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COMMON
BRITISH BIRDS

HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM

BY

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BULLFINCH.

BRAMBLING.

GOULDFINCH.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

An attempt has been made in the following pages to provide a simple guide to the identification of some of the more common inland British Birds. The aim has been to place as clearly as possible before the reader just those features of size, plumage, note, &c., which will enable him to distinguish the different species of our common birds when seen in their wild state in the fields and woods.

The size being probably the first feature to be observed, a list will be found following this Note of the species grouped under different sizes as compared with four well-known common birds, viz. the Sparrow, Blackbird, Pigeon, and Rook. A brief note is appended of some striking peculiarity of each species, and initial letters showing whether a resident or a summer or winter visitor to the British Isles.

The same plan of stating the size as compared with one or other of the four standards is followed in the account of each species, as being preferable to giving the length in inches in a work intended mainly for reference in the field.

I should recommend all bird-lovers to obtain if possible a pair of field-glasses, as these, even if only moderate in power, will prove of the greatest service.

LIST OF BIRDS UNDER THE DIFFERENT SIZES

R.— Resident. *S.M.* — Summer Migrant.
W.M. — Winter Migrant.

Sparrow, Small.

| | |
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| Chiffchaff | <i>S.M.</i> Note ' Chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff.' |
| Creepers, Tree | <i>R.</i> Creeps like a mouse up trunks of trees. |
| Gold Crest | <i>R.</i> Very tiny. Gold and black on head. |
| Redpole | <i>R.</i> & <i>W.M.</i> Crimson on crown of head. |
| Siskin | <i>R.</i> & <i>W.M.</i> Greenish. In small flocks. Tame. |
| Tit, Blue | <i>R.</i> Blue. Hangs on twigs upside down. |
| Tit, Coal | <i>R.</i> Black head, also hangs in any position. |
| Tit, Longtailed | <i>R.</i> Long tail. |
| Tit, Marsh | <i>R.</i> Black head. |
| Warbler, Willow | <i>S.M.</i> Delicate olive. |
| Warbler, Wood | <i>S.M.</i> Greenish, see Note. Heard in woods. |
| Whitethroat, Lesser | <i>S.M.</i> White throat, grey head. |
| Wren, Common | <i>R.</i> Tiny, carries short tail erect. |

Sparrow.

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Blackcap | <i>S.M.</i> Black head. Light olive back. |
| Brambling | <i>W.M.</i> White rump. Under beech-trees. |
| Bullfinch | <i>R.</i> Red breast, white rump. |
| Bunting, Corn | <i>R.</i> Rather resembles a Lark. |
| Bunting, Reed | <i>R.</i> Black head, white collar. |
| Bunting, Yellow | <i>R.</i> Yellow head, chestnut back. |
| Chaffinch | <i>R.</i> White markings on wings. |
| Flycatcher, Grey | <i>S.M.</i> Makes short flights from perch to catch flies. |
| Goldfinch | <i>R.</i> Gold on wings. Black and scarlet on head. |
| Greenfinch | <i>R.</i> Green, gold on wings and tail. |

- Hawfinch R. Thick bill. White in tail.
 Linnet R. Rosy breast and forehead. Tail forked.
- Martin, House S.M. White rump.
 Martin, Sand S.M. Brownish above.
 Nightingale S.M. Song heard at night.
 Nuthatch R. Creeps up and down trees. Grey back, black streak through eye.
- Pipit, Meadow R. Seen on commons and uplands.
 Pipit, Tree S.M. Takes short flights from top of tree, singing as it returns to perch, 'Twee, twee, twee.'
- Redstart S.M. Red tail, black throat, white forehead.
- Robin R. Red breast.
 Sparrow, Hedge R. Brown bird with slender bill.
 Sparrow, House R. Bill short and thick.
 Sparrow, Tree R. Much like House Sparrow. Black spot on cheek.
- Stonechat S.M. Black throat. White spot on neck.
- Swallow S.M. Blue-black back. Deeply-forked tail.
- Tit, Great R. Black head, white cheeks, black stripe down yellow breast.
- Wagtail, Grey R. Black throat, yellow underneath.
 Wagtail, Pied R. Black and white.
 Wagtail, Ray's S.M. Yellow head and throat.
 Warbler, Garden S.M. Song very like Blackcap. Uniform olive plumage.
- Warbler, Reed S.M. Found amongst reeds.
 Warbler, Sedge S.M. Found near water.
 Wheatear S.M. White rump.
 Whinchat S.M. Note 'Utack, utack.' Hay-fields.
- Whitethroat S.M. Chestnut on wings.
 Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted R. Creeps up small boughs of trees. Black and white.
- Sparrow, Large.**
- Kingfisher R. Bright blue on back, seen when in flight.

- Shrike, Redbacked S.M. Chestnut back, black streak through eye.
 Skylark R. Song.
 Swift S.M. Long knife-like wings, swift flight, harsh scream.

Blackbird, Small.

- Dipper R. Dark above, and white breast. Brooks.
 Redwing W.M. Like Song Thrush, red on sides, white eyebrow.
 Starling R. Dark glossy plumage. Often in flocks.

Blackbird.

- Blackbird R. Black plumage.
 Fieldfare W.M. Grey rump, dark tail, seen in flocks.
 Nightjar S.M. Utters a sustained jarring note summer nights.
 Ouzel, Ring S.M. Hills. Like a Blackbird with white crescent on chest.
 Sandpiper S.M. Margins of streams or lakes. Sandy above, white underneath.
 Snipe R. Gets up from marshy ground crying 'scape, scape.' Twisting flight.
 Thrush, Song R. Spotted breast.
 Woodpecker, Great Spotted R. Black and white plumage.

Blackbird, Large.

- Dabchick R. Ponds. Dives.
 Thrush, Mistle R. Pale sandy rump. White edging to tail.
 Woodpecker, Green R. Green plumage. Red on head. Undulating flight.

Pigeon, Small.

- Turtle Dove S.M. Soft cooing note.
 Rail, Land S.M. Note 'craak, craak,' heard in summer.
 Rail, Water R. Seen creeping down ditches, and among reeds.

Pigeon.

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|--------------|--|
| Cuckoo | S.M. Well-known note. |
| Sparrow Hawk | R. Swift silent flight, seen chasing some small bird. |
| Jackdaw | R. Black, grey nape. Note, 'Jack.' |
| Jay | R. Woods. Harsh scream. |
| Kestrel | R. Seen hovering almost motionless in the air. |
| Lapwing | R. Note 'Pee wit wit wit, pee-a-wit.' |
| Magpie | R. Black and white. |
| Moorhen | R. Pools and brooks. White on tail which it continually jerks. |
| Partridge | R. Flies up with a startling whirr of wings. |

Pigeon, Large.

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| Grouse, Red | R. Gets up suddenly from among heather, etc. |
| Pigeon, Wood | R. Strong swift flight |

Rook.

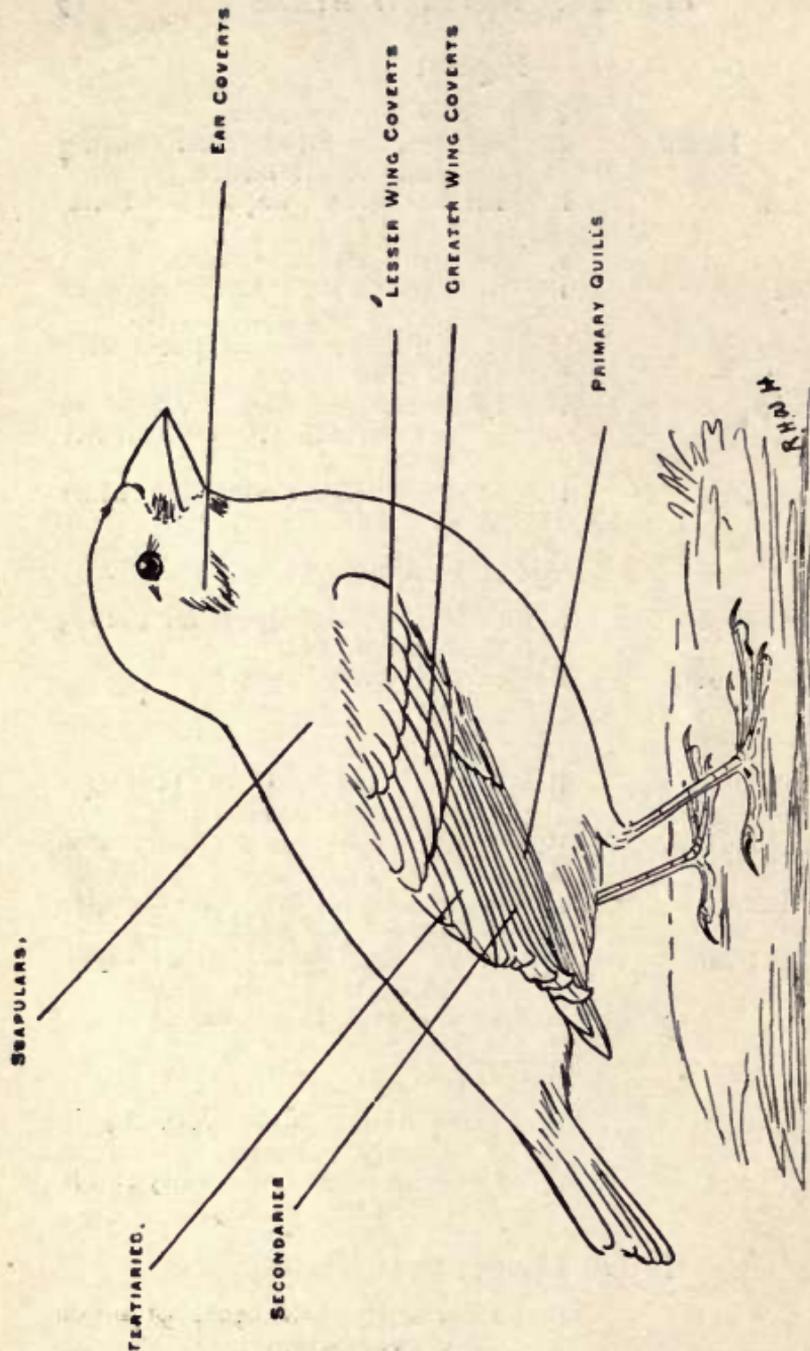
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| Coot | R. Water bird. Dark plumage, white on forehead. |
| Crow, Carrion | R. Black, seen singly or in pairs. |
| Curlew | R. Hills and commons. Note. |
| Owl, Barn | R. Light coloured bird, flies at night. Screeching note. |
| Owl, Brown | R. Brown bird, also flies at night, 'Hooting' note. |
| Rook | R. Black, seen in flocks. |

Rook, Large.

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|------------|---|
| Pheasant | R. Long tail. Male very handsomely coloured. |
| Duck, Wild | R. Like domestic duck, only smaller. Flies swiftly. |

Much Larger than Rook.

| | |
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| Heron | R. Flies with slow beats of much curved wings. |
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HAWFINCH, SHOWING THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BIRD.

COMMON BRITISH BIRDS

The initial letters in the brackets stand for: R.—Resident. S.M.—Summer migrant. W.M.—Winter migrant. The word after the initial letter denotes the Family to which the bird belongs.

BLACKBIRD. (R. Thrushes.)

Size.—The Blackbird, being so well known and easily recognizable, is taken as a standard for comparison. Length $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Colour.—Male: entirely black, with yellow bill and dark-brown feet. Female: dark brownish-black above. Throat and chest reddish-brown, mottled with dusky. Lower breast and under parts blackish. Bill brown.

Note.—The Blackbird is one of our best songsters, commencing early in the spring—as a rule, I think, a little later than the Song Thrush. Its song consists of a succession of rich mellow fluty notes, and is said to be the only bird's song which really forms a musical strain.

As one walks down a country lane, or follows a footpath over the fields by the side of a hedgerow, sooner or later a Blackbird is sure to fly out with a rush and a noisy cry, which sends the rabbits hurrying into their holes, and causes every wild creature within hearing distance to be on the alert for danger. When the birds are going to roost in the evenings among the thick evergreens, the Blackbird is again much in evidence, flying about from bush to bush, uttering its loud alarm-note and 'tick, tick, tick' in such a vehement and important manner that one would think that particular Blackbird was in charge of all the rest of the birds in the garden, and was responsible for seeing them all safely to bed.

Distinguishing Feature.—You can hardly mistake the Blackbird itself, though many people living in the country are unable to say for certain whether a bird heard singing is a Song Thrush or a Blackbird. A Song Thrush in full song repeats one note several times, then another, and so on, perhaps using eight or nine

variations. 'Pretty dick, pretty dick, pretty dick' is a favourite note, sometimes sounding like 'Wet week, wet week, wet week.' A Blackbird, on the other hand, actually whistles a stave of melody which it is possible to express in terms of music.

Nest.—Dried grass, made firm and solid with mud, and a coating of mud inside, on which is placed a final lining of fine dried grass. In a hedge, often at the bottom on the bank, sometimes on a beam in a shed, and I have known one in the ground among a few short nettles out in an open field.

Eggs.—Greenish-blue, with spots of reddish-brown, the spots on some eggs very small, and scattered all over the egg, on others larger and collected chiefly at the larger end.

Haunts.—Found almost everywhere in the country.

BLACKCAP. (S.M. Warblers.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Male: crown of head glossy black. Upper parts light olive-brown, wings and tail sepia-brown. Throat and under parts ashy-white, tinged with brown on flanks. Female: like the male, only the crown is rusty-brown instead of black.

Note.—A bird that is usually heard singing in the midst of foliage. Very pleasing song, containing some very full rich notes, the latter generally coming bubbling out after a few uttered more quietly. Much resembles that of the Garden Warbler. Also a harsh 'charring' note like most of the Warblers.

Distinguishing Feature.—The black cap in the male and the reddish-brown cap in the female. After a little comparison the song may be distinguished from that of the Garden Warbler by the richer notes.

Nest.—Fragile structure of dried bents lined with fine grass, roots, and hairs placed in bushes, brambles, &c.

Eggs.—Usually dull white, blotched olive-brown and grey.

Haunts.—Shrubberies, coppices, &c.

BRAMBLING. (W.M. Finches.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—In winter, head, cheeks, and upper part of back black, with the feathers edged sandy-brown.

