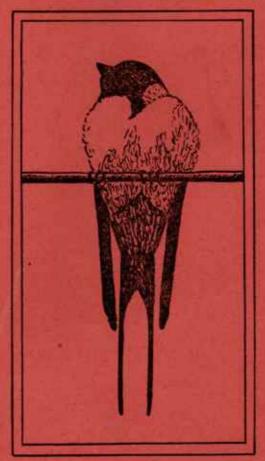
# SHOREHAM ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Fourth Annual Report 1957



For the Year 1956

(Price: TWO SHILLINGS)

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### EDITORIAL NOTES.

The affairs of the Society continue to flourish. Our Membership has increased considerably during the year. We have been fortunate in having an extremely interesting series of winter lectures which both in content and in form have been of a very high standard and have been greatly appreciated by members. Attendance at the lectures and also at the out-door meetings has been excellent. An increasing number of members have contributed notes to our recorders. We trust others who have not already done so will send in their notes next year, as by this means we hope in time to build up a more comprehensive picture of the bird-life, both permanent and seasonal, of the area.

I number of interesting birds visited the area during the year (notably the Hoopee, Woodchat Shrike and Spoonbill) and some members were fortunate enough to see certain birds for the first time.

to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and to the British Naturalists Association.

We are greatly indebted to Mr. James Fisher for taking the trouble to visit Shoreham and give his written opinion (which is reproduced in this Report) on the vexec question of the identity of the white gull, which was first seen in December 1954, and has been the subject of articles in our Annual Reports in the last two years. The bird was still in the district at the end of the year, and apart from occasional absences for a few days, could usually be found in one of a number of places by or near the river.

We should like to congratulate Mr. Tony Marr on winning the I.S.P.B. Junior Ornithological Prize for the second successive year. Mr. Marr is one of our keenest observers and his notes have been of great value in some of the items of this Report.

The Society has suffered a great loss during the year in the death of Mr. N. C. Smith. Mr. Smith as members are aware, was the Society's representative on the Protection of Birds Committee of the West Sussex County Council. We are pleased to say that Mr. Rampton has kindly consented to take his place on that Committee.

We should also like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs. Berry, Miss Keats and Mr. Grigg for their valuable assistance to the Honorary Secretary during the year,

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### THE SANCTUARY 1956.

The Society has now had the use of the Sanctuary four years. During this time many improvements have been made. The latest is the building of a hide in the copse, with a bird feeding table in view; by this means it is hoped to attract into the open birds that may well pass unobserved otherwise. The hide has been made possible by generous gifts of time lateur and material by members. This year three more birds have been recorded for the first time:-Buzzard, Hoopee and Woodchat Shrike.

The Buzzard was seen twice soaring over in the spring. The Hoopoe was first seen by Mr. Weatherhead. It was haunting the slopes of Mill Hill for some days in August and was seen by many members. The Woodchat Shrike, an immature bird and a great rarity, was seen in the autumn by three younger members under ideal conditions, and strangely enough, very shortly after one had been seen in Shoreham. It is a record that I feel can be accepted on the field description supplied. Incidentally there had been one at Dungeness the week before.

Without a doubt the Sanctuary, with its copse, bushes and water is a great attraction to migrant birds in both spring and autumn. Scarce visitors such as the Firecrest are regular in the spring, often staying several days. The Black Redstart is recorded now each year and many other unusual species must often pass through unseen. Waders are attracted at times to the muddy edges of the stream, the Common Sandpiper being recorded again this year.

Breeding in the Sanctuary continues much the same as last year, but without the Lesser Whitethroat as a breeding species. The Tree Sparrows fought a losing battle with Domesticus for the nestbox. No attempt was made to find nests this year. For those who keep the Sanctuary under regular observation it will be noted that the numbers of the species vary with the seasons. Goldcrests winter there, mount in number to early spring and then leave to breed elsewhere. They return in the autumn again, building up their numbers as before. Other species behave in a

similar way. With its cover and plentiful food there is a great attraction for the Thrush family. In autumn fifty to eighty Blackbirds and Redwings can be seen together. The Blackbirds may well be migrarts from Europe with the Redwings. A Blackbird, winter ringed in Shoreham, was found breeding in the summer of the following year in Sweden.

At the same time there was an increase of up to ten in the numbers of Robins, a species which is not given to gathering together, although the females do move about. One ringed in Shoreham was found in Margate a few weeks later.

In the height of the spring migration the copse is often alive with passing Warblers and other migrant It is always a surprise to me that the Spotted Flycatcher, a regular passage migrant, does not stay to nest. The habitat is ideal but they always pass by.

The Sanctuary is worth a visit on any day of the year. Ir. and Mrs. Weatherhead continue their kindly co-operation.

J.S.

## DETAILED REPORT ON THE SANCTUARY 1956

The list which follows is intended to indicate in comparison with last year the present status in the Sanctuary of the species mentioned.

Three new species were reported for the first time there, making a grand total of 95 since records began in 1953. RESIDENTS.

Blackbird. Yellow Hammer. Wren. Magpie. Starling. Jackdaw. Reed Bunting.

Dunnock

Kestrel. Chaffingh. Robin. Meadow Pipit. Moorhen. Greenfinch. Goldfinch. Skylark.

listle Thrush.

House Sparrow Song Thrush Blue Tit. Rook. Carrion Crow. Carn Bunting

Great Tit.

#### SUMMER VISITORS.

Lesser Whitethroat. Chiffehoff. Cuckoo. Nightingale. Sedge Warbler. Willow Warbler. Swallow. Whitethroat. Reed Warbler.

Yellow Wagtail. Turtle Dove.

