

Fringilla montifringilla. **Brambling.**

A few present during cold spell of late January, most five 27th. One February 5th, single birds on five days in March and on three in April to 16th. In autumn two October 15th, and one or two daily until 22nd, one 29th, four 31st. From November 3rd, usually present, peak numbers c. ten 3rd and 4th, c. twenty 12th, c. forty 24th.

Emberiza citrinella. **Yellow Bunting.**

Present from March 9th (six 23rd), and up to three seen frequently in April and May, less frequently in June and July to 25th. There was no satisfactory evidence of breeding. Autumn records of one September 7th ; a male October 24th and 25th, female 30th to November 3rd ; male November 9th, female 24th, male 27th and 28th, and one December 13th (J.O.).

Emberiza bruniceps. **Red-headed Bunting.**

An adult male August 15th to 21st ; another October 2nd and 3rd.

Emberiza hortulana. **Ortolan Bunting.**

One August 28th, the only record.

Emberiza schoeniclus. **Reed Bunting.**

A male January 27th, 31st and February 9th ; a female October 10th, 18th, 20th, November 12th, 13th, two 15th, one 18th.

Calcarius lapponicus. **Lapland Bunting.**

One September 11th and 13th, two 17th, one October 9th.

Plectrophenax nivalis. **Snow Bunting.**

A female February 1st, a male April 15th. One October 22nd, two 24th, one 25th to 27th, November 12th, two 13th and 14th.

NOTES ON SELECTED SPECIES

Little Crake. The bird of September 12th to 14th was seen only by Dudley Iles, who had had previous experience of the species on the Continent. On the first day, he saw the bird's head above the bank of the shallow ditch in the walled gardens of Millcombe, and noted the short green bill. A moment later the bird was chased from the ditch by a Water Rail, which pursued it for some yards. The impression was of a very small rail rather similar in general coloration to a Water Rail, but without barring on the underparts. A better view was had on the 14th, when the crake was feeding beneath the apple trees. The lack of white markings on the upperparts ruled out Baillon's Crake, and left no doubt that it was an adult male Little Crake.

Red-rumped Swallow. This bird spent the greater part of March 27th hawking low over the west sidings between Goat Island and the Battery, and was seen on several occasions, in excellent light, at a range of only ten feet. It appeared rather longer in the body than a Swallow nearby. The crown and back had a bluish sheen which the wings and deeply-forked tail lacked. The narrow nuchal band was chestnut; the rump sandy-chestnut, paler towards the tail. The underparts were of a warm buff colour.

American Robin. On October 25th Mary Gade saw an unfamiliar bird near Quarterwall Pond which may have been this thrush. On the 27th it was in the group of swallows about forty yards south of V.C. Quarry. In the field it somewhat resembled an oversized cock Stonechat, with its blackish head and pale brick-red underparts. The upperparts were dark olive-brown, the wings paler, like a Ring Ousel's, and there was a white ring round the eye. When disturbed it gave a call very like the rattle of an uneasy Blackbird. It fed upon blackberries during much of the time that it was watched, and seemed most unwilling to leave the shallows and the bramble-choked gully behind them. Eventually it was dislodged and driven into the Terrace trap.

After ringing and examination at the Old Light, it was taken to the Hotel and shown to F.W. and Mary Gade and John Ogilvie. Later, Kenneth Monk of the South Light took photographs, and the bird was released in the farm area.

On the morning of the 28th, it had returned to the group of trees on the Terrace, about half a mile from the place of release, a curious preference in view of the fact that many spots apparently equally attractive lie nearer the Hotel. It was still there on the 29th, but spent the remaining ten days of its stay on the open grassland near Quarterwall Pond, where it fed among Redwings and Blackbirds. Another note was heard here, a Blackbird-like 'tsee' as the bird flew away.