Rump white. Throat, breast, scapulars, and lesser coverts pale orange-brown, rest of under parts white. Greater coverts black, edged orange-red, rest of wing black, feathers edged yellow, and some of the quills with a white spot at base forming a white bar when wing closed. Tail black. Female not so bright.

Note.—Does not sing while with us.

Distinguishing Feature.—Often seen in autumn and winter in company with Chaffinches feeding under beech-trees. The white on rump is very conspicuous when the Brambling flies up off the ground, and at once distinguishes it from the Chaffinches.

Nest.—In Scandinavia.

Haunts.—Beech woods, &c.

BULLFINCH. (R. Finches.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Male: head, wings, and tail black, back grey, rump and bar across wing white. Throat and breast crimson, under parts greyish-white. Female: much duller than the male.

Note.—A low whistle.

Distinguishing Feature.—The clearly defined colours, black head, wings, and tail. Crimson breast, and white rump, which shows distinctly when flying. A thick-set bird, with strong, short beak.

Nest.—In low bushes, brambles, &c.; sticks, moss, lined hair.

Eggs.—Bluish-green, few spots of red-brown.

Haunts.—Shrubberies, gardens, &c.

BUNTING, CORN. (R. Buntings.)

Size.—Large Sparrow.

Colour.—Above, brown with black centres to feathers. Below, ashy-white with black spots. No white on tail.

Note.—Like the rest of the Buntings' songs, a short strain monotonously repeated.

Distinguishing Feature.—Much like a Lark in appearance. Differs from the other Buntings in having no white in tail.

Nest.—On ground under tuft of grass or small bush.

Eggs.—Purplish-white, with dark spots and scribbings.

Haunts.—Cornlands, local.

BUNTING, REED. (R. Buntings.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Head and throat black, cheeks and a collar round neck white. Upper parts reddish-brown streaked with black, lower back and rump greyish. Outer tail feathers white. Under parts white with black streaks on sides. The female is not so black about the head.

Note.—Has a slight song, short and often repeated.

Distinguishing Feature.—The black on the head and the white collar. The white in tail showing, conspicuously in flight.

Nest.—In tussocks of rough grass or rushes. Dried grass, lined hair.

Eggs.—Pinkish-white, with streaks and spots of dark chocolate-brown.

Haunts.—Side of streams or lakes.

BUNTING, YELLOW. (R. Buntings.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Male: head and upper breast yellow with greenish markings. Upper parts chestnut-brown, with dark centres to feathers, lower back and rump light chestnut. Outer tail-feathers white. Female: greenish-brown with darker markings, lower back and rump chestnut.

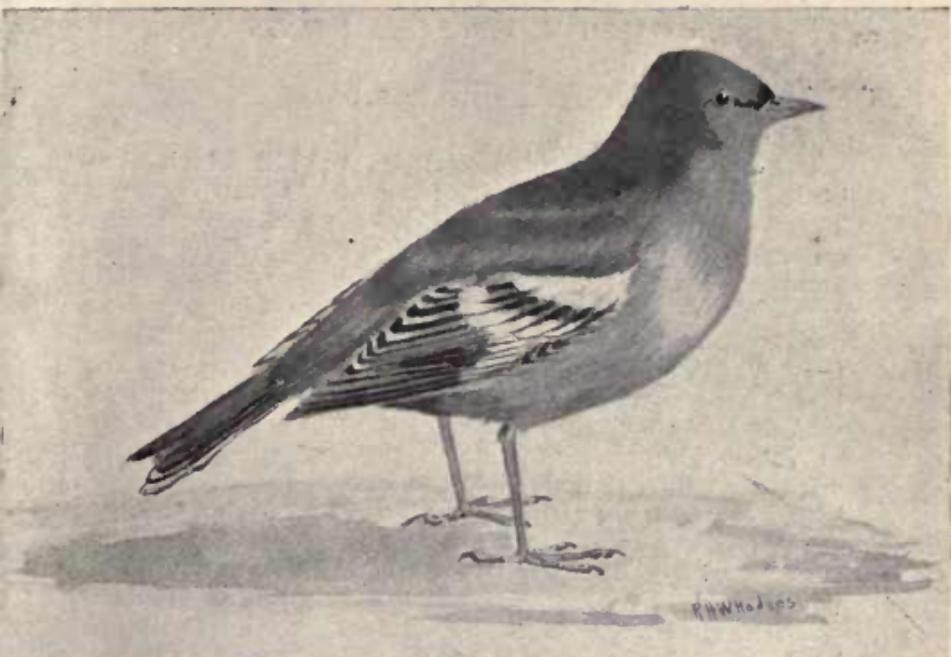
Note.—A rather monotonous song, continually repeated, supposed to resemble 'A little bit of bread and no cheese,' the last two syllables long drawn out.

Distinguishing Feature.—The yellow or yellowish-green on the head, chestnut on rump, and white feathers in tail showing during flight. The only other British bird showing so much yellow on the head and chest is the Ray's Wagtail, but in that bird the back is pale grey; besides which the general form and carriage of the two birds is very different. Often seen flitting down the hedgeside in front of you as you walk along the road.

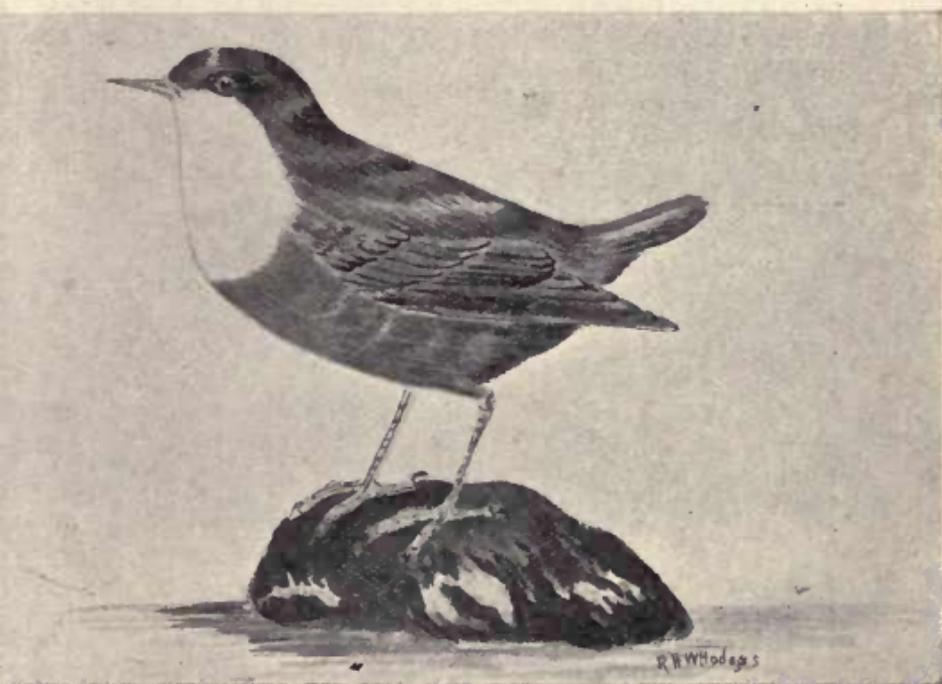
Nest.—In hedgebank or bottom of hedge, lined horsehair.

Eggs.—Pale pinkish-white with long streaks and a few spots of deep brown, looking as if they had been scribbled over with a pen, hence the name 'Writing Lark.'

Haunts.—Hedges. Rickyards in winter.



CHAFFINCH.



DIPPER.

CHAFFINCH. (R. Finches.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Male: forehead close to bill black, head bluish-grey, back chestnut-brown, rump greenish. Throat and under parts reddish, passing into white on under tail-coverts. Lesser coverts white, greater coverts black, tipped with white, rest of wing black, some of the feathers being edged with pale yellow and others having white on inner webs. Central tail-feathers greyish; rest black, tipped with white. Female: brownish-green above, greyish below, wing more brown with white markings not so distinct.

Note.—The song is a single phrase repeated, ending with a curious little twist, the last note but one being higher than the previous one, and the last note again dropping. The call- or alarm-note is a sharp 'Pink, pink,' and can be fairly well imitated by sharply hitting the edge of one penny on another held flat in the hand.

Distinguishing Feature.—Smart, sprightly-looking bird. The large amount of white on the wings. Very common; often seen walking in the middle of the road. Sharp call-note.

Nest.—Very beautiful structure, neatly built of moss, lichen, &c., lined hair, in bush or against trunk of tree.

Eggs.—Purplish-white, with spots and sometimes a streak of dark brown.

Haunts.—Fields and hedges; gardens, orchards, woods.

CHIFFCHAFF. (S.M. Warblers.)

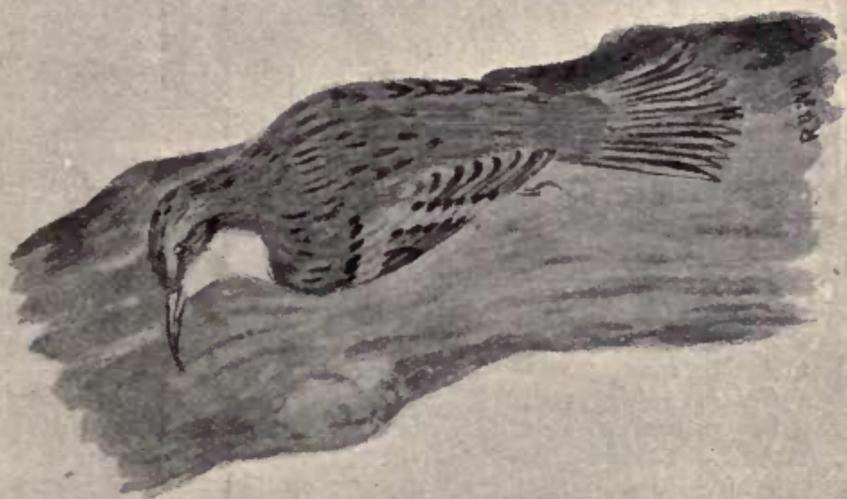
Size.—Smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Dull olive-green above, wings and tail brown, feathers margined with greenish. Under parts dingy yellowish-white. Eyebrow greyish-white, dull streak through eye. Feet blackish-brown, nearly black.

Note.—Two notes continually repeated, 'chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff,' very distinctive. Heard from fairly tall trees. The only note with which that of the Chiffchaff is likely to be confused is the spring call of the Great Tit; this, however, is heard much earlier, in January or February, and is more shrill and louder, also a little quicker, there being practically no pause between the two syllables of the Great Tit's call, while



LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER.



TREE CREEPER.

that of the Chiffchaff is uttered slightly more deliberately. The second note of the Chiffchaff is lower in pitch than the first.

Distinguishing Feature.—The note above described, also the dark legs and feet of the Chiffchaff; otherwise the Willow Warbler and this bird much resemble each other, though the Chiffchaff is rather more dull in appearance than the Willow Warbler.

Nest.—On ground, of dried grass, &c., domed, lined feathers.

Eggs.—White, spotted with light red.

Haunts.—Woods and shrubberies.

COOT. (R. Rails and Coots.)

Size.—Rook.

Colour.—Dark blackish-grey, with a pure white plate on forehead. Bill pale pinkish-grey. Head, neck, and tail black, under parts ashy-grey. Legs and feet grey.

Note.—Sharp, loud, single call-notes, one of which is supposed to resemble the name 'Coot.'

Distinguishing Feature.—Rather thick, heavy-looking bird. Uniform dark colour with white forehead. Dives after much of its food, taking funny little headers, and coming up in the same place after staying down quite a considerable time. The Coot and the Moorhen are often seen feeding on the land.

Nest.—A large structure made of dead vegetation, in reeds or sedges.

Eggs.—Pale buff-white, with small brown spots.

Haunts.—Large ponds and lakes. Does not frequent such small pools of water as the Moorhen often does.

CREEPER, TREE. (R. Creepers.)

Size.—Smaller than Sparrow. Beak rather long and curved.

Colour.—Above brown, tinged with buff, with ashen-grey centres to feathers, also tiny white spots; white streak over eye. Below silvery-white.

Note.—Usually only a tiny cheep; but it also has a weak little song, which, strangely enough, many naturalists have never heard.

Distinguishing Feature.—Its habit of creeping up the trunks of trees like a mouse, seeking after insects in the crevices of the bark. When watched, it usually creeps round to the opposite side of the trunk. It is as equally at home hanging on to the under side of a bough as it is on the top. Curved beak and streaky plumage above, and silvery-white beneath. Small size. The effect of the variegated plumage is to make it closely resemble the bark of the tree it creeps upon.

Nest.—In a crevice of bark or hole in tree.

Eggs.—White with red spots.

Haunts.—Woods and wooded districts.

CROW, CARRION. (R. Crows.)

Size.—Slightly larger than Rook.

Colour.—Glossy black.

Note.—A hoarse croak or caw.

Distinguishing Feature.—The Crow is usually seen singly or in pairs, and has no bare patch on face like the Rook.

Nest.—The Carrion Crow does not build in company. The nest is made of sticks, &c., lined wool and fine grass, at the top of some tall tree in a secluded wood.

Eggs.—Greenish-white, thickly spotted and blotched with greenish and reddish-brown.

Haunts.—Chiefly wooded districts.

CUCKOO. (S.M. Cuckoos.)

Size.—Pigeon.

Colour.—Above slaty-grey, tail blackish with spots of white and tipped with same. Sides of face and throat lighter grey than back, rest of under parts white with black bars.

Note.—‘Cuckoo.’

Distinguishing Feature.—The well-known note. In flight the Cuckoo has a somewhat hawk-like appearance, having a rather long tail, the style of colouring adding to the likeness.

Nest.—None, the eggs always being placed in the nest of some other bird, such as Hedge Sparrow, Tree Pipit, Wagtail, &c.

Eggs.—Vary a great deal, usually whitish, with brown markings of various shades.

Haunts.—Most country districts.

CURLUW. (R. Plovers and Snipes.)

Size.—Rook.

Colour.—Brown, with narrow dark centres to feathers. Rump white with black streaks; tail white or ashy-white with black bars, underneath white with black streaks.

Note.—A whistling cry, somewhat resembling the name 'Curlew.'