#### WINTER VISITORS.

Fieldfare. Water Rail. Goldcrest. Snipe. Redwing. Stonechat. Green Woodpecker. Lapwing.

Partridge.

#### PASSAGE MIGRANTS.

Grey Wagtail. Lesser Spotted Woodpecker. Whinehat. Grasshopper Warbler. Firecrest. Wheatear. Common Redstart. Spotted Flycatcher. Blackcap. Common Sandpiper. Garden Warbler. Tree Pipit.

Hoopoe.

Kingfisher. Black Redstart. Woodehat Shrike. Pied Flycatcher.

OCCASIONAL VISITORS.

Longtailed Tit. Bullfinch. Brambling. Redshank. Pied Wagtail. Stock Dove. Common Gull. Heron. Blackheaded Gull. Mute Swan. Teal Little Owl. Tawny Owl. Herring Gull. Mallard. Buzzard.

Tree Sparrow

#### FLYING OVER.

Sand Martin. House Martin. Cornorant. Swift. Curlew.

#### REPORTED FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR.

March 30th and April 10th. Buzzard. August 19th. Hoopoe. September 12th. Woodchat Shrike.

### SPECIES THAT BRED, OR WERE BELIEVED TO HAVE BRED.

Yellow Hammer. Robin. Blackbird. Reed Warbler. Sedge Warbler. Magpie. Linnet. Song Thrush. Cuckoo. Nightingale. Wood Pigeon. House Sparrow. Whitethroat. Wren. Goldfinch. Corn Bunting. Dunnock. Starling. Greenfinch. Willow Warbler. Great Tit Blue Tit. Moorhen. Chaffinch.

### THE DUCK COUNTS 1956.

The cold weather in January and February brought added interest to the counts with White-fronted Geese, Whooper Swans and Bewick Swans in numbers.

Pintail, Wigeon and Shoveler were common, and large numbers of Teal and Mallard were counted in regular counts. The ideal conditions of flood water do not always coincide with a count day, and indeed on several days of the count this year the weather was not favourable. One surprise was two Goosander drakes in February, an unusual species for Sussex and more so inland. One wintering Sandpiper was seen.

J.S.

### THE WHITE GULL.

The problem of this bird is now as near solved as it can be.

On September 3rd it was seen by Mr. James Fisher who has had great experience of sea birds. Mr. F. Severs and Mr. J. M. Twort were also present.

He reported as follows in his field notes :-

#### COPY.

GULL: Shoreham, just West of bridge in green meadow, 0915 - 0945 hours BST 3rd of September, 1956. Light: slight overcast, good light, diffused. Gull about 80 yards to northward of stance: 30x Ross telescope propped against tree, almost filled field: perfect conditions.

Gull digesting, lying on belly, occasionally standing, finally flying off. In company of a hundred other Gulls-Herring, Lesser B.B. and Great B.B., adults and young. Individuals of each of these species close by to the white Gull and available in the same telescope field for comparison.

Size. Apparently exactly the same as Herring

Gull.

Colour of Plumage. Almost pure white but not quite white. Most non-white on upper wing, which appeared ivory or very faint dirty yellow. On prolonged examination appeared that beneath the white plumage was a very faint "ghost" pattern - very faint and only visible from some angles - which resembled that of an immature Herring - or Lesser B.B. Gull. This ghost pattern the basis for the faint offwhiteness of the Gull. No grey on wings or mantle at 311, unlike Iceland or Claucous adult. Iceland or

Glaucous immature would have been mottled.

Bill. Easily compared with that of neighbouring.

Herring, Lesser B.B. and Great B.B. Gulls. In shape exactly as first two. Not nearly as massive as that of Great B.B. Gull (or Glaucous). Head likewise, same shape and size as that of Herring Gull or Lesser B.B. Gull - not Great B.B. Gull. Colour of bill pale pink except for gonys patch on lower mandible, which is of orthodox shape, but light horn-colour distally(anterior) shading to dark proximally (posterior). This gonys mark reflected in similar but smaller mark on upper mandible, of same (but mirror) shape and colour.

Distribution of marks similar to those of 2nd or 3rd year Herring Gull.

Eye. Iris dark brown. Sclerotic light yellow. Orbital ring brown - a faintly pinkish brown.

Legs. Pale (but pale) pink.

Wings. When folded, tips almost flush with tip of tail.

Gull, hatched in 1954 (possibly 1953 but less likely).

signed....J.Fisher. September 3rd, 1956.

There will be many who will not agree with this diagnosis, and we are all entitled to our opinions.

Mr. Fisher would be the first to agree that to be absolutely certain one would have to obtain the bird and examine the skin, feather by feather by feather, in a museum with other skins for comparison.

I should like to say how grateful we are to Mr. Fisher for giving up some of his holiday to see this bird for us.

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### BIRD RINGING REPORT FOR 1956

In the past year a total of 570 birds were ringed of 40 species. Of these 422 were ringed as adults and 148 as nestlings. The total was made up as follows:-

Starling Blackbird Song Thrush Dunnock Reed Bunting Greenfinch	8 House Sparrow 63 Cornerake	2 4 3 1 3 1 70	Reed Warbler 17
Blue Tit Robin Wren Great Tit Little Grebe Black-headed Gull Chaffinch Missel Thrush	33 Whitethroat 19 Spotted Fly- 10 catcher 15 House Martin 2 Little Owl 4 Pied Wagtail 6 Carrion Crow 9 Yellow Bunting	39 98 5 11 43	Yellow Wagtail 5 Swellow 6 Night Jer 2 Lesser White- Throat 1 Redstart 1 Pied Fly- catcher 2 Vater Rail 1

This is a decrease of 132 on last year. Corncrake, Carrion Crow, Corn Bunting, Water Rail, Yellow Bunting and Skylark were ringed for the first time. There was an increase of two in the total number of species ringed.

