful and slender. When alarmed it at once drops down to the base of the reeds and skulks. Sociable in winter.

Food.—Aquatic insects, molluscs, and seeds of reeds in winter.

Nest.—April onwards. Probably two broods.

Site.—On marshy ground amongst aquatic herbage, in tuft of sedge, &c.

Materials.—Reed-stems and leaves, and grass, lined with feathery fibres of the reed-tops; a deep cup.

Eggs.—Five to seven. Dingy white, minutely speckled and wavily lined with dark brown.

GREY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla melanope*).

Resident or intermigratory. Most common in mountainous districts, but rarer and more local than Pied Wagtail.

Haunts.—Rushing mountain torrents, like the Dipper.

Plumage.—Head and upper parts bluish grey; pale streak over and under eye. Gorget black and diamond-shaped. Wings brownish black, edged with buffish white. Tail brown, long and graceful, with outer feathers white, conspicuous in flight. Under parts bright yellow. Bill dark brown. Legs pale brown. Length $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female duller and no black gorget; throat white (latter remark also applies to male in autumn); breast buff; tail shorter. Young browner above; eye-stripe and under parts more buffy.

Language.—Closely resembling that of its Pied relative. Call-note, "si-si."

Habits.—A most graceful and pretty bird, quick and agile in its actions, running quickly, and flying in an undulatory manner. Perches in trees more readily than its congeners.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ largely; spiders, centipedes, molluscs and crustacea; also seeds.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—On the ground in thick tuft of grass, under bush or rock, in wheel-rut, choked ditch, &c. Always near water.

Materials.—Grass, roots, and moss, lined with wool and hair.

Eggs.—Five to six. Creamy white, closely mottled and clouded with pale brown, like Yellow Wagtail's, but rather larger. Sometimes marked with dark hair-like lines.

KINGFISHER (*Alcedo ispida*).

Generally distributed in Great Britain, in suitable localities; rarer in the extreme North.

Haunts.—Rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and sheets of water.

Plumage.—Crown and nape bluish black, barred with emerald-green and cobalt. Back, rump, and upper tail-coverts azure-blue. Tail indigo-blue. Wings bluish green, spotted with azure-blue. Lores and ear-coverts chestnut; buffish white patch at sides of neck. Throat white; under parts dull orange-red. Tail short. Bill black, orange at the base, and long. Legs reddish brown. Length $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, duller and greener. Young, paler and browner, and bill black.

Language.—A shrill piping "kee" uttered on the wing.

Habits.—It loves to perch on a branch overhanging a stream, intently watching for its finny prey; then suddenly it plunges into the water and catches it, returning to its perch to swallow it, head first. Flight swift and direct. In disposition shy and retiring.

Food.—Small fish, tadpoles, water-beetles, small crustacea, &c.

Nest.—March or April. One brood.

Site.—In hole in river-bank made by the bird.

Materials.—None; but indigestible pellets of fish-bones cast up by the adults are roughly shaped round the eggs.

Eggs.—Six to eight. Pure glossy white, and nearly spherical in shape.

TEAL (*Querquedula crecca*).

Resident, but large numbers are winter visitors. Some remain to nest in suitable localities, though sparingly, in the South. Breeds abundantly in Wales, North of England, the Orkneys, Scotland, and Ireland.

Haunts.—Rivers and open sheets of fresh water, &c. Our smallest duck.

Plumage.—Crown of head and cheeks chestnut; round eye and extending back towards nape a broad green stripe margined with buff; upper parts prettily pencilled in black and white; speculum green and purple. Rump black. Tail brown; fore-chest buff, spotted with blackish; under parts white, buff patch each side of the rump. Flanks vermiculated with black and white. Bill blackish. Legs and feet brownish grey. Length 14 in. Female, mottled with brown. Young, very similar to female. Young in down; brown above with dark streak from forehead to crown; two other streaks from eye to nape; yellowish-white below.

Language.—A short, sharp "quack"; also a soft whistle.

Habits.—On taking to wing they rise almost perpendicularly from the water to a fair height, and then shoot off rapidly. Perhaps the tamest of our wild Ducks. It feeds by night.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, seeds of aquatic plants, worms, slugs, mollusca, &c.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—On the ground among herbage, &c., and usually near water.

Materials.—Sedges, reeds, dry grass, leaves, and pieces of heather, lined with brown down, having lighter centre and no white tips.

Eggs.—Seven to ten or more. Creamy or buffish white.

MALLARD OR WILD DUCK (*Anas boscas*).

The progenitor of our domesticated Duck. Our commonest Duck, being well distributed throughout Great Britain, and nesting where suitable.

Haunts.—Fresh-water lakes and rivers, &c.

Plumage.—Head and neck green; white ring round neck. Breast chestnut; speculum green, bordered with white. Rump, upper and under tail-coverts and curled feathers of tail black, remaining tail-feathers grey; flanks and belly dull white. Bill yellowish green. Legs and feet orange-red. Length 24 in. Female smaller, and plumage generally mottled with brown and buff. The male assumes a plumage like the female in May, known as the "Eclipse" plumage. Young, like the female. Nestling in down: dark brown above, paler below. Throat buff. Buff stripe above eyes and brown stripe through same.

Language.—Much resembling the homely "quack" or "quark" of the domesticated Duck.

Habits.—It walks awkwardly (waddles), owing to the backward position of the legs. It swims well, and can submerge the body, leaving the bill only projecting above water, when thoroughly alarmed. It flies rapidly with neck outstretched. It feeds chiefly by night, sifting and spattering mud in its specialized laminated bill. Before the young are able to fend for themselves, the male, like all true Ducks, sheds his nuptial plumage, and

assumes the mottled garb of the female, and during the moult he is incapable of flight.

Food.—Practically omnivorous.

Nest.—March or April. One brood.

Site.—Among reeds at the side of a lake or river, under some bush ; sometimes, though rarely, in a tree, or far from water.

Materials.—Grass, rushes, leaves, profusely lined with neutral greyish down from the bird's breast.

Eggs.—Eight to twelve. White, slightly tinged with green, smooth-shelled and oval in shape.