Distinguishing Feature.—Large size, curved bill, colour, and note. The note is sometimes heard from overhead in places where it does not otherwise occur, as the bird is passing to its breeding-haunts in the spring. The observer of birds will do well to look up when he hears an unknown call, as he may be rewarded with a glimpse of some avian stranger.

Nest.—Shallow depression on the ground.

Eggs.—Olive-brown, well marked with darker brown.

Haunts.—In summer, uplands and moorlands where there are soft boggy patches. In winter the Curlew goes to the seaside, and many migrate south.

DABCHICK. (R. Grebes.)

Size.—Blackbird, large. Practically no tail, which gives it a stumpy appearance.

Colour.—Smoky-black, sides of neck and breast deep chestnut, as are also lower flanks and patch on each side of the rump.

Note.—A trilling chatter.

Distinguishing Feature.—Seen on lakes and rivers. Dives quickly if alarmed, coming up again some yards away, when, if it still thinks there is danger, it again disappears beneath the surface. Never seen on land, legs being placed very far back, which position, though admirably adapted for swimming and diving, makes the bird unfitted for ordinary walking.

Nest.—Among reeds and water-plants.

Eggs.—Chalky-white, but become stained with brownish through being covered with wet vegetation when the bird leaves the nest.

Haunts.—Lakes, ponds, and rivers.

DIPPER. (R. Dippers.)

Size.—Blackbird. Short tail, much the shape of a Wren.

Colour.—Above blackish-brown, breast white, under parts deep reddish-brown.

Note.—A varied song, wild and sweet.

Distinguishing Feature.—The erect attitude, with the short tail nearly at right angles to the back; the dark colour above, with the white breast showing distinctly as the bird perches on a stone or rock in the middle of a stream.

Nest.—Built of moss on the banks of a stream. Entered at the side.

Eggs.—Pure white.

Haunts.—Streams.

DOVE, TURTLE. (S.M. Pigeons.)

Size.—Smaller than domestic Pigeon.

Colour.—Above chestnut-brown, with black centres to feathers, wings dusky-brown, centre tail-feathers dusky-brown with pale tips, remainder black with white tips, outer ones white on outside. Head bluish-grey, sides of face and neck pinkish, deeper on chest, fading lower down to white. On each side of neck a patch of black feathers with light margins.

Note.—A soft purring 'coo-ooo-ooo.'

Distinguishing Feature.—When flying the warm brown colour and the white margin round the spread tail. Flight much like that of a pigeon, only the bird is smaller. The soft coo as above.

Nest.—A slight platform of sticks in larch or other tree. As a rule placed rather low.

Eggs.—Two only, and pure white.

Haunts.—Woods and fields.

DUCK, WILD. (R. and W.M. Ducks.)

Size.—Smaller than the domestic Duck.

Colour.—The male is practically the same in plumage as an ordinary domestic Drake, having deep green head and neck with white collar, back brown, shoulders grey, chest deep chestnut, under parts freckled greyish-white, tail black, wings with a patch of bright greenish-blue edged with black and white. The female

is brown, with black markings, like the farmyard Duck.

Note.—Similar to that of the domestic species.

Distinguishing Feature.—The ordinary Wild Duck can hardly be mistaken. The more uncommon species do not come within the scope of this work.

Nest.—In reeds or other secluded spot, sometimes up in a willow-tree, lined with down from the Duck's breast.

Eggs.—Greenish-blue.

Haunts.—Meres, pools, &c. Numbers increased during the autumn and winter by arrival from more northerly regions.

FIELDFARE. (W.M. Thrushes.)

Size.—Larger than Song Thrush, but not quite so large as the Missel Thrush.

Colour.—Head grey, back and wing-coverts rich chestnut-brown, lower back ashy-grey, wings blackish, tail black, space between bill and eye black. Throat, sides of neck and breast, yellowish-white, with dusky spots; centre of breast and belly white without spots.

Note.—The notes we hear during the Fieldfare's winter sojourn in Britain are a chattering cry heard as the flock flies overhead, moving maybe to some fresh feeding-ground, and a sharp alarm-note, 'tsak,' often uttered from the top of a tall tree.

Distinguishing Feature.—The chestnut and grey back, with the black tail contrasting with the latter, serve to identify the Fieldfare. It is usually seen in flocks about the grasslands, arriving about October and leaving in April. In severe weather Fieldfares are seen feeding on the haws and holly berries in company with other Thrush birds.

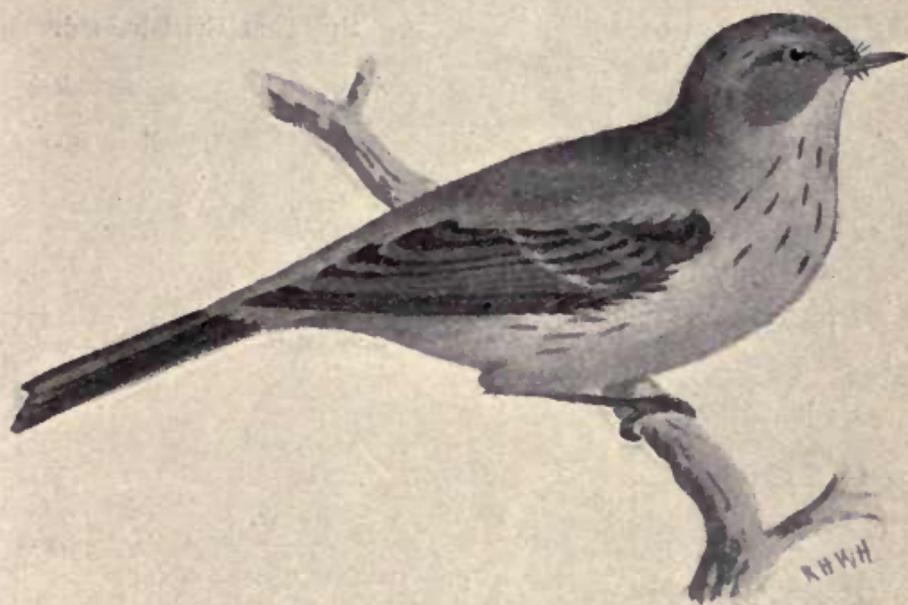
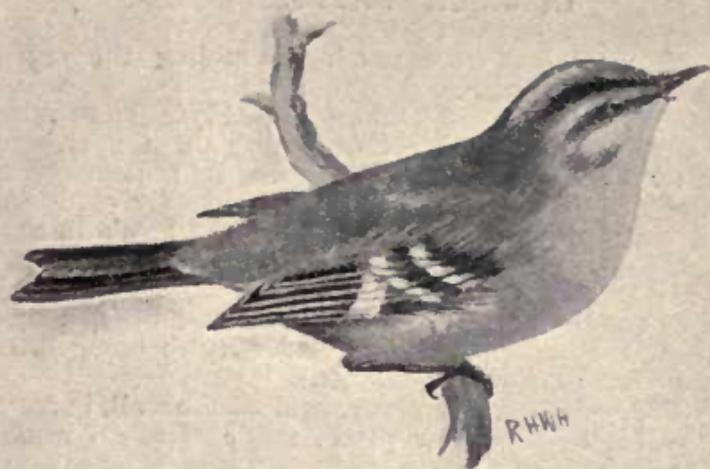
Does not nest in British Isles.

Haunts.—Fields. Roosts on the ground at night.

FLYCATCHER, GREY. (S.M. Flycatchers.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Brownish-grey above, wings dark brown, also tail. A few spots on head. Under parts greyish-white, with a few faint spots on throat and upper part of breast.



1. GOLDCREST.
2. SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.

Note.—A call-note much resembling the cry of a young Blackbird.

Distinguishing Feature.—The Flycatcher may be recognized by its habit of sitting on a post, rail, or other convenient point whence it makes short excursions into the air after flies, usually returning to its original perch. The snap of the bird's beak as he catches his prey can be heard at some yards distant. The Flycatcher has a characteristic pose when perching, with the body in a horizontal position, which may have been acquired through the necessity of being in readiness to fly off at any moment.

Nest.—In ivy, or creeper, against the wall, in a crevice in a tree or other like place, made of moss, wool, &c., lined with hair.

Eggs.—Whitish, thickly spotted and blotched with orange-red.

Haunts.—Gardens and edges of wood. Seems to prefer being near man's dwelling-places.

GOLDCREST. (R. Goldcrest.)

Size.—Smaller than Sparrow. Smallest British bird. Length about $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Colour.—Above greenish. Along crown a streak of brilliant orange bordered on each side with a line of black, wings dusky-brown, with two bars of yellowish-white, under parts ashy-white, sides olive.

Note.—A rather piercing call-note and a weak song.

Distinguishing Feature.—The small size, gold crest, and the grey bars on wing.

Nest.—Suspended on a branch of pine- or yew-tree, beautifully made of moss, &c.

Eggs.—Whitish, with tiny reddish-brown spots.

Haunts.—Chiefly woods, especially fir-woods, or where there are many yew-trees.

GOLDFINCH. (R. Finches.)

Size.—Rather smaller than a Sparrow.

Colour.—Forehead and face bright crimson, head and ear-coverts black, cheeks white, back and sides of breast fawn-brown, under parts white. Lesser wing-coverts black, greater coverts and basal half of quills bright yellow, rest of quills black with white spots on tips. Tail black, tipped white.

Note.—A pleasing, sprightly song; also utters a musical call-note.

Distinguishing Feature.—The flash of gold on wings and the black on head contrasting with white cheeks and scarlet on forehead. Neat dapper little bird. Fond of feeding on seeds of thistles and dandelion.

Nest.—Neat structure, moss, &c., lined hair, often in apple-tree.

Eggs.—Pale bluish-white, spotted purple and brown.

Haunts.—Fields.

GREENFINCH. (R. Finches.)

Size.—Sparrow. Heavily built about the head and neck.

Colour.—Yellowish-green all over, primary quill-feathers in wing edged yellow, four of the outer tail-feathers on each side also yellow. The female bird more dull.

Note.—A few faint sibilant notes, followed by a long-drawn 'twree-ee,' the last being often the only one heard if the bird is a little distance away. Also a musical twitter, often uttered as it flies.

Distinguishing Feature.—The green colour of the plumage, with thick beak and bull-dog head. When in flight the yellow shows up distinctly on each side of the tail. The long-drawn note as above.

Nest.—In hedges, moss, dried grass, a few twigs, lined with hair. Not so tidy as that of the Chaffinch.

Eggs.—White with a few purplish-red spots at larger end.

Haunts.—Gardens and hedgerows.

GROUSE, RED. (R. Game Bird. Grouse.)

Size.—Pigeon, large.

Colour.—General colour, a dark mixture of deep chestnut, brown, and black. Wing-quills and tail black. Above the eyes is a bare scarlet spot. The legs and toes are feathered.

Note.—A harsh call.

Distinguishing Feature.—The Red Grouse flies up suddenly from under one's feet, in much the same manner as the Partridge; but the larger size and darker colour will distinguish the two species, apart from the difference in the situation (see Haunts).

Nest.—On ground among the heather.

Eggs. Eight or ten. Buff-coloured, spotted, and blotched with dark reddish-brown.

Haunts.—Open moors and hillsides covered with heath and ling. The Red Grouse is confined to the British Isles, and is therefore peculiarly a 'British bird.'

HAWFINCH. (R. Finches.)

Size.—Rather larger than a Sparrow. Heavily built, with thick beak.

Colour.—Chin and throat black; crown of head, cheeks, and rump chestnut; on the nape a collar of grey; back and lesser wing-coverts deep chestnut; greater coverts greyish-white, forming a broad bar on the wings. Secondaries and some of the inner primaries glossy black with a white spot on the inner web, rest of the quills black. Under parts vinous-red, lower abdomen and under tail-coverts white. Two middle tail-feathers like back, rest dark brown with a large white spot on the inner web; and as the outer web is narrow and the colour fades off at the end, a large amount of white shows when the bird flies.

Note.—Rather a silent bird, the note when heard being described as 'soft and inward, somewhat resembling that of the Bullfinch.'

Distinguishing Feature.—Thick bill and appearance; shows much white in tail during flight. Chestnut-brown on upper parts. Appears to be increasing in numbers in England.

Nest.—Composed of small twigs, dried grass, &c., lined fine roots and hair. In hedges or trees.

Eggs.—Bluish-white, spotted and streaked grey and brown.

Haunts.—Gardens and woods.

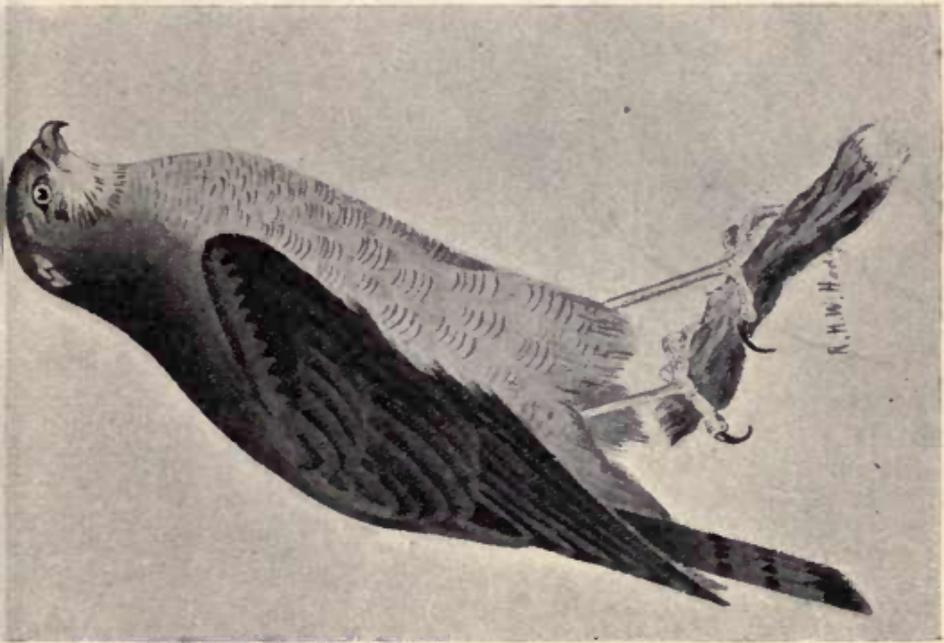
HAWK, SPARROW. (R. Falcons.)

Size.—Pigeon.

