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BIRDS AT SIGHT

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# BIRDS AT SIGHT

HOW TO KNOW THEM

*by*

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*(Hon. Sec. Bird Lovers' League)*

*with*

*126 Illustrations in Black and White  
by the Author*



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## PREFACE

In this short work on British birds I have described only what is necessary for their identification, leaving out many other points of interest, but, by so doing, it has been made as simple and straightforward as possible to enable the bird-lover to observe the chief characteristics of each bird and to be able to recognize it in the field or on the wing.

I have purposely omitted many rarer birds which are not likely to come to the reader's notice until after some experience in recognition has been attained. Descriptions of these birds will be found in more advanced works.

The birds have been arranged in families, as nearly as possible, in the order of their size, as this will greatly assist the reader to quickly visualize one bird as against another. To keep the text as free as possible from details not directly connected with the identification of birds, only the family name has been given. A list, however, is given on page 101 showing the classification and nomenclature of each bird described.

The illustrations show the birds in their most characteristic attitudes and a few sketches of birds in flight have also been included.

It is sincerely hoped that this little book will help many readers to gain a first real knowledge of our bird friends, and when progress has been made, there are other more advanced books to be obtained which will encourage and assist them to a wider and fuller study of the wonderful bird-life of our homeland.

In conclusion I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the standard work *The Birds of the British Isles* by T. A. Coward, M.Sc., F.R.E.S., M.B.O.U., etc., from which, by kind permission of the Publishers, I have been able to obtain much useful information.

S. VERE BENSON  
(MRS. H. T. HILLIER)

KENDAL.

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## INTRODUCTION

Many birds only show their "identification marks" when on the wing, and in the case of those with white rumps this is especially so. The rump is the lower part of the back where it joins the tail feathers. This is very often hidden when the wings are folded, but when the bird flies away from us, any white on the rump immediately catches the eye. In this way, and by noticing any peculiarities of flight or shape, we may usually recognize a bird even from a distance.

For instance, if we see a bird about the size of a Pigeon, with dark wing-tips and tail and a white rump, even when it is flying away at a considerable distance, when no details or colours can be seen, we know at once that it is a Jay.

When you see a small bird running or walking on the ground, instead of hopping, find out which birds run and which hop. Note undulating flight, bars on wings and notice particularly the natural surroundings of the birds and where and how they are feeding.

When watching for flashes of white you see a grey-backed bird with a white rump, about the size of a sparrow, usually flying into a hedge or bush you will know it to be a Bullfinch; while, on bare moors or cliffs, you may see a slim, buff-coloured bird of similar size, darting away near the ground and showing a flash of white rump, which will prove to be that interesting summer visitor, a Wheatear.

But all these birds may be recognised with your eyes shut if you know their notes.

Most birds give a flight note or an alarm note, even if they are not heard singing.

It is a good plan to memorize the song or note of each bird for the purpose of knowing it again, as a trained ear is of greater help than the eye, especially if the bird is partly or completely out of sight.

For beginners, it is sound advice to take nothing for granted, and to learn everything for yourself. You may not even know a House-Sparrow until you have definitely

identified it. Watch the way it hops, listen to its chirps and notice the difference in plumage between the male and female.

It is best to learn to recognise all the common birds of the garden and hedgerow, before you attempt the identification of rarer species.

When examining nests or looking at eggs never frighten the parents by a noisy or careless approach or disturb a bird when sitting on its eggs. If you feel unable to identify an egg without handling it, lift it very gently from the nest with a handkerchief or gloved hand to protect the egg from contact with your bare fingers, otherwise the parent may become aware that a human hand has touched her eggs and will possibly desert them. Replace the egg at once exactly as you found it and do not interfere with a nest if the parents are watching and anxious. Be careful, also, not to disturb the protecting leaves or grass which screen the nest, nor to unduly trample the vegetation at the approach. This might lead to its discovery by others, or by one of the bird's natural enemies.

Finally, never, under any circumstances, rob a nest by taking away any of the eggs or young birds. It is a very cruel and senseless act and unworthy of any bird-lover. The agony of bereaved birds is very real and distressing at the loss of their precious eggs and chicks. The robbing of nests is also very harmful by reducing the number of birds which are so useful in keeping down insect pests in our gardens and fields.

## OIL-CLOGGED SEA-BIRDS

All sea-birds are liable to become contaminated with the thick, black waste-oil discharged on the sea by ships and the following instructions are intended for any bird-lover who may find an unfortunate bird stranded and exhausted on the shore, and wish to do their utmost to save its life. The tar-like oil clogs their plumage and makes them quite helpless and unable to swim or fly.

The best way to remove the oil, without injuring the bird's skin, is to soften it by rubbing in a good dressing of salad oil, letting it soak in for about two hours. Then wash out thoroughly with a warm lather of soap and water. If the cleaning process is not completely successful at first, it can be repeated after a day's rest. Do not use petrol, except on wing or tail feathers, as it burns the skin. The main point to remember is that the bird is exhausted and should be kept in a safe place, quiet and warm, and fed on its natural food, raw fish. If the fish is larger than can be swallowed whole by the bird, it should be cut into long thin strips, and if refused at first, open the mouth and put a small strip of fish well down the throat. Keep the bird in a warm, airy place but away from fires, and until it regains strength, encourage warmth by means of a box of soft rags in which it can rest.

Give the bird plenty of sea-water to splash in and when liberating try it in a pool first, before putting it out of reach, but if it seems unseaworthy keep it in the most natural surroundings possible until the next moult.

Sea-water, fresh fish and somewhere to swim and dive are all essentials to an ocean bird if it has to be kept for some time. It is useless to try and keep them as permanent pets unless they are so damaged as to be unfit for their natural way of life.

# BIRDS AT SIGHT

## GOLDCRESTS OR KINGLETS

(Family *REGULIDÆ*)

### GOLDCREST.

Length:  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

The smallest European bird. Very tiny, and not easy to distinguish among twigs.

**Colour:** Olive, with yellow crest, and a small double black and white bar on the wing.

**Bill:** Very thin, small and black.

**Habits:** Quiet and secretive, and always busily on the move.

**Haunts:** Pines, larches and all trees.

**Food:** Small insects.

**Notes:** "Si-si-si" and a very high, fairy-like song.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest is like a tiny basket of moss or lichens suspended under a branch. Eggs, 7 to 10, very small, white, faintly speckled with red-brown. April to June.

## WRENS

(Family *TROGLODYTIDÆ*)

### WREN.

Length:  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

Small and plump with uptilted tail. Extremely energetic.

**Colour:** Brown, barred all over with darker brown.

**Bill:** Sharp and thin.

**Habits:** Constantly bobbing up and down and scolding, or creeping like a mouse in a bush or under a cabbage leaf.

**Haunts:** General, especially gardens, yards and woods.

**Food:** Spiders, caterpillars and all insects.

**Notes:** "Tic, tic, tic" and a scolding "churr", also a beautiful trilling song of remarkable clearness and loudness.

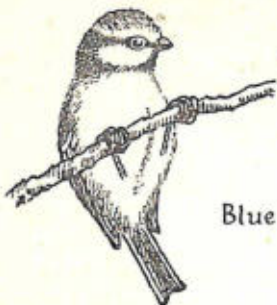
**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The mossy nest is globular, with the entrance-hole at the side. Eggs, 5 to 12, white, faintly speckled with red-brown. April to June.



Goldcrest



Wren



Blue Tit



Coal Tit



Marsh Tit

TITMICE  
(Family *PARIDÆ*)

**BLUE TITMOUSE.** Length : 4½ ins.

A small, very acrobatic blue and yellow bird, often known as the "Tom Tit."

**Colour :** Primrose-yellow beneath, bluish above, blue and white head.

**Bill :** Very short.

**Habits :** In winter very tame, coming to houses and gardens for food, and hanging up-side-down on suspended nuts, bones, fat, etc.

**Haunts :** Almost everywhere.

**Food :** Insects, also nuts, fat, and other scraps put out for it.

**Notes :** "Ch-ch-rr-si-si-si" and a short, high song.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest may be in a hole in a tree or wall, disused letter-box or pump, or any similar place. Eggs, 7 or more, white, spotted with brick-red. April or May.

**COAL TITMOUSE.** Length : 4½ ins.

A small agile bird with unique white nape-patch, in addition to white cheeks and black cap and throat.

**Colour :** Brownish and greyish, paler beneath, and with a black and white head.

**Bill :** Very short.

**Habits :** Constantly flitting about with spritely, acrobatic movements.

**Haunts :** Gardens and woods.

**Food :** Chiefly insects, also nuts, seeds and scraps.

**Notes :** "Si-si" and a song something like "if-he, if-he, little wee."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is in a hole in a wall or tree-stump, near the ground. Eggs, 6 to 11, white, spotted with brick-red. April or May.

**MARSH TITMOUSE.**Length :  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

A small, spritely bird with black cap (lacking the Coal Tit's whitish nape).

**Colour :** Pale buff beneath, brown above, black cap and chin, white cheeks.

**Bill :** Very short.

**Habits :** Quieter and not so common as the Coal Tit. Quickly flitting from bush to bush searching for insects.

**Haunts :** Gardens, woods and marshes.

**Food :** Chiefly insects, also seeds.

**Notes :** " Sit-sit-sit " and a song of two notes.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest and eggs resemble those of the Coal Tit. April to June.

**LONG-TAILED TITMOUSE.**Length :  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

A very tiny bird with long, narrow tail.

**Colour :** Black and white, tinged with reddish-pink chiefly on the flanks and back.

**Bill :** Exceptionally short, just like a black dot.

**Habits :** Usually about half a dozen together, flitting from tree to tree.

**Haunts :** Woods, copses and hedges.

**Food :** Mostly insects.

**Notes :** Continuous low conversational notes of " zit, zit " or " zup."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The deep, domed nest, with entrance-hole at the side, is made of moss, lichens, wool and spiders' webs, and is lined with multitudes of feathers ; in a bush or hedge. It is a wonder that these feathers do not smother the birds when 15 young and both parents roost in the nest together. The parents' long tails are usually bent over their backs and protrude from the entrance-hole. Eggs, 6 to 15, white, speckled with brick-red. April or May.

**GREAT TITMOUSE.** Length: 5½ ins.

A large and handsome blue-green Tit, with a black band down its yellow breast from chin to under the tail.

**Colour:** Green and blue above, primrose-yellow beneath, with smart black head and stripe on the breast, and shining white cheeks.

**Bill:** Strong and sharp.

**Habits:** At the bird-table it clings upside-down to suspended nuts or bone, and at a distance is easily confused with the Blue Tit, though much larger and of bolder colouring. It is a pugnacious bird, driving away smaller Tits and other birds from the bird-table.

**Haunts:** Anywhere, especially among trees, and it comes to gardens for food in winter.

**Food:** Insects, nuts and seeds, and any fat or scraps put out for it.

**Notes:** A loud "Chink," also "si-si-si," and a song of two metallic notes, "See-saw" or "tea-cher" repeated frequently.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest may be in a hole in a tree or wall, old pot, pump, box, or any similar place. Eggs, 6, 7 or more, white, spotted with brick-red. April or May.

## WARBLERS

(Family *SYLVIIDÆ*)**WILLOW WARBLER.** Length: 4½ ins.

A small, inconspicuous bird, searching ceaselessly for insects in trees, without seeming to pause even while singing.

**Colour:** Olive above, pale beneath.

**Bill:** Fine and thin.

**Habits:** Secretive.

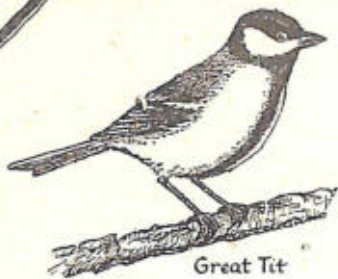
**Haunts:** Trees, copses and bushes.

**Food:** Insects.

**Notes:** "Tpo-eet," and the song is a fairy-like, descending cadence, very silvery and delicate.

**Other Points:** Only here in spring and summer. The domed nest of grass and feathers is on the ground, hidden in herbage or grass. Eggs, 6 to 8, white, spotted with brick-red. May.

Long tailed Tit



Great Tit



Sedge Warbler



Willow Warbler  
or Chiffchaff



Reed  
Warbler

**CHIFFCHAFF.** Length :  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

The song is the only clear distinction between this bird and the last.

**Colour :** Olive above, pale beneath.

**Bill :** Fine and thin.

**Habits :** Secretive.

**Haunts :** Trees and copses.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** "Too-eet," and the incessant, high, silvery, chipping song of "Chiff-chaff, chiff-chiff-chaff," uttered almost continuously in harmony with the rustle of the trees. A pleasant and familiar sound in spring-time.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The domed nest is in herbage or a bush. Eggs, 5 to 7, white spotted with brown. May.

**SEDGE WARBLER.** Length :  $4\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

A small bird, difficult to see in sedges, but most arresting to hear.

**Colour :** Rich brown above, streaked. Buff beneath, with a light line over the eye.

**Bill :** Rather short and thin.

**Habits :** Secretive.

**Haunts :** Sedges, reeds, marshes and ditches.

**Food :** Water insects and their larvae, gnats and midges.

**Notes :** A scolding "churr" and "tic tic" and a varied, warbling song including squeaks, bubblings, and chatterings, and deeper harsh notes. It sings at night as well as by day.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest of grass, moss and hair is in herbage or a low bush. Eggs, 5 or 6, greenish-yellow, mottled all over with brown. May.

**REED WARBLER.**Length :  $5\frac{1}{4}$  ins.

Not unlike the Sedge Warbler, but duller in colour and less streaked.

**Colour :** Brown, paler beneath.

**Bill :** Thin.

**Habits :** Secretive.

**Haunts :** Reed-beds and marshes, chiefly in the southern half of England. It is rare in the north and west.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** The song is not unlike that of the Sedge Warbler, but less loud, exuberant and excited, and may be heard by night as well as by day.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest is usually a beautifully woven and very deep cup suspended between reeds, or occasionally it is in a bush. Eggs, 4 or 5, greenish-white, blotched with olive. May to July.

**COMMON WHITETHROAT.** Length :  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

A noisy, excited little bird, often scolding, or with white throat puffed out in song, and the feathers on the crown of its grey head raised.

**Colour :** Brown above, grey head, white throat, and pale underparts with a pinkish tinge. The female is paler, lacking the grey on the head.