#### RECOVERIES OF INTEREST.

Song Thrush
Juvenile. Ringed Shoreham 18/10/55.
Killed by a cet in Eastbourne 13/9/56,
24 miles E.

Starling. Adult. Ringed Shoreham 12/1/55. Killed Yaxley, Hunts. 115 miles N.

Blackheaded Gull. Immature. Ringed Shoreham 11/2/56
Found dead Hounslow, Middlesex. 43 miles N

Other recoveries concerned only local birds and there was nothing notable about them.

J.S.

### NOTABLE BIRDS OF THE AREA 1956.

These records of birds seen in the Shoreham and District area are of interest, either because the species is not seen annually in numbers, or because the date of the occurence is unusual.

The records have been compiled mainly from the notes of members. The following have contributed:Miss Barclay, Miss Biggs, Mrs. Chapman, Mr and Mrs. Farmer,
Mr and Mrs Jenking, Messrs. Child, Ferguson Lees, Grigg,
Harber, Kadwell, Marr, Pilcher, Severs, RusMton, Sturman,
Sutton, Thompson and Twort, Dr. Stafford, and Mrs
Weatherhead.

Red-throated Diver. Many records from the sea and a few from the Adur and the Harbour.

Black-throated Diver. Two at Widewater both ciled, one bitten in the neck, November 11th.

Black-necked Grebe. One on sea near Widewater February 2nd. Two E.F. or Slavonian on the sea February 4th and one in flight, Adur, November 15th.

Gannet Many sea records; flock of c. 80 October 6th and c. 50 November 3rd.

Cormorant. Two of Southern or Continental race, Harbour, March 31st.

Shag. One on the sea, November 4th.

Spoonbill. Two adults on Adur, near Railway Bridge, October 8th, full details given.

Garganey. A drake flew E. to W. over the sea, April 22nd.

wigeon. Many records from sea at both ends of the year; five on the Adur, February 2nd. A pair there on February 4th and one male February 20th, 22nd.

Shoveler. A few records from the sea with a pair flying E. to W., May 20th. Three immatures (2 m. and 1 f.) Adur January 8th. Two there, February 16th and one February 19th.

Scaup. Three Widewater February 1st and one February 19th. Four Southwick Canal (females) February 20th and a few from the sea.

Tufted Duck. Up to 27 during February and March on Widewater.

Pochard. A few from the sea during the cold weather. One male Widewater February 1st and up to five there during February and early March. One male Southwick Canal February 20th. Two males Widewater 25th to 31st December.

Goldeneye. Many recorded from the sea. Up to six on the Adur, including two adult males during February and early March. Five females Widewater Bebruary 1st and one Southwick Canal November 2nd to 5th

Long Tailed Duck. One female between Rail and Toll bridges December 1st, 7th and 8th.

Velvet Scoter. Only records are from the sea.

Eider. One female, sea, April 17th and one close in November 3rd.

Red-Breasted Merganser. Many from the sea. Three females Harbour entrance February 11th. Four there February 14th. One male oiled, Widewater March 12th to 18th.

Goosander. One female February 1st and one male and four females, February 22nd, all sea records. One male on Adur January 13th and one male Adur near Coombes, December 1st.

Smow. One female on the sea February 20th.

Grey Lag Goose. On February 22nd six flew in from the W. and landed on the new rubbish dump. A flock of 30 large geese flying over Shoreham on February 23rd and 33 on March 4th were probably Grey Lag.

white-Fronted Goose. One New Dump February 22nd and one flew over the Flood Arch to S.E. March 24th.

Brent Goose One, dark-breasted, Widewater, February 15th to 19th and five flying to the E. over the sea October 31st.

Whooper Swan. Eighteen flew in from East and settled on the Adur, and then flew W. February 12th.

marsh Harrier. One female or immature flying E. to W. Widewater October 31st.

Hen Harrier. One female or immature Downs above Steyning, November 19th, 22nd and 25th.

Peregrine. One flying near Houseboats, Creek, Shoreham, February 25th.

Buzzard. One flew over Sanctuary March 30th and one probably the same, April 10th.

Water Rail. One picked up in Kingston Lane was released in Sanctuary, October 8th. One heard Sanctuary October 14th and Movember 16th. One Flood Arch November 4th.

Corncrake. One in Shoreham garden May 4th during heavy mist was caught and ringed and released apparently unharmed.

Oyster Catcher. One immature near footbridge September 2nd onwards, one adult December 9th. Many from sea including a flock of 24 flying E. to W. Aug. 21st

Grey Plover. One Adur, Shoreham, in summer plumage May 6th. Up to three birds seen at Shoreham and Widewater during the autumn and winter. A few from the sea during spring and autumn.

Golden Plover. Six flew over New Dump from S. and c. 12 flew E. to W. along Shoreham Beach on February 1st.

Turnstone. A number recorded from Shoreham during the late summer and autumn. Fourteen near Cuckoo Corner on August 28th.

Jack Snipe. A number of records, maximum 4 on Flood Arch during cold spell.

Woodcock. One in flight Southwick February 3rd and 15th. One near Lancing Clump, April 2nd.

Whimbrel. Earliest record 40 in flight off Shore-

ham April 22nd. 23 in flight there, May 3rd.
Black Tailed Godwit. One on edge of sea Widewater, August 24th. Flock of 20 flying over sea there, W. to E. August 22nd.

Bar-Tailed Godwit. Several during February at South -wick and Shoreham. Two at sea edge Widewater, April 24th; three there August 24th and two September 2nd. one flew W. to E over sea April 29th.