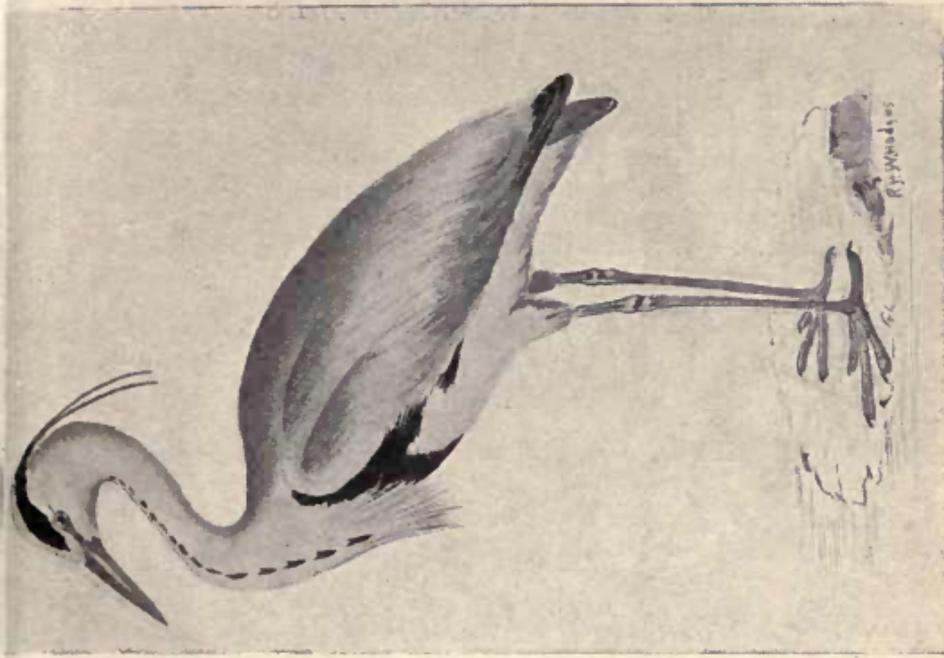
Colour.—Above slaty-grey, with darker bars on tail. Below reddish-white, with narrow bars of brown. Beak hooked, legs and toes yellow with long sharp black talons.

Note.—Not often heard to utter a note.

Distinguishing Feature.—The slate-grey form, flying swiftly and silently down the hedgerow or through the trees in the wood, as the Sparrow hawk searches for its



SPARROW HAWK.



HERON.

prey. The wing and tail are fairly long, and the shape graceful. Swallows and other birds may often be seen mobbing a Sparrow hawk.

Nest.—Made of sticks at top of tall tree.

Eggs.—White, with blotches and spots of reddish-brown; very beautiful eggs.

Haunts.—Wooded districts.

HERON. (R. Herons.)

Size.—Largest bird that is described in this book. Length 30 inches. Has long neck and legs, with long sharp bill.

Colour.—Above bluish-grey, wings darker, narrow black plumes on head, under parts white, with black markings down the front of neck, where the feathers are elongated.

Note.—Sometimes utters a harsh 'krach, krach.'

Distinguishing Feature.—The large size. In flight the wings move in slow beats and are much curved, the long neck is bent back, and the legs are stretched out behind, looking like a narrow tail. Often seen getting up from the margin of a lake or stream.

Nest.—In tall trees, built of sticks.

Eggs.—Greenish-blue.

Haunts.—Sides of lakes and brooks.

JACKDAW. (R. Crows.)

Size.—Smaller than Rook.

Colour.—Black, with a patch of grey on back of head and sides of neck. Eye light grey.

Note.—A familiar sound to most people, especially those who live near an old ruin, sounding like 'Jack'; hence probably the name.

Distinguishing Feature.—The small size, grey patch on back of head, and whitish-looking eye. When seen flying in company of Rooks, as they often do, Jackdaws may be picked out by the quicker beating of the wings, and by the note, which is pitched higher than the caw of the Rook.

Nest.—In holes in trees or walls, often in church-towers. Sticks and straw.

Eggs.—Bluish-white, with spots of dark brown.

Haunts.—Fields near nesting places.

JAY. (R. Crows.)

Size.—Pigeon.

Colour.—Pinkish-brown, whitish crest with black streaks, black streak under eye, rump white, tail black, wing blackish-brown, with patch of chequered blue and black and a little white.

Note.—Harsh scream or chatter.

Distinguishing Feature.—Harsh scream, pinkish-brown colour, with the white rump and black tail.

Nest.—Placed in trees, built of sticks, lined grass, &c.

Eggs.—Greenish, thickly spotted with fine greenish-brown, sometimes almost uniform.

Haunts.—Woods.

KESTREL. (R. Falcons.)

Size.—Pigeon.

Colour.—Male: head bluish-grey, back pale chestnut with a few black spots, lower back and tail bluish-grey, tail tipped black then white, under parts reddish-white with black spots. Female: above reddish-brown with black bars, tail the same with whitish tips, under parts much the same as in the male bird.

Note.—A cry somewhat like the plaintive call of a cat.

Distinguishing Feature.—The Kestrel is most easily recognized when 'hovering,' which is its usual method of hunting for its prey. Facing the wind, at a height of from 50 to 200 feet with outspread wings and tail, the Kestrel may be seen, motionless, excepting for the slight quivering of the wings as it searches the ground below for some small creature on which to pounce, such as a mouse, mole, frog, &c. If nothing is seen, the graceful little falcon moves away to another spot, where it again remains 'hung aloft the sky.' When a movement below is seen, the bird often drops a few feet and hovers again, before making a final swoop to clutch its victim and bear it away. The reddish back of the Kestrel distinguishes it from the slate-grey Sparrow hawk, which does not hover.

Nest.—Usually an old nest of a Crow or other bird.

Eggs.—Mottled all over with fine reddish-brown spots and darker blotches.

Haunts.—Wooded and open districts.

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KINGFISHER. (R. Kingfishers.)

Size.—Sparrow, large.

Colour.—The most brilliantly-coloured of all our British birds. Crown of head greenish-blue, back a beautiful cobalt-blue. Wings greenish-blue. From bill to ear-coverts a broad streak of reddish-orange, on sides of neck a patch of buff-white, and a streak of bright blue from gape of bill below the orange. Throat buff-white, under parts rich reddish-orange. Male and female practically alike.

Note.—A shrill 'h'wee, h'wee,' generally uttered when flying.

Distinguishing Feature.—The brilliant blue of the Kingfisher's back, when seen like a streak as it flits down a stream or across a lake with swift straight flight, at once points out the bird; and when seen sitting on a stump or other place of vantage over a stream watching for small fish, the long sharp beak and short tail serve as a guide.

Nest.—In a hole in a bank. The 'nest' is composed of fish-bones disgorged by the old birds.

Eggs.—Pure glossy white.

Haunts.—Streams and lakes.

LAPWING. (R. Plovers and Snipes.)

Size.—Pigeon.

Colour.—Above dark green. Head black, with crest of long narrow feathers. Cheeks, side of throat, and under parts white, chin and large patch on throat black; upper and under tail-coverts light chestnut; tail black and white.

Note.—'Pee wit, pee wheet, wheet, whit,' heard especially in the spring.

Distinguishing Feature.—The note as above. During autumn and winter it is seen in large flocks, which go through remarkable evolutions in the air, wheeling and turning as though by the word of command. Appears as though black and white when flying. A ground bird, never perches on trees.

Nest.—Just a hollow, with a few dry straws in it.

Eggs.—Olive-brown with black blotches and spots. Difficult to find, as they match their surroundings so closely.

Haunts.—Open fields, especially where there is marshy ground. During a hard frost Lapwings retire to the seaside.

LINNET. (R. Finches.)

Size.—Slightly smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Male: head ash-grey, forehead and breast crimson, throat yellowish-white with dusky streaks, back and wing-coverts chestnut-brown, quills black edged with white, showing as a white streak when wing closed. Tail-feathers black, edged with white. Tail forked. Female: browner and without crimson on forehead or breast; upper parts streaked with dusky. Breast and under parts sandy streaked with brown. In winter the male bird loses the crimson on head and breast, and becomes much duller all over.

Note.—The Linnet has a pleasing song, and some musical call-notes with a curious metallic twang.

Distinguishing Feature.—The crimson on forehead and breast (with the whitish throat above the latter) chestnut on back, forked tail with white edging, and the musical twitter heard as the birds follow each other down the road in front of you, as is often their habit.

Nest.—In hedges or bushes, often in gorse. Moss, bents and wool, lined wool and hair.

Eggs.—Bluish-white with reddish spots, generally at larger end.

Haunts.—Fields.

MAGPIE. (R. Crows.)

Size.—Smaller than Rook.

Colour.—Glossy black above, patch on each shoulder white, throat black, rest of under parts white. Tail long and wedge-shaped, glossy green, black and purple.

Note.—A harsh, grating cry.

Distinguishing Feature.—This handsome black-and-white bird with the long tail can hardly be mistaken. When in flight the white inner webs of the quill-feathers flash out.

Nest.—A large structure made of sticks, having a roof of the same material, leaving only a small opening. Lined grass, &c. Built in thick thorn hedge or tree.

Eggs.—Greenish-white, thickly spotted and speckled with greenish-brown

Haunts.—Fields.

MARIN, HOUSE. (S.M. Swallows.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Above blue-black with the rump pure white, throat and under parts pure white. Tail forked, but not so deeply as that of the Swallow.

Note.—A twittering song.

Distinguishing Feature.—The patch of white on the lower part of the back easily distinguishes this from the other Swallow birds.

Nest.—Built of clay and mud, with a small entrance near the top, often placed under the eaves of houses

Eggs.—Glossy white.

Haunts.—Everywhere where suitable nesting-sites exist.

MARTIN, SAND. (S.M. Swallows.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Brown above, also sides of face, and band across upper chest. Chin and under parts white.

Note.—A slight chattering, often uttered as the birds chase each other through the air.

Distinguishing Feature.—The sandy-brown back; no white on rump; tail not so long or forked as that of the Swallow.

Nest.—The Sand Martin burrows a tunnel from two to three feet deep in the side of a sandbank, making a rough nest of straw and feathers at the end. Nests in colonies.

Eggs.—White.

Haunts.—Breeding-haunts are dependent on the presence of suitable banks for the nest tunnels, neighbourhood of water preferred.

MOORHEN. (R. Rails.)

Size.—Pigeon.

Colour.—Above dark olive-brown, a little white on the edge of the wing. Crown of head and sides of face blackish, throat and under parts dark slate-grey. Some white marks on sides of body. Under tail-coverts white, except the middle feathers, which are black. On the forehead is a frontal plate which joins the bill, and this and the basal half of the bill is crimson, rest of bill greenish. Legs and toes olive-green, with a red garter just above leg joint.

Note.—Rather a loud 'cluck' and a metallic 'ts-ack.'

Distinguishing Feature.—In walking or swimming, the Moorhen, especially if conscious of being watched, keeps up a constant flicking of the short tail showing distinctly the pure white on the sides of under tail-coverts, the head bobbing forward in little jerks at the same time. The white marks on wings, sides of body, and under tail-coverts show up distinctly.

Nest.—Among reeds or rushes, made of dead rushes, &c.

Eggs.—Buff-white, with red-brown and purple spots.

Haunts.—Ponds and streams, as well as larger lakes and rivers.

NIGHTINGALE. (S.M. Thrushes.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Olive-brown, paler below.

Note.—It is probably by the song that the Nightingale is generally recognized, and there is hardly need for me to speak of its exceeding beauty. It must be noted that every bird heard singing in the night is not necessarily a Nightingale, as other birds, the Sedge Warbler for instance, sing at night. However, once the Nightingale has been heard, there is no mistaking its song for that of any other species.

Distinguishing Feature.—The song.

Nest.—In thick undergrowth, often partly made of dried leaves.

Eggs.—Olive-brown.

Haunts.—Locally distributed. It should be noted that the Nightingale has a distinctly limited range in the British Isles. It does not occur in Ireland or Scotland, and in Wales Glamorganshire appears to be the only county where it is regularly recorded. In England the Nightingale is found in the southern, midland and eastern counties, as far north as Yorkshire. Cheshire is only occasionally visited, while in Shropshire it practically keeps to the valley of the Severn. Cornwall is left out altogether, so that the western limit of this beautiful songster's range is reached in Devonshire and the counties bordering on Wales, and Cheshire and the south of Yorkshire in the North. In those districts visited by the Nightingale, the song may usually be heard from the end of April to the first week in June. Of course, occasionally birds are met with outside the usual dis-

tricts, and then they attract considerable attention among the residents who are not usually so favoured. I remember one year when a bird used to sing nightly on the extreme borders of North Shropshire, quite near part of Flintshire, and numbers of people went almost every evening to hear the stranger.

NIGHTJAR. (S.M. Nightjars.)

Size.—Blackbird, large.

Colour.—Ashy-grey, with dark-brown mottlings and narrow bars and streaks of black and yellowish-buff. Each outer tail-feather has a large white spot. The mouth is very wide, the corners of the gape reaching behind the eye.

Note.—A peculiar jarring, heard at night, and continued for a considerable time without ceasing.

Distinguishing Feature.—The Nightjar is an evening bird, coming out at night from its hiding-place among the fern or other cover, and hunting for moths, looking in the dusk with its curious bat-like flight almost like a huge moth itself. The note is also heard at night, and can hardly be mistaken for that of any other bird.

Nest.—Practically none.

Eggs.—Are laid on the ground, and are white, with spots and mottlings of brown and grey.

Haunts.—Wooded districts with open ferny glades.

NUTHATCH. (R. Nuthatches.)

Size.—Sparrow, slightly larger. Stiffly built, with thick-set head and fairly long, strong beak.

Colour.—Above slate-grey, dark streak through eye to ear-coverts, throat and chest reddish-white deepening into chestnut lower down.

Note.—A liquid note like 'wheet, wheet,' often heard from the tops of tall trees in spring.

Distinguishing Feature.—The Nuthatch, like the Tree Creeper, chiefly finds its food on the barks of trees, but creeps up and down the trunks; rather a short stumpy-looking bird. The blue-grey back, black eye-streak, and chestnut under-parts, with the woodpecker-like beak, should suffice to identify it.

Nest.—In hole in tree. If entrance be too large, the Nuthatch will build it partly up with clay.

Eggs.—White, spotted with red.

Haunts.—Parks and wooded districts.

OWL, BARN. (R. Owls.)