**Bill :** Fine and thin.

**Habits :** Flitting along the hedges, sometimes darting up in the air in song, and falling back like an arrow to the hedge.

**Haunts :** Copses, hedges, etc.

**Food :** Chiefly insects, sometimes berries.

**Notes :** Various scolding notes, and a cheerful but harsh warbling song.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest of grass, roots and hair, is in a bush or hedge. Eggs, 4 to 6, whitish, speckled with brown. May or June.



Lesser Whitethroat



Common Whitethroat



Blackcap

Spotted  
Flycatcher



Pied Flycatcher

**LESSER WHITETHROAT.** Length :  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

Chiefly a woodland bird, with an outstanding ringing trill.

**Colour :** Greyish, very pale beneath, with white throat and dark ear-coverts.

**Bill :** Thin.

**Habits :** Quiet.

**Haunts :** Woods, copses and hedges.

**Food :** Chiefly insects, and sometimes berries.

**Notes :** The song is a loud rattling trill, sometimes preceded by a low warble.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest of grass and fine roots is in a bush. Eggs, 4 to 6, whitish spotted with brown. May or June.

**BLACKCAP.**Length :  $5\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

The plumage of pale grey is of a remarkably soft appearance, and contrasting sharply with the smart black cap, is unmistakable at close quarters.

**Colour :** Grey, much paler beneath. The cock has a black cap, the hen a brown one.

**Bill :** Thin.

**Habits :** Fairly secretive, as a rule.

**Haunts :** Trees, copses and gardens.

**Food :** Insects and berries.

**Notes :** Scolding notes and a warbling song.

**Other Points :** Usually here only in spring and summer, but it has been recorded in south-west England in winter, and I have seen it at that time in Cornwall. The nest of fine grass and rootlets, is in a bush or creepers. Eggs, 4 or 5, yellowish-white, mottled with red-brown. May.

## FLYCATCHERS

(Family *MUSCICAPIDÆ*)

**PIED FLYCATCHER.** Length: 4 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

A smart little black and white bird, quick on the wing in search of insects.

**Colour:** White beneath and black above, with a large patch of white across the wing, and a spot of white on the forehead. The female is brown and white.

**Bill:** Fairly thin.

**Habits:** When perched, it swings the tail up and down, not fast, with an appearance of downward pressure.

**Haunts:** Chiefly the Lake District and western counties.

**Food:** Beetles and all kinds of insects.

**Notes:** A cheery little warble and a double note like that of the Great Tit.

**Other Points:** Only here in summer, in certain districts, and seen as a passing spring visitor on its way to breeding haunts. The nest is in a hole in a tree or wall. Eggs, 5 to 8, pale blue. May or June.

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER.** Length: 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

A drab bird with very quick, agile flight in pursuit of insects.

**Colour:** Brown, pale beneath.

**Bill:** Thin.

**Habits:** It sits still and almost invisible on a chosen perch, darting out after every passing fly.

**Haunts:** Gardens, woods, copses and lanes.

**Food:** Insects, largely flies.

**Notes:** It is usually quiet and the song is low and short, but there is a squeaky call-note.

**Other Points:** Only here in spring and summer. The nest is in a hole in a wall or other niche, or in creepers. Eggs, 4 or 5, whitish, spotted with brick-red. May to July.

## SWALLOWS

(Family *HIRUNDINIDÆ*)

### SWALLOW.

Length :  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

Unmistakable in skimming flight, displaying the long forked tail.

**Colour :** Dark, sheeny steel-blue above, white beneath, with a chestnut forehead and throat, and a dark blue band across the breast.

**Bill :** Very slight and short, with rather large gape.

**Habits :** Usually seen on the wing or perched high on telegraph wires, roof ridge, or tree.

**Haunts :** Anywhere in the sky, or skimming low over a pond or river.

**Food :** Insects caught on the wing.

**Notes :** Constant twitterings, and a twittering song.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The saucer-shaped mud, grass and feather nest is on a beam or in a niche in a barn, or similar position. Eggs, 4 to 6, white, spotted with brown, rather narrow in shape. May to August.

### HOUSE MARTIN.

Length :  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

Easily distinguished from the Swallow, Sand Martin and Swift, its rump and lower back being white.

**Colour :** Black above with white rump, and white beneath. The feet are also feathered with white down.

**Bill :** Very short and slight, with rather large gape.

**Habits :** Usually seen on the wing or perched on a roof or high position.

**Haunts :** Usually near houses or barns or skimming a pond.

**Food :** Insects caught on the wing.

**Notes :** Constant twitterings.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The wonderful bottle-shaped mud nest is under the eaves of a building. All the mud is brought in the birds' bills, and the nest is gradually constructed sticking to the wall or beam, and with a very small entrance-hole. Eggs, 4 or 5, white, narrow. June to August.

**SAND MARTIN.** Length : 5 ins.

Slightly smaller than the House Martin and lacking the conspicuous white rump.

**Colour :** Dark, dull brown above, white beneath with a brown band across the breast.

**Bill :** Very slight and short, with large gape.

**Habits :** Usually seen on the wing round sandy cliffs or skimming to and fro ceaselessly over water.

**Haunts :** Sandpits, cliffs, sandy river banks and open water.

**Food :** Chiefly insects, caught on the wing.

**Notes :** Continuous twitterings.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest is in a tunnel burrowed in the sand high on the side of a pit or cliff or river bank, in a colony of other nesting holes. Sometimes the tops of cliffs or the sides of sand-pits may be seen riddled with these nesting-tunnels. It is an unmistakable sight. Eggs, 4 or 5, white, narrow, May to July.

## SWIFTS

(Family *MICROPODIDÆ*)**SWIFT.** Length : 7½ ins.

With long, narrow, scimitar-shaped wings, gliding fast and often high, and screaming shrilly, the Swift is unmistakable.

**Colour :** Nearly black except for a light patch on the chin.

**Bill :** Slight and soft, and the mouth has a very wide gape in which flies are caught, and a number of whiskers or bristles at the corners which act as fly-traps.

**Habits :** Usually seen sweeping through the air, catching insects, twisting and screaming.

**Haunts :** The sky.

**Food :** Insects caught on the wing.

**Notes :** A high scream, "Chee-ree-eee."

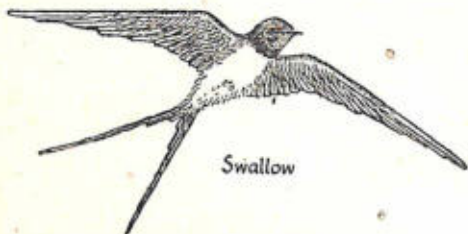
**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest is in a crevice in a wall or tree or on a beam in the roof of a building. Eggs, 2 or 3, white, long-shaped. May or June.



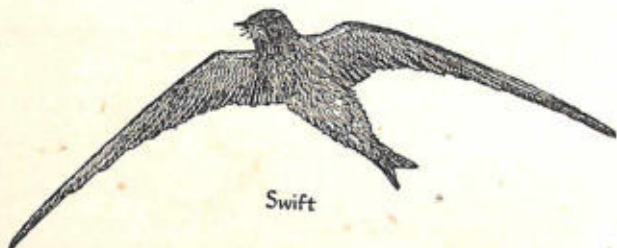
House Martin



Sand Martin



Swallow



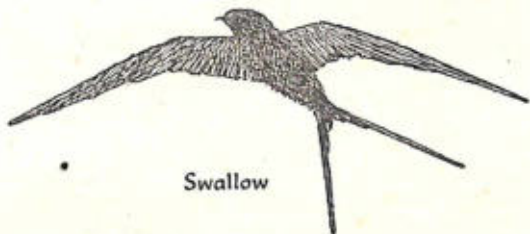
Swift



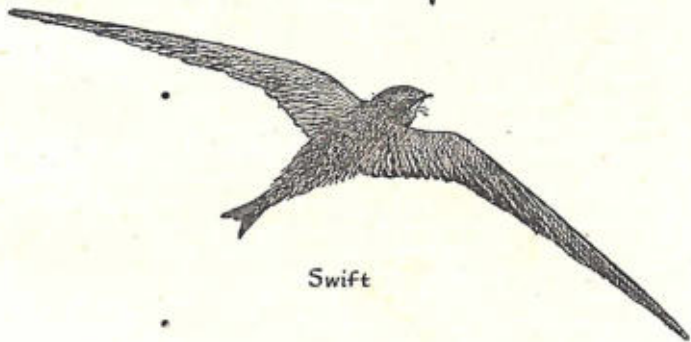
House Martin



Sand Martin



Swallow



Swift

## FINCHES

(Family *FRINGILLIDÆ*)

### LINNET.

Length :  $5\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

A small brown finch with a voice not unlike a canary's.  
**Colour** : Brown with greyish head, and the male in summer has crimson on the breast and forehead.

**Bill** : Short and thick.

**Habits** : It is gregarious, and in winter may be seen in large flocks. The flight is shortly undulating, and the flocks keep up a musical twitter.

**Haunts** : Heathy commons, gorse land and hills.

**Food** : Insects and small seeds.

**Notes** : Besides the twittering "Tweet," there is a varied song, lower and sweeter than that of a canary.

**Other Points** : With us all the year round. The nest of rootlets, grass, wool and hair, is in a gorse bush, or similar place. Eggs, 4 to 6, nearly white or bluish, with dark specks. April to June.

### GOLDFINCH.

Length : 5 ins.

A dainty bird with bright colours and tinkling notes.  
**Colour** : Light brown and white, with black wings crossed by wide, bright yellow bands. The black tail is spotted with white, and the crimson face and chin are surrounded by a white band and with black on the crown.

**Bill** : Sharp, light in colour, and not as thick as those of most other finches.

**Habits** : It is gregarious, and twittering flocks may be seen on thistles, groundsel and other weeds, picking out the seed and then flitting on to the next patch with a jerky, undulating flight.

**Haunts** : Weedy waste land, fields and meadows.

**Food** : Small seeds and insects.

**Notes** : "Tweet, Tweet" : a tinkling, twittering chorus. The song is similar.

**Other Points** : With us all the year round. The nest of fibres, moss, lichen and wool is in a hedge, orchard tree or bush. Eggs 4 to 6, white or creamy speckled and blotched with brown, red or purple. May.

**GREENFINCH.**

Length 6 ins.

An olive-green bird, with wheezy or rattling notes. **Colour:** The variable green plumage is brightest in summer. There is yellow at the base of the tail and along the front edge of the wing, noticeable chiefly in flight. In winter the plumage is browner. The hen is more olive.

**Bill:** Stout and thick.

**Habits:** Often flocking or seen in pairs.

**Haunts:** Fields, gardens or anywhere where seeds are to be found.

**Food:** Weed seeds, but when in the garden it loves sunflower seeds. Also insects.

**Notes:** A long-drawn, wheezy "weee." The song is a rattle interrupted by chirps and the wheezy "weee."

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest of grass, moss, twigs and feathers, is in a hedge or bush. Eggs, 4 to 6, whitish spotted with brown or purple, April to July.

**CHAFFINCH.**

Length: 6½ ins.

A familiar bird in town and country, with its cheery chirp and handsome plumage.

**Colour:** Brown above with greenish rump, and very showy white bars or patches across the dark wings. The face and breast are pink, the crown and nape bluish. The hen is light brown and inconspicuous except for the white bars on the wings.

**Bill:** Thick and sharp.

**Habits:** Rather tame.

**Haunts:** Round houses, in stack yards and farm yards, or in woods or fields.

**Food:** Seeds, beech-mast and insects.

**Notes:** A loud "chink," a soft "wit," a plaintive "weet." The song is a loud rollicking descent with a quick turn or flourish at the end.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The mossy nest with soft lining is one of the prettiest, and may be in a bush, hedge, or tree. Eggs, 4 to 6, pinkish grey with a few brown or red-brown blotches. April or May.



Linnet



Goldfinch



Goldfinch in flight



Greenfinch



Chaffinch

**HOUSE SPARROW.**

Length : 6½ ins.

Our most common small bird of town and village, with jaunty hop and cheery chirp.

**Colour :** Brown above, greyish white beneath. The male has a blackish head, black throat and white cheeks.

**Bill :** Stout and thick.

**Habits :** Very gregarious, gathering in noisy chirping flocks.

**Haunts :** Buildings, stack yards, farms and trees in towns and country.

**Food :** Insects, small seeds, corn, and scraps of all sorts.

**Notes :** A variety of noisy chirps and chirrup, and a conversational "churr."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The untidy nest is in a hole or niche under the eaves of a building, hole in a wall, thatch, stack, or tree, or in ivy. Eggs, 5 or 6, speckled and blotched all over with brownish or greyish. February to August, or almost any time.

**TREE SPARROW.**

Length : 6 ins.

Not unlike the House Sparrow in appearance, but much more shy and less abundant.

**Colour :** Brown, pale beneath, with bright copper-brown cap. The black bib is much smaller than that of the House Sparrow and on the white cheek is a black patch. Cock and hen birds are much alike.

**Bill :** Stout.

**Habits :** Quiet.

**Haunts :** Trees, woods and country districts.

**Food :** Insects and small seeds.

**Notes :** Chirps and chirrup.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is in a hole in a tree or wall, usually in a colony. Eggs, 4 to 6, with brownish speckles and blotches all over. April to June.

**BULLFINCH.**

\* Length : 6½ ins.

The deep rosy breast of the male attracts attention, and when in flight, at a distance, a Bullfinch may always be recognised by the white rump, like a flash disappearing into the hedge.

**Colour :** Bluish-grey above, with black head, wing-tips and tail, and white rump, also a white bar on the wing. The cheeks, throat and breast of the male are deep rose. Those of the female are drab.

**Bill :** Stout and strong.

**Habits :** Rather quiet and shy as a rule. The cock and hen are usually seen together.

**Haunts :** Gardens, woods and hedgerows.

**Food :** Seeds, berries and insects.

**Notes :** A low plaintive "bill," and more rarely a low musical song.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of rootlets and twigs is in a bush or tree. Eggs, 4 to 6, greenish-blue spotted with brown. April to June.

**HAWFINCH.**

Length : 7 ins.

A stout, short-tailed bird with a unique massive bill, and curious frilled feathers on the wings.