Green Sandpiper. One near Lancing April 22nd, and one in field by Rail Bridge, Shoreham, April 28th. One near Cuckoo's Corner, September 2nd.

Common Sandpiper. One Adur April 5th and one there July 6th. Maximum number twelve in ditches near Airport, August 29th.

Spotted Redshank. One Flood Arch, September 8th, One there November 11th and one presumably the same bird, calling from the Creek November 12th.

Greenshank. One calling Shoreham August 28th; Three near footbridge, August 31st. Two near Cuckoo's Corner September 2nd. Thirteen Adur, September 9th. Two Adur, September 2nd and October 9th.

Krot. Maximum zeventeen, Adur, Shoreham, February 5th. Fifteen Widewater, February 1st.

Little Stint. One Widewater, April 24th to May 17th Several daily at Stagnant Pool or at the Creek, Shoreham, August 27th to September 8th. Maximum six (five at Creek and one at Stagnant Pool,) September 1st.

Curlew Sandpiper. One Creek, Shoreham, September 2nd and 3rd.

Sar derling. One Adur, May 6th; two Southwick Harbour February 20th to March 7th. One Creek, Shoreham, August 31st. Two edge sea Widewater, September 7th.

Ruff. One Flood Arch, Shoreham, February 5th to March 3rd and 11th. One reeve same place August 29th.

Stone Curlew. Four above Lancing, April 8th. Two with nest there, April 22nd.

Arctic Skua. Two adults, one light and one dark phase flew W. to E. over sea Widewater, May 13th. Two impature Skuas probably of this species flew W. to E. over sea, September 4th.

Lesser Black-Backed Gull. One Shoreham January 8th and subsequently. Spring passage first noted March 20th

July 30th. One adult Stagnant Pool, Shoreham

Blick Tern. One flying W. to E. over sea, September 3rd.

Iceland Gull. One on mudflats opposite Town Hall, Shoreham, April 23rd, with apparently all white plumage From description this bird was seen on sea off Shoreham the previous evening. On April 28th, one near Toll Bridge in the morning, and one presumably the same bird, in field by New Dump in afternoon.

Black-Headed Gull. A gull with nearly all white plumage seen near Rail Bridge, Shoreham, April 19th to 21st was probably an albino (dilute) of this species.

Sabine's Gull. One immature, Flood Arch, Shoreham, September 2nd. Particulars given.

Common Arctic Tern. One Toll Bridge, August 27th and 28th. One on mud Widewater, September 4th. Many from sea including eight, July 9th and one November 4th, a late date.

Little Tern. A few from the sea. Three by Toll Bridge, May 3rd and one flying down river May 6th.

Sandwich Tern. A few from the sea, first record April 9th. No big spring passage as last year. One on June 30th, early autumn record. Two on mud Widewater September 4th.

Razorbill. A few from the sea.

Guillemot. One on mud was picked up oiled near Norfolk Bridge and looked after by a resident, October 22nd. One on sea October 27th.

Short-Eared Owl. One near Railway Bridge, April 21st Swift. One flew south over Southwick, September 21st, a late date.

Hoopoe. One Rubbish Dump, April 14th, one Mill Hill August 2nd and one Hove Park, August 17th.

Skylark. Immigration from the sea during October and November was considerable.

Sand Hartin. Five flew E. to W. Shoreham Beach, October 21st, a late date.

Hooded Crow. One near Sussex Pad, April 3rd and one probably the same bird on Airfield, April 30th & May 1st

Mistle Thrush. Flock of thirty counted in Sanctuary, August 7th.

Long Tailed Tit. Two near Cuckoo's Corner, April 8th. Two at Sanctuary, November 16th. One Adur near Coombes, October 13th. Eleven near Sussex Pad, December 9th.

ledwing. Two near Rail Bridge and one Sanctuary October 6th.

Stonedat. A very pale female by Rail Bridge, Shoreham, March 17th, may have been of Siberian race.

Black Redstart. One near Power Station, Southwick, during March. One female, Sanctuary, March 24th and one Lancing Clump, March 28th, a male.

Grasshopper Warbler. One Lancing, April 29th was first record. I July 11th, seen and heard at close range near Sanctuary was last record.

Common Whitethroat. One near Sanctuary, October 13th, a late date.

Lesser Whitethroat. A few spring records. Six Janetuary, September 12th.

Chiffehaff. One Sanctuary and three just outside Farch 19th. One Sanctuary, Movember 16th & 18th

Firecrest. One Sanctuary, March 3rd and 9th. Two there March 17th to 21st. One about 1 mile N. of Sanctuary heard calling from hedge and seen, March 18th. One West Hove Golf Course April 4th, and one near Railway Bridge, Shoreham, March 24th to April 2nd

Pied Flycatcher. One, end of Sanctuary Road, September 11th to 13th. One in garden Southwick, September 3rd and one there September 30th. One in another Southwick garden, September 14th.

Water Pipit. One in summer plumage at Stagnant pool, Shoreham, April 5th and 6th, and another, possibly still in winter plumage, there April 6th,7th

White Wagtail. One at Stagnant Pool, Shoreham, April 15th, and two there April 16th and 17th.

Red Backed Shrike. One male near Sanctuary, May 20th. One male at Rubbish Dump, Shoreham, May 6th and a female there May 22nd.

Woodchat Shrike. Two immatures on September 12th, one on Rubbish Dump and the other at Sanctuary.

Brambling. About thirty, Kingston New Barn, February 5th.

Snow Bunting One flew V. to E. over sea Shoreham, November 4th.

Reed Bunting. About forty near Coombes, November 11th and 18th.

Tree Sparrow. Two March 17th, Sanctuary and two near nest box and seen entering it there May 6th, 7th and 15th. Six just inside Sanctuary August 4th. Two there October 6th and one Movember 18th. One near there October 15th.