Size.—Rook.

Colour.—Above light yellowish-buff. with black and white spots and mottlings of silver-grey. Face white. Under parts pure white.

Note.—A shrill screech, not a hoot, like the Brown Owl's note.

Distinguishing Feature.—When flying in the evening, the Barn Owl appears almost white, and has a very quiet, noiseless flight, as it flits over the fields and down the hedgerows looking for mice and other small prey.

Nest.—In hollow tree, barn, or ruin.

Eggs.—White.

Haunts.—Farm buildings, barns, &c.

OWL, BROWN. (R. Owls.)

Size.—Rook.

Colour.—Above reddish-brown with black streaks and bars, under parts rather lighter, with same markings. No ear-tufts.

Note.—'Hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo-hoo' heard in the evening.

Distinguishing Feature.—The darker appearance and the 'hooting' note will distinguish it from the Barn Owl.

Nest.—Usually in hollow tree or old ruin.

Eggs.—White.

Haunts.—Woods.

PARTRIDGE. (R. Game Bird. Pheasants and Partridges.)

Size.—Pigeon.

Colour.—Above, chiefly brownish-buff with fine markings of black; underneath, chestnut and grey with fine markings, a large horseshoe patch of chestnut on breast of male bird, tail-feathers short and chestnut.

Note.—A creaking call-note, heard chiefly in early spring when the birds are pairing.

Distinguishing Feature.—The sombre brown plumage, which mingles so well with the clods on a plough-field as to make the bird almost indistinguishable. Plump appearance. They get up with a whirr, and fly swiftly and straight. Towards the end of the summer, when the

young birds can fly, and in the autumn, Partridges are seen in coveys of from eight to twenty birds.

Nest.—On ground, in long herbage, or under a bush.

Eggs.—Olive-brown.

Haunts.—Cultivated lands.

PHEASANT. (R. Game Bird. Pheasants and Partridges.)

Size.—Rook, large.

Colour.—Male: head and neck dark glossy green. Mantle, chest, breast and flanks fiery-orange, with blue-black margins of feathers, lower back maroon and greenish, tail olive with narrow black bars. Centre of breast black. Female: sandy-brown, with dark-brown and black markings.

Note.—A short abrupt crow, often heard in the woods on spring and summer evenings.

Distinguishing Feature.—The brilliant colouring of the male bird and long tail. The Pheasant, like the Partridge, often gets up from under one's feet with a startling whirr and clatter.

Nest.—On ground under hedge or bush.

Eggs.—Uniform olive-brown.

Haunts.—Woods and fields. Often seen feeding on the grasslands at the edge of a wood. The Pheasant is polygamous, the male bird having several wives, unlike the Partridge, which pairs.

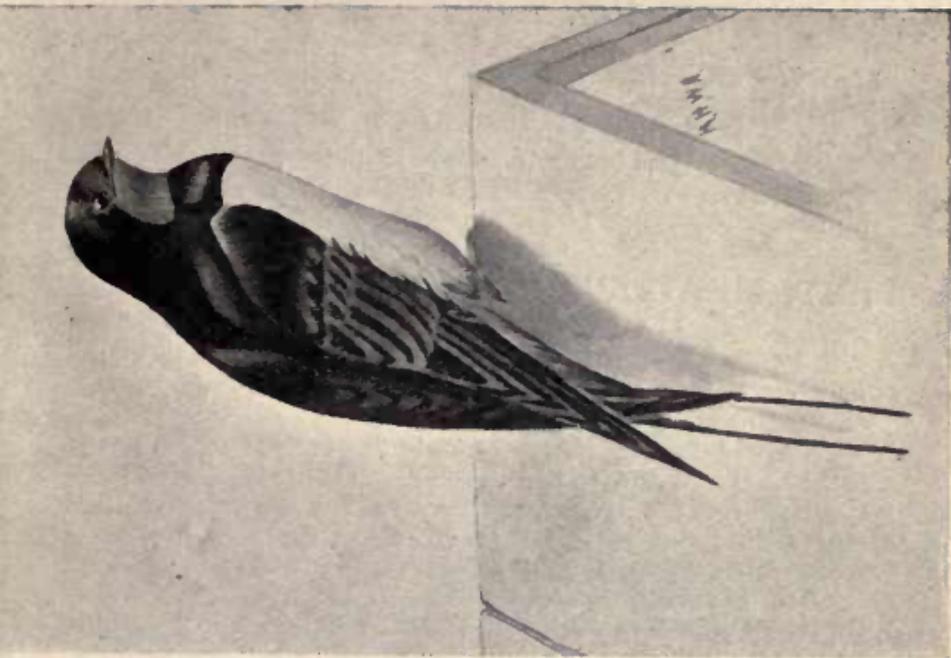
PIGEON, WOOD. (R. Pigeons. Numbers increased in winter by immigration from Northern Europe.)

Size.—Slightly larger than ordinary domestic Pigeon.

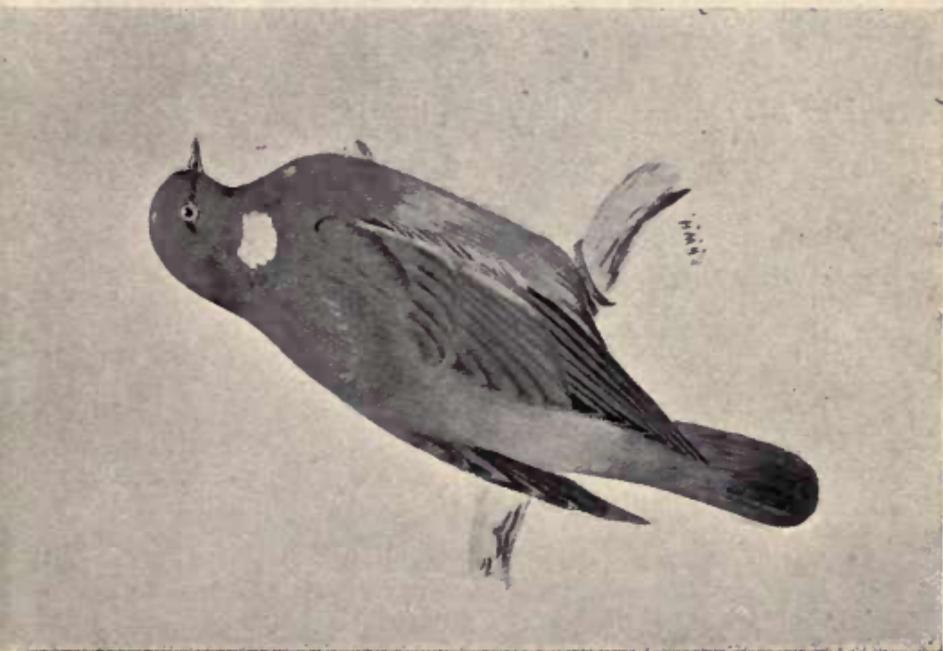
Colour.—Above, pale slaty-grey, wing-quills darker, an edging of white round the wing. Head and throat bluish-grey, on each side of neck a patch of white. A gloss of lilac all round lower neck. Chest pinkish, rest of under parts greyish-white. Lower part of back and rump pale grey, tail grey, tipped with black. Feet pink.

Note.—A cooing note, familiar to all dwellers in the country, said to resemble 'Take two coo-oo, Paddy.'

Distinguishing Feature.—The large size, clear grey colour, and white patches on sides of neck. Note as above. Powerful flight.



SWALLOW.



WOOD PIGEON.

Nest.—A slender platform of sticks in a fir or other tree.

Eggs.—Two only, pure white.

Haunts.—Woods and wooded districts. Feeds on open fields. Will often build in gardens quite close to houses.

PIPIT, MEADOW. (R. Pipits.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Olive-brown above with dark centres to feathers. Below white tinged with olive, spots on chest and sides.

Note.—The song and the mode of uttering it are both somewhat similar to the Tree Pipit's, only, instead of starting from a tree-top, the Meadow Pipit generally starts from the ground or a clump of gorse or heather, which abound in its usual breeding-haunts.

Distinguishing Feature.—Not so tawny as the Tree Pipit. Difference in habits when singing. Not found so much on cultivated land.

Nest.—On ground, lined hair and fine grasses.

Eggs.—Dull white, mottled with brown.

Haunts.—Uplands in the summer. Many migrate south in the winter.

PIPIT, TREE. (S.M. Pipits.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Tawny-brown above, with dark centres to feathers, below buff-white, with some black streaks. White on outer tail-feathers.

Note.—Sings in the air, taking flight off the top of some tall tree, singing as it goes up and then descending, with outspread wings and tail, usually to the starting-point. The last notes of its song consist of 'twee twee twee,' long drawn-out as it descends to its perch.

Distinguishing Feature.—The very characteristic method of uttering its song as above, tawny plumage, and Wagtail-like carriage when on ground. Hearing the drawn-out notes at the end of the song often calls one's attention to the bird.

Nest.—On ground, lined with hair.

Eggs.—Variable, pinkish-white mottled with purplish-brown to slate-grey, with dark markings.

Haunts.—Wooded districts.



1. LAND RAIL.
2. PARTRIDGE.

RAIL, LAND. (S.M. Rails.)

Size.—Pigeon, small.

Colour.—Above sandy-brown with black centres to feathers, wing-coverts chestnut, cheeks, throat, and under parts greyish-buff. On sides of body alternate bars of dark brown and white.

Note.—A loud grating note 'crek crek,' 'crek crek,' continually repeated. By making small notches in a piece of wood eight or ten inches long, and drawing another piece along it, an excellent imitation of the Landrail or 'Corncrake's' note is produced.

Distinguishing Feature.—The note as above is heard from May to July. Rarely seen, though occasionally, crossing a road. Runs very swiftly in a skulking manner, and soon hides itself when the long grass is reached. Does not often take wing; but when it does, flies with long legs hanging down.

Nest.—In long grass.

Eggs.—Pale buff-white, with reddish-brown and purple spots.

Haunts.—Fields.

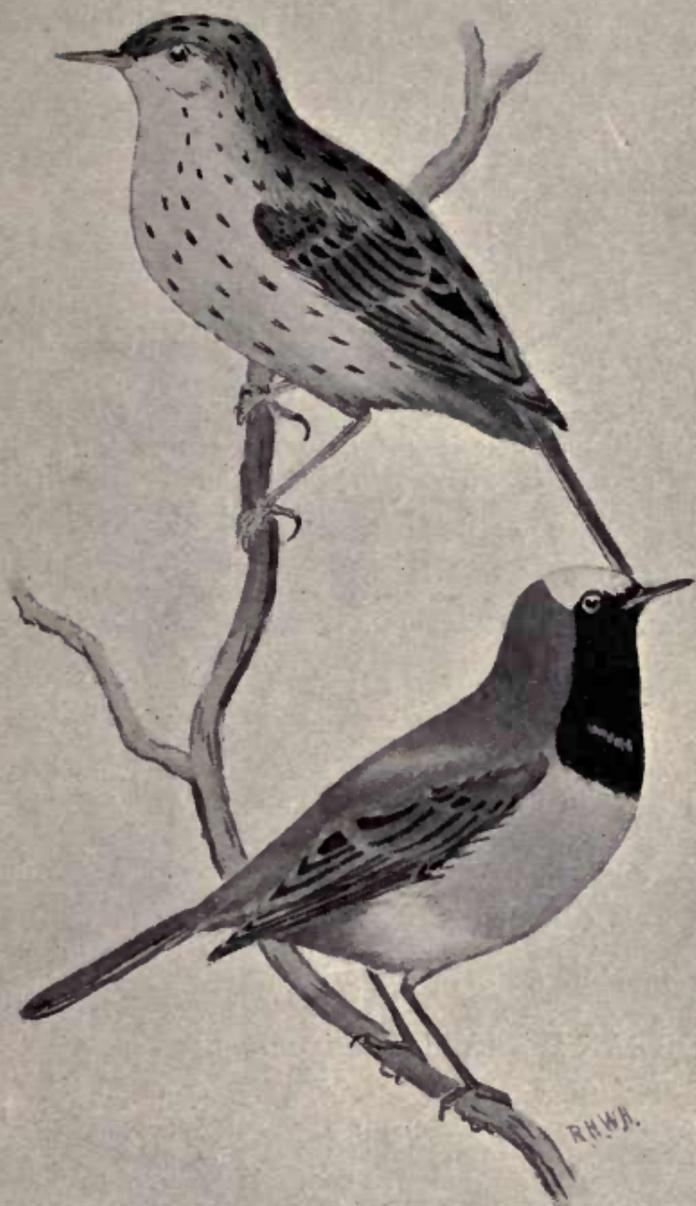
RAIL, WATER. (R. Rails.)

Size.—Pigeon, small.

Colour.—Above olive-brown, with black streaks. Throat and under parts dark grey. Sides of body barred with black and white. Centre under tail-coverts barred black and white and tipped with buff. The outer under tail-coverts pure white. Legs and feet flesh colour.

Note.—A sharp metallic note like 'tik' or 'tak': uttered many times with a brief interval.

Distinguishing Feature.—A bird that is not easily observed, owing to its shy skulking habits. It rarely takes to flight unless absolutely forced, always trying to escape by swiftly threading its way on foot through the reeds and other herbage near the stream or pool where it makes its haunt. Sometimes a dark-brown object, that at first sight may be mistaken for a rat running along the side of a ditch, looked at more carefully will turn out to be a brown bird with rather a long beak, and a few black and white bars on the sides of the body, and may thus be recognized as the Water Rail. When the haunt of a Water Rail is known, it may be observed,



1. TREE PIPIT.
2. REDSTART.

by approaching the place carefully, walking about feeding, moving its tail in jerks, like its relative the Moorhen, showing the white on the under tail-coverts.

Nest.—Among reeds and rushes, made of herbage.

Eggs.—Six or seven, creamy-white with reddish-brown and grey spots.

Haunts.—Sides of streams and pools, especially where there is thick cover of reeds or sedges.

REDPOLE. (Resident in Scotland and North of England, principally known as a winter visitant in the southern half of England. Finches.)

Size.—Much smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Male: forehead, space between bill and eye, chin and throat, black, crown of head crimson, back reddish-brown with black streaks, sides of throat, breast, and rump crimson, the latter tinged with grey. Wings and tail dusky, feathers edged pale brown, wing-coverts tipped pale yellowish. Female: without the red on breast and rump. In winter the male is not so bright in colour.