**Colour :** Wine-brown, paler beneath, with grey on the nape and blue-black wings. There is a thin black line through the eye and round the bill, and the throat is black. The tail is black and white, and there is a large white shoulder-patch or bar on the wing. The female is paler.

**Bill :** Exceptionally massive and heavy.

**Habits :** Shy and secretive. The flight is deeply undulating.

**Haunts :** Gardens, orchards and woods.

**Food :** Seeds, berries, insects, grubs, and garden produce, including fruit stones which are cracked in the powerful bill and the kernels eaten.

**Notes :** Usually a single piercing note.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round, though not very abundant. The nest of roots and twigs is in a bush or tree. Eggs, 3 to 6, whitish, streaked or blotched with brown. April or May.



Tree Sparrow



House Sparrow



Bullfinch in flight

Hawfinch



Bullfinch



**REED-BUNTING.**

Length : 6 ins.

A bird of reed-beds, with black and white head.

**Colour :** Brown above and white beneath, with a black head and throat. A wide white band leading from the bill, forms a collar round the neck. The female lacks the black and white but has a brown moustache-line.

**Bill :** Rather short and thick.

**Habits :** Usually seen clinging to a swaying reed, keeping a fairly upright position.

**Haunts :** Reed-beds and reedy patches in lakes, rivers and ditches. In winter it is scarce, except as a wanderer moving south, often in a flock.

**Food :** Largely insects, often small seeds.

**Notes :** The notes and song are characteristic of Buntings but the song is stuttering and a poor copy of the Corn-Bunting's or Yellow-Hammer's.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The grass and hair nest is among reeds or marsh grass. Eggs, 3 to 6, brownish-white boldly blotched with almost black. April to July.

**GIRL BUNTING.**

Length : 6 ins.

Though rather smaller, this is not unlike the Yellow-Hammer, but the black on the head and throat are conspicuous.

**Colour :** Brown above, pale yellow beneath streaked with brown, with a greenish band across the breast and on the head. The cheeks are yellow with a black band through the eye and a black throat. In flight white feathers are noticeable in the tail. The hen is more streaked with brown, and lacks the black and yellow on the head.

**Bill :** Rather short and thick.

**Haunts :** Country districts, in south Britain.

**Food :** Insects and small seeds.

**Notes :** The notes are not unlike the Yellow-Hammer's, but the song, a rattling "Tit-tit-tit-tit-tit" lacks the final note of the other bird.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round, but not common. Nest and eggs like those of Yellow-Hammer.

**YELLOW-HAMMER or YELLOW BUNTING.**

Length : 6½ ins.

A familiar hedgerow bird with bright yellow head.

**Colour :** Canary-yellow on the head and underparts, with a few streaks of brown. Bright reddish-brown on the back. White feathers in the tail show in flight. The female is duller and the yellow more obscured by streaks.

**Bill :** Fairly thick and short.

**Habits :** Flitting along the lanes or singing from the top of a hedge.

**Haunts :** Open country and hedgerows.

**Food :** Insects and small seeds.

**Notes :** "Chirrip" (pronounced in one syllable). The song, "Tit-tit-tit-tit-tit-TEE" is well known as "A-little-bit-of-bread-and-no-cheese." The emphasis is on the last note, which is higher than the rest, or sometimes lower.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The grass and moss nest is low in a bush or hedge, or even on the ground. Eggs, 3 to 5, whitish, more or less scribbled over with curly lines, from which the bird has been called the "Scribe," or "Scribbling Lark." May to July.

**CORN BUNTING.**

Length : 7 ins.

A bird of the open country and characteristic in song and habits.

**Colour :** Light brown, boldly streaked.

**Bill :** Short, thick and angled.

**Habits :** Usually seen singing on a telegraph wire or other vantage point.

**Haunts :** Open country, avoiding woods.

**Food :** Chiefly insects, also seeds.

**Notes :** "Chip." The song begins with a clucking sound and then breaks out into a chattering tinkle like the shattering of glass.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round though only in suitable localities. The grass and moss nest is on the ground or in a low bush. Eggs, 4 to 6, nearly white, with a reddish tinge, blotched and lined with dark brown. May or June.



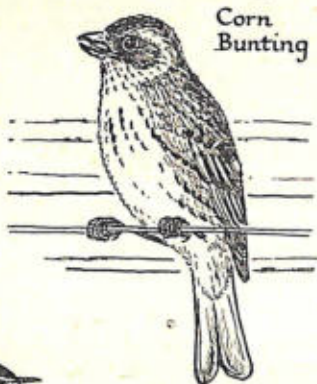
Yellow Hammer



Cirl  
Bunting



Reed  
Bunting

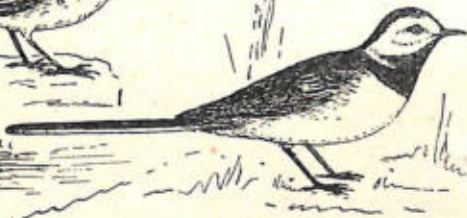


Corn  
Bunting

Grey Wagtail



Pied Wagtail



## WAGTAILS and PIPITS.

(Family *MOTACILLIDÆ*)

### YELLOW WAGTAIL.

Length :  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

This is the smallest and the most dainty of these three birds.

**Colour :** Brilliant yellow, with olive above. The white outer feathers of the long, thin, blackish tail, are a feature of all the Wagtails.

**Bill :** Very fine, thin and black.

**Habits :** It runs most daintily on the ground or picks its way mincingly between the grasses. The flight is undulating.

**Haunts :** Pastures, fields, moors and marshes.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** Like those of the Grey Wagtail.

**Other Points :** Only here in summer or passing in spring and autumn, and never common. The nest is in a bank or on the ground. Eggs, 4 to 6, similar to those of the other two Wagtails. April to June.

### PIED WAGTAIL.

Length :  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

The Pied Wagtail, or, as it is often misleadingly called, Water-Wagtail is one of our most sleek and dainty birds. In fact, in appearance and gestures the Wagtails are like no other family.

**Colour :** Black and white. On the breast, in winter, there is only a crescent of black. The female is greyish on the back and has less black on the breast.

**Bill :** Very fine, thin and black.

**Habits :** On the ground the bird runs nimbly, wagging the tail up and down at each pause. Flight undulating.

**Haunts :** Almost anywhere where insects may be caught, including streams, ponds, farms, fields and meadows.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** "Tu-reep" and a warbling song of similar liquid notes.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round, though most abundant in spring and summer. The nest is in a hole in a wall or bank, or similar place. Eggs, 4 to 6, whitish, thickly speckled with grey. April to June.

**GREY WAGTAIL.**♂ Length:  $7\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

A misleading name for such a dainty, colourful bird; often confused with the Yellow Wagtail.

**Colour:** Slate-blue above, bright sulphur-yellow beneath. In winter the black bib is lost. The female has a rather more olive shade above and no black bib.

**Bill:** Very fine and thin.

**Habits:** With graceful undulating flight and liquid note, the bird alights on a stone by a stream and swings the tail up and down.

**Haunts:** Rocky streams, woodland brooks, rivers, ponds, lakes.

**Food:** Insects.

**Notes:** "Te-seep," very like the note of the Pied Wagtail, but softer.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round, though less numerous in winter. The nest is in a hole in a river bank, rock or wall. Eggs 4 to 6 are similar to those of the Pied Wagtail. April to June.

**MEADOW PIPIT.**Length:  $5\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

A slim, streaked bird with the dainty gait of the Wagtails.

**Colour:** Brown, pale beneath, and much streaked or striated.

**Bill:** Thin and fine.

**Habits:** On the ground the bird has a dainty mincing walk, and never hops. The horizontal carriage is also that of the Wagtails.

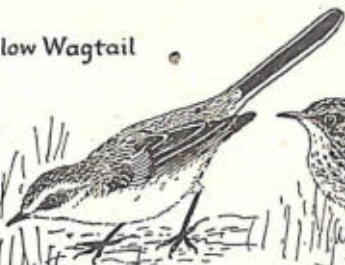
**Haunts:** Downs, fields and moors.

**Food:** Chiefly insects.

**Notes:** When on the ground there is a conversational note: "pipit," but the alarm is a shrill "peep, peep." The bird mounts into the air in song, uttering "pip-pip-pip-pip-pip," and planes earthwards again with rigid wings and a whirring "pe-pe-pe-pe-pe-pe-pe." I have given two figures on Plate 9 which show the characteristics of all three Pipits.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The grass nest, lined with hair, is on the ground in heather or tufted grass. Eggs, 4 to 6, completely covered with brown blotches and speckles. April to June.

Yellow Wagtail



Pipit



Pipit in song-flight

Skylark



Woodlark

**TREE PIPIT.**

Length : 6 ins.

Though a little larger, this is very like the Meadow Pipit, but is easily distinguished by its haunts and song.

**Colour :** Light brown, pale beneath, and much streaked.

**Bill :** Fine and thin.

**Habits :** Usually to be seen in the higher branches of trees. Feet more suited to perching than those of the Meadow Pipit.

**Haunts :** Trees, copses and the outskirts of woods, in contrast to the Meadow Pipit which frequents the open spaces on high moors and meadows.

**Food :** Chiefly insects.

**Notes :** There is an alarm note, "peep," and the song, though like that of other Pipits, has a sweet lingering ending. The song-flight starts from a tree, and the bird planes down again to a branch instead of the ground.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest and eggs, 4 to 6, are similar to those of the Meadow Pipit. April to June.

**ROCK PIPIT.**

Length : 6½ ins.

The largest of the Pipits, chiefly distinguished by its haunts.

**Colour :** Brown above, slightly streaked, and pale beneath. The plumage above is of a rather more greyish-olive tone than that of the Meadow and Tree Pipits.

**Bill :** Fine and thin.

**Habits :** It runs daintily on the sand, or picks its way along a cliff-ledge or over rocks, busily searching for insects.

**Haunts :** The rocky coast. It sticks closely to the cliffs, boulders and shingle as a rule.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** Like other Pipits it has a shrill note, "peep, peep," and a song-flight into the air while it utters "pip-pip-pip-pip," returning like a falling arrow with rigid wings spread and a whirring "pe-pe-pe-pe-pe-pe."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of grass and occasionally seaweed, lined with hair, it in a cliff-crevice or hole or behind a clump of sea pinks. Eggs, 4 or 5, like those of other Pipits. May to July.

## LARKS

(Family *ALAUDIDÆ*)

### SKYLARK.

Length :  $7\frac{1}{4}$  ins.

An unmistakable and fluent songster.

**Colour :** Light brown, much streaked, paler beneath, with a crest on the crown.

**Bill :** Mediumly thin.

**Habits :** The outstanding characteristic is the song-flight, in which the bird may flutter at a considerable height for many minutes at a time.

**Haunts :** Fields, meadows and downs.

**Food :** Insects, small seeds and green sprouts of grass, etc.

**Notes :** A liquid flight-note and a wonderful, exuberant, trilling, warbling song, well known and quite beyond description, as it flutters high up in the blue sky.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The grass nest is on the ground. Eggs, 3 to 5, thickly speckled with brown. April to June.

### WOOD-LARK.

Length :  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

Though a rather smaller bird than the Skylark, the difference in length is largely due to the short tail of this lark.

**Colour :** Light brown, pale beneath, and streaked, with a pronounced crest on the head and a dark mark and white spot on the wing.

**Bill :** Mediumly thin.

**Habits :** Fluttering in the sky in song, the short tail as well as the very different song, distinguish this bird from the last.

**Haunts :** Near woods, copses, fields and hill-sides, chiefly in the south of England.

**Food :** Insects and small seeds.

**Notes :** A liquid flight-note, and a song of a few silvery descending notes in a minor key, uttered as the bird flutters in the sky, often drifting in a wide circle.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round, though not so common or generally distributed as the Skylark. Nest and 3 or 4 eggs, are similar to those of the Skylark, the eggs, however, being slightly smaller and less mottled. March to May.

## THRUSHES

(Family *TURDIDÆ*)

### STONECHAT.

Length : 5 ins.

A small, distinctive bird with flirting wing, scolding alarm note, and smart black head and white collar.

**Colour :** Dark brown and blackish above, chestnut-pink beneath, with black head, white collar and wing-patch, and a whitish patch on the rump. The female is streaky brown above and has no white collar or black head.

**Bill :** Fine, thin and dark.

**Habits :** The constant jerking of the wings and tail, while uttering a sharp incessant note, is very distinctive.

**Haunts :** Gorsy commons and brambles, downs, moors and open spaces.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** "Wee-chat, wee-chat-chat" high and squeaky. There is also a short song.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round, though more common in spring and summer. The nest of grass, hair, etc., is in a coarse bush or low covert. Eggs, 4 to 6, blue-green faintly speckled with brown. April or May.

### WHINCHAT.

Length : 5 ins.

Not unlike the Stonechat in notes and demeanour.

**Colour :** Brown above with strong markings and streaks, chestnut-pink beneath, with black cheeks, a white line over the eye, white at the base of the tail on each side, and a white bar on the wing. The female lacks the black and white.

**Bill :** Fine, thin and dark.

**Habits :** Like those of the Stonechat, but the stance is less upright.

**Haunts :** Open moorlands.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** Like those of the Stonechat. The usual one is a scolding "wee-tic-tic."

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The grass and hair nest is hidden near the ground. Eggs, 4 to 6, greenish-blue, sometimes very faintly speckled with red-brown. May or June.



Stonechat



Whinchat

Wheatear  
in flight



Wheatear



Redstart



Black Redstart



**WHEATEAR.**\* Length :  $5\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

The largest of the Chats and unmistakable with its cream and grey plumage and snowy white rump.

**Colour :** Pale grey above, cream-colour and buff beneath, with black ear-coverts and tail tip, and blackish wings. The rump is pure white. The female is rather browner above and more buff beneath.

**Bill :** Fine and dark.

**Habits :** Like other Chats, it bobs and curtseys, flirting the tail and uttering the family "chat." But the most noticeable thing, as it flies close to the ground, is the flash of the white rump, disappearing as the bird alights, and showing up again as it flies on to the next boulder.

**Haunts :** Coastal pastures, downs, hills, and high moors, where it flits among the crags and stones.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** "Wee-chat-chat," and a warbling song.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest is in a hole under a rock. Eggs, 4 to 6, pale blue. April or May.

**REDSTART.**Length :  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

In its characteristics, this bird seems like a cross between a Robin and a Chat.