Resident Birds of the Sea, Seashore and Cliffs

CHOUGH (*Pyrrhocorax graculus*).

Extremely local, and probably a decreasing species. Found most frequently in Cornwall, North Devon, Lundy Island, West Wales, Channel Islands, and West of Ireland.

Haunts.—Wild and rugged sea-cliffs.

Plumage.—Black, with purple and green reflections. Bill orange-vermilion and arched. Legs orange-vermilion. Length 16 in. Female, slightly smaller. Young, beak and legs dull orange colour.

Language.—It utters a note like "chough," reminding one of the Jackdaw. Another cry, a clear metallic "kling."

Habits.—Gregarious, and always nesting in communities, like the Jackdaw. It flies in a series of curves, at intervals closing its pinions and dropping towards the ground, then rising again. It both walks and hops on the ground.

Food.—Insects and their larvæ, worms, marine mollusca, and refuse left by the receding tide. Also berries and grain.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—In hole or cleft in the cliffs, in ruins, and the like, and generally inaccessible.

Materials.—Sticks, twigs, sprigs of heather, &c., lined with dry grass, roots, fur, wool, and hair.

Eggs.—Three to six. Greenish white, spotted, blotched and streaked more or less with varying shades of brown and grey. Rather variable.

BLACK GUILLEMOT (*Uria grylle*).

Best known as a winter visitor, but breeds fairly commonly on the north and west coasts of Scotland and Ireland, and sparingly on Isle of Man.

Plumage.—Sooty black. Conspicuous white patch on wing-coverts. Bill black. Legs and feet vermilion-red. Length 14 in. Female similar. In winter, crown white, marked with black. Back barred with black and white; rump and under parts almost white. Young: much like adults in winter dress; young in down, sooty black.

Language.—A low, plaintive kind of piping or whining.

Habits.—Generally much like its commoner relative, but not so gregarious.

Food.—Fish and crustacea.

Nest.—May or June. One brood.

Site.—Not, like the Common Guillemot, on ledges, but, like the Razorbill, in fissures in rocks or under rocks.

Materials.—None.

Eggs.—Two. Like Razorbill's in shape. Bluish or greenish white, blotched and speckled with various shades of brown and ash-grey.

RAVEN (*Corvus corax*).

Very local and rare, except in Scotland, where it is more abundant. It also breeds in suitable localities in the south and south-western counties, and in Ireland.

Haunts.—Mountainous districts and especially sea-cliffs.

Observation.—Distinguish from Crow and Rook by larger size.

Plumage.—Glossy black, with purple and Prussian blue reflections. Feathers of throat elongated. Bill and legs black. Length 25 in. Female slightly smaller and not so lustrous. Young, like female.

Language.—A hoarse, croaking "whurk"; also a cry resembling the hoarse growl of a dog. It is a mimic.

Habits.—Flight powerful, heavy, and sweeping. On the ground it sidles along with long, ungainly hops, or walks in a stately manner.

Food.—Omnivorous.

Nest.—March. One brood.

Site.—Not often in trees ; usually on some inaccessible ledge on the sea-cliffs.

Materials.—Stout sticks, twigs, and heather-sprigs, lined with grass, roots, wool, fur, &c.

Eggs.—Four to six. Greenish blue, more or less densely spotted and blotched with dark olive-brown ; variable.

COMMON CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax carbo*).

Common throughout our coasts where suitable.

Haunts.—Rocky ledges of the cliffs and the sea and some inland stations.

Plumage.—Head and neck black, with white filamentary plumes, the feathers of the occiput becoming crest-like in spring. Throat white ; gular pouch yellow. Mantle black, glossed with cupreous ; rest of plumage black. Conspicuous white patch on the thighs in the breeding season. Bill dark horn-colour. Legs black. Length 36 in. Female similar. Nestlings nude, and bluish black. Young bird, dark brown above and dirty white below, mottled with pale brown.

Language.—A harsh guttural cry. Usually very silent.

Habits.—On land it progresses awkwardly, owing to the backward position of the legs. It flies rapidly, with neck outstretched like a Duck's. It is an expert swimmer and diver, going down to great depths with incredible rapidity after its finny prey. Very sociable, always nesting in communities. It loves to sit on a rocky ledge, with head erect and half-opened wings, occasionally flapping them. The Cormorant's "rookery" is a most evil abode, reeking and stinking with its excrement and regurgitated fragments of fish.

Food.—Fish exclusively.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—On some rocky ledge overlooking the sea, and usually rather inaccessible.

Materials.—Sticks and seaweed.

Eggs.—Three to five. Pale greenish blue underground, thickly encrusted with a white chalky substance. In shape long and narrow, and rather small for the bird's size.

SHAG (*Phalacrocorax graculus*).

More local than the last, but met with abundantly in Scotland, Isle of Man, Farne Islands, Channel Islands, and Ireland.

Haunts.—Rocky ledges of the sea-coast. More essentially a marine species than the last.

Observation.—Distinguish from Cormorant by greener plumage and absence of white throat and thigh patch.

Plumage.—Bare skin of face yellow. General plumage dark green, glossed with purple and bronze. The crest is assumed just before the breeding season, after which it is lost. Bill black. Legs black. Length 27 in. Female similar, but smaller. Young, brownish green above, and mottled with brown below. Nestling, at first nude, then covered with blackish brown down.

Language.—A harsh "kroak-kraik-kroak."

Habits.—Generally like the last.

Food.—Fish.

Nest.—May.

Site.—In caves or clefts of rocks, &c.

Materials.—Sticks, seaweed, &c.

Eggs.—Three to five. Precisely similar to last, but slightly smaller.

STORM-PETREL (*Procellaria pelagica*).

Met with fairly commonly on the open seas all round our coasts throughout the year. It breeds in the Channel

Islands, Scilly Isles, Lundy Island ; also in Scotland and its islands, and in Ireland.

Plumage.—Upper parts greyish black. Rump and upper tail-coverts white and conspicuous ; greater wing-coverts edged with white. Tail tipped with black ; under parts sooty black. Bill, legs, and feet black. Length 6 in. Female similar. Young browner. Nestling covered with greyish black down.