#### GARDEN BIRDS FOR 1956.

"Stone House", Windlesham Gardens, Shoreham-by-Sea.

### Winter.

Greenfinches. Males, females and first winter birds.

These occurred in abnormally large numbers this year. Commenced in the third week in January and ceased to come in the first few days of April. Over fifty were trapped and ringed in these months.

#### Spring.

Higrant Warblers. Arrived late in the garden this spring. Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers together on 14th May. Last spring passage Warbler, a Willow, on 24th May in the garden.

Corncrake. On 4th May about 6.p.m. Summertime a dense sea-mist descended over the coastal area. About 7.p.m. an adult Corncrake was found in an unbalted funnel trap in the shrubbery in my garden. often being killed by telegraph wires. This bird no doubt was forced down low by the sea-mist and took refuge in the shrubbery, and entered the funnel by accident.

### Autumn

Autumn Migration of Varblers. The first returning Warbler was a Willow on 27th July, by two days the earliest yet recorded in my garden.

Lesser Whitethroat. On 20th August, the first

for the garden.

Chiffchaffs. The first I could be certain of not until the 6th September.

Pied Flycatcher. Two birds this year; one on 10th September, a female. The other, an immature bird, on 15th September.

Redstart. An adult female on 9th September. The last migrating Warbler in the garden this year

was a Chiffchaff on 26th September.

As to the winter birds there was little of note except that Redwings were scarce even in severe weather; Chaffinehesmuch less common; Starling flocks were less. This is possibly because other householders put out food on their lawns to attract J.S.

### Other Gardens

Hoopoe. A Hoopoe seen 1 m. Mr. Jeatherhead's garden on August 2nd was later seen in the garden of 7 Mill Hill, on August 3rd, 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th, often staying for some time. It was also seen in other Hill Hill gardens.

Redstart. Seen in garden of 7 Mill Hill on august 30th 1(male) September 2nd a pair , 3rd September and 4th 1 (female) Seen in garden of 78 Park Avoiue, May 1st, 1 (male) September 11th, 1.

Lesser Whitethroat One seen in the garden of 78 Park Avenue on September 11th.

Pied Flycatcher. One in garden, Southwick, September 3rd, and one there, September 30th. One in another Southwick garden, September 14th.

Black Redstart. One female in garden at Steyning, 26th and 27th October.

### MOVEMENT OF BIRDS AT OR NEAR COAST.

No big passage of Redwings or Fieldfares was recorded by members this year but besides immigration from the sea there were some notable movements of Starlings and Chaffinches.

On February 2nd there was a huge passage of Starlings from S.E. to N.W. over Southwick. During a fifteen minute watch many thousands passed over and were still passing when the observer had to leave. On February 5th several small flocks of this species flew E. to W. along Southwick Canal, where many Redwings and other Thrushes were already settled. On November 13th a big flock of 150 Starlings flew W. over Southwick. The biggest movements of Chaffinches were those at Widewater where on March 15th a member estimated that between 9.a.m. and 10.a.m. over 800 passed from W. to E. A lesser number estimated at about 400 were seen flying in the same direction on March 26th.

At Widewater from late April to mid lay a few Goldfinches and Linnets were seen passing to the E. but during October and early Fovember more were seen, especially on October 14th when 225 of the former and 300 of the latter passed to the E. in about 3 hours. In addition 50 of the latter passed to the W. Other passerines noted passing along the coast in the autumn were Greenfinches, meadow Pipits, Swallows and Skylarks.

During the cold spell two flocks of 30 and 33 large unidentified Geese were seen flying N. over Shoreham, one on February 23rd and the other on March 4th. On February 22nd 6 Grey Lag Geese flew in from the W. and landed on the new Rubbish Dump, and on 12th February, 18 Whooper Swans flew in from the E. and settled on the Adur. Unfortunately they were disturbed apparently by the noise of a passing train and took off again almost immediately to the W.

J.M.T.

### ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES OF LIGRARIS (1956)

The following details have been compiled from notes supplied by members. The members who have contributed are: - Miss Barelay, Mr and Mrs. Farmer, ". and messrs. Kadwell, Marr, Severs, Twort & Weatherhead. SPICIES. EARLY DATE AND LOCALITY. LATE DATE AND LOCALITY. 4 on Downs behind Lancing Stone Curlew. April 8th. 1 at Sanctuary, April 22nd 1 juvenile at Cuckoo. Sanctuary Sep 3r Turtle Dove 1 by Rail Bridge May 6th Swallow 1 at Park Avenue, April 2 Shoreham Bch flying E. to loth W. Oct 27th. 1 at Steyning House Martin. 1 at Sanctuary April 9th. Hov. 19th. 5 flew W.along 4 at Shoreham, April 10th. Sand Martin. Shoreham Bch. 1 at Sanctuary 2 by Rly Brdg and 1 at Rody ing March 23rd. Sanctuary, Oct 6th. 1 on Beach 2 2 near Sanctuary, April Wheatear. at Sanctuary 2nd. Oct. 21st. 1 M. and 1 F. near Rly Redstart. Bridge, Shoreham Apr. 15th. 1 at Sanctuary, April 18th. Michtingale 1 on Downs near Lancing Grasshopper-April 29th. Wartler. 1 at Sanctuary, May 20th. Reed Warbler. Sodge Warbler. 1 at Sanctuary, April 15th. Garden Warbler. 1 near Rly Bridge, May 1st 1 at Sanctuary Sept. 11th. 1 at Sanctuary, April 22nd.1 nr Sanctuary Whitethroat. Oct. 13th. Lesser White- 1 at Sanctuary May 4th. 6 at Sanctuary Sept.12th throat. Willow Warbler. 1 at Sanctuary, march 31st. 1 at Sanctuary 1 on Downs nr Lancing,

May 11th.