**Colour :** Slate-grey above with a bright chestnut-red rump and tail, and chestnut shading to white beneath. The cheeks and throat are black, the forehead and a line over the eye white. The hen is paler beneath and browner above and lacks the black and white.

**Bill :** Fine, thin and black.

**Habits :** The bobbing and curtseying and flicking of the tail are more reminiscent of the Robin than of a Chat.

**Haunts :** Trees, forests, ruins, quarries and rocks.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** There is a short, cheerful song, a plaintive "wee," and a Chat-like "wee-tic."

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest is in a hole or crevice in a tree, quarry or wall. Eggs, 5 or 6, pale blue. May or June.

**BLACK REDSTART.** Length : 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

The characteristics are like those of the Redstart, but it is a more uncommon bird.

**Colour :** Dark grey above with fiery chestnut-red tail, and black on the face, throat and breast. The dark wing has a large whitish patch. The hen has no black, and is brownish-grey with chestnut tail.

**Bill :** Fine, thin and black.

**Habits :** Like the Redstart, it bobs and flits, Robin-like.

**Haunts :** Generally near the coast.

**Food :** Insects.

**Notes :** The usual note is a Robin-like "tic, tic."

**Other Points :** It is an uncommon passer-by as a rule, usually arriving in October or November and passing on, though a few spend the winter in England, chiefly in the south-west.

**ROBIN.** Length : 5 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

Such a pretty and well-known bird needs no introduction.

**Colour :** Brown above, whitish beneath with scarlet forehead, face, throat and breast, and a soft bluish border between the scarlet and the brown. The beady black eyes with a knowing expression are attractive.

**Bill :** Very fine, thin and black.

**Habits :** Bobbing, curtseying and flirting the tail.

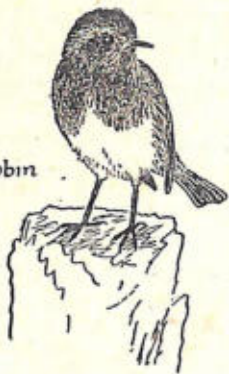
**Haunts :** Gardens and almost anywhere.

**Food :** Insects, grubs, and worms, also fruit, and scraps and crumbs put out for it.

**Notes :** "Tic, tic, tic" and a long, faint, very high "wee." The song is lovely and varied, bursting out from a bare tree in winter with a delicious ripple of sound, when most birds are silent, or trilling from a leafy hedge in summer.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is in a hole in a wall, bank or tree, or in an old tin or pot. Eggs, 5 or 6, white, speckled with red-brown. February to July.

Robin



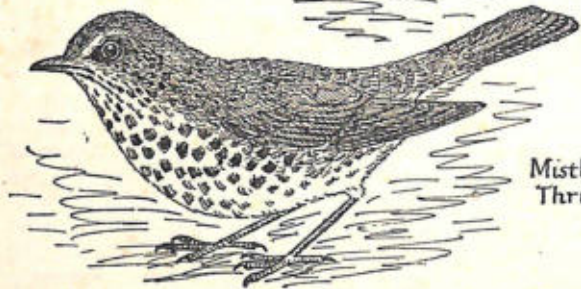
Nightingale



Song Thrush



Mistle Thrush



**NIGHTINGALE.**Length :  $6\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

Like a large brown Robin, only very shy and retiring.

Colour : Brown, paler beneath.

Bill : Fine and thin.

Habits : It usually remains hidden, but when seen has the demeanour and curtesy of a Robin.

Haunts : Woods and thickets.

Food : Insects, worms and sometimes berries.

Notes : The famous song is heard by night or day, and contains succulent low twitters, an aggressive note rising in a crescendo, and many notes, some beautiful, some loud, some soft, some harsh, and many liquid warbles and trills.

Other Points : Only here in spring and summer. The nest of grass and leaves is hidden on or near the ground. Eggs, 4 to 6, olive-blue or brownish olive. May.

**SONG-THRUSH.**Length :  $8\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

A familiar bird, especially in the garden, with one of the finest and most powerful voices among our songsters.

Colour : Brown above, buffish-white beneath, boldly spotted with dark brown on the breast.

Bill : Of moderate length and thickness.

Habits : Usually hopping, sometimes running, on the lawn, pulling at a worm or standing with head on one side listening for one to move.

Haunts : Gardens, fields, lanes, and almost anywhere.

Food : Insects, worms, snails, grubs and berries.

Notes : The quiet flight-note is "chick," and there is a chattering alarm cry. The song is varied, rich, loud and exuberant. It shouts from the tree tops "come out, come out" and "did 'e do it? did 'e do it? Judy did." Also "Joyce, Joyce, Joyce" and other clear ejaculations and twitters.

Other Points : With us all the year round. The nest of twigs and grass, smoothly lined with mud, is in a bush or tree. Eggs, 4 or 5, blue, spotted with black. February to July.

**MISTLE-THRUSH.**

Length: 11 ins.

Larger and usually appearing longer, slimmer and greyer than the Song-Thrush.

**Colour:** Greyish-brown above, nearly white beneath, with large dark blotches on the breast and flanks. The whitish undersides of the wings show in flight.

**Bill:** Of medium length and thickness.

**Habits:** Like the Song-Thrush, it hops on the lawn, pulling at worms or listening with head held on one side.

**Haunts:** Gardens, fields, woods, lanes, and most places, though not quite so abundant as the Song-Thrush.

**Food:** Worms, snails, grubs, insects and berries.

**Notes:** "Chick," and a harsh alarm "churr." The song is often shouted from the top of a tree in the teeth of a gale, hence the bird's name, "Storm-Cock." It is a short phrase, inferior to that of the Song-Thrush.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The root, mud and moss nest, lined with grass, is in a tree, bush or wall. Eggs, 4 or 5, whitish, spotted with two shades of brown. February to May.

**REDWING.**Length:  $8\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

Very like a Song-Thrush, but a little darker and richer above, and distinguished by the chestnut-red on the flanks.

**Colour:** Brown above, buffish-white beneath with dark spots and streaks, and pinkish-chestnut on the flanks.

A light line over the eye is noticeable.

**Bill:** Of medium length and thickness.

**Habits:** Seen, usually with others, on the land in winter.

**Haunts:** Ploughed fields, meadows and open country.

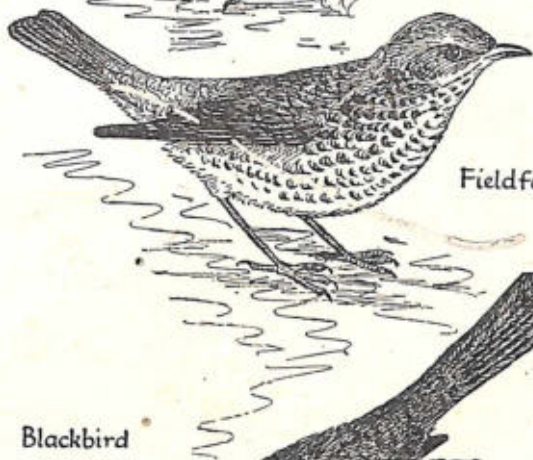
**Food:** Worms, grubs, insects and berries.

**Notes:** "Tic" or "took" and a "churring" alarm.

**Other Points:** Only here in winter. Unfortunately, in exceptionally hard and prolonged frosts or snow, many Redwings and Fieldfares may be found starved or frozen in the fields and lanes.



Redwing



Fieldfare



Blackbird

**FIELDFARE.**

• Length : 10 ins.

This is another winter Thrush, distinguished by the grey on the head and rump.

**Colour :** Back chestnut, wings and tail very dark brown, head, neck and rump light grey, underparts chestnut on the breast shading to white and heavily streaked with nearly black. White on the under-side of the wings shows in flight.

**Bill :** Of medium length and thickness.

**Habits :** Seen with others on the land in winter.

**Haunts :** Ploughed fields, meadows and open country.

**Food :** Worms, grubs, insects and berries.

**Notes :** "Chick."

**Other Points :** Only here in winter.

**BLACKBIRD.**

Length : 10 ins.

A garden bird with black plumage, crocus-yellow bill, and a flute-like whistle unequalled in sweetness.

**Colour :** The cock is all black except for the bill. The hen is dark brown with a brown bill.

**Bill :** Of medium length and thickness, bright yellow.

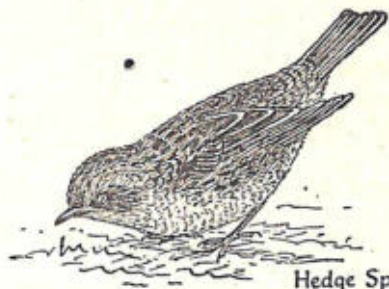
**Habits :** When alarmed it takes to its wings with a clattering crow. As it alights, it raises the tail. It may be seen hopping on the lawn looking for worms : several long, springy hops, and a pause before going on again.

**Haunts :** Gardens, woods, fields and almost anywhere.

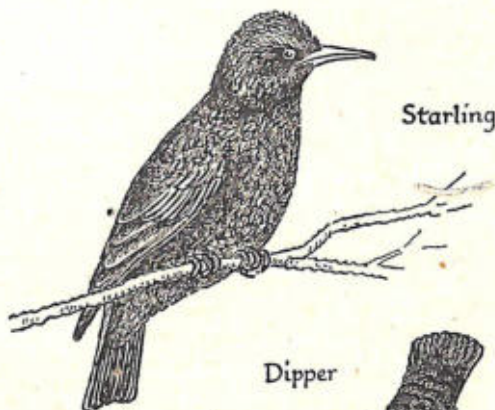
**Food :** Snails, worms, grubs, insects, fruit and berries.

**Notes :** The clattering alarm starts with a yell : and dies away with protesting clucks. There is also an anxious and persistent "pink, pink, pink," when disturbed or at dusk. The beautiful song is a low, rich, flute-like whistle of unparalleled sweetness, and the songs of individual birds vary greatly. •

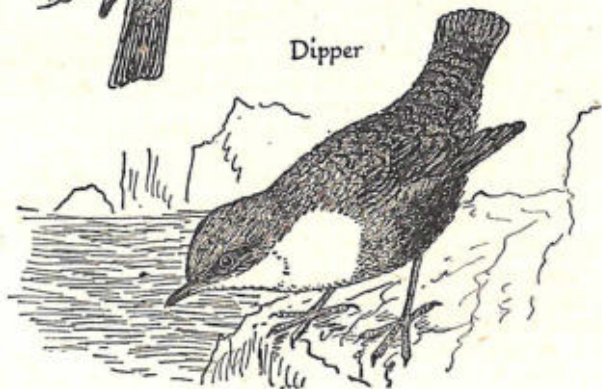
**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of grass, roots and mud, lined with grass, is in a bush, tree or creepers. Eggs, 4 to 6, green-blue, very finely speckled with red-brown. March to July.



Hedge Sparrow



Starling



Dipper

## STARLINGS

(Family *STURNIDÆ*)

### STARLING.

Length :  $8\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

A clownish bird, noisy and ungainly, but handsome when in plumage of green and purple gloss.

**Colour :** Town Starlings are usually dull black, and immature birds are brownish, but a mature Starling seen at close quarters shows the green and purple sheen of the glossy plumage. In winter this is speckled all over with white and buff tips.

**Bill :** Fairly long and very sharp, yellow in summer, brown in winter.

**Habits :** The bird has a short tail and upright carriage, and on the ground it waddles or scampers. This alone should make it impossible to confuse it with the long-tailed, stream-lined Blackbird with its long, springy hops. Starlings are very gregarious and may be seen in a flock working across a field and jabbing at the turf in search of insects. They fly and roost in huge numbers often passing overhead at sundown in seemingly unending streams.

**Haunts :** Chimney pots, high buildings and trees, fields, meadows, plantations, in fact almost anywhere.

**Food :** Grubs, insects and fruit.

**Notes :** A rasping alarm note and various squeaks. The Starling is a mimic and can imitate the notes of other birds to perfection, bringing them into its own song which is a medley of bubblings, twitters and clicks, punctuated by a very thin, sweet, high whistle.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of straw, grass and feathers is in the roof of a building, in a wall, tree or creeper. Eggs, 4 to 7, pale blue. April to June.

## ACCENTORS

(Family *PRUNELLIDÆ*)

### HEDGE-SPARROW.

Length :  $5\frac{1}{4}$  ins.

The Hedge-Accentor quite wrongly called "Sparrow," is also named the "Dunnock." In no way does it resemble a sparrow or any kind of finch. The thin bill, neat lines, and quiet way of creeping about, are the very opposite.

**Colour :** Streaked brown above, slate-grey on the face, throat and breast.

**Bill :** Fine and thin.

**Habits :** It creeps like a mouse in a bush or hedge, or under the cabbage leaves in search of insects, or picks its way demurely over a flower bed with very short, hardly noticeable hops.

**Haunts :** Gardens, hedgerows, allotments, and almost anywhere.

**Food :** Spiders, beetles, grubs, caterpillars and all kinds of insects, also small seeds sometimes.

**Notes :** A shrill, vibrating squeak. The song is a cheerful high-pitched warble.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The grass and moss nest with hair and wool lining is in a stack of brushwood, hedge or bush. Eggs, 4 or 5, of an exceptionally beautiful, bright turquoise-blue. March to June.

## DIPPERS

(Family *CINCLIDÆ*)

**DIPPER or WATER-OUSEL.** Length : 7 ins.

A short, dark bird with a white breast, seen bobbing up and down by rocky streams.

**Colour :** Dark brown above shading to nearly black on the lower back ; chestnut shading to black beneath, with white chin, throat and breast.

**Bill :** Fairly thin, and dark.

**Habits :** It flies fast and straight down stream, or bobs up and down on a stone sticking out of the water, with the jerky curtsey of a Wren. It often dives into the water for food, or it will wade in. Under water it swims with the wings.

**Haunts :** Woodland streams, rocky brooks, burns, swift rivers, and lakes.

**Food :** Water insects, grubs, water snails and small fish.

**Notes :** " Sip, sip " and a sweet trilling song.

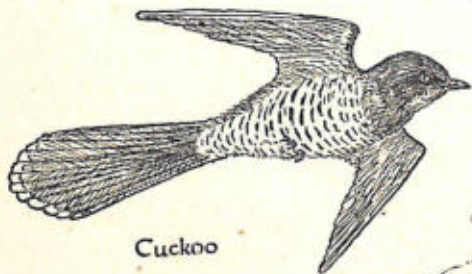
**Other Points :** With us all the year round, in suitable places. The domed nest with entrance-hole low at the side, is in a hole in a bank or bridge or cleft in a rock. Eggs, 4 to 6, white. April to June.