Language.—Like “ ti-tee-ik,” several times repeated.

Habits.—Our smallest web-footed bird, being little larger than a Sparrow. When seen flying over the sea it reminds one in its flight and white rump of the House Martin. It is an oceanic wanderer, never coming to land of its own free will, except to breed, where it is absolutely helpless, and has to use its wings and hooked beak to help itself along. It is crepuscular in habits. When caught, it ejects, through the tubular passage to its nostrils, an offensive oily fluid with which it feeds its young one. When flying it lets its legs dangle, and gives the effect as of paddling. When near the nest a musky odour may always be detected.

Food.—Fish, crustacea, mollusca, and various floating fatty and oily matters.

Nest.—June. One brood.

Site.—In burrows in soft peaty soil ; in fissures in rocks, and under rocks.

Materials.—If any, a few dead grasses and stalks.

Eggs.—One. Large for the bird's size, being about one inch long ; white, sometimes faintly freckled with reddish brown. It soon becomes stained to a creamy colour. The shell is of rough texture.

LEACH'S FORK-TAILED PETREL

(*Oceanodroma leucorhœa*).

Much rarer than the last, but has been found breeding on St. Kilda, the outer Hebrides, and North Rona.

Plumage.—Generally much like the last, but distinguishable on account of its rather greyer appearance, forked tail, and larger size (8 in.), being about the size of a Swift.

Language.—Like "pewr-wit."

Habits and Food.—Generally like the last.

Nest.—June. One brood.

Site.—Like the last.

Materials.—Grass, stalks, or moss.

Eggs.—One. White, faintly zoned with rusty red; rough in texture.

OYSTER-CATCHER (*Hæmatopus ostralegus*).

Met with commonly on our coast-lines, perferably perhaps where it is rocky, with stretches of sands. Breeds abundantly in Scotland (sometimes found inland), and elsewhere, in all suitable localities.

Plumage.—Head, neck, fore chest, and upper parts black. Upper tail-coverts, great wing-coverts, and under parts pure white. Bill long, chisel-edged, and orange-yellow. Legs and feet flesh-colour. Length 16 in. Female: similar; in autumn and winter the front and sides of neck white. Young: white band on throat, back tinged with ruddy, and other colours duller. Nestling covered with greyish down, tipped with buff and mottled on head and back.

Language.—A sharp, shrill whistle, several times repeated.

Habits.—Fond of perching motionless on some sea-girt rock. When feeding, it runs along in a trotting manner. Flight rapid, and when flying its pied plumage is conspicuous. It levers off limpets from the rocks at low tide, but it is extremely doubtful whether it can successfully negotiate the bivalves of an oyster, as its name implies. It swims with ease.

Food.—Mussels, limpets, whelks, small fish, and crustacea; also marine plants.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In depression in shingle, among pebbles, and on rocks not far above high-water mark.

Materials.—When on shingle, fragments of pebbles often line the cavity; when on rocks, a few pieces of seaweed, &c.

Eggs.—Three or four. Pale clay- or stone-colour, spotted and streaked with blackish brown and greyish brown. Large for the bird's size, and not very pyriform.

RAZORBILL (*Alca torda*).

Resident, though it is a pelagic wanderer all the year except in the breeding season, when it resorts to precipitous cliffs, notably in Scotland, Flamborough, Isle of Wight, on Dorset, Devon, and Cornish coasts, Lundy Island, Isle of Man, and Irish coasts.

Plumage.—Upper parts greenish black. Throat deep velvety brown. Secondaries tipped with white; under parts white. Bill axe-shaped, with white stripe from eye to base of culmen. Legs and feet blackish. Length 17 in. Female similar. In winter the green sheen on upper parts is lost, and throat and cheeks are white. Young: like the adult in winter dress; young in down, blackish brown above, dingy white below.

Language.—Usually rather silent. It makes several curious noises, which may be compared to those of the Gulls, or to low moanings, or gruntings.

Habits.—Eminently sociable, and in the breeding season may be found on the rocky ledges of its home in countless numbers with the Guillemot. It sits on a ledge slightly inclined forwards, owing to the backward position of its legs. When leaving its ledge it never flies upwards, but slantwise down to the water. At all times pelagic, it may be observed in small companies swimming equally well on the surface or below the water,

where it catches fish. Its flight is like the diving Ducks', and, like them, it also flies in line.

Food.—Fish and crustacea.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In some cranny in the sea-cliffs, or under a rock.

Materials.—None.

Eggs.—One. Very variable, but less pyriform than the Guillemot's, and seldom with any green colouring. Usually whitish or pale brown, blotched and spotted with rich dark reddish brown and black.

PUFFIN (*Fratercula arctica*).

It breeds in immense numbers at various stations all round our coasts, notably in the northern and western isles of Scotland, Bass Rock, Flamborough Head, Farne Islands, Isle of Wight, Dorset, Devon, and Cornish coasts, Scilly Islands, Channel Islands, Lundy Island, on Welsh and Irish coasts, Anglesea, Isle of Man, &c.

Plumage.—Sides of face white. Head, collar and upper parts black. Under parts white. Eyelid orange-red; above and below the eye bluish grey areas. Bill blue at base, yellow in the middle, and red at the tip, and adze-shaped. Legs and feet orange-red. Length 12 in. Female similar. In winter the bill is smaller and duller. Young: face and sides of head dusky grey; patch of sooty black in front of eye; young in down, blackish brown.

Language.—Usually very silent. It emits a grating kind of noise, like "a-r-r."

Habits.—Perhaps our most grotesque bird, with its multi-coloured, toucan-like, and ill-proportioned bill, its plump, compact body, and short legs. Eminently sociable in the breeding season, its nesting holes literally riddling the soft, peaty earth that it usually frequents. On land it waddles awkwardly. It flies rapidly with quickly agitated wings, and swims and dives well. When

sitting, the parent will suffer itself to be captured rather than forsake its treasure. Very punctual in its appearance at its breeding stations, and similarly when after nidification it leaves for the open seas.