Sept. 11th.

Blackcap.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES OF MIGRANTS (1956) contd

SPECIES
Chiffehaff.

The same tuary, Moreh T9th. 1 at Same tuary Nov. 19th.

Spotted- 1 at Sanctuary, May 13th. Flycatcher.

Tree Pipit. 1 landed on Shoreham Beach.

April 9th.

Redbacked

Shrike.

Yellow Wag- 2 at Widewater, March 17th. 1 on Dump Pool tail. Sept 19th.

1 by Railway Bridge, May 6th.

F.S.

### FIRECRESTS AT SHOREHAM.

One of the features of the Spring of 1956 was the number of records of Firecrests for the Shoreham area. At least six different birds were observed, all within a few miles of Shoreham.

When one considers that the Sussex Bird Reports from 1949 to 1951 inclusive list only nine birds of the species for the whole of Sussex, whereas twelve birds were listed in the 1955 Report, it seems apparent that many more Firecrests are visiting us now than formerly.

It is probable that the severe winter of 1947 reduced the status of this species for several years and it is now recovering. However, the increase in the number of records may in part be due to relatively more bird-watchers being able to distinguish this species from its near relative, the Goldcrest.

For those not conversant with the species there may be some difficulty in distinguishing one from the other, but the pressence of a well-marked whitish eyestripe in the Firecrest should make it unmistakeable. There are other differences of course, but this I think is a feature especially to look for. Incidentally, the Firecrest is more liable to feed near the ground than the Goldcrest and its call note (often single) is of lower pitch.

J.M.T.

### YOODCHAT SHRIKES AT SHOREHAM.

I wo birds of this species were seen on 12th
Septenber. The first was seen in the Dump Pool in
the morning, but not positively identified. It was
still there in the afternoon in the same place and was
watchel by three observers for about 1½ hours. It was
identified as a Woodchat Shrike (Lanius Senator) for
the following reasons:

In flight it was a typical shrike, with markedly undulating flight, and at rest the upright stance, heavy build, and quite long tail were noted, while closer views revealed the strong hook-tipped bill: every time it flew the observers noted a narrow whitish bar at the base of the primaries, and its pale greyish rump. These two features are the main ones which separate the immature Woodchat from other Shrikes. A detailed description, too long to be repeated here, was taken down on the spot. This bird was extremely tame for a shrike, and was watched from as little as ten yards away, and later from about five yards distance. It was typically "Shrikish" in behaviour, perching on the tops of bushes and, on occasions, on a fence. It frequented the area around the Dump Pool and the Dump itself.

Later the same afternoon a second immature Woodchat was fourd at the Sanctuary. The bird was observed closely for some minutes while full details of its plumage were noted. It was a much lighter coloured bird than the first one, with an almost white rump and pale grey under-parts. The whitish bar at the base of the primaries was once again easily seen.

The Woodchat Shrike is an infrequent summer and autumn visitor to the British Isles, although it has been recorded more frequently in recent years. The autumn of 1956, however, was rather exceptional for occurences of this species, and many more than usual were recorded.

The first bird was seen by Messrs. Farbridge, harr, Ruston and Twort and the second bird by Messrs. Farbridge, Marr and Ruston.

B. A. E. M.

### MUTE SWANS AT SHOREHAM

Shoreham residents are familiar with the sight of Swans - swimming in the river, or on the Widewater or the sea, and occasionally in flight.

For a number of years a pair of Swans has nested on a small island on the Widewater, and the Shoreham population of Swans is believed to consist largely of their descendants. In the spring of 1956, the original pen having suffered an injury, the cob took a new mate. Seven cygnets were successfully hatched, but all died after a short time. (Examination by the R.S.P.C.A. is understood to have disclosed that death was due to insufficient food.)

Another pair tried to nest in the garden of a house adjoining Widewater at its W. end, but they were driven off by the householder.

A pair of Swans also nested in the estuary near the houseboat "Happy Medium". The site was badly chosen, and netwithstanding the efforts of the Swans to raise the height of the nest by adding vegetation, the eggs (4 in number) were submerged at the high tides during the period 10th to 14th May. The pen continued to sit until the spring tieds of 9th to 13th June, when the eggs were again submerged and two disappeared. The nest was then abandoned.

It will be interesting to see whether the same pair nest in the estuary next spring - and if so whether a more intelligent site is chosen.

F.S.

#### SHOREHAM LIGHTHOUSE.

In early September 1956 the writer received the permission of the Shoreham Harbour Trustees to visit Shoreham Lighthouse, situated, as most members know, beside the Brighton-Worthing Road opposite the entrance to the Harbour. The object was to see if any small migrant passerines migrating during the night were attracted by the beam. However, the site of the Lighthouse in a built-up area, is not ideal for autumn migration: observation will

probably be more successful in the spring, when the rigrants come straight off the sea. As it was, with the exception all the birds recorded in the visits - which took place on September 16th, 23rd and 30th - where on the mud nearby. A very dark night, when the tower of the light is invisible, is best; unfortunately it was not dark enough on the writer's three visits. The watches did not start until after l.a.m. as the nearby street lights did not go off until about that time, and finished at dawn.

The exception referred to was a Song Thrush, which flew past the Lighthouse, calling, at 0510 hours on September 23rd. Other birds heard calling from the mud nearby were: Heron, Oyster Catcher, Ringed Plover, Whimbrel, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, most of these birds were heard on several occasions.

B.A.E.M.