Note.—The song rather resembles that of the Linnet, as does also the call-note.

Distinguishing Feature.—The small size and red on crown. In the Linnet the red is on the forehead.

Nest.—In bushes or hedges, moss, dried grass lined with down.

Eggs.—Bluish-white, with red and purplish-brown spots.

Haunts.—Often seen in small parties in the winter, frequently in company with Siskins and Goldfinches among clumps of alder and birch.

REDSTART. (S.M. Thrushes.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Forehead white, back grey, rump orange-chestnut, tail same, excepting two central feathers, which are brown, throat black, breast and sides of body chestnut.

Note.—Simple song, not very varied.

Distinguishing Feature.—The plumage is rather a striking combination of grey, black, and red, with the



WATER RAIL.

SANDPIPER.

patch of white on forehead. The constant flicking of the red tail is characteristic.

Nest.—Usually in a hole in a wall.

Eggs.—Pale blue.

Haunts.—Edges of woods, especially where there are walls or ruins.

REDWING. (W.M. Thrushes.)

Size.—Smaller than Blackbird.

Colour.—Above olive-brown. A broad white streak over the eye; ear-coverts dark brown with yellowish streaks; sides of the neck, breast, and under parts dull white, with black spots small on the throat, larger lower down; centre of breast unspotted; sides of body and under wing-coverts rich red-chestnut.

Note.—Very rarely heard to sing in this country, the note uttered during winter being merely a plaintive 'yapping' call-note.

Distinguishing Feature.—The red on the sides, though the white eyebrow, contrasting with the dark ear-coverts, often shows up at a distance when the red cannot be distinguished. The Song Thrush has no white over the eye. Does not breed in British Isles.

Haunts.—Fields, roosting in shrubberies, &c.

RING OUZEL. (S.M. Thrushes.)

Size.—Blackbird.

Colour.—Male: black all over with pale edgings to the feathers. On the breast a crescent-shaped patch of white. Female: browner, crescent not so clear.

Note.—Somewhat similar to the Blackbird's, but not nearly so mellow.

Distinguishing Feature.—The white crescent and rusty edging to feathers.

Nest and Eggs.—Much like those of the Blackbird.

Haunts.—The Ring Ouzel is an inhabitant of moors and hillsides, where it arrives about the middle of March, departing again in the autumn.

ROBIN. (R. Thrushes.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Above olive-brown, base of forehead, throat, and breast bright brick-red, lower parts dirty white. The young Robin in its first plumage is quite unlike its parents, being yellowish-brown with spots of lighter

buff and specks of blackish-brown. The red does not appear on the breast until about the end of August, so that the beginner in the study of birds is likely to be puzzled during some weeks in the summer by the appearance of this obvious Robin in all respects excepting colour. However, the carriage and trustful familiarity of the Robin are so well known, that the speckled thrush-like appearance of the young bird will not long deceive any one, once the difference in the immature plumage is known.

Note.—The song of the Robin is to my mind one of the most beautiful of all bird songs, though maybe it has rather a melancholy strain in it. There is also a sharp call-note, and a note like the winding of a watch.

Distinguishing Feature.—The cheery confiding Robin must be familiar to every one, if only from a Christmas card! The young bird wears a spotted plumage for the first few months, donning his red waistcoat gradually about August.

Nest.—Various places, hedgebanks, old kettles, &c.

Eggs.—White, clouded and speckled with orange-red.

Haunts.—Everywhere, especially neighbourhood of dwellings.

ROOK. (R. Crows.)

Size.—Taken as standard. Length 17 inches.

Colour.—Glossy black.

Note.—The 'caw' of the Rook is one of the most familiar sounds of the countryside.

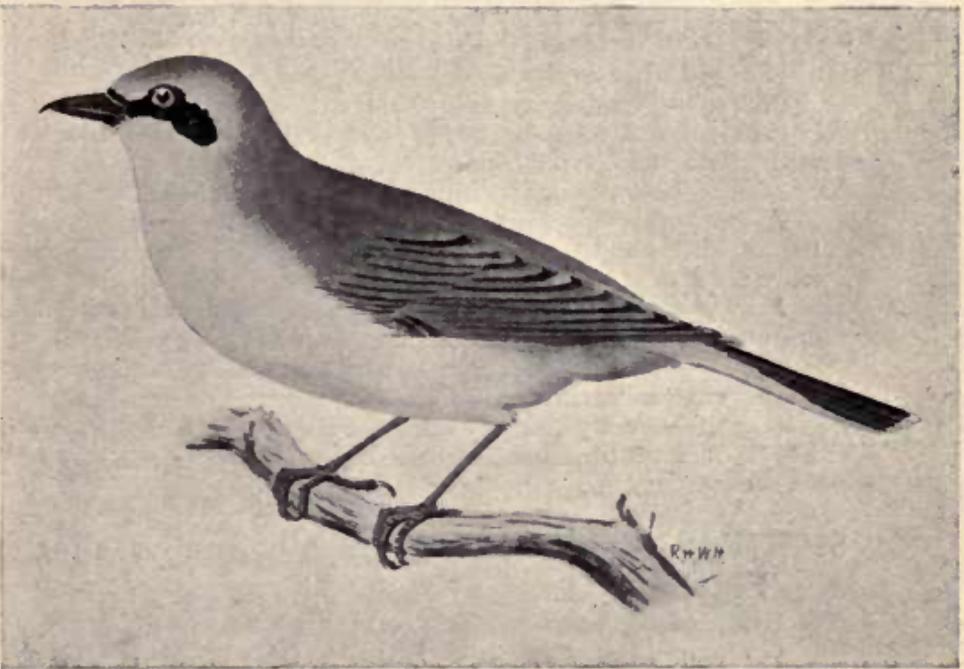
Distinguishing Feature.—The Rook is usually seen about the fields in flocks. The adult Rook has a space surrounding the bill which is bare of feathers; this, together with the fact that the Carrion Crow is usually seen alone or with a mate only, serves to distinguish the two birds.

Nest.—Rooks are truly gregarious birds, breeding as they feed, in company. The nests, made of sticks lined with grass, &c., are usually placed in fairly tall trees, several nests being in one tree. Rookeries, as breeding-colonies of Rooks are called, are often in a clump of trees in a park, or avenue leading up to some country mansion.

Eggs.—Greenish-white, with spots and blotches of greenish-brown.

Haunts.—Fields.

NUPIATCH.



RED-BACKED SHRIKE.

SANDPIPER. (S.M. Plovers and Snipes.)

Size.—Blackbird.

Colour.—Above, pale brown with arrow-shaped markings of black on feathers. Below, white with a few dark spots on chest. Tail barred with blackish, tipped with white, the outer feathers being nearly all white, the white decreasing until the middle feathers only have a narrow tip. Bill rather long, but not so long as that of the snipe.

Note.—‘Teet, teet,’ or ‘peep, peep.’

Distinguishing Feature.—The pale-brown back and white under parts. A graceful bird with slender legs, often seen running along the margin of a lake or stream, especially where there is dry shingle or sand. Often when disturbed flies away, just skimming the surface of the water, uttering ‘peep, peep,’ and shows a white margin to inside of wings and round tip of tail.

Nest.—A shallow depression among the pebbles and shingle.

Eggs.—Buff-white, with dark-brown and grey spots and blotches.

Haunts.—Sides of lakes and rivers.

SHRIKE, RED-BACKED. (S.M. Shrikes.)

Size.—Large Sparrow.

Colour.—Head grey, black streak across eye to ear-coverts, back chestnut-red, wings brown, tail black and white, under parts pinkish.

Note.—Not musical—chiefly a ‘chack, chack.’

Distinguishing Feature.—The reddish back, grey head, and black streak over ear-coverts. The beak is hooked at the tip.

Nest.—Moss, dry roots and grass, lined hair, rather rough.

Eggs.—White or greenish-white, reddish and grey spots, rather variable.

Haunts.—Very locally distributed. Has a curious habit of impaling beetles and other insects on thorns, hence sometimes called the ‘Butcher Bird.’

SISKIN. (Chiefly known as a winter visitor.
Finches.)

Size.—Smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Male: head and throat black, back green

with dusky streaks, rump yellowish. A yellow streak above and rather behind the eye, neck, breast and belly yellow, sides and rest of under parts white, with a few dusky streaks. Lesser wing-coverts as back, greater coverts black tipped yellow, rest of wing brownish-black, feathers edged yellow, tail dusky, most of the feathers having a yellow spot near the base. Female: more dull.

Note.—A simple piping call is the note usually heard with us.

Distinguishing Feature.—The small size, black on head, and greenish plumage. Fearlessness of man is characteristic of the Siskin, allowing one to watch it within a few feet.

Nest.—In bush or hedge.

Eggs.—Bluish-white with reddish-brown spots.

Haunts.—The most likely spots to see the Siskin are clumps of alder- or birch-trees. In such situations small flocks of this pleasing little bird may occasionally be met with in the winter and spring, busily hunting for food.

SKYLARK. (R. Larks.)

Size.—Sparrow, large.

Colour.—Sandy brown, with dark centres to feathers, white tips to some wing-feathers, outer tail-feathers white. Slight crest.

Note.—The song of the Skylark is one of those well known to most people. It almost invariably sings flying at a considerable height, ascending in wide spirals, singing as it rises, and continuing as it slowly descends, often until within a few feet of the ground. It sings without interruption or pause longer than any other bird. Whilst most songs consist of more or less short strains repeated, or a succession of single or double notes uttered with pauses between, the Skylark's song is one long sustained trill.

Distinguishing Feature.—The rather large size, slight crest and sandy-brown plumage with dark markings. In flight the inside edge of the wings appears whitish. Fond of having a dustbath in the roads. The song.

Nest.—On the ground in open field, lined hair.

Eggs.—Greenish-brown, thickly speckled and mottled darker brown.

Haunts.—Open fields. Does not perch on trees, though occasionally on tops of hedges.

SNIPE. (R. and W.M. Plovers and Snipes.)

Size.—Blackbird. Has long bill.

Colour.—Above blackish streaked with sandy-brown. Throat and chest brown, with black spots and bars. Breast and under parts white, sides barred with blackish.

Note.—The note that is usually heard is a cry of alarm 'scape, scape,' uttered when the snipe flies up in front of you off some wet patch of land or the side of a stream. It also makes a drumming sound in the spring, which is heard only when the bird is flying, and is believed to be caused by the vibration of the tail-feathers.

Distinguishing Feature.—The 'scape, scape,' and the twisting flight as the bird flies up. Long bill.

Nest.—In tufts of reeds, &c.

Eggs.—Pale olive-brown, spotted and blotched with reddish-brown, black, and purplish-grey.

Haunts.—Marshy places.

There is a small Snipe called the *Jacksnipe*, which is about the 'Large Sparrow' size, and appears only in the autumn and winter. It is seen in the same haunts as the common Snipe, and has the same habits, only it generally flies up without calling out 'scape, scape.'

SPARROW, HEDGE. (R. Accentors.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Warm brown, with black streaks on back and on sides of body. Head and under parts more greyish-brown than the back and wings.

Note.—Rather a pleasing though simple song, short, heard early in the spring. Not unlike that of the Jenny Wren, only weaker. A plaintive call-note 'weet.'

Distinguishing Feature.—Can be distinguished from the female House Sparrow by the more delicate shape, slender bill, and different carriage. The differences in the plumage, too, are easily seen when looked for.

Nest.—Neatly made of moss, wool, &c., lined hair.

Eggs.—Greenish-blue.

Haunts.—Every garden and hedge.

SPARROW, HOUSE. (R. Finches.)

Size.—Taken as guide. Length 6 inches.

Colour.—Male: above reddish-brown with dark markings, lower back and rump greyish-brown. Crown of head grey bordered with deep chocolate. A patch on throat and chin black, much larger and extending lower down in spring and summer. Under parts light grey. One bar of white on wings. Female: dull-coloured brown of two shades, greyish below.

Note.—Probably the chirp of the Sparrow is known to dwellers in towns and the country alike. There is no real song.

Distinguishing Feature.—From the Hedge 'Sparrow' this bird can be distinguished by the thicker and more stumpy bill, and bold impudent carriage, also the differences in plumage.

Nest.—In a hole under the eaves or in a tree, often in thick ivy or a holly-bush. When not in a hole it is built with a roof. Straw, &c., warmly lined feathers.

Eggs.—White with grey and brown spots, vary a good deal.

Haunts.—Wherever human habitations are. Common in town and country.

SPARROW, TREE. (R. Finches.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Above chestnut-brown, with dark markings. Crown of head chestnut. Cheeks white, with a spot of black on each. Patch of black on chin and upper throat. Two bars of white on wing. Male and female alike.

Note.—The chirp of the Tree Sparrow is rather more musical than that of the House Sparrow.

Distinguishing Feature.—The brighter and more light appearance about the head caused by the chestnut crown, the detached spot of black on the white cheek, and the two bars on wing.

Nest.—In holes in trees.

Eggs.—Whitish with brown spots.

Haunts.—Although not rare, the Tree Sparrow is a locally distributed bird, appearing usually in little colonies, generally away from houses or buildings. It is an interesting bird, and worth looking for, as no doubt it is often overlooked owing to the resemblance to its relative the House Sparrow.

STARLING. (R. Starlings.)

Size.—Blackbird, tail shorter.

Colour.—Black, glossed with green and purple, with points of feathers whitish. In spring most of the pale points wear off the male bird's plumage, leaving the glossy black. Young birds brown. Bill in spring and summer yellow.

Note.—The Starling's song is rather a singular one, made up in great part of imitations of the notes of other birds. The whistling cry of the Curlew is a very common item in the Starling's morning concert. While singing the Starling keeps up an incessant shivering of the wings and body, with the throat puffed out, and head thrown up, many of the notes thus uttered being scarcely audible. Also has a grating call-note.

Distinguishing Feature.—Dark speckled appearance, short tail, and shivering song. The bill is rather long. In autumn and winter seen in large flocks.

Nest.—In holes in walls, under roofs, &c.—Straw and feathers.

Eggs.—Beautiful pale blue.

Haunts.—Fields.

STONECHAT. (R. Thrushes.)

Size.—Sparrow, small.