Food.—Fish and crustacea.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—Under rocks, in clefts in rocks, in rabbit-burrows, but usually in a burrow tunnelled by the bird itself in soft, peaty soil, about three or four feet long, terminated by the nest cavity.

Materials.—If any, a few grasses or bents.

Eggs.—One. Dull white, spotted very faintly with pale brown and grey. It soon becomes dirtied, and the markings are obliterated.

MANX SHEARWATER (*Puffinus anglorum*).

Widely distributed, and not uncommon round our coasts, breeding in considerable numbers, chiefly on various islands off the Irish coast, the west coast of England and Wales, and in great numbers at St. Kilda; also on many of the Scottish isles.

Plumage.—Head and upper parts sooty black; under parts white. Sides of neck white, mottled with brown. Bill brownish black. Legs and feet yellowish pink. Length 15 in. Female and young similar. Nestling covered with grey down.

Language.—Said to resemble “kitty-coo-roo,” or “cuck-cuck-oo.”

Habits.—Like the Storm-Petrel, it is crepuscular, and has a similar kind of flight, *viz.*, that reminding one of the Swallow tribe. It is a capital diver, and procures food often at great depths. It spends almost its whole time—except when it comes to land to breed—flying over the open sea, fair weather and foul. It ejects a green oil.

Food.—Fish, cuttlefish, offal, &c.

Nest.—May or June. One brood.

Site.—In a burrow made by the bird in soft peaty soil ; or in holes in rocks, or under rocks.

Materials.—If any, a few dead grasses or stalks.

Eggs.—One. Pure white, smooth in texture, and always retaining a peculiar musky odour.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus fuscus*).

Well distributed, but not so abundant as the Herring Gull. Its chief breeding stations are Lundy Island, Welsh coast, Walney Island, Isle of Man, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Shetlands, Orkneys, and other Scottish islands, Farne Islands, Cornwall, Devonshire, and Channel Islands.

Plumage.—Back and wings black, but tipped with white on scapulars and secondaries ; primaries blackish tipped with white, the rest pure white. Bill, legs, and feet yellow. Length 21 in. Female similar. In winter, head and neck streaked with brown. Young : parts white in adult mottled with ashy-brown, and where black in adult mottled with ruddy brown ; in fact, it is like the young Herring Gull. Nestling : covered with greyish buff down on upper parts ; head, neck, and back marked with brown ; under parts paler greyish buff.

Language.—A cackling kind of yelp, like the Herring Gull's, but, if anything, scarcely so harsh.

Habits.—Closely resembling the Herring Gull.

Food.—Like Herring Gull.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—Like Herring Gull.

Materials.—Like Herring Gull.

Eggs.—Two or three. Variable, and practically indistinguishable from the Herring Gull's. They are, however, slightly smaller, and exhibit a tendency towards bluish green in ground colour rather than olive-brown.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

(Larus maximus).

Resident ; but also partially migratory, as it is distributed pretty generally round our coasts in winter. Its breeding haunts are fewer than the two last species. It nests in fair numbers on Lundy Island, Scilly Isles, in Cornwall, on the Welsh coast, in Cumberland, and at several stations in Scotland and Ireland.

Observation.—Our largest Gull.

Plumage.—Bill yellow. Legs and feet flesh-colour, otherwise it is a larger edition of the Lesser Black-backed Gull. Length 30 in.

Language.—A loud querulous cackling.

Habits.—Generally it resembles the Gull already mentioned. It is crafty, suspicious, and vigilant. It is a noble bird in appearance, and has a strong powerful flight.

Food.—All kinds of animal matters. It devours eggs, and will kill and eat weakly mammals and birds.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—On the top of some stack of rocks, on the ground on cliff-side, sometimes on the shore.

Materials.—Grass, seaweed, &c., with a few feathers and some wool for a lining ; it is ill-compacted and bulky.

Eggs.—Two or three. Greyish brown or buff, spotted and blotched with dark brown and grey. Much larger than any other Gull's egg.

GREAT SKUA (*Megalestris catarrhactes*).

Chiefly known as a visitor in spring and autumn. In these islands it breeds only in the Shetlands. When not breeding it roams over the seas far from land.

Plumage.—Upper parts mottled with brown and white. Shafts of quills white and conspicuous in flight ; under parts rufous brown. Bill, hooked at tip, legs, and feet

black. Length 21 in. Female similar. Young much like the adults. Nestling covered with brownish grey down.

Language.—A cry resembling "skui," hence Skua.

Habits.—Very strong and swift on the wing, and when near its nest it swoops most menacingly round the intruder's head. Very predacious, and prefers rather to rob Gulls of food they have found than find it itself; it will even attack and kill other weakly Gulls.

Food.—Fish and animal matters found floating on the sea or purloined from other birds.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In hollow in ground on high moorlands.

Materials.—Twigs, dry grass, moss, &c.

Eggs.—Two. Olive-brown, blotched and spotted with dark brown and greyish brown.

ARCTIC OR RICHARDSON'S SKUA

(*Stercorarius crepidatus*).

The commonest Skua in these islands, being a regular visitor to our coasts in autumn and spring. It breeds in the Shetlands, Orkneys, Sutherland, and Caithness.

Plumage.—Crown dusky. Cheeks, neck, and under parts white, suffused with yellow; remaining plumage umber brown. Tail rather long and tapering. Bill horn-colour. Legs and feet black. Length 20 in. Female similar.

Observation.—There are two forms of this species, one light (above described), the other dark. As these two varieties interbreed, birds with plumage intermediate between the light and dark forms are found. The young are also subject to some variation in their immature plumage according to the variety to which their parents belong. Nestling covered with sooty-grey down, paler below. These also vary according to the parents.

Language.—A cry like "mee" or "mee-awk."

Habits.—Generally like the Great Skua, but it is gregarious.

Food.—Fish, either caught by itself or robbed from other Gulls. Also preys on wounded birds.

Nest.—May or June. One brood.

Site.—Like the great Skua.

Materials.—Like the Great Skua.

Eggs.—Two. Olive-brown or russet-brown, spotted and blotched with dark brown and grey.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER (*Colymbus arcticus*).

