

RARITY DESCRIPTIONS

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*. 28th May to 1st June, 1976.

On 28th May many visitors mentioned the presence of a strange heron with yellow legs and I saw the bird in flight at 18.00 hours and the next day several times attempting to roost in the wooded Millcombe valley.

A typical Night Heron in structure and colour except that this bird carried its legs very low, more like a Bittern, the left leg trailing particularly badly.

In some lights the coverts were seen to be bronze-brown presumably indicating a sub-adult although it had a well developed black cap and white plumes, grey primaries and white underparts.

M. ROGERS

The bird was first seen head-on standing at the edge of the pond. The head, neck and underside tinged buff like a pale Wheatear and the eye showed red even from a distance. The crown and back of neck were glossy black with a whitish crest feather.

After the bird flew to another pond I got a good view from above as it took off in flight and the back was dark grey, wings paler and the coverts above the secondaries seemed even paler and brownish. The legs were fairly bright yellow.

The bird called 'Kaak kaak' several times in flight.

L. V. BLACK

Little Bittern female *Ixobrychus minutus*. 2nd April, 1976.

My wife and I were walking along a track when some distance ahead I noticed a smallish buff coloured bird flying low over the bracken. Before we reached the area the bird took off again and pitched in an area of very boggy juncus behind us. A quick search failed to locate the bird and I went to summon aid in order to quarter the ground thoroughly but in my absence the bird took off in a south-easterly direction and we failed to relocate it.

Light brown upperparts with some streaking on the back, more on underparts. The most conspicuous features in flight were the wing patches buff in colour and extending over a large area. Fairly close in size to a Lapwing, perhaps smaller and looking like a miniature Purple Heron with very large feet protruding beyond the tail, but not so much of a neck as in the large herons.

M. and W. ROGERS

Alpine Swift *Apus apus*. 23rd August 1976. First seen by M. Darlston and later by M. and W. Rogers, M. Squires, I. G. and L. V. Black *et al.*

A large brown swift with wings swept back even more. The upper parts were paler, belly and chin white but chin not as white as belly and separated from it by a broken breast band.

M. DARLSTON, M. ROGERS

Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*. 9th April, 1976.

At about 10.30 hours my wife and I noticed a very pale grey warbler feeding at the top of Millcombe. It was seen on several occasions during the day and was trapped without difficulty at 18.00 hours when it appeared in our front garden.

Basically a garden warbler, grey with head several shades lighter, underparts silvery white with no trace of yellow but some buff on flanks, the bird was dumpier and bigger headed than Willow Warbler and primary and tail edges tinged lime green. The rump was much the same colour as the wing edges merging into the lower back and tail coverts. There was a slight tinge of yellow at the carpal joint. The superciliary was white or off-white, rather straight and fading rapidly behind the dark eye. Legs dark, upper mandible dark but lower horn

colour. The bird fed actively especially around blackthorn, flycatching and on the ground and it tolerated the presence of persons in the normal phylloscopus manner. In the hand the head, nape and back were seen to be grey-olive tinged green, head less so and lime green wash on rump much more pronounced. The darker brown tail feathers and considerably darker two central ones all had narrow lime green outer fringes, the outermost ones with a just discernable white edge, more noticeable at the rear of the tail. Wing feathers olive, bordered with lime green about 1 mm wide but 2-3 mm on tertials. Primaries as dark as tail.

The chin was white to buffish (faint) on upper breast, belly to undertail coverts silvery white, flanks buffish. Legs very deep brown, soles dull yellow, bill with dark brown upper mandible, lower horn; gape yellow. Measurements, bill to skull 10.5 mm, wing 64 mm, tarsus 19 mm, tail 49 mm, weight at 19.00 hours 10.0 grams.

Wing formula, 1st p.c. +5.5, 2nd -8, 3rd and 4th longest and emarginated, 5th -0.5 emarginated, 6th -3.5, 7th -6, 8th -9, 9th -10 mm. The bird was seen by M. and W. Rogers, I. G. and L. V. Black and J. Ogilvie.

M. ROGERS

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*. 20th April, 1976.

During the morning of 20th April my wife and I together with J. High flushed a pipit two or three times in muddy juncus covered areas on airfield and it was walked for a few minutes before it flew off calling at a considerable height in a northerly direction.

A very pale mantled bird which was streaked considerably less than the mantle of a Meadow Pipit but considerably whiter underparts, heavily streaked black, and white unstreaked upper abdomen and vent. Soft parts as Meadow Pipit, legs a shade darker. No trace of red on head or neck but face more buff; outer tail feathers white. The carriage was more horizontal giving a more wagtail appearance. The call when flushed was a 'teeze' quite drawn out and more vibrant than Tree Pipit.

A very pale Red-throated Pipit compared with birds seen previously but the call, skulking behaviour and marked preference for marshy ground were diagnostic despite the early date.

M. ROGERS

Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*. 1st and 11th June.

Warm chestnut brown back and tail with two very noticeable pale wing bars and darker streaks on upper breast, rest of breast beige white, whitish on belly. The bill was pale yellowish horn and the eye looked dark. The markings looked very similar to those of Spotted Flycatcher on the wings and the feathers had pale edges. The bird called several times, a single loud 'tch wee'. In size it was slightly larger than a House Sparrow and looked longer in the body.

L. V. BLACK

RINGING REPORT, 1976

<i>Species</i>	<i>Full-grown</i>	<i>Pullus</i>	<i>Species</i>	<i>Full-grown</i>	<i>Pullus</i>
Manx Shearwater	35		Sedge Warbler	9	
Storm Petrel	9		Blackcap	5	
Shag		2	Garden Warbler	5	
Greylag Goose	1		Whitethroat	19	