Kingfisher



Nightjar



Cuckoo

## KINGFISHERS

(Family *ALCEDINIDÆ*)

### KINGFISHER.

Length : 7½ ins.

The brightest gem among British birds.

**Colour :** Brilliant blue above with bright green glints on head and wings. Chestnut-red beneath with a white throat. A patch on each side of the neck is white and the ear-coverts chestnut. The legs are bright red. The blue on the back is so vivid in certain lights that the flying bird may appear more like a flash of blue light than anything tangible.

**Bill :** Long, powerful and sharp.

**Habits :** The flight is swift and straight, usually close to the water. The bird perches on an overhanging branch, or a log or stone protruding from the water, and watches for the prey. It is an expert diver, dropping to the water like an arrow and returning with a fish or insect.

**Haunts :** Lakes, rivers, streams, and in winter sometimes the coast.

**Food :** Small fish, tadpoles, water insects and shellfish.

**Notes :** A sharp whistle is frequently heard, and there is also a warbling song.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is in a hole tunnelled in a bank, the eggs being laid on a litter of fish bones. Eggs, 6 to 8, white. April to June.

## NIGHTJARS

(Family *CAPRIMULGIDÆ*)

### NIGHTJAR.

Length : 10½ ins.

A bird of the twilight, with a soft purring note which nobody would take to be the utterance of a bird.

**Colour :** Brown, grey, cream and black, boldly marked and patterned, so that a sitting bird is so well camouflaged as to look like a piece of rough bark or some brown leaves, almost invisible among the surroundings. The male is distinguished by white patches on the outer tail-feathers, and by white spots on the wings most noticeable in flight.

**Bill :** Slight and soft but with a very large gape and with whiskers or bristles at the sides, which help it to catch insects on the wing.

**Habits :** It flies silently at dusk catching insects, or crouches *along* a branch or rail (not across it) and emits its whirring purr.

**Haunts :** Heaths and heathy woods.

**Food :** Beetles, flies and moths which fly at dusk.

**Notes :** The purring song usually continues for several minutes. It is low and soft, like the sound of a spinning wheel or sewing machine.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The 2 long, whitish eggs, blotched with brown and grey are laid on the ground in May or June.

## CUCKOOS

(Family *CUCULIDÆ*)

### CUCKOO.

Length : 13 ins.

The Cuckoo has become known as a harbinger of Spring. Though a very popular bird, it causes the destruction of many useful, innocent small birds.

**Colour :** Slate-grey above, and on the head, neck and throat, white beneath, handsomely barred with dark grey. Young birds are brown above.

**Bill :** Of medium length and thickness.

**Habits :** In flight, the rather long tail and forward wings give it a hawk-like appearance. Small birds often scold and try to mob it. Its most outstanding habit is that of laying its eggs in the nests of other birds.

**Haunts :** Anywhere in the country.

**Food :** Caterpillars and insects of all kinds.

**Notes :** Besides the famous "cuckoo," there are chattering and bubbling notes.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. No nest is made. About a dozen eggs are laid during the season and all separately placed in nests of different small birds. When the young Cuckoo hatches, it throws out the other fledglings or eggs and they are left to perish on the ground. The Cuckoo's eggs are variable in colour and usually match those in the nests in which they are laid. May or June.

## CREEPERS

(Family *CERTHIIDÆ*)

### TREE CREEPER.

Length : 5 ins.

This dainty little bird is the smallest of those which creep up the trunks of trees.

**Colour :** Brown above, well marked and streaked, and white beneath.

**Bill :** Very fine, thin and curved downwards.

**Habits :** On the trunk of a tree, or sometimes on a wall, it may be seen creeping like a mouse, hardly visible except when the white underparts catch the eye. Besides creeping up the trunks, it is able to go along in the same close-clinging way on the underside of a branch like any fly crawling on the ceiling. It clings with the claws, braced by the pressure of the tail against the bark.

**Haunts :** Woods, plantations and anywhere where there are trees.

**Food :** Small insects and their grubs, which it busily searches for in the cracks of the bark.

**Notes :** A high squeak, and a little song "tee-tee-tee-sissi-tee."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is in a crevice in a tree, behind some bark or a stem of creeper. Eggs, 5 to 9, white, spotted with red-brown. May or June.

## NUTHATCHES

(Family *SITTIDÆ*)

### NUTHATCH.

Length  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

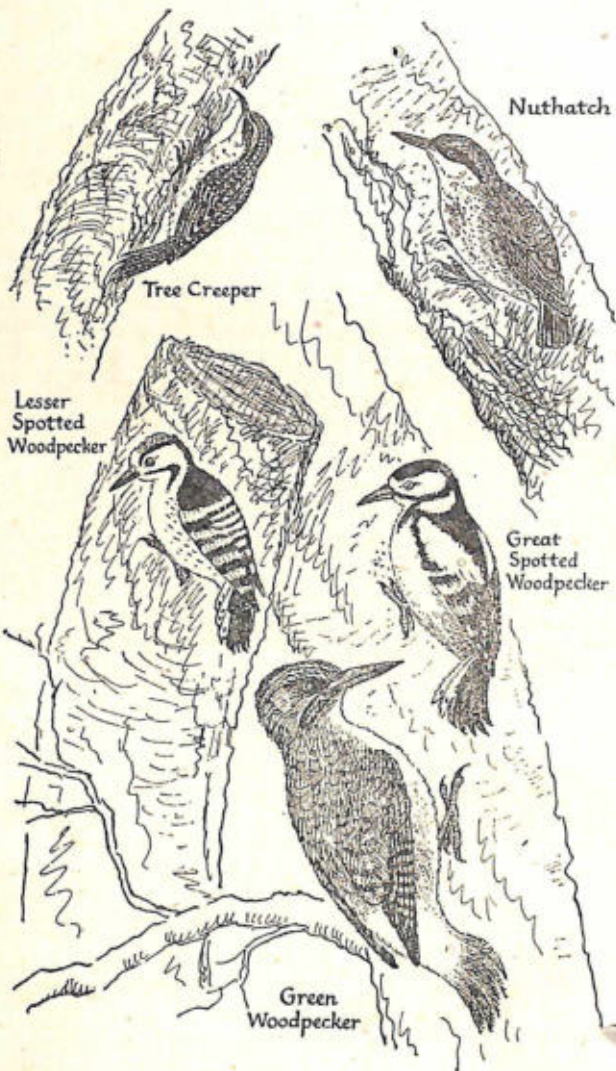
A stocky, short-tailed, trunk-creeping bird, equally happy up-side-down or at any angle.

**Colour :** Slate-blue above, buff beneath, shaded with red on the flanks. A heavy black band through the eye adds to the long-headed look of the bird.

**Bill :** Rather long and sharp.

**Habits :** It is an expert creeper, up or down a tree, and its whistles are noisy and cheerful.

**Haunts :** Trees, parks, gardens and woods, chiefly in the southern half of British Isles.



**Food :** Chiefly insects and their grubs, also nuts, berries and seeds. Though definitely a wild, arboreal species, it visits gardens, and in Devon I saw it regularly at the bird-table, where I noticed it preferred to hack off a portion of food and take it away to a tree, where, after wedging the morsel into a crack, the bird would peck it to pieces. This act was according to the bird's natural habit of tightly wedging nuts before hammering them to pieces.

**Notes :** A loud boy-like whistle, "toy, toy, toy" and various others equally noisy, and the song is a trilling whistle, like a police whistle, but much softer and more musical.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is in a hole in a tree. Eggs, 5 to 8, white spotted with brick-red. April to June.

## WOODPECKERS

(Family *PICIDÆ*)

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER.** Length  $9\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

A handsome pied bird, which makes a very fast, vibrating, drumming sound on a tree.

**Colour :** Black and white, very handsomely barred. The underparts are creamy-white shading to crimson on the abdomen and under the tail. The male also has a red patch on the nape.

**Bill :** Moderately long and sharp.

**Habits :** A tree-creeping bird, tapping the wood in search of insects and grubs. The flight is undulating.

**Haunts :** Among trees, sometimes in parks or gardens, or in wooded country.

**Notes :** The call is not a note, it is a loud vibration caused by the bird drumming on a branch with its bill. There is an alarm note, "chuck" or "quick"

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is in a hole in a tree. Eggs, 4 to 7, creamy-white. May.

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER.** Length  $5\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

This is the smallest Woodpecker, handsomely barred with black and white. It also drums on a branch.

**Colour :** Black and white, boldly barred across the back and wings. The male has a red crown.

**Bill :** Sharp.

**Habits :** The flight is shortly undulating. The bird creeps on a tree trunk, tapping and prizing out insects and grubs.

**Haunts :** Trees, parks, and wooded country.

**Food :** Harmful insects and grubs.

**Notes :** There are sharp notes, not unlike those of the Great Spotted, and the call, which is a loud vibration made by the bird drumming on a branch with its bill.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round in certain areas. Neither of the Spotted Woodpeckers is abundant. The nest is in a hole in a tree. Eggs, 4 to 8, white. May.

**GREEN WOODPECKER.** Length :  $12\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

A handsome green and yellow bird with a ringing, laughing call.

**Colour :** Green above and yellowish-green beneath, with a yellow rump and crimson crown and nape.

A heavy moustache-line is black and red, or, with the female, black.

**Bill :** Rather long, and sharp.

**Habits :** It climbs up the trunks of trees tapping and searching for weevils and grubs, or flies from tree to tree with steeply undulating flight. Its love of ants brings it away from the trees to search ant-hills. It licks up the insects with a very long, sticky tongue.

**Haunts :** Woods, parks and gardens. Most abundant in the southern half of the British Isles.

**Food :** It is useful in eating insects and grubs which destroy trees and other wood. It also sometimes eats nuts and berries.

**Notes :** A loud, cheerful, echoing call, "hellow-hellow-hellow" or "ha-ha-ha-ha-ha," like a noisy laugh.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is in a hole in a tree. Eggs, 4 to 7, white. April or May.

## CROWS

(Family *CORVIDÆ*)

### JAY.

Length : 14½ ins.

At a glance the flying bird, about the size of a pigeon, is noticeable for the white rump, contrasting with the dark-brown tail and wing-tips.

**Colour :** Wine-brown above, and pale pinkish brown beneath. The crested crown is streaked with black and white, and there is black and white on the wing as well as a long, finely striped patch of blue and white. The tail feathers are blackish-brown and there is a heavy blackish moustache-line.

**Bill :** Strong and of a medium thickness.

**Habits :** It is a coward, taking cover in trees, with raucous cries, and it is very mischievous and robs the nests of other birds, devouring eggs or young.

**Haunts :** Woods and copses.

**Food :** Small birds and animals, eggs, grubs, insects, snails, acorns and fruit.

**Notes :** A harsh and raucous cry.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of sticks and grass is in a bush or tree. Eggs, 5 to 7, buff or greenish speckled with brown. April or May.

### MAGPIE.

Length : 18 ins.

A black and white bird with a long, graduated tail.

**Colour :** Black and white with glossy green sheen on the wings and tail.

**Bill :** Black, strong and of medium thickness.

**Habits :** It is a robber of nests, and will attack any young or injured bird. It is fond of bright objects and will steal trinkets if they are near an open window. On the ground it hops jauntily forward or sideways.

**Haunts :** Anywhere in the country.

**Food :** Eggs, small animals and birds, fledglings, insects, grubs, fruit, corn and acorns.

**Notes :** A very harsh chattering.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The domed nest, with entrance at the side, is built of sticks and mud, in a tree or bush. Eggs, 5 to 8, pale bluish-green speckled with brown. April.

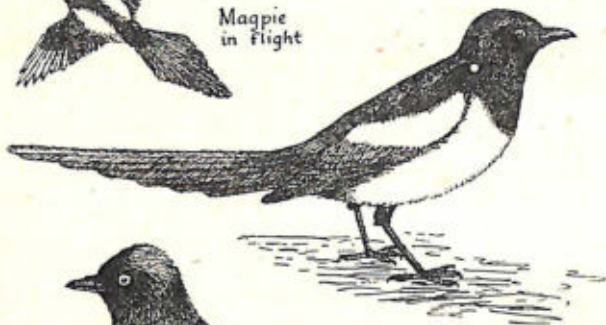
Jay



Jay in flight



Magpie in flight



Magpie



Jackdaw

**JACKDAW.**

Length : 14 ins.

Similar to a Rook or Crow, but smaller and with grey on the nape.

**Colour :** Black, with grey on the back of the head and neck. The eyes are noticeable, being very light blue-grey.

**Bill :** Black, not thick, and of medium length.

**Habits :** It is gregarious, and there are usually several together. The wings are less long and ragged than those of the Rook and Crow, and the wing-beats quicker. On the ground it hops, waddles or struts.

**Haunts :** Almost everywhere.

**Food :** Grubs, insects, small birds' eggs and fledglings, and sometimes fruit, corn and scraps.

**Notes :** "Jack, Jack" or "clack, clark," and the alarm is a raucous "carr."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest, of sticks and grass, is usually in a colony on cliffs, quarries or ruins, or in trees. Eggs, 3 to 6, bluish, spotted with brown. April.

**ROOK.**

Length : 19 ins.

The Rook may be distinguished easily from the Crow at close quarters by the bare whitish skin at the base of the long bill. It also differs in being very gregarious.

**Colour :** All black, with bare whitish skin on the face and chin round the bill.

**Bill :** Rather long and heavy.

**Habits :** Rooks are generally seen in flocks, flying, "cawing" in the tree-tops, or feeding on the fields.

**Haunts :** Cultivated country where there are trees.

**Food :** Chiefly grubs, leather-jackets, etc., and sometimes seeds and eggs.

**Notes :** "Caw" or "cah, caw."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of sticks and mud, lined with grass, etc., is a colony or rookery in the tops of tall trees. Eggs 3, to 6, greenish mottled with olive-brown. March.