### EBA-WATCHING OFF SHOREHAM IN 1956.

The year 1956 was a successful one for seawatching. Some unusual species, including Shag, Eider, Goosander, Smew, White-fronted Goose, Marsh Harrier, Garganey, Arctic Skua, Black Tern and Snow Bunting were recorded. Other species new for sea-watching included Golden Plover, Black-Tailed Godwit, Reed Bunting and Knot. A full list of birds follows this account.

The sen was watched on 47 days for a total of about 116 hours. The longest watch was on April 22nd 6½ hours. The most successful was on October 27th, 97 species have now been recorded in the sea-watching area. Observers included Messrs. Bristow, Child, Farbridge, Ruston, Twort, Wells, Wilmshurst and the writer.

A new venture this year was early morning watching in April and May, often from as early as 5.a.m. It proved very successful, and many migrants were seen coming in off the sea. But once again, as last year, many birds remained unidentified owing

to bad light, distance or poor views, or a combination of these. The most tantalizing was a suspected Pratincole on October 27th, which disappeared into the distance before a good view was obtained.

### SYSTEMATIC LIST

Red-Throated Diver. Common in winter months (max.c. 30 on November 4th. 1 on May 20th, a late date. First autumn bird October 14th.

Great-Crested Grebe. Maximum in winter c.20 on 18th February. Last ones April 10th. First autumn birds, (2) on October 27th.

Gannet. First recorded (2) on May 13th. Many in autumn from September 19th onwards; maxima October 6th up to 80 in one flock fishing at sea, and November 3rd, up to 50 in one flock. Last recorded (c.6) on 4th November.

Shag. One on the sea on November 4th.

Hallard. Only about a dozen recorded.

Teal. 2 in April, a few (up to 3) in October.

Garganey. A drake flew E to W on April 22nd.

Wigeon. 15 flew W. on February 1st. Otherwise few in first 3 months of year. 1 E-W on September 4th. A few in October.

Shoveler. A pair on sea April 4th, a F. on 10th. A pair on 22nd, a pair on May 20th, late to be still on sea; a pair on October 27th and a m. on November 4th.

Scaup. 5 E-W on February 18th.

Tufted Duck. About 18 E-W on February 1st. 7 W-E on November 3rd.

Pochard. 1 m. E-W on February 4th. 2 m. W-E on February 18th. 5 E-W on February 26th.

Goldeneye. Many during February cold spell in small numbers. M. (singly) on February 1st and 18th. 1 f. E-W October 27th.

Velvet Scoter. 30 on February 18th. 9 on April 22nd and 2 E-W on 25th; a pair on May 13th. 1 m. E-7 on October 27th, 1 on 31st and 1 on November 3rd.

Common Scoter. Recorded on nearly every watch. Easterly movement (small) in April and May, with maximum (c.50) on May 20th.

Eider. One F. close inshore on April 17th and an oilect. in & bad state on November 3rd.

Red Breasted Merganser. Common in winter months. Last recorded on April 10th (2 f. W.- E.) 2 f. W-E on August 23rd, an unusual date. Recorded regularly after 27th Oct.

Goosander. A f. E-W very near on February 1st. A m. W-E with 4 females on February 22nd.

Smew. A female on sea on February 20th.

Shelduck. 40 E-W on February 1st: 10 W-E. on February 4th: 4 E-W on February 18th. A few odd birds in April and February. 1 on May 13th. 4 E-W on October 27th.

White Fronted Goose. I on sea on February 26th later

Brent Goost. 5 W-E on October 31st.

Marsh Harrier. An immature or F. E-W on October 31st.

Kestrel. 1 flew in S-N and coasted W on October 6th.

Oyster Catcher. Passage was generally in a W-E direction irrespective of the time of year. 64 passed in this direction during the year, including 16 on October 28th, 14 on November 4th; and 1 flock of 24 on August 21st was recorded flying E-W.

Lapwing. 1 of a flock of 18 out over the sea on 9th January flew in. 1 in SEENW with a Starling on 18th February. 2 in SE-NW on October 27th and 6 on October 28th

Grey Plover. 1 on the beach on April 10th. 1 W-E on May 20th; 1 E-W on October 6th; 1 E-W on October 20th; 3 on October 21st. 1 W-E on October 27th and 1 on 31st. 1 E-W November 4th.

Golden Plover. About 12 E-W on Feburary 1st.

Turnstone 1 E-W on May 6th. 3 W-E on 13th.

Curlew. A few during February cold spell and during May and April. 1 E-W on October 20th and 2 on 27th.

Black- !ailed Godwit. A flock of 20 on August 22nd W-E.

Whimbrel. 40 W-E on April 22nd, 4 on 29th. 2 on May 2nd, 4 on 6th, 5 on 13th. A few during these months were recorded turning up-river.

Bar-Tailed Godwit. 1 on April 29th is the only record Common Sandpiper. Up to 6 along the beach August 21st - 23rd. 1 on September 11th.

Knot. 8 W-E on February 1st.

Dunlin. Small E. movement in April and May. On May 20th I flew in SE-NW and 6 in S-N. On October 27th many seen coming in from the sea with Starlings (q.v.) and flying on inland or coasting W. 21 E-W on Nov.3rd.

Arctic Skua. 2 adults, 1 light and 1 dark phase flew W-E on May 13th. 2 dark phase immatures which flew W-E on September 4th were probably of this species

Kittiwake. 1 immature W-E on August 22nd; 1 immature and 1 almost adult bird W-E on 23rd.

Black Tern. 1 W-E on September 3rd.

Common Artic Tern. First recorded May 2nd but nobig passage in the spring. 23 E-W on August 23rd. 33 W-E on September 3rd; On September 4th c. 210 flew W-E in 4½ hours. A few recorded in October. 1 on November 4th was probably an Arctic on account of the date.