Colour.—Male: black with sandy margins to feathers, head, sides of face and throat black, with broad white patch on sides of neck. Small patch of white on upper tail-coverts, tail blackish-brown. Wings blackish with white patch; breast orange-chestnut, below buff-white. Female: browner all over, no white on upper tail-coverts. The white patches on sides of neck and wings are smaller than in male. Throat ashy, with black patch.

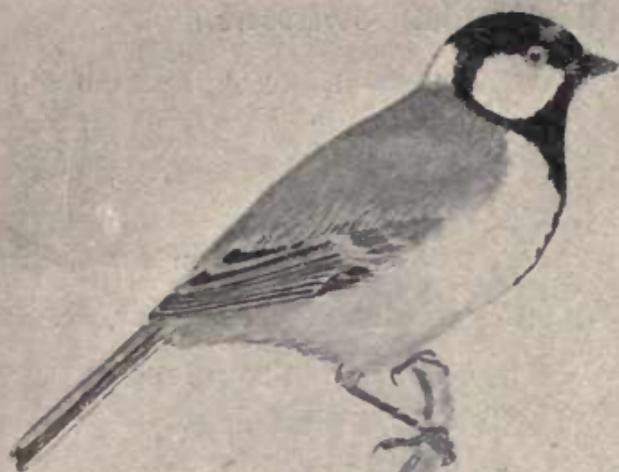
Note.—The call-note is 'utack, tack, tack,' much like that of the Whinchat.

Distinguishing Feature.—The black throat and large white neck-spot in the male Stonechat. In the female the black spot on throat and absence of white on tail will distinguish it from the Whinchat.

Nest.—On ground.

Eggs.—Pale bluish-green, distinctly spotted with light reddish-brown.

Haunts.—Chiefly moorland.



1. GREAT TIT.
2. STARLING.

SWALLOW. (S.M. Swallows.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Above glossy blue-black, forehead and chin chestnut, upper breast black, under parts white, tinged with reddish. Tail deeply forked; outer feathers long and narrow. When tail is expanded, it shows white spots on the tips of the feathers.

Note.—A low, twittering song.

Distinguishing Feature.—The uniform blue-black upper plumage, with deeply forked tail.

Nest.—Built of clay in outhouses, barns, &c. Open at the top, lined with feathers.

Eggs.—White, with dark red-brown spots.

Haunts.—Seen everywhere.

SWIFT. (S.M. Swifts.)

Size.—Sparrow, large.

Colour.—Sooty black, chin greyish.

Note.—A shrill scream, heard as the birds chase each other through the air at great speed.

Distinguishing Feature.—The uniform dark colour and long knife-like wings. The Swift exhibits a wonderful command of the air, being able to alter its course, to rise or descend, with hardly a visible motion of the extended wings, but apparently by merely changing the inclination of the wings and tail to the currents of the upper air. At another time a screaming company of Swifts will dash like black meteors with rapidly beating pinions, skimming round the old church-tower or other lofty building where they are wont to have their nesting-places, making the air resound with their harsh screams. The Swift's wings are so long and the legs so short that if by chance it alights on the flat ground it is often unable to rise.

Nest.—In hole in wall or under eaves, made of straw and a few feathers which are picked up on the wing.

Eggs.—Two only, pure white.

Haunts.—Most inhabited districts where buildings suitable for nesting-sites exist.

THRUSH, MISSEL. (R. Thrushes.)

Size.—Larger than the Blackbird.

Colour.—Head and back greyish-brown, lower back and upper tail-coverts lighter and slightly tinged with

buff. Under parts yellowish-white with black spots. tail-feathers brown, with a white spot on the inner web of all except the two centre ones, increasing in size to the outer ones.

Note.—The Missel Thrush is one of the earliest songsters to begin, and certainly it is one of the first to cease singing, rarely continuing much after the middle of April. From the habit of often singing during the rough weather in early spring, this bird is sometimes called the Stormcock. Though the song consists merely of a short phrase or two repeated, it has a very distinct charm of its own; and, as the wild notes come fitfully to the ear during the gusts of a rough March wind, one feels that the year is on the move, and though snow may linger under the hedgerows and on the distant hills yet the coming of the spring will not much longer be delayed.

Besides the song the Missel Thrush has a harsh scolding note uttered when attempting to drive away an intruder, be it Magpie, Cat, or even human being from the vicinity of its nest, or when, in winter, a swarm of foreign immigrants in the shape of Fieldfares and Redwings make a raid on its favourite holly-bush or hawthorn.

Distinguishing Feature.—The large size, grey look about the head, lighter brown of the lower back, and white edging to the tail (showing up distinctly when the tail-feathers are expanded during flight). The harsh grating alarm-note.

Nest.—Rather a rough structure of dried grass, wool, &c., lined fine grass, usually in a tree.

Eggs.—Pale bluish or greenish-white with red-brown and pale purplish spots.

Haunts.—Fields and orchards.

THRUSH, SONG. (R. Thrushes.)

Size.—Smaller than Blackbird.

Colour.—Olive-brown above, throat and breast white tinged with yellowish-brown, with black spots. Under the wings yellow.

Note.—One of the most charming of our songsters. The song is heard from early spring until late summer. It consists of a number of distinct notes, each note being repeated several times, then a fresh one uttered in the same way.

Distinguishing Feature.—The Song Thrush may be distinguished from the Redwing by its having no white above the eye, and no red under the wings or on the sides.

Nest.—Made of dried grass and mud, and lined with small fragments of rotten wood laid on a coating of wet mud, making a hard smooth surface.

Eggs.—Greenish-blue with black spots.

Haunts.—Gardens and woods.

TIT, BLUE. (R. Tits.)

Size.—Smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Crown of head sky-blue, white line round the blue, cheeks white with blue-black line above going through the eye, and another below reaching to the back of the neck. Throat and chin is bluish-black, and a line of dusky blue runs down the centre of breast; remainder of under parts yellow, back greenish, wings and tail blue. Bill and legs bluish-grey.

Note.—‘Chee, chee, chee,’ and ‘chee, chee, chee, chit, te de dee, dee,’ the last five syllables uttered quickly and on a slightly lower note. The Blue Tit appears to wish to inform one of its presence, almost invariably uttering its note when it alights in a tree near by.

Distinguishing Feature.—Blue cap and general blue and yellow plumage, small size, and manner in which it often hangs head downwards, upside down, or indeed in any possible position in its search for food among the twigs and leaves. This is a habit characteristic of all the Tit tribe.

Nest.—In hole in wall or tree.

Eggs.—White, with red spots.

Haunts.—Woods and gardens.

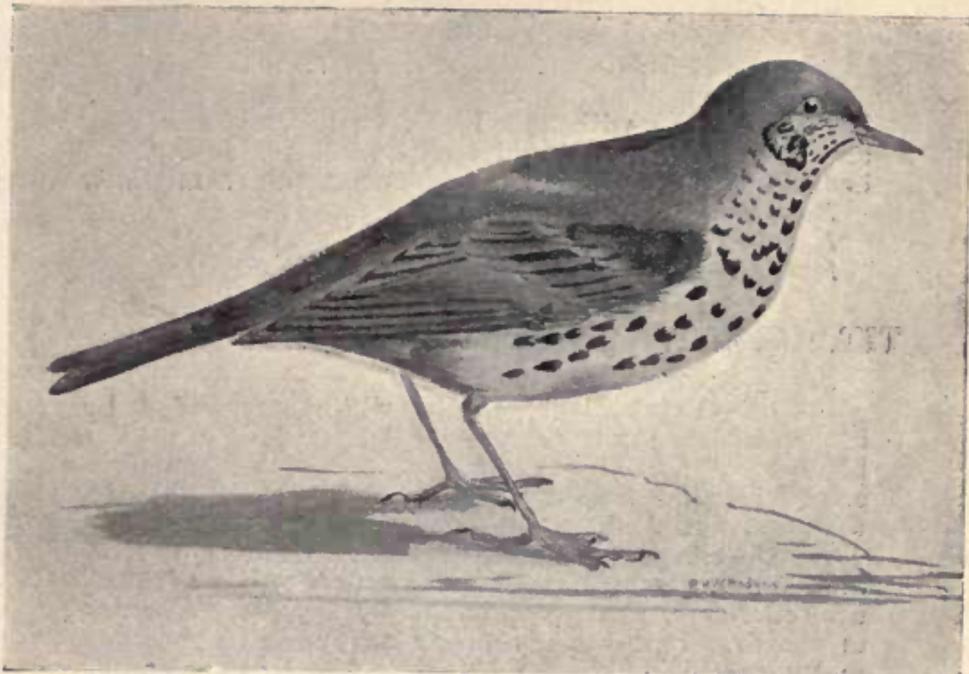
TIT, COLE. (R. Tits.)

Size.—Smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Head and chin black, with a white spot on the nape. Back olive-brown. Wings dusky-brown, lesser and greater coverts tipped white, tail dusky. Under parts greyish-white.

Note.—A clear ringing note.

Distinguishing Feature.—The white spot on the nape distinguishes the Cole Tit from the Marsh Tit, and the smaller size and different build and gait prevent it



SONG THRUSH.



BLUE TIT.

being confused with the Black Cap Warbler, which also has a black head and grey back. The latter bird has a more slender beak, and is a summer migrant.

Nest.—In holes in trees or walls.

Eggs.—White, with many pale red spots.

Haunts.—Woods and gardens.

TIT, GREAT. (R. Tits).

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Head black, cheeks white surrounded by black, white patch on nape. Breast yellow with a black streak down the centre from throat; back greenish-grey, wings and tail greyish-blue, feathers edged lighter. Feet and bill black.

Note.—The principal note of the Great Tit is a piercing double note resembling 'wheet-tu, wheet-tu, wheet-tu,' uttered chiefly in the early part of the year, being one of the first bird-notes we hear that tells us spring is really coming. It also utters a sharp 'pink, pink,' like the Chaffinch.

Distinguishing Feature.—The conspicuous white cheeks surrounded by black, and the black line down the centre of the yellow breast. It is the largest British Tit. The spring note, which rather resembles a saw being sharpened!

Nest.—A biggish structure, in a hole in a wall or tree, often in a letter-box, made of moss, wool, rabbit fur, &c.

Eggs.—White, with red spots.

Haunts.—Woods and garden.

TIT, LONGTAILED. (R. Tits.)

Size.—Smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Crown of head and cheeks white, with broad black band through eyes, back black in centre, sides of back and scapulars rose-red, under parts white, tinged with rosy, tail, over three inches long, six middle feathers black, remainder edged and tipped with white.

Note.—A tiny rattling note heard often when a party of Longtailed Tits are following each other from bush to bush, also a 'tick, tick,' and a note somewhat like 'chee' common to all the Tits.

Distinguishing Feature.—The long tail; white, black, and rosy plumage. Has rather a fluffy appearance,

like a woolly ball with a long feather stuck in it. Seen after the breeding-season in little parties of eight to twelve following each other from tree to tree, or down the hedge.

Nest.—Different from other Tit's nests, being built in a bush, oval in shape with a tiny entrance on side near top, made of moss, wool, and lichens, and warmly lined with feathers.

Eggs.—Ten to twelve, white, with a few pale red specks.

Haunts.—Woods and gardens.

TIT, MARSH. (R. Tits.)

Size.—Smaller than a Sparrow.

Colour.—Head and throat black, *no* white on nape. Back greyish-brown, wings and tail bluish-grey, with only one indistinct whitish bar on wing. Cheeks yellowish-white, under parts greyish-white.

Note.—Rather a silent bird, but has a tit-like call-note.

Distinguishing Feature.—The absence of white on the nape distinguishes it from the Cole Tit.

Nest.—Usually in a hole in a tree.

Eggs.—White with a few dark red spots.

Haunts.—Woods and gardens.

WAGTAIL, GREY. (R. Wagtails.)

Size.—Sparrow. Slender shape with long tail.

Colour.—Head and back grey, rump and under parts yellow. Throat in summer black. Wings and tail brown, outer tail-feathers white. In winter the black on throat disappears, and the yellow is paler.

Note.—Usually a simple 'tweet.'

Distinguishing Feature.—Easily recognized as a Wagtail by its constantly moving longish tail, while the black throat with yellow under parts denotes this species.

Nest.—In hole in wall, or heap of stones, generally near water.

Eggs.—Yellowish-white, with brownish spots and dots.

Haunts.—Sides of streams or ponds.

WAGTAIL, PIED. (R. Wagtails.)

Size.—Sparrow. Graceful shape with long tail.

Colour.—Black above, white forehead, sides of face and neck. Black throat, wing-feathers edged with white. Outer tail-feathers white. The female is more grey on the back.

Note.—Generally a simple call-note 'chiz-zit.'

Distinguishing Feature.—The clearly defined black and white plumage. Often seen gracefully running along the side of a stream or pond catching insects, all the while moving its long tail in the characteristic up-and-down manner common to all the Wagtails.

Nest.—In a wall, heap of stones, &c., dried grass, lined hair and wool.

Eggs.—White, with numerous tiny grey spots and dots, sometimes a black line.

Haunts.—Farmyards, sides of streams, ponds, &c. Seen following cattle as they graze, catching the insects stirred up out of the grass by the animal's feet.

WAGTAIL, RAY'S. (S.M. Wagtails.)

Size.—Sparrow. Slender shape, with medium length of tail.

Colour.—Back greenish-grey, head and under parts bright yellow. Wings and tail brown. Female more dull.

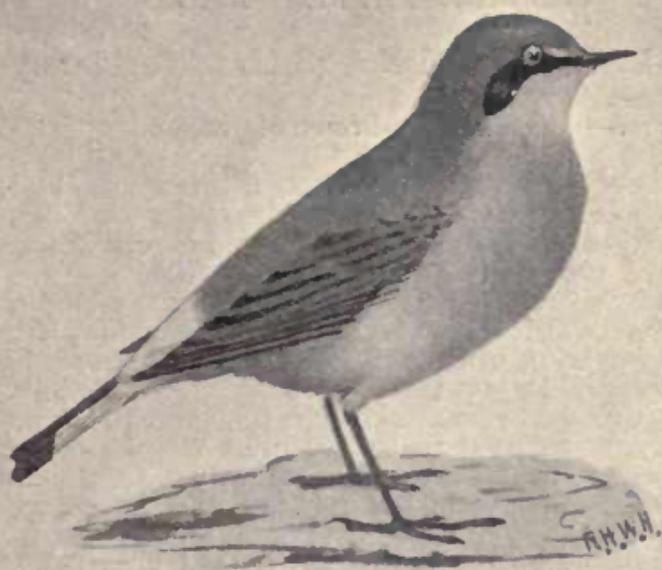
Note.—A shrill call-note.