Resident only in northern districts. The rarest of the Divers which visit our coasts in winter. It breeds sparingly in outer Hebrides and some parts of the west coast of Scotland.

Plumage.—Crown and nape ash-grey. Upper parts blackish, barred and spotted with white. Throat purplish black, with half collar of white streaks. Sides of neck striped with black and white; under parts white. Bill black. Legs and feet brown. Length 26 in. Female similar, but rather smaller. In winter, plumage above chiefly ash-brown; throat and under parts white. Young: much like adults in winter plumage; young in down blackish brown above, and greyish brown below.

Language.—A loud, discordant cry.

Habits.—Admirably equipped for aquatic life. It swims and dives expertly. It flies well when occasion demands. It comes to land only to breed, where it is extremely awkward owing to the very backward position of the legs.

Food.—Fish.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—On an islet or at margin of lake.

Materials.—Aquatic herbage untidily heaped together.

Eggs.—Two, dark olive-brown thinly spotted with brown and black.

RED-THROATED DIVER

(Colymbus septentrionalis)

Resident in Scotland. Fairly common round our coasts in winter. It breeds on the northern and western isles of Scotland, on the mainland, and in west of Ireland.

Plumage.—Head, throat, and sides of neck pale grey. Crown and nape slate-grey, streaked with white. Neck striped with black and white; on front of neck a patch of orange-chestnut. Back dusky brown, speckled with white; under parts white, with greyish spots on flanks. Bill, legs, and feet blackish. Length 23 in. Female similar, but smaller. In winter, red on throat lost, and plumage above spotted and streaked with white. Young: feathers of back and wing-coverts edged with white; young in down brownish black above and greyish brown below.

Language.—A harsh "kark kakera."

Habits.—Similar to the last species.

Food.—Similar to the last species.

Nest.—May or June. One brood.

Site.—On the margin of some secluded tarn or loch.

Materials.—If any—a few water-weeds, heather, or bents.

Eggs.—Two. Olive-brown, spotted with dark umber-brown. Variable in size.

GANNET OR SOLAN GOOSE (*Sula bassana*).

Resident, but coming south in winter. Very local, breeding only in certain localities, e.g., Lundy Island, Farne Islands, certain stations in Scotland, especially the famous Bass Rock, and in Ireland.

Haunts.—Ledges of the sea-cliffs and the sea.

Plumage.—Generally pure white, tinged with buff on the head and neck. Primaries black; wings long and pointed. Nude skin round base of bill and eye dark

blue. Bill large, conical, and horn-colour. Legs black. Length 34 in. Female similar. Young : at first naked and black, then covered with white down ; later, blackish brown above, flecked with white ; under parts mottled with brown and buff. Adult plumage attained in five or six years, the white increasing year by year.

Language.—A harsh “carra, crac-cra.”

Habits.—Flight rapid and powerful. It swims well, but cannot dive. When fishing it rises to some height and then plunges down with tremendous force into the water to seize some surface-swimming fish. Gregarious in the breeding season.

Food.—Fish.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—On some inaccessible ledge of the sea-cliffs.

Materials.—Grass, turf-sods, and seaweed.

Eggs.—One. Dull white, chalky substance overlying pale blue shell. Soon becomes very dirty.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*).

Rarer than formerly, owing to constant persecution. Found most commonly in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland.

Haunts.—Wild sea-cliffs.

Plumage.—Upper parts bluish grey, barred with darker grey. Head and moustachial streak black ; under parts buffish white, transversely barred with brown. Tail more or less barred with ruddy brown, and tipped with white. Bill bluish, darker at the point ; cere and legs yellow. Length 15 in. Female : upper parts tinged with brown, and under parts with reddish ; length 18 in. Young : ashy brown on upper parts, with buff margins to feathers ; under parts dull white, longitudinally streaked with brown. Nestling covered with white down.

Language.—A sharp “hek,” repeated two or three times.

Habits.—This species is the Falcon used for hawking, on account of its remarkably rapid and dashing flight and its fearless nature. It captures its prey by striking it down with its talons.

Food.—Birds of various kinds up to the size of a Crow ; sometimes small mammals.

Nest.—April. One brood.

Site.—On some inaccessible ledge on the sea-cliffs ; seldom in trees.

Materials.—If any—sticks, seaweed, grass, &c.

Eggs.—Two to four. Yellowish white, well marked with rich red, orange-brown, and brick-red. Variable.

ROCK DOVE (*Columba livia*).

Its natural home is the sea-cliffs, and is especially common in Scotland, Ireland, and the islands adjoining ; found also in suitable districts on many parts of the English coast. This species is the wild form of the domesticated Pigeon.

Plumage.—Generally much like the Ring and Stock Doves, but easily distinguished from them by the two black transverse bars on the wings and white rump, the latter very conspicuous in flight. Bill black. Legs and feet red. Length $12\frac{1}{2}$ in. Female, slightly smaller and duller. Young, still duller.

Language.—Identical with the "coo" of the tame Pigeon.

Habits.—Much like the other Doves, but never alights on trees.

Food.—Like the other Doves.

Nest.—March onwards. Two or three broods.

Site.—On the floor or ledge of some gloomy cave.

Materials.—A few sticks and straws.

Eggs.—Two. White and glossy, and rather smaller and stouter than the Ring Dove's.

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Larus ridibundus*).

Or, more properly, Brown-headed Gull. Resident : but largely intermigratory. Of late years, increasingly vast hosts of these birds come up the Thames to London and visit the lake in St. James's Park from autumn until early spring. Well distributed and common throughout our coast-lines where it is fairly flat. It breeds in marshy places near the sea, and often on inland waters. The chief Gulleries are at Scoulton Mere, Norfolk, and on Walney Island ; while it also breeds commonly at various other stations north of Yorkshire, but sparingly southwards.

Plumage.—Head, nape, and throat chocolate-brown ; upper parts lavender-grey ; outer primaries have white centres, and dark margins to inner webs ; other parts white, flushed with pink on under parts. Bill, legs, and feet carmine. Length 16 in. Female similar, but rather smaller. In winter the brown head is almost entirely lost. Young : forehead white ; head and nape greyish brown ; mantle, shoulders, and primaries brownish. It may be four or five years before the bird attains the pure plumage of the adult. Nestling, covered with buffish brown down on upper parts, and yellowish brown on under surface. Head, throat, and back marked with black.