Little Tern. 12 W-E on May 6th. 1 E-W on 13th.

Sandwich Tern. First recorded April 9th. Very few in the spring. 7 E-W on August 21st and 3 on 23rd. 1 W-E on September 3rd and 4 on 4th, and 1 on 19th.

Razorbill. First recorded September 3rd. The maximum from then until November 4th when the last one was recorded, was c. 8 on November 3rd.

Guillemot. 1 on sea on October 27th.

Swift. Small immigration from sea recorded in May

Skylark. Autumn arrival from sea first noted on October 14th when 4 in S-N. On October 21st c.65 flew E-W and c.120 came in from the sea. On October 27th c. 1970 came in from S or SE in the morning and a further 27 in the afternoon. Wind N. On October 28th only 4 came in, and on 31st only 1. 28 in to N. or NE on November 4th.

Swallow. Immigration from sea observed in April and May. Small coasting movements in may, August, September and October.

House Martin. On September 4th c.60 were observed to fly NW high over the beach in a flock. Wind SW.

Sand Martin. Immigration from sea with Swallows in April and May. On August 21st 2 flew out to sea to S. Wind W-SW. On September 3rd c.30 flew out to the S. over a rough sea. Wind S-SW. On October 21st 5 flew E-W over the beach - quite a late date.

Blue Tit. On October 21st, during a coastal movement of Finches, Pipits, Skylarks etc., 6 flew E-W high over the beach.

Song Thrush. On October 21st 1 flew NW over the

Redwing. 1 in S-N on February 1st. Wind E-NE, snow.

Wheetear. Arrival from sea was noted early a m.
April 1)th. Up to 50 were noted in the Widewater area
in the morning, all flying N. over the houses after
a while. 1 on beach October 21st.

Willow Warbler. On April 22nd, 3 flew in from the sea during the morning.

Meadow Pirit. Arrival from sea and coasting movements recorded in October and November, c.150 flew E-W on October 23rd.

Tree Pipit. I flew in S-N and landed on beach 9th April. Other Pipits from sea in April and May were perhaps of this species.

Rock Pipit. A few on beach in October.

Pied Wagtail. 1 flew in S-N and coasted W. 6th October. 1 in SE-NW on 21st. Coasting movements in Oct.

Yellow Wagtail. 1 flew in S-N May 13th. 30-40 flying about leach on August 23rd.

Starling. 1 in SE-NV with a lapwing. February 18th 1 in S-N on March 30th. Autumn arrival first recorded October 21st, when a flock of c. 150 came in S-N. On October 27th c. 8400 came in from S. or SE. in 6 hours

a.m. but none p.m. C.70 in from S. or SE on October 28th, and c.1300 on 31st from S. or SSW.

Greenfinch. Coasting movements in October; c.35 W-E on 14th, 4 W-E on 16th, 25 E-W and 2 W-E on 21st.

Goldfinch. A small E. movement in April and May; maximum 27 W-E on May 6th. Coasting movements in October with a peak of c.225 on 14th. On October 27th 5 flew in from S. or SE.

Linnet. Coasting movements in October with a peak on 14th when c.310 passed W-E. in 3 hours. On October 23rd 6 flying E-W turned and flew out to sea high to SW. One broke off and flew W. The remaining 5 were watched until lost to sight.

Chaffinch. On October 21st 1 flew in SE-NW and coasted W. C.50 flew E-W. on this day, with smaller coasting movements on other days in October. On 27th October c.320 flew in from S. or SE. and c.250 on 31st.

Reed Bunting. 1 m. flying about on May 6th. On October 14th 18 flew W-E in 3 hours, an interesting movement; 1 E-W November 4th.

Snow Bunting. 1, calling, flew W-E over sea on November 4th.

B.A.E.M.

### SHOREHAM ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Receipts & Expenditure Account, Year Ended 31st December, 1956. £. s.d. Expenditure Receipts. £. S. d. Cash in hand.1.1.56. 8. 4. 7. Subscriptions & 17.12. -. Affiliation Fees 5.10.-Subscriptions. 7.19. -. Printing. 8.18.6 Donations. Annual Reports - Sale. 5. 8. -. Lectures Expenses 9. -.6 11. 6. Sanctuary " 16.-Sanctuary Receipts. Postage etc. Cash in hand 31.12.56. 10. 6.1 £39.15.1 £39.15. 1.

> (Signed) G.W. Rampton. Hon. Treasurer.

-27- 31.12.56.

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### SUL LARY OF MEETINGS AND FIELD DAYS IN 1956

#### Meetings and Lectures.

January 4th

February 4th.

February 22nd.

March 14th October 10th. November 14th.

Field Days.

February 18th. March 10th April Sth.

May 5th June loth. October 27th. November 24th.

"An Illustrated Tall-

about Birds". Cine-Films of Birds

Annual General

Meeting. "Night Jars" "Dungeness"

"Sussex Birds"

Dr. J. Stafford. Mr. A. R. Cawkell.

Mr. W. S. C. Murray.

Mr. H. A. Thompson.

Mr. D. L. Dunkin.

"Birds as Specialists"Miss P. Bond.

At Newhaven. At Pagham.

At Washington (in conjunction with

B.E.N.A.) Around Wickham Farm, Steyning. At Mill Hill Bird Sanctuary. September 29th. At Mill Hill Bird Sanctuary.

Around Shoreham Estuary.

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

### For 1957.

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### LATE NOTES.

A Black-headed Gull picked up dead on 20th December 1956 near the Footbridge was found to have been ringed when young in Schleswig Holstein, Germany (exact locality not known) on 15th July, 1951.