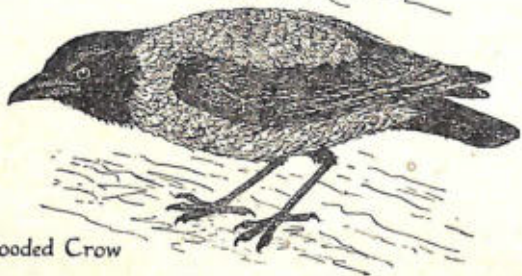
Rook



Raven's  
head



Carrion  
Crow



Hooded Crow

**CARRION CROW.**

Length: 20 ins.

The Crow is not gregarious. It is a robber and scavenger, black from bill to claw, and rather a shady character.

**Colour :** Black all over.

**Bill :** Black, strong and slightly hooked at the tip, for tearing meat.

**Habits :** Usually solitary or in pairs, and not flocking as do Rooks and Jackdaws.

**Haunts :** Almost anywhere.

**Food :** Carrion, grubs, insects, worms, grain, berries, eggs and small birds and animals.

**Notes :** A deep croak.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of twigs is on a cliff-ledge, or in the top of a tree. Eggs, 4 or 5, bluish-green blotched with brown. April or May.

**HOODED CROW.**

Length: 20 ins.

The Crow of the north has grey on the back and underparts.

**Colour :** Back and underparts ash-grey, head, throat, wings, tail and legs black.

**Bill :** Strong, black, and slightly hooked at the tip.

**Habits :** Usually solitary or in pairs.

**Haunts :** Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Highlands of Scotland and northern England, chiefly round the coasts.

**Food :** Scraps, carrion, eggs, fledglings, small animals and birds, grubs, insects, grain and shellfish.

**Notes :** A harsh croak.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest and eggs are similar to those of the Carrion Crow. April.

**RAVEN.**

Length : 26 ins.

The largest of the Crow Family ; a solitary bird of moorland, cliff and crag.

**Colour :** Black all over.

**Bill :** Strong, black, and slightly hooked at the tip for tearing flesh.

**Habits :** Solitary or in pairs, often seen flying with slow, heavy wing-beats over wild country and cliffs. Ravens are sometimes seen displaying and turning over and over in the air ; an exercise known as "rolling" or "cork screwing," or caressing one another with their bills when at the nesting-site.

**Haunts :** Mountains, cliffs and sometimes woods, but it is uncommon, except on parts of the coast and in the extreme north of the British Isles.

**Food :** Carrion, small animals and birds, eggs, grubs, worms, grain and fruit.

**Notes :** A deep "honk," "grog" or "croak."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of sticks, roots, etc., and lined with grass, wool, or some other soft material, is on a cliff-ledge or crag. Eggs, 3 to 7, greenish, blotched with dark brown. February or March.

**BARN-OWLS**(Family *TYTONIDÆ*)**BARN-OWL.**

Length : 14 ins.

In flight, the plumage appears almost white as the bird flaps noiselessly with wide, blunt, rounded wings, low over the hedges. On this account, many people thinking they have seen a pure white Owl, have difficulty in identifying the bird as a Barn-Owl, one of our commonest species.

**Colour :** Sandy and grey above, spotted with white.

The face and underparts are white with a few grey specks. The legs and feet are also feathered with white.

**Bill :** Very small and hooked, and usually almost hidden in the feathers of the round, white face.

**Habits :** In the rafters of a barn or church, the bird may be seen sitting motionless, watching the passer-by through slit-like eyes. It often flies by day, but chiefly at dusk or by night.

**Haunts :** Barns, ruins, towers, farm buildings and woods.

**Food :** Rats, mice, moles, small birds, beetles, and very occasionally fish.

**Notes :** There is an uncanny screech, also hisses and snores.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The 3 to 8 eggs are laid on a ledge in a barn, ruin, tower, or hollow tree, with no definite nest. The eggs are laid at intervals of a few days, usually in April, and each hatches at a different time, so that young of various ages and eggs are found together. The eggs are white.

## OWLS

(Family *STRIGIDÆ*)

**BROWN-OWL OR WOOD-OWL.** Length :  $15\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

Though not so often seen in daylight, it sometimes glides noiselessly through a woodland glade, displaying the soft, brown, rounded wings. The eerie, wavering call at dusk is very beautiful.

**Colour :** Brown, boldly marked with light and dark patterns and with more or less grey.

**Bill :** Very small and hooked, and usually almost hidden in the feathers of the round face.

**Habits :** By day, it is usually hidden in a tree with its back to the trunk, bolt upright with its eyes nearly closed but vigilant. At night, it flies in search of mice and small roosting birds.

**Haunts :** Woods and trees.

**Food :** Small birds, mice, rats, rabbits and insects.

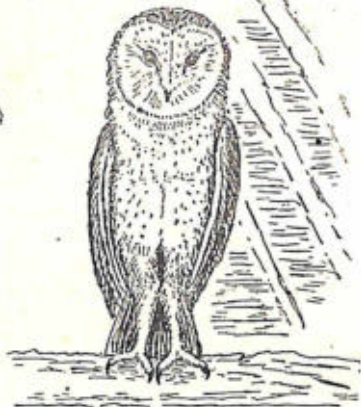
**Notes :** "Wit, wit" or "to-wit" and the long, wavering, eerie call "hoo-hoo-hoo-ooooo."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is in a hole in a tree or ruin, or the old nest of a Pigeon or some other large bird. Eggs, 3 or 4, white, laid and hatched at intervals, as with the Barn-Owl.

Barn Owl



Barn Owl  
in flight



Brown Owl



Long-eared Owl



Little Owl

**LONG-EARED OWL.**

Length: 14½ ins.

Distinguished by the tufts on the head, resembling ears.

**Colour:** Brown and grey, handsomely marked.

**Bill:** Small, hooked, and half hidden in the face-feathers.

**Habits:** It remains hidden by day and hunts at night.

**Haunts:** Fir plantations and woods.

**Food:** Small birds, mice and insects.

**Notes:** A yapping note and a wavering call not unlike that of the Brown-Owl.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest is the old one of a Pigeon, Crow, Hawk, or other large bird. Eggs, 4 or 5, white. March or April.

**LITTLE OWL.**

Length: 9 ins.

The smallest and fiercest of the Owls, it was introduced from abroad less than a hundred years ago.

**Colour:** Grey-brown, spotted with white and boldly marked.

**Bill:** Small and hooked.

**Habits:** It will kill other birds, even those of its own size, and hunts by day as well as at night. But its chief diet, in spite of alarming rumours to the contrary, appears to consist of mice, insects and worms.

**Haunts:** Woods and country districts.

**Food:** Birds, mice, voles, beetles and other insects and worms.

**Notes:** A mewling "ki-wak," "que-weet" or "qui," and a snoring note.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest is in a hole in a tree, wall or quarry, or, occasionally the eggs are laid on the ground. Eggs, 4 to 6, white. April or May.

## HAWKS, FALCONS and EAGLES

(Family *FALCONIDÆ*)

### SPARROW-HAWK.

Length: 13 ins.

A rather small Hawk, but an ogre to every little bird, as it dodges over the hedges in search of the unwary.

**Colour:** Dark slate-grey above, and whitish, tinged with rufous and barred with red-brown beneath. The female is 2 inches longer and grey-brown above, and the white underparts are barred with dark grey. Both have a whitish patch on the nape.

**Bill:** Much hooked.

**Habits:** With short, rather forward wings and longish tail it skims the hedges and the outskirts of spinnies, taking small birds unawares and pouncing on them.

**Haunts:** Woods and open country.

**Food:** Chiefly birds, also mice, insects and frogs.

**Notes:** A sharp cry "pew."

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest of sticks is in a tree, or occasionally on a cliff-ledge. Eggs, 5, whitish blotched with red-brown. May.

### KESTREL.

Length: 14 ins.

Our most familiar Hawk, easily distinguished as it hovers in the air, with longish tail and far forward, narrow, quivering wings.

**Colour:** Chestnut, spotted with black on the back, slate-grey head, rump and tail, dark wing-tips and rich buff underparts spotted and streaked with black. The tip of the tail is black with a white border, and there is a bold black moustache-line. The female is streaked red-brown, barred across the tail.

**Bill:** Very hooked.

**Habits:** The skilful hovering, almost motionless, in the air, sometimes for minutes together, is unmistakable.

**Haunts:** Cliffs, open country and woods.

**Food:** Chiefly insects and mice, sometimes small birds.

**Notes:** A sharp "pew."

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest of sticks is on a cliff-ledge, or in a tree, often the old nest of a Crow, Pigeon or other bird. Eggs, 4 or 5, buff, thickly mottled with red-brown. April or May.



Sparrow Hawk

Wm



Kestrel in  
flight



Kestrel

**PEREGRINE FALCON.**

Length : 15 ins.

A swift, fierce Falcon, with powerful flight.

**Colour :** Slate-grey above, marked with darker grey, and white beneath, barred with black and tinged on the breast with buff. The bold black moustache-lines join the blackish cheeks. The female is 3 inches longer (i.e., 18 inches).

**Bill :** Very sharp, hooked and powerful.

**Habits :** The flight is very fast and powerful, and the falcon flies down its prey.

**Haunts :** Coasts, cliffs and mountains.

**Food :** Sea birds and many other kinds, including Pigeons, Waders, and small birds.

**Notes :** A sharp "kek, kek."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The eggs, 2 to 4, are laid on a high cliff-ledge, with a few sticks or no nest at all. The eggs are red-brown, blotched with dark brown. April or May.

**BUZZARD.**

Length : 21 ins.

A large, heavy bird with great wide wings with rounded ends.

**Colour :** Rich brown, with a paler patch beneath, and barred across the tail with black. The plumage is variable, some birds being quite white on the chin and below the breast except for small brown edgings.

**Bill :** Hooked.

**Habits :** It is unmistakable as it wheels and glides in the sky with rounded, moth-like wings and mewing cries.

**Haunts :** Wooded hills, cliffs and tree-clad country.

**Food :** Mice, rats, rabbits, young birds, reptiles and large insects.

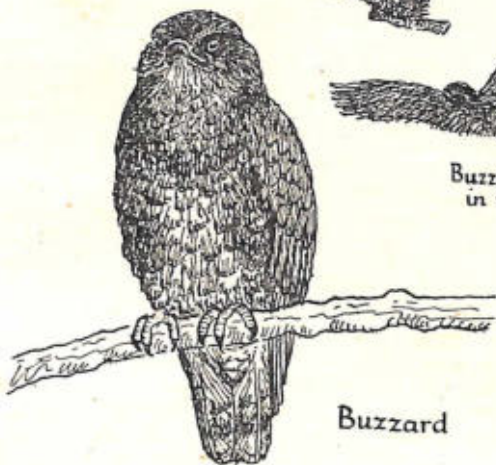
**Notes :** A mewing cry : "mee-oo" or "mow."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of sticks, grass, leaves, etc., is in the top of a tall tree or on a cliff-ledge. Eggs, 2 or 3, whitish, blotched with light brown. May.

Peregrine Falcon



Buzzards  
in flight



Buzzard

**GOLDEN EAGLE.**

Length : 32 ins.

A magnificent bird, with huge wing-span and powerful flight.

**Colour :** Dark brown, with golden-bronze on the head and nape, like a mane. Legs feathered to the toes. Immature birds have a white band across the tail. The female is 35 inches long.

**Bill :** Very powerful and hooked.

**Habits :** When in flight the great, wide wings bend upwards at the tips, with pinions divided like fingers.

**Haunts :** Mountains, crags and wild, high forests in the north. The bird is very rare, surviving in Scottish Highlands, only occasionally seen elsewhere.

**Food :** Rabbits, hares, rats, small lambs, Grouse and other birds, and any carrion.

**Notes :** A sharp yelp or bark.

**Other Points :** With us, in its few breeding haunts, all the year round. The huge nest, of branches, sticks, heather, etc., is on a crag or high, rocky eyrie, or, occasionally in a tree. Eggs, generally 2, blotched all over with red-brown, are laid in March or April.

**WHITE-TAILED or SEA EAGLE.** Length : 36 ins.

The greatest of our Eagles, with wing-span about 8 feet.

**Colour :** Brown, pale on the head, and sometimes greyish or whitish-headed, and with a white tail. The female is 40 inches long. Immature birds, till 6 or 7 years old, lack the white tail, and are browner-headed.

Unlike the Golden Eagle, the legs are not feathered.

**Bill :** Powerful and hooked.

**Habits :** The slow beat of the great, majestic wings is like that of the Golden Eagle, but it is more of a coastal bird.

**Haunts :** It is very rare, and is usually seen only off the coasts of Scotland and the Northern Isles, though immature wanderers have been recorded elsewhere.

**Food :** Fish, carrion, small animals and sea-birds.

**Notes :** A yelping cry.

**Other Points :** In its last remaining haunts it is with us all the year round. Nest of sticks, heather, etc., on cliff ledge or rocky stack. Eggs, 2, white, rough, dull. April.



Golden Eagle

## WADERS

(Family *SCOLOPACIDÆ*)

### DUNLIN.

Length : 7½ ins.

A dainty little Wader, scampering on the sands with others or flying in a small flock of twinkling grey and white, with musical piping.

**Colour :** In summer it is red-brown above, with grey on the wings, and whitish with a large patch of black on the underparts. The face and throat are streaked. In winter it is grey above and on the breast, and white beneath. The plumage is always very variable.

**Bill :** Long and thin with slightly curved downward tip.

**Habits :** It is usually gregarious, flocking with others of the species and often joining other Waders. On the ground it runs nimbly. It wades for food and also swims. The flight is quick and straight.

**Haunts :** Sandy shores, mud-flats, estuaries, salt marshes.

**Food :** Insects, grubs, sand-hoppers, sand-worms, and small sea creatures.

**Notes :** Twittering, piping, purring, a fascinating sound.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The grass nest is usually on a moor. Eggs, 4, buff or pale green, blotched with brown. May or June.

### COMMON SANDPIPER.

Length : 8 ins.

A brown and white Wader with a rippling pipe.

**Colour :** Olive-brown above and on the breast, white beneath.

**Bill :** Long, thin and straight.

**Habits :** While standing, it often jerks the tail and nods.

**Haunts :** The coast, lakes, marshes, and trout streams in Scotland. Its breeding haunts are chiefly in Scotland, Ireland and north England, and in the south and east counties it is generally a non-breeding visitor.