Language.—Always vociferous, and makes a variety of harsh guttural cries, some sounding more or less like a laugh, others somewhat reminding one of the Peewit's call.

Habits.—Sociable ; nesting in immense numbers close to one another at some Gullery, often inland, and in a boggy situation. In flight it rather reminds one of the Lapwing in the way it dashes about when agitated. It runs very well on the ground, although the water is its element, where it floats or paddles along as buoyantly as a cork. It has no diving powers beyond plunging



OYSTER CATCHER (*page 101*)



PUFFINS (*page 103*)



Photo GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL (*page 106*) *Berridge*



RINGED PLOVER (*page 117*)

into the water, if it cannot reach its object in any other way. In hard weather it comes inland, and may be seen in meadows or ploughed fields searching for grubs, &c., miles from the sea-coast.

Food.—When at the sea, fishes, crustacea, and any kind of animal matter cast up by the tide. In winter it is almost omnivorous.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—In slight hollow on boggy margin of some mere, or on some islet.

Materials.—Dead grass, pieces of sedge, and other aquatic vegetable matters.

Eggs.—Two to four. Very variable; usually pale greenish or olive-brown, blotched and spotted with dark brown and black, and underlying greyish brown.

COMMON GULL (*Larus canus*).

Named rather unhappily, since it is not known to nest south of the Border, though it is frequently observed on migration on our coasts, *i.e.*, from autumn to spring. It breeds abundantly in the north of Ireland, and Scotland, and the adjacent islands.

Observation.—Distinguish from Kittiwake by white tips to primaries.

Plumage.—Mantle French grey; first two primaries black, with white patch near the end. Head, neck, tail, and under parts white. Bill greenish; yellow at the tip. Legs and feet greenish yellow. Length 18 in. Female similar, but slightly smaller. In winter the plumage is almost exactly like the Black-headed Gull in winter dress. Young: like other Gulls the sign of immaturity is the prevalence of brownish mottling, the primaries and broad band on the tail being dark brown; the under side of the wings is brown mottled. Nestling: covered with grey down, streaked and spotted with black and brown; under parts greyish yellow.

Language.—A harsh cry, much like the Black-headed Gull's.

Habits.—In autumn and winter gregarious. It nests either near the sea or on some inland waters. It has an easy, graceful flight, but not nearly so dashing as the Tern's. It swims well, but cannot dive beyond merely plunging itself into the water from some height. Like the Black-headed Gull, it forages in the fields for food in winter.

Food.—Like the Black-headed Gull.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—Not often on cliffs; usually on low-lying islets in the sea or inland lakes.

Materials.—Dry grass, seaweed, turf, heather, and other vegetable débris.

Eggs.—Two or three. Olive-brown, spotted and blotched with deep blackish brown and purplish grey. Variable.

KITTIWAKE GULL (*Rissa tridactyla*).

Widely distributed, and abundant in suitable localities. Essentially a sea-bird, it haunts rocky coast-lines where the cliffs are high and precipitous. In Scotland and Ireland it is very abundant, and in England it nests principally on the Farne Islands, at Flamborough, Isle of Man, Lundy Island, Devonshire and Cornwall, and on the Welsh coast.

Observation.—Note the blackish tips to wings and distinguish from Common Gull.

Plumage.—Mantle dark lavender-grey. Head, neck, rump, upper tail-coverts, tail, and under parts pure white. Scapulars and secondaries tipped with white. First three primaries black. Bill greenish yellow. Legs and feet black. Length 15½ in. Female similar. Our smallest Gull (excluding the stragglers), and distinct, at close quarters, on account of the absence of its

hind toe. Young, a row of black marks across secondaries; back and wings brownish black rather than lavender as in adult; wing-coverts mottled with black; tail white, tipped with brownish black. Nestling covered with dark grey down on the back, otherwise buffish white.

Language.—A cry resembling “kitti-ake,” hence its trivial name.

Habits.—Feeds on surface-swimming fish principally, which it procures by precipitating itself into the water. Sociable, and, when near their nesting haunts, the cliffs resound with their trisyllabic cries. The young are fed somewhat after the manner of young pigeons. It is a poor walker, but an excellent swimmer, when it rests on the waves like a buoyant cork; it can also dive and swim under water. Flight graceful, gliding, and rapid, and it also has a propensity for hovering.

Nest.—In May or June. One brood.

Site.—On some inaccessible ledge of the sea-cliffs.

Materials.—Seaweed chiefly, and other marine plants; lined with dry grass.

Eggs.—Two or three. Stone-colour or brownish, spotted and blotched with dark and light brown and grey.

HERRING GULL (*Larus argentatus*).

Well-distributed and common round all our coast-lines, and breeding in many localities, notably on Lundy Island, on the coasts of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, at Flamborough, on south and south-western coast-lines, and Channel Islands. For a nesting site it selects precipitous rocks.

Observation.—In general appearance like a larger Common Gull.

Plumage.—Head, neck, upper back, under parts, upper tail-coverts, and tail white. Back, scapulars, and wing-coverts lavender-grey; scapulars and secondaries tipped

with white ; outer primaries black, with white tips. Bill yellow. Legs and feet flesh-colour. Length 24 in. Female similar. In winter, head and neck streaked with grey. Young : upper parts streaked and mottled with brown ; under parts first brown, then mottled with greyish brown. Full adult plumage in the fifth year. Nestling : covered with greyish buff down, mottled with black on head, upper parts, and chest ; lighter on under parts.

Language.—A noisy kind of yelping ; also a cry reminding one of a derisive laugh.

Habits.—Gregarious in the breeding season. Flight powerful and fairly rapid. In disposition quarrelsome and thieving. It beats about the shore at low tide on the look-out for any nasty mess cast up by the sea, and on finding anything a good deal of squabbling and yelping ensues. It will kill young weakly birds, and eats other birds' eggs with avidity. It also catches surface-swimming fish, and may, at times, be seen far inland searching the ploughed land for worms, &c.