The description taken was as follows:

Upperparts: Head, very dark brown, feathers with olive-brown tips. A short patch above, another behind and below the eye, white. Rest of upperparts dark olive-brown, rather greyer on rump and lesser wing-coverts. Wings and tail very dark brown. Outer edges of primaries, secondaries, primary and greater wing-coverts pale greyish. The two outer tail-feathers on each side with small whitish tips. Underparts: Chin and throat white with dark striations, particularly at the sides. Upper breast, sides of lower breast, flanks, axillaries and under wing-coverts pale brick red, rather paler on under wing-coverts; feathers with greyish tips on upper breast and flanks, whitish tips on sides of breast. Centre of lower breast, and belly white. Under tail-coverts off-white, feathers with dark grey-brown bases forming a patch in the ventral area. Soft parts: bill dark brown, yellow at gape, eyes dark brown, legs and feet dark brown.

This description suggests that it was a first-winter bird, and of the two races breeding in eastern North America, it most favours the typical *T. m. migratorius*.

Wing-formula : 1st primary 6 m.m. shorter than primary-coverts, 3rd and 4th longest, 2nd 7 m.m. shorter, 5th 2 m.m. shorter, 6th 9 m.m. shorter ; 3rd to 6th emarginated on outer web.

Outermost tail-feathers 5 m.m. shorter than rest.

Measurements : Wing 130 m.m. ; tarsus 33 m.m. ; bill from feathers 18.5 m.m. Weight 69.8 gms at 1300 hrs.

The bird arrived during a period of strong westerly weather in which several other American species were recorded in the British Isles.

Blackbird. As in previous years, the autumn migrants included a number of large specimens. Eighteen of 104 measured after October 1st had wing-measurements greater than the *Handbook maxima* (134 m.m. for males, 128 for females). Seventeen of these occurred on or after November 4th (the exception was a female, October 12th, wing 129, which can be disregarded), and taking this date as a dividing line the following figures are obtained :

	WING-MEASUREMENTS OF TRAPPED BLACKBIRDS			
	(Oct. 1st to Nov. 3rd)		(Nov. 4th to Dec. 2nd)	
No. of Specimens	Male	Female	Male	Female
Wing Measurements	10	22	23	49
	126-133	118-129	123-137	118-135
Mean Wing Measurements	129.2	123.5	129.3	125.3

The number of males trapped in the first period is too small to give a reliable mean, but the data for females are more dependable, and show a pattern closely resembling that of 1951.

This year the proportion of females to males was much the same in both periods, whereas in 1951 females predominated only in the second period. For the autumn as a whole, the sex-ratio was similar in both years (43 : 23 in 1951, 71 : 33 in 1952).

White's Thrush. The first view obtained of this bird was probably the best, for though it spent almost three weeks in a limited area of Millcombe, it was extremely shy and seemed to prefer the densest cover. It fed in the grass among the trees, and on the open terrace of the Villa, but fled at once into the rhododendrons and hydrangeas when disturbed. Often several days elapsed without any sign of the bird's presence.

On October 15th a brief full view was had at a range of barely ten feet, in good light, and this, with subsequent observations of the bird in flight, provided a reasonably complete description.

It was a large thrush about the size of a Mistle Thrush, a rich golden-brown on the upperparts, each feather being tipped with a crescentic black mark. This pattern extended to the base of the tail, and could be seen clearly at a considerable distance. The underparts were paler, with similar markings. The under-wing

showed a striking pattern in flight, black with a white bar. The outer tail-feathers had distinct white tips. Bill and eye apparently dark-brown. No call was heard.

The bird was seen on several occasions by Mary Gade and John Ogilvie, and once by F.W.G.

Red-headed Bunting. Both the August and the October bird were adult males, and the description given in last year's report need not be repeated, except to add that the legs were pale brownish-flesh, and that the October bird had brownish tips on the rich red-brown feathers of the head and bib, which made it less brilliant. Both birds frequented the Tillage field. The first appeared to feed exclusively on oats, which were being cut at the time; the second fed in the stubbles, and also on the seeds of ragwort, which it took from the plant, like a Goldfinch.

A note used by both birds was a soft 'tlup'.

Both fed with Linnets, but did not fly with them when disturbed.

Albinism. The pale Meadow Pipit, seen in the autumn of 1951, returned in April, and occupied a territory above V.C. Quarry until August. It was not seen subsequently.

An extremely pale phylloscopid (presumably Willow Warbler), a uniform pale greenish-white above and below, was seen at Tibbett's Point, July 28th.

An almost pure white Chaffinch was present on October 15th. It was seen at very close quarters and called several times.