**Food :** Insects, grubs, worms and small sea creatures.

**Notes :** A clear, high twitter or pipe.

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer as a rule, though occasionally it winters in Cornwall and Devon. The nest is on the ground, often near the water, and concealed in vegetation or bushes. Eggs, 4, buff spotted with brown. May.

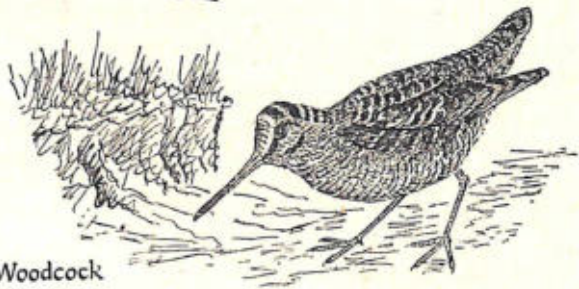
Sandpiper



Dunlin



Snipe



Woodcock

**COMMON SNIPE.**

Length: 10½ ins.

A handsomely-marked brown bird with a very long, straight bill.

**Colour:** Brown, with bold streaks of cream and nearly-black down the crown, and black, cream and brown mottlings, bars and streaks on the wings and tail. The underparts are lighter, streaked and barred on the breast and flanks.

**Bill:** Very long, thin and perfectly straight.

**Habits:** It remains hidden by day, usually, except when disturbed, when, fearing the "sportsman," it flies in zigzags until out of gunshot.

**Haunts:** Marshes and moors.

**Food:** Chiefly worms, but also insects, and, failing these, a few seeds.

**Notes:** There is a clear double note and a sharp alarm cry. The bird also makes a high drumming noise with the wings and tail.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The grass nest is on the ground, in rushes, long grass, etc. Eggs, 4, pale olive, blotched with brown. April.

**WOODCOCK.**

Length: 14½ ins.

A beautifully marked bird with high forehead and long bill, but secretive and afraid of 'the man with the gun.'

**Colour:** Brown, finely mottled, barred and patterned with black, buff and chestnut.

**Bill:** Long, thin and straight.

**Habits:** By day it remains hidden. The flight makes a whirring sound.

**Haunts:** Marshes, ditches, copses and woods.

**Food:** Largely worms, but also insects.

**Notes:** Though a quiet bird there is a flight-note not unlike that of the Snipe, and occasionally there is a sharp note and a croak.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest is a slight hollow in the ground, among fallen leaves, usually in a copse or wood. Eggs, 4, creamy-white, blotched with light brownish or greyish colour. March or April.

**CURLEW.**

Length: 23 ins.

A large brown Wader, with a long curved bill and sweet call-notes.

**Colour :** Mottled brown, with white on the rump and under the tail.

**Bill :** Very long and thin and curved downwards.

**Habits :** The flight is leisurely and not unlike that of a gull, and the birds often fly at night with sweet calls. In mud or soft sand the long, sickle-shaped bill is used as a probe to extract sand-worms and other morsels, and on the rocks the bird searches the seaweed. Though essentially a Wader (the largest of the family) it can also swim.

**Haunts :** The coast, mud-flats and moorlands.

**Food :** Sea creatures, including shellfish, and sand-worms, also insects, worms and berries.

**Notes :** The commonest flight and call-note is a plaintive "curlwee," or the distant musical whistle "lwee lwee" with a lift at the end like a wistful question. There is also a delicious, liquid bubbling note.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The 3 or 4 buffish or greenish eggs, blotched with brown, are laid on the ground with only a little grass or similar material as a nest. They are hidden amongst clumps of rushes or heather on a moor. April or May.

## PLOVERS

(Family *CHARADRIIDÆ*)**RINGED PLOVER.**

Length: 7½ ins.

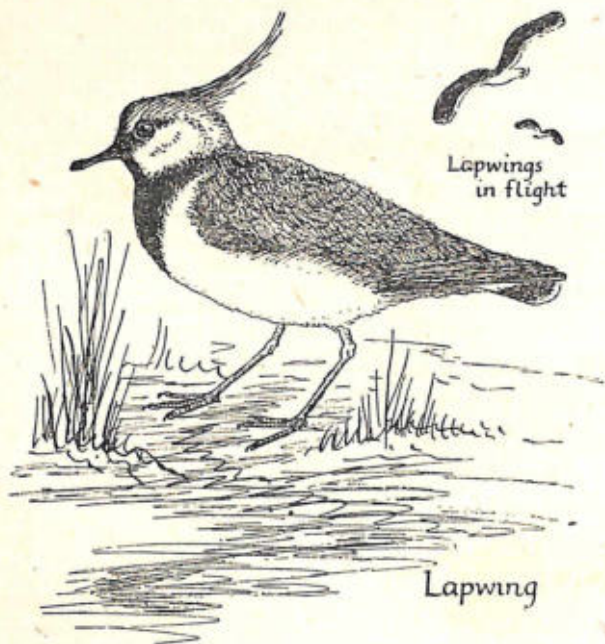
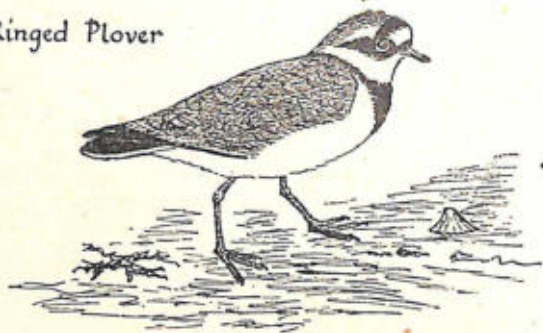
It is a dainty bird as it scampers on the sands near the edge of the sea, usually with two or three others.

**Colour :** Light grey-brown above, white beneath, with black bands across the forehead and round the neck, joining the black bib.

**Bill :** Small, short and thin.

**Habits :** It is gregarious and is usually seen with other Ringed-Plovers or consorting with Dunlins and other waders. On the sand, it runs fast in short dashes stopping to pick up hoppers and insects. When it takes to its wings it twitters musically.

Ringed Plover



Lapwing

**Haunts :** Sandy shores, or, occasionally by inland water.

**Food :** Insects, sand-hoppers, sand-worms, shellfish and small sea creatures.

**Notes :** A liquid "two, two" or "two-lee."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is a slight hollow in the ground, or in sand or shingle above high water mark. Eggs, 3 or 4, yellowish, spotted with dark brown. April to June.

### • LAPWING, GREEN PLOVER or PEEWIT.

Length : 12 ins.

The Lapwing or Peewit is a beautiful bird at close quarters with its glossy plumage, large brown eyes and long wispy crest. At a distance in flight, the bird looks black-and-white, with floppy rounded wings.

**Colour :** The crown, crest, throat, and breast are black, the sides of the neck and underparts white, the back and wings glossy metallic green and bronze. The white tail is crossed by a black band, and at the base of the tail, above and below, there is bright chestnut. The legs are red. In winter the throat is white.

**Bill :** Rather small and thin.

**Habits :** Lapwings are usually gregarious. In winter, large flocks often feed on the land, or fly in billowing flocks or little knots of twinkling black and white. The flight is uneven and the birds often flop this way and that, the blunt, round wings seldom level.

**Haunts :** Fields, pastures, moors, marshes and tidal mud-flats.

**Food :** Leather-jackets, wireworms, snails, slugs, worms, and many harmful insect-pests and grubs. It is the farmer's friend.

**Notes :** A shrill "peewit" and a whistling note.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. Four pear-shaped, olive eggs, blotched with dark brown, are laid in a slight hollow in the ground. March to July.

## OYSTER-CATCHER

(Family *HÆMATOPODIDÆ*)

**OYSTER-CATCHER.** Length: 16½ ins.

A handsome, pied bird of seaweedy rocks and shore.

**Colour :** The head, breast and back are black. The underparts, the base of the tail and a large, wide bar on the wing are white. The legs are pinkish-red, the eyes bright red. In winter there is white on the throat and the sides of the neck.

**Bill :** Rather long, thin, straight, and orange-scarlet.

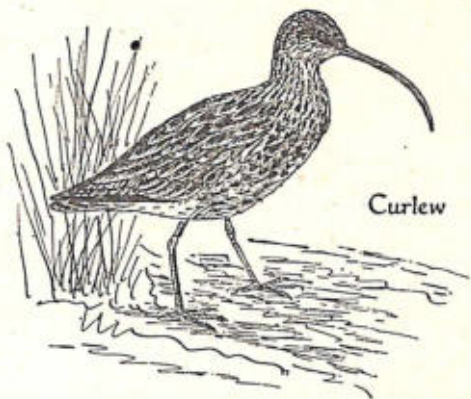
**Habits :** Generally seen picking its way over the seaweed, almost washed by the waves, or flying in small parties, with a showy display of black-and-white wings and tails.

**Haunts :** Rocky coasts and sandy shores, more abundant on the west than the east coasts.

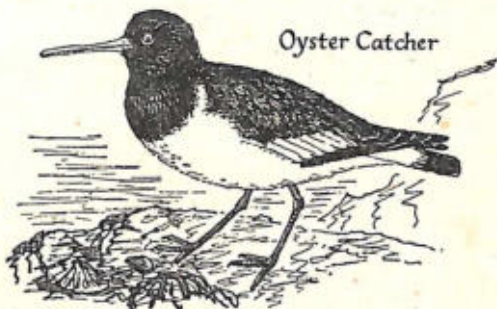
**Food :** Sand-worms, shrimps, shellfish, crabs, etc., and very small fish.

**Notes :** "Pic, pic, pic," a musical chatter rising and falling as a party is disturbed in its sea-weed search. There is also a trilling whistle.

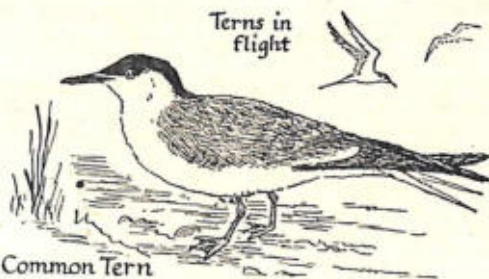
**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The 3 or 4 yellowish eggs, blotched with dark brown, are laid in shingle or rocks above high water mark, with no nesting material except a few scraps of broken shell, etc., or, occasionally they are in grass near the shore. May.



Curlew



Oyster Catcher



Terns in  
flight

Common Tern

## GULLS and TERNS

(Family *LARIDÆ*)

### COMMON TERN.

Length :  $14\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

A slim grey and white bird with narrow, pointed wings. Terns are often known as "Sea-Swallows" because of their slim lines and long forked tails.

**Colour :** White, with soft grey back and wings, and a very faint grey tinge on the underparts. The crown and nape are black, the legs and webbed feet, red. Immature birds are mottled with buff.

**Bill :** Red with a black tip, thin, and of medium length.

**Habits :** The flight is like that of a Gull as it beats along the coast looking for food, or dives into the sea after a fish.

**Haunts :** The sea, the coast, mud-flats, tidal rivers, and sometimes lakes inland.

**Food :** Chiefly shellfish, or inland, sometimes insects.

**Notes :** A rather shrill cry, "keeri" or "kik."

**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer. The nest is a hollow in the sand or shingle, on rocks or turf, with or without material, and usually in a large ternery or colony. Eggs, 2 or 3, buff or greenish, blotched with dark brown. June.

The Arctic Tern is less abundant in the south, but out-numbers the Common Tern on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland. The Sandwich Tern, which is more uncommon, is larger and has black bill and legs.

### COMMON GULL.

Length :  $17\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

In spite of its name, in many places this is not the most abundant Gull.

**Colour :** White, with soft grey mantle and black wing-tips with white "mirrors." Immature birds are mottled with brown. The legs and webbed feet are greyish or yellowish green.

**Bill :** Greenish-yellow, less powerful than those of the larger Gulls.

**Habits :** Like other Gulls, the flight is easy and languid and interspersed with gliding. Common Gulls are seldom seen in England or Wales in spring or early summer.

**Haunts :** The coast and sea, and occasionally inland.

**Food :** Carrion and garbage, small fish, sand-worms, shellfish, crabs, etc.

**Notes :** Yelping cries, like those of other Gulls.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of grass and sea-weed is in a colony on a high moor or on cliff-ledges. Eggs, 2 or 3, olive, buff or green-blue, spotted with brown or black, occasionally with few or no spots, and extremely variable in shade. May.

### BLACK-HEADED GULL. Length : 16 ins.

The smallest and also the most abundant of our familiar Gulls.

**Colour :** White, with very pale grey mantle and black wing-tips without "mirrors." The white band along the front edge of the greyish wings distinguishes this from other Gulls when in flight. The nearly black on the head is only worn in spring and summer. The legs and webbed feet are red. Immature birds are mottled with brown on the mantle.

**Bill :** Red, thin.

**Habits :** In flight it looks slimmer and the wing-beats are quicker and more erratic than those of the larger Gulls. It is gregarious.

**Haunts :** The coast, rivers, lakes and inland. The commonest Gull inland and in London.

**Food :** Garbage, waste fish, insects and grubs. Insects are caught on the wing, and it follows the plough.

**Notes :** Raucous screams and chatters are heard, especially when the birds are excited.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of sticks and grass is in a large colony, usually in marshes. Eggs, 2 to 4, blue-green, olive, buff or brownish, blotched with dark-brown. April or May.



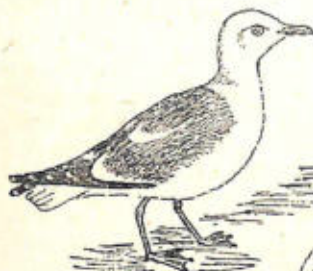
Common Gull



Black-headed Gull



Great Black-backed Gull  
in flight



Herring Gull



Lesser Black-backed Gull

**HERRING GULL.**

Length : 24 ins.

A large, powerful and familiar Gull around our coasts.  
**Colour :** Spotless white with a soft grey mantle, and black wing-tips with white "mirrors." The legs and webbed feet are flesh-pink. Immature birds are mottled with brown.

**Bill :** Yellow, with a red spot on the angle of the lower mandible. The upper mandible is hooked at the tip.

**Habits :** Flying with easy drifting flight, usually gliding with motionless wings.

**Haunts :** The sea, the coast, and sometimes on the land.

**Food :** Shellfish, waste fish, sand-worms, crabs, etc., also scraps and carrion of any kind, other birds' eggs, grubs, worms, leather-jackets and sometimes grain.