Food.—Fish usually, but in hard times it is practically omnivorous.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—On ledges of sea-cliffs, on masses of isolated tumbled rocks, on the ground under some overhanging rock, or some sea-girt islet.

Materials.—Grass-sods, seaweed, and other marine plants.

Eggs.—Two or three. Olive-brown, spotted and blotched with rich dark umber and greyish brown. Variable.

ROCK PIPIT (*Anthus obscurus*).

Found nearly all round our coast-lines, except on the east ; common in Channel Islands and in northern islands of Scotland.

Haunts.—Rocky sea-coasts; the only songster inhabiting the seashore.

Plumage.—Upper parts olive-brown, each feather having a dark centre; a whitish eye-stripe; a smoky grey patch on inner web of outer tail-feathers, no white on outer tail-feathers as in Meadow Pipit; under parts buffish white, spotted and streaked with dark brown. Bill dark brown above; paler below. Legs brown. Length $6\frac{1}{4}$ in. Female similar. Young more streaked and spotted.

Language.—Song much like Meadow Pipit's, and delivered on the wing as a rule, with a rock instead of a low bush as a base. Call-note, "ist," persistently repeated if disturbed.

Habits.—*Note*—Almost indistinguishable from Meadow Pipit, but this species never quits the seashore; much like the other Pipits. When alarmed it does not fly far, but shifts uneasily about from rock to rock uttering its call-note.

Food.—Marine insects and their larvæ, small mollusca and crustacea; also seeds.

Nest.—April onwards. Two broods.

Site.—Among or under rocks, &c.; in clump of sea-pink, or in tuft of grass.

Materials.—Bits of seaweed, grass and moss, lined with fine grass and hair.

Eggs.—Four to five. Greenish white; densely mottled, especially at the large end, with dark brown; like Meadow Pipit's, but with no hair-like streak.

RINGED PLOVER (*Ægialitis hiaticola*).

Generally distributed along our coast-lines. A shore-bird, breeding either on pebbly beaches, or among sand-dunes. Sometimes found inland.

Plumage.—Band across forehead, lores and gorget black; white band across lower forehead; white stripe

over eye. Collar white; upper parts hair-brown. Outer tail-feathers white; others tipped with white; under parts white. Bill black at tip, yellow towards base. Stilt-like legs and feet orange. Length $7\frac{3}{4}$ in. Female less black gorget, and generally duller. Young: dusky brown in place of black areas; no black band on forehead; legs pale yellow. Nestling covered with down, mottled with fawn and brown.

Language.—A plaintive piping like "pooree."

Habits.—Sociable, even in breeding season. Runs with great celerity over the pebbles of the shore. Flight swift. Not particularly timid, and when the nest is approached the parents are most solicitous, and often feign injury.

Food.—Insects, worms, shrimps, sandhoppers, &c.

Nest.—May onwards. Two broods.

Site.—On the beach, not far above high-water mark.

Materials.—If any, a few grasses; usually the slight cavity is lined with small pebbles and broken shells.

Eggs.—Four. Pale stone-, clay-, or cream-colour, neatly spotted with dark brown and grey; pyriform shape, disposed in cavity diagonally, *i.e.*, with the small ends all pointing towards the centre, like the other Plovers'.

DUNLIN (*Tringa alpina*).

Resident, but reinforced by considerable numbers of migrants in autumn and spring. Breeds in considerable numbers in the mountainous districts of the North, also in Cornwall, Wales, south-western counties, Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Haunts.—Shores and tidal rivers when not breeding.

Plumage.—Crown of head rufous brown, streaked with black. Mantle chestnut, marked with black. Upper parts ash-grey. Throat and fore-chest greyish white, streaked with black. Lower breast black. Belly white. Bill rather long and black. Legs and feet black. Length

7½ in. Female rather larger. In winter the adults lose the rufous tinge on upper parts, and become greyish ; under parts white ; greyish band on chest, and white bar on wings. Young : feathers of head and back with dark-centres and rufous margins ; chin white ; upper breast tawny, streaked with dusky on flanks ; belly whitish. Nestling : rufous above and greyish white below ; three black streaks on back.

Language.—A pleasing little trill, like "trui." Also another note, like "purre."

Habits.—In disposition rather confiding. Fond of running nimbly over the seashore, stopping every now and then to probe the sand or ooze for food. When flying together in large flocks, often in company with other waders, they look, at one moment, like a dark cloud, at another like a silver one, as they wheel rapidly round and expose the under parts.

Food.—Marine insects, worms, and crustacea.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—On the ground among heather, or in tuft of coarse grass.

Materials.—A few leaves and grasses.

Eggs.—Four. Greenish or buffish white, well spotted and blotched with two shades of reddish brown and grey. Pyriform shape.

COMMON REDSHANK (*Totanus calidris*).

Well-distributed in all suitable localities, especially on the east coast.

Haunts.—Sea-coast, tidal flats, and saltings chiefly, but also found inland.

Plumage.—Upper parts ash-brown, streaked and barred with umber. Secondaries dingy white, noticeable in flight ; rump white. Tail white, barred with blackish ; under parts white, streaked with umber, and zigzagged with umber on flanks. Bill black at tip, otherwise red.

Legs and feet orange-red. Length 11 in. Female, slightly larger and more rufous above. In winter, upper parts dusker, under parts white, flecked only with dark spots. Young : marked with rusty buff on upper parts ; under parts dusky, spotted and striped with greyish brown. Nestling : ruddy buff above and paler below, black streak through eye, and three stripes down back.

Language.—A clear ringing "leero" or "tiu-too-too," several times repeated.

Habits.—Flight somewhat heavy and wavering. White band on wings conspicuous. It swims well, and can dive if occasion demands. Food usually obtained by wading. When disturbed on its breeding-grounds it becomes most vociferous and excited. Shy and wary. When standing it bobs its head and jerks its tail.

Food.—Marine insects, crustacea, mollusca, and worms.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—In slight depression on the ground, in tuft of rushes, &c., always well-concealed, and not far from water.