Distinguishing Feature.—Though found in different situations from the last two birds, being one of the Field Wagtails as distinguished from the Water Wagtails, the shape and carriage of this graceful species point it out as one of the same family. The bright yellow on the head and under parts prove it to be this species, as, in the summer, when Ray's Wagtail is seen, the Grey Wagtail has a conspicuous black throat. If in winter a Wagtail is seen without any black on the throat and showing traces of yellow underneath, it is the Grey Wagtail in winter plumage.

Nest.—On the ground, usually under a clod of earth or tuft of grass.

Eggs.—Whitish, with small spots and dots of greyish-brown.

Haunts.—Chiefly fields.



1. WHEATEAR.

2. PIED WAGTAIL.

WARBLER, GARDEN. (S.M. Warblers.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Uniform olive-brown above, under parts dull brownish-white.

Note.—Much like that of the Blackcap, and heard from similar situations, also sustained for considerable time like the Blackcap's, but does not contain quite such rich notes.

Distinguishing Feature.—The uniform olive-brown hue of the Garden Warbler serves to distinguish it from the Blackcap or other bird of its size and shape, being considerably larger than the Willow Warblers, with which it might be confused by a beginner. It is an interesting fact that though the Garden Warbler occurs at Selborne now, Gilbert White apparently did not know it.

Nest.—Much resembles that of the Blackcap, as also do the *Eggs*.

Haunts.—Similar situations to those favoured by the Blackcap, i.e., where there are plenty of low-growing bushes or undergrowth to afford seclusion.

WARBLER, REED. (S.M. Warblers.)

Size.—Slightly smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Above reddish olive-brown, below white tinged yellowish or pale buff. Pale eyebrow.

Note.—A hurried chattering song with many 'tack, tack' notes in it. Somewhat resembles that of the Sedge Warbler.

Distinguishing Feature.—Is of a skulking nature, and is not likely to be met with, except where there are beds of reeds at the side of a lake or river. If in such a situation a strange song is heard much like that of a Sedge Warbler, only not so loud or harsh, it will probably be this bird. If seen, the uniform brown colour distinguishes it from the Sedge Warbler.

Nest.—One of the most wonderful and interesting of our British birds' nests. It is suspended between three or four or more tall reed-stems about eighteen inches above the water, constructed chiefly of the feathery heads of the reeds amongst which it is placed, and rather deep, which is necessary to prevent the eggs or young falling out when the supporting reeds are swayed and bent in the wind.

Eggs.—Pale greenish with dark greenish-brown blotches and spots.

Haunts.—Reedbeds by the sides of lakes or streams.

WARBLER, SEDGE. (S.M. Warblers.)

Size.—Sparrow, small.

Colour.—Above russet brown, with black centres to feathers, pale eyebrow and dark line above it, underparts white with sides tawny-buff.

Note.—Very energetic voluble singer, imitates many other birds. A good many chattering, scolding notes in the song, which is often heard at night. If a stone is thrown after dark into the bushes where it makes its home it often breaks into song.

Distinguishing Feature.—The markings on the plumage, and *song*. The Sedge Warbler is also found in many places where the Reed Warbler would not occur, such as near small streams and pools.

Nest.—In low bush, dried grasses, lined hair.

Eggs.—Greenish-white, clouded all over with brownish, and a thin line or two of black, usually at the larger end.

Haunts.—Sides of streams or pools, or even ditches, but generally where there is plenty of thick cover in the shape of low bushes, &c.

WARBLER, WILLOW. (S.M. Warblers).

Size.—Smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Olive-greenish above, wings and tail brown, feathers edged with greenish. Eyebrow yellow, dark streak through the eye, under parts yellowish-white. Feet pale brown.

Note.—A simple, pleasing song, much slower than that of the Wood Warbler, and the notes fall gradually in a descending scale. Also has a plaintive call-note, 'wheed' or 'wheet,' often uttered when nest is thought to be in danger.

Distinguishing Feature.—Song. Smaller than Wood Wren and duller in colour. Pale feet distinguish it from the Chiffchaff, whose feet are blackish.

Nest.—On ground, domed, made of dried grass, &c., and lined feathers.

Eggs.—White, with light red spots.

Haunts.—Hedgerows, gardens, and woods.

WARBLER, WOOD. (S.M. Warblers.)

Size.—Smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Above yellowish-green. A broad eyebrow of sulphur yellow, throat yellow, under parts white.

Note.—Usually heard in woods, or at all events where there are clumps of tall trees. Song begins with a few notes like ‘tick, tick, tick,’ and ends with a ‘shivering trill’ (while the latter is uttered the head is thrown back and the whole body shakes). This song once heard, is easily recognized, and is far the easiest way to distinguish the Wood Warbler from the other ‘Willow Warblers.’

Distinguishing Feature.—The note as above. Is brighter in hue than the Willow Warbler or Chiffchaff.

Nest.—On ground, of dry grass, domed, lined fine grass, no feathers.

Eggs.—White, with red spots.

Haunts.—See ‘Note.’

WHEATEAR. (S.M. Thrushes.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Back blue grey, black streak through eye to ear-coverts, rump white, tail black, white at base excepting middle feathers, wings blackish-brown. Cheeks, throat, and breast tawny-buff, rest of under parts creamy white. Female duller in colour, being browner all over, but with the same white markings on rump and tail.

Note.—‘Tack, tack.’

Distinguishing Feature.—The white rump (Anglo Saxon ‘Whete Aer’), which shows very distinctly when the bird flies, but disappears so suddenly when it alights that the bird in its sober colouring becomes almost invisible.

Nest.—On ground among heap of stones, or under clod of earth.

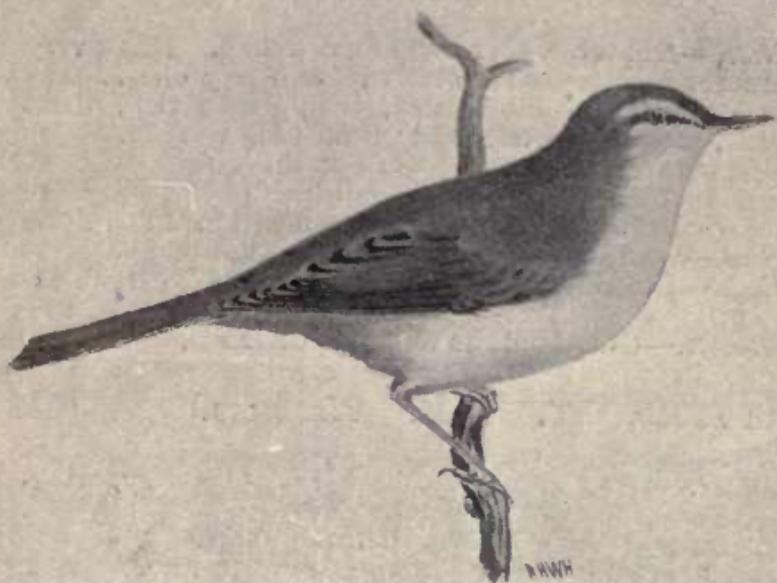
Eggs.—Pale greenish-blue, with occasionally a few spots of pale brown.

Haunts.—Moorlands and wilder parts of the country as a rule in the breeding-season. Seen in many places only while passing on migration.

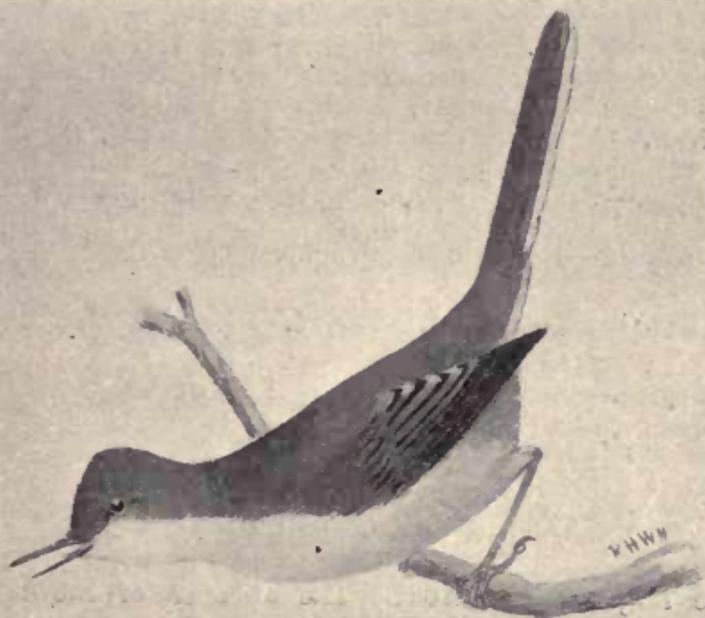
WHINCHAT. (S.M. Thrushes.)

Size.—Sparrow, small.

Colour.—Sandy-brown above with black streaks, wings blackish with white spot, tail brown with base white excepting central feathers. Black streak through eye, cheeks, chin, and sides of neck white, breast rosy, under parts sandy. The female is browner.



WILLOW WARBLER.



WHITETHROAT.

Note.—A short, rather monotonous song. Has a very characteristic call-note, uttered when any one is near nest or young, 'utick, tick, tick, utick, tick, tick,' flitting, meanwhile, anxiously from twig to twig.

Distinguishing Feature.—Rather short stumpy bird. The flick of white on the tail, the whitish eyebrow above the dark eye streak, and the above mentioned call-note.

Nest.—On ground among grass.

Eggs.—Greenish-blue, with pale spots of reddish-brown.

Haunts.—Grasslands as well as moorlands.

WHITETHROAT. (S.M. Warblers.)

Size.—Small Sparrow.

Colour.—Head ashy-grey, back brownish-grey, wing-coverts and innermost secondaries edged with chestnut, rest of wings dark brown, tail the same, with outer feathers edged white. Throat pure white, breast tinged with pink, contrasting with throat, legs pale brown. Female browner above, breast whiter.

Note.—A lively song often uttered on the wing, the bird fluttering up a little way and singing as it descends. Often utters a jarring, scolding note when nest is approached, 'chaah.'

Distinguishing Feature.—The pure white throat, grey head, and chestnut on wings. If seen close at hand the flesh-coloured legs distinguish this bird from the Lesser Whitethroat, which has bluish-grey legs.

Nest.—A fragile structure made of bents, lined fine roots and hair, in low bush or bramble.

Eggs.—Greenish-white, spotted and speckled with grey and greenish-brown.

Haunts.—Hedgerows, gardens, &c.

WHITETHROAT, LESSER. (S.M. Warblers.)

Size.—Smaller than Sparrow.

Colour.—Head slaty-grey, rest of upper parts ashy-brown, quills dusky-brown with pale edges, outer tail-feathers edged and tipped white. Throat white, rest of under parts tinged with pink. Legs lead colour.

Note.—Of a somewhat similar character to that of the Whitethroat, but rather quieter.

Distinguishing Feature.—More shy and retiring than the larger Whitethroat. The absence of the bright

chestnut on wings, and the blue-grey or lead-colour legs, not pale brown, as in 'Whitethroat.'

Nest.—In hedge or low bush, very fragile, bents lined hair and fine roots.

Eggs.—White, spotted chiefly at the large end with brown and grey.

Haunts.—Hedgerows, gardens, &c.

WOODPECKERS.

All the Woodpeckers find their chief supply of food in the crevices of the bark of trees. Their feet have sharp, strong claws, and two of the toes are placed forward and two backward, enabling the birds to cling with ease perpendicularly on the trunks and limbs of trees; they are also helped by the structure of the tail, the feathers of which are very strong and pointed; this acts as a prop to the bird.

WOODPECKER, GREEN. (R. Woodpeckers.)

Size—Blackbird, large.

Colour.—Above chiefly olive-green, crown of head crimson, spots of white on wing, under parts yellowish-white.

Note.—A wild cry that is something like a laugh, said to be uttered before rain, hence the name 'Rainbird' has been given to it.

Distinguishing Feature.—The laugh-like note, green colour, and, when seen flying, the undulating character of the flight. The bird seems as though it were riding on invisible waves, rising with each deliberate stroke of the wings and sinking as the impetus dies away. Seen clinging to the trunk or large limb of tree.

Nest.—At bottom of hole hollowed out in tree trunk.

Eggs.—Pure white.

Haunts.—Wooded districts.

WOODPECKER, GREAT SPOTTED. (R. Woodpeckers.)

Size.—Blackbird, large.

Colour.—Above chiefly black and white, patch of red on back of head, under tail-coverts red.

Note.—A call note usually rendered as 'tchick' or 'chink.' It also produces a loud noise by drum-

ming with its bill on the trunk or branches of trees, usually in spring time. This is supposed to be a love song.

Distinguishing Feature.—The pied plumage—the smaller size distinguishing it from the Magpie, as well as the Woodpecker's attitude.

Nest.—In hole hollowed out in tree trunk.

Eggs.—White.

Haunts.—Woods.

WOODPECKER, LESSER SPOTTED (R. Woodpeckers.)

Size.—Sparrow.

Colour.—Principally black and white in bars and patches. Crown of head crimson.

Note.—Makes a drumming sound on the branches of trees. Also a call-note like 'peep, peep.'

Distinguishing Feature.—The pied plumage, small size, and Woodpecker habit. Seen more on the smaller limbs of trees than the other two Woodpeckers.

Nest.—In hole hollowed out in tree.

Eggs.—Pure white.

Haunts.—Woods.

WREN. (R. Wrens.)

Size.—Small, being only four inches long.

Colour.—Brown, tinged with chestnut on the lower part of the back, paler on throat and breast. Bars of darker colour on tail, wings, and sides of body.

Note.—Besides a call-note like the winding of a clock, the Wren has an extraordinarily loud song for the size of the bird, which it utters quickly and impetuously.

Distinguishing Feature.—The small size, with reddish-brown plumage, and short tail carried usually nearly at right angles to the back. Insistent song.

Nest.—In ivy, hole in wall, side of haystack, &c., of dried grass and leaves, domed, with entrance at the side.

Eggs.—White with red spots.

Haunts.—Woods, hedges, gardens.

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