Materials.—A few grasses and bents.

Eggs.—Four. Pale buffish brown or stone-colour, spotted and blotched with rich dark brown, lighter brown and neutral tint underlying. Pyriform shape.

COMMON GUILLEMOT (*Uria troile*).

Widely distributed and common round our coast-lines, keeping out to sea for the greater part of the year. At breeding time it takes up its position on precipitous cliffs, notably at Flamborough Head, in Scotland (especially the Bass Rock), on the Farne Islands, Isle of Wight, Dorset, Devon, and Cornish coasts, at Scilly and Lundy, and on the Welsh and Irish coasts, &c.

Observation.—Distinguish from Razorbill by brown upper parts and slenderer bill.

Plumage.—Head, neck, and upper parts chocolate-



REDSHANK (*page 119*)



GUILLEMOTS (*page 120*)



Photo

CURLEW (*page 122*)

Berridge



SHELDUCK (*page 123*)

brown; under parts white. Secondaries tipped with white, forming slight bar. Bill black, pointed, and not shaped like the Razorbill's. Legs and feet blackish. Length 18 in. Female similar, but rather smaller. In winter, throat white. Young: like adults in winter dress; young in down, brownish black above and dingy white below.

Language.—A variety of curious and weird noises, some like the moaning of one in pain, others like the mew-ing of a cat.

Habits.—Generally much like the Razorbill. An expert diver, propelling itself through the water with the combined aid of its webbed feet and wings. Owing to its short wings, the flight, though rapid, is somewhat laboured, and the wings are much vibrated. It only properly comes to land to breed, where it is completely out of its element, shuffling along most awkwardly, bowing and bobbing its head the while.

Food.—Fish in enormous quantities.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—On some inaccessible ledge of the sea-cliffs.

Materials.—None.

Eggs.—One. Large for the bird's size, and acutely pear-shaped. Very variable indeed. Generally bluish green, blotched and streaked with dark reddish brown and black.

WHITE-TAILED OR SEA EAGLE OR ERNE

(*Haliæetus albicilla*).

Once a common resident; now rare, and found only breeding sparingly on the sea-coast in Ireland, and on some of the Scottish islands.

Observation.—Distinguish from Golden Eagle by white tail.

Plumage.—Upper parts brown, lighter on head and neck. Primaries blackish; under parts chocolate-

brown. Tail wedge-shaped and white. Bill, cere, and legs yellow. Length 33 in. Female similar, but larger; 36 in. Young, at first covered with greyish white down; later with dark brown, mottled with fulvous brown on mantle and wings. Tail dark brown. Plumage of this species variable.

Language.—A loud yelp-like "queek-queek-queek."

Habits.—Much like the Golden Eagle, but it feeds more readily on carrion. It pounces on basking fish.

Food.—Mammals, birds, especially sea-birds; fish, refuse, and carrion found on the sea-coast.

Nest.—April. One brood.

Site.—On some inaccessible ledge of the sea-cliffs, or in trees.

Materials.—Sticks, seaweed, &c., lined with grass, wool, moss, &c.

Eggs.—Two or three. Dull white, and unmarked.

COMMON CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*).

More numerous on our coast-lines in autumn and winter. Breeds in most of the south-western counties, Wales, North of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Haunts.—Hilly and moorland districts in the breeding season.

Plumage.—Generally reddish ash, mottled with dusky; rump white; under parts pale brown, streaked with dusky brown; whitish on belly. Tail insignificant, and barred with dark brown and dull white. Bill long, curved down, and dark brown, yellower at base. Legs and feet bluish grey. Length 21 in. Female, rather larger. In winter, plumage paler, and under parts nearly white. Young, similar, but washed with buff below. Nestling: brownish grey above, mottled with sooty black; lighter grey below.

Language.—A shrill "curlui" or "cour-lie."

Habits.—In disposition very timid, and on the slightest

approach of danger is up on the wing flying rapidly, displaying the white triangular rump-patch, and uttering its loud notes. When anxious for its nest it is especially vociferous, and feigns injury to entice the intruder away. Curlews feed at low tide, and as the tide comes in they withdraw inland, flying in wedge-shaped formation. At breeding-time they retire inland to the moors, and remain till nidification is over, leaving the non-breeders behind. In flight, extends neck and stretches out legs behind. On the ground walks in a stately manner and rarely runs.

Food.—Worms, snails, spiders, berries, and insects when inland; when on the seashore, various small marine creatures, crustacea, &c.

Nest.—April or May. One brood.

Site.—On the ground in a slight hollow, more or less sheltered by a bunch of heather or tuft of grass.

Materials.—A few grasses or leaves.

Eggs.—Four. Olive-green, blotched and spotted with dark greenish and reddish brown and grey. Pyriform shape.

COMMON SHELD-DUCK (*Tadorna cornuta*).

As a breeding species very local and nowhere common. Found on the east coast, in Wales, some of the southern counties, in Scotland and Ireland.

Haunts.—Sandy sea-coasts.

Observation.—In appearance this Duck seems like a link between the Geese and Ducks proper.

Plumage.—Bill and knob at base of same bright red. Head and upper part of neck dark green, next a pure white collar, then a band of chestnut. Wings white, except part of the secondaries and primaries, which is black; speculum on wing green; scapulars black. Rump, upper tail-coverts and tail-feathers white, the latter tipped with black; under parts white, except

breast and belly, which are brown. Legs and feet pink. Length 26 in. Female, minus the knob at the base of bill, and colouring not so bright. Young: head and neck blackish; wings and under parts white; bill flesh-pink; legs and feet lead-colour. Young in down: dark brown above and white below. Forehead and cheeks white.

Language.—A harsh cry or quack; in the breeding season the male utters a whistling note.

Habits.—It walks fairly well, and without the familiar waddle of the duck. In flight it somewhat resembles the Geese, rapid and direct, with neck outstretched.

Food.—Mollusca and crustacea chiefly, also various marine insects.

Nest.—May. One brood.

Site.—In an old rabbit-hole, but often in a burrow excavated in a sand-dune by the bird, sometimes as much as six or eight feet in (hence Burrow Duck).

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