**Notes :** A laughing clamour, yelping cries and wailing, and a low, conversational "qua-qua-qua."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of sea-weed and grass is on a cliff-ledge or grassy slope or shelf on the side of a cliff. Eggs, 3, olive, blotched with dark-brown. May.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL.** Length : 22 ins.

Distinguished from the Herring Gull by the blackish mantle and yellow legs, and though not so abundant, two or three are a very common sight round the coast.

**Colour :** White with nearly black mantle, black wing-tips with white "mirrors" and yellow legs and webbed feet. Immature birds are mottled with brown.

**Bill :** Like that of the Herring Gull.

**Habits :** It has an easy flight, constantly gliding. It is more of a slayer of other sea birds, but in many respects its habits and food are like those of the Herring Gull.

**Haunts :** The sea, the coast and sometimes far inland.

**Food :** Fish, sand-worms, shellfish, and other sea-creatures, carrion, scraps, eggs, sea-birds and their young, and inland, grubs, worms, etc.

**Notes :** Similar to those of the Herring Gull.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of sea-weed and grass is on the side of a grassy cliff or island, or in a colony in a marsh. Eggs, 2 or 3, olive, buff or greenish, spotted with brown. May.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL.**

Length : 29 ins.

The largest of the Gulls and not so abundant as the foregoing species.

**Colour :** Pure white, with nearly black mantle and black wing-tips with white "mirrors." The legs and webbed feet are pale flesh-pink. Immature birds are mottled with brown.

**Bill :** Yellow, with a red spot on the lower mandible. The upper mandible is hooked at the tip.

**Habits :** With long, powerful wings it glides with no apparent effort, or soars with a few slow wing-beats.

**Haunts :** The sea, the coast and estuaries.

**Food :** It is a slayer of sea-birds and also devours eggs and young, is fond of carrion, offal and fish. Known as "the corpse-eater."

**Notes :** The yelping cries of other Gulls and a guttural "agh, agh."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of seaweed and grass is on a rock or cliff-ledge on the coast or islets, chiefly in the north and north-west of the British Isles. Eggs, 2 or 3, olive or buff-olive, sparsely blotched with dark-brown. May or June.

**AUKS**(Family *ALCIDÆ*)**PUFFIN.**

Length : 13 ins.

A short, stocky bird with upright carriage and grotesque bill of many colours.

**Colour :** Nearly black above and in a band round the throat, and white beneath, with whitish cheeks. The legs and webbed feet are orange-scarlet.

**Bill :** Exceptionally deep and massive, and striped with scarlet, yellow and grey-blue.

**Habits :** It is gregarious. Puffins may be seen grouped on rocky stacks or nesting in colonies on cliffs and islets. They dive into the sea after fish and swim under water using the wings.

**Haunts :** The coast, rocks and wild, rocky islands.

**Food :** Fish.

**Notes :** Deep and guttural.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round, though scarce in the winter. The nest is in a burrow tunnelled by the bird in the earth, in a crowded colony, on an island or cliff anywhere round the coast, but more abundant in the north west. Only 1 rough, whitish egg, generally with a vague band of reddish or greyish spots. May or June.

### RAZORBILL.

Length : 17 ins.

A penguin-like bird when seen standing upright on a cliff-ledge or stack, with others, in ranks of sleek black and white.

**Colour :** Black, with white underparts and bar on the wings, and a white line from the eye to the top of the bill. In winter the cheeks and throat are white. The legs and webbed feet are black.

**Bill :** Rather stout, black and grooved, with a white line across, running on the main groove.

**Habits :** It may be seen swimming on the sea buoyantly, usually with others. It dives and swims under water, using the wings.

**Haunts :** In spring and summer, on the coast, rocky stacks and islets, but in winter it remains far out at sea, never approaching the coast except when storm-driven.

**Food :** Fish.

**Notes :** Deep and guttural.

**Other Points :** With us round the coast in spring and summer, and far out in the ocean in the winter. The 1 large egg is buff, greenish-blue or nearly white, and very variable, blotched with dark brown. It is laid in a colony on cliff-ledges, or among the rocks on an islet, with no nest. May.

**GUILLEMOT.**

Length : 18½ ins.

An ocean-going bird with rather penguin-like appearance when seen in a colony, rank upon rank of black and white birds with upright stance, along the rocky ledges of stacks, islets or cliffs.

**Colour :** Blackish-brown with white underparts and a very thin white bar on the wing. The legs and webbed feet are blackish. In winter the cheeks and throat are white.

**Bill :** Blackish, and more slender and pointed than that of the Razorbill.

**Habits :** It swims on the sea ; or diving, swims beneath the surface, using the wings.

**Haunts :** In the breeding season it frequents the high rocky stacks and cliffs where it nests, but in the winter its haunt is the ocean, far from land.

**Food :** Fish.

**Notes :** A deep, guttural note and a grunt.

**Other Points :** With us round the coast in spring and summer, out at sea in winter. The 1 very large, pear-shaped egg is laid on a high stack or cliff-ledge without any nest. It may be any shade of buff, green, blue, brown, reddish or whitish, blotched or lined with brown or other shades, or plain. May.

In winter, storm-driven or oiled members of this and other species are often washed ashore exhausted or dying. They will repay the good Samaritan who picks them up and feeds them and cleans off the clots of tar-like filth from their plumage. Directions for this will be found on page 3.

Puffin



Razorbill



Guillemot



## CORMORANTS

(Family *PHALACROCORACIDÆ*)

**SHAG.** Length : 28 ins.

A blackish bird with a long neck, seen on our coasts.

**Colour :** Glossy metallic green, often appearing black at a distance. The legs and webbed feet are black.

The tufty crest is only worn in the breeding season.

Immature birds are more brownish, and pale beneath.

**Bill :** Hooked at the tip, black with yellow at the base.

**Habits :** Seen standing on the rocks at the foot of the cliffs, often with others, or swimming on the sea and diving. Under water it swims fast in chase of fish, and remains submerged for considerable periods. It usually flies close to the water, the long neck stretched forward.

**Haunts :** Chiefly rocky coasts.

**Food :** Fish.

**Notes :** A silent bird with only a low croak.

**Other Points :** With us all the year. Seaweed nest on rocky ledge. Eggs, 2 to 5, chalky-whitish. April or May.

**CORMORANT.** Length : 36 ins.

A larger bird than the Shag; common in rivers, and flats.

**Colour :** Black with dark brown mantle and gloss of purple and green. The lower cheek and chin are white, and in spring there is a white patch across the thigh. The legs and webbed feet are black. Immature birds are brownish and pale beneath.

**Bill :** Brownish, with yellow at the base; hooked tip.

**Habits :** Often seen on a rock drying its plumage or swimming low in the water, soon diving, remaining submerged for many seconds before reappearing at a different place. Under water it swims very fast, overtaking fish. It flies close to the water usually, with neck outstretched and with quick, regular wing-beats.

**Haunts :** The coast, tidal rivers and inland waters.

**Food :** Fish and eels.

**Notes :** A very silent bird with only a low croak.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The seaweed nest is usually in a colony on rocks, islets or cliffs. But if inland, sticks and grass are used. Eggs, 3 to 5, chalky whitish. April or May.



Shag



Cormorant

## DOVES and PIGEONS

(Family *COLUMBIDÆ*)

### TURTLE DOVE.

Length : 11½ ins.

Our smallest Dove with soft plumage of pinkish grey and brown.

**Colour :** The back is light brown with black markings, the head, flanks and rump soft grey, the underparts pinkish. On the sides of the neck are a few little black and white stripes. The darker tail is fringed with white which catches the eye when the tail is fanned out, as it often is as the birds alights. The legs are red.

**Bill :** Slender and not long.

**Habits :** Though feeding on the ground the bird frequents trees, from which we hear its soft coos.

**Haunts :** Trees, chiefly in districts where these are not too dense.

**Food :** Seeds, insects and young green shoots.

**Notes :** A soft, purring coo.

**Other Points :** Only here in late spring and summer.

The rather flimsy twig nest is in a tree. Eggs, 2, white. May or June.

### WOOD-PIGEON or RING-DOVE.

Length : 16½ ins.

This large pigeon is unmistakable on the ground or in flight. In flight it displays a broad white bar on the grey wing, and on the ground the short legs and waddling gait are characteristic.

**Colour :** Bluish-grey, paler and pinker beneath, and tinged on the breast with a reddish, dusky tone. There is a wide bar or oblong of white across the wing, and a white bar or patch on the purple and green glossy neck. The wing-tips and tail are dark. The legs are purplish-red.

**Bill :** Neither long nor thick.

**Habits :** The flight is quick and strong, and the bird often leaves the shelter of a tree with a clatter and dash. When alighting the tail is usually fanned out.

**Haunts :** Woods, gardens and trees.

**Food :** Seeds, grain, greens, young shoots, caterpillars, slugs, nuts, acorns and berries.

**Notes :** A soft and soothing sound, familiar in summer, "coo-coo-coooo-c-coooo-cuk," often ending abruptly as if cut off. Sometimes translated into "tak' two coos, Taffy, tak'."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is of sticks and very shallow, almost flat, in a tree or bush. Eggs, 2, white, usually between April and August, though earlier nests occur, and even later ones.

## PHEASANTS and PARTRIDGES

(Family *PHASIANIDÆ*)

**PARTRIDGE.** Length : 12½ ins.

The round heavy-looking body, short, down-curved wings, rather umbrella-shaped, and whirring flight, are unmistakable.

**Colour :** The appearance at a distance is brown. The plumage is greyish, barred and streaked with chestnut or buff above and on the flanks, and the face and throat are chestnut. There is a chocolate patch underneath.

**Bill :** Short and small.

**Habits :** By day it is often in the fields concealed in grass or crops, and on a ploughed field it is almost invisible, or it may rise from near our feet with a startling whirr of wings. It is usually gregarious and feeds and flies in a covey or small flock.

**Haunts :** Cultivated country.

**Food :** Insects, caterpillars and seeds.

**Notes :** A grating note or creak, unlike that of any other bird.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is a hollow in the ground, lined with grass, etc., hidden under a bush or hedge, or in herbage. Eggs, 7 to 20, usually 12 to 16, olive. April to July.

The Red-legged Partridge has bright red bill and legs and is boldly barred on the flanks with red, white and black.



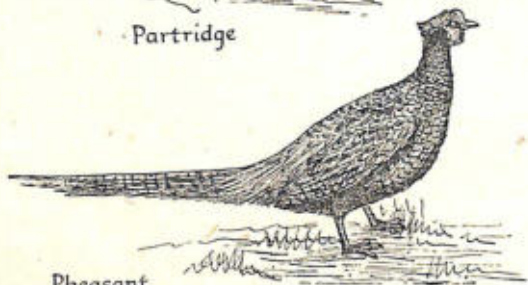
Turtle Dove



Wood Pigeon



Partridge



Pheasant

**PHEASANT.**

Length : 24 to 36 ins.

A beautiful, variable bird with long, tapering tail.

**Colour :** Chestnut-brown, sheeny with purple, green and bronze, and handsomely marked with cream and black. Behind the bare, fleshy, bright-red face are two ear-tufts. The female is dull brown with shorter tail.**Bill :** Short and small.**Habits :** Usually a shy bird, but often seen crossing a road or strutting on the outskirts of a wood or in a field. The flight is whirring, with periods of gliding.**Haunts :** Woods, copses and plantations.**Food :** Insects, grubs, berries, mast, seed, green shoots.**Notes :** A crow, often startling as the bird is put up.**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest is a hollow in the ground in thick covert. Eggs, 7 to 18, usually 10 or 12, pale olive. April to June.**WATER-RAILS, Etc.**(Family *RALLIDÆ*)**CORNCRAKE.**

Length : 10 ins.

A bird seldom seen, but often heard, in the summer, though it is by no means abundant.

**Colour :** Buff and brown, streaked and spotted, paler beneath, chestnut on the flanks and grey on the sides of the head. Chestnut on the wings is noticeable in flight.**Bill :** Fairly short, but not thin.**Habits :** It is secretive, remaining hidden in long grass by day, and running, rather than flying, when moving from place to place. Its habits are chiefly nocturnal and it calls by night and day. Though chiefly a bird of dry land, it is able to swim.**Haunts :** Fields, growing hay and long grass.**Food :** Insects, worms, slugs, snails and seeds.**Notes :** A grating "crek, crek."**Other Points :** Only here in spring and summer as a rule, though it has been recorded in the winter, generally in western counties, but occasionally in the north and south. The nest is a slight hollow lined with grass and hidden in sedges or long grass. Eggs, 7 to 12, pale buff, spotted with chestnut. May or June.

**WATERHEN or MOORHEN.** Length : 13 ins.

A familiar blackish bird on almost every pond or marsh, with guttural cries.

**Colour :** Nearly black with a whitish line on the flanks, and white under the tail which is very noticeable from behind when the bird is mincing along on the ground with its large feet, its tail flopping and head jerking.

**Bill :** Not large, red with a yellow tip.

**Habits :** When swimming, the head is jerked rhythmically, and the bird rises from a pond heavily, beating the water with its wings, and alights again with a splash. It also dives and swims beneath the surface.

**Haunts :** Ponds, lakes, rivers, marshes and ditches.

**Food :** Worms, slugs, insects, water-creatures and water-plants, berries and seeds.

**Notes :** Ringing and guttural squawks and a loud "fullock" or "chirrick."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of rushes and grass is near the water, concealed in vegetation or an overhanging bush. Eggs, 6 to 12, warm buff spotted with red-brown. April to July.

**COOT.** Length : 15 ins.

Not unlike the Waterhen but larger, and with a showy white forehead-shield.

**Colour :** Nearly black.

**Bill :** White of moderate size, but with the addition of the white shield on the forehead.

**Habits :** The head is jerked while swimming, like that of the Waterhen, and the bird has the same heavy take-off with much splashing. Like the Waterhen, it is constantly diving.

**Haunts :** River-flats, meres and lakes.

**Food :** Water-plants, fresh-water shellfish, worms, grain, etc.

**Notes :** Ringing or metallic squawks.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of reeds and flag-leaves is hidden among the water-plants. Eggs, 6 to 12, greyish-buff spotted with dark brown or black. April or May.



Corncrake



Waterhen

Coot

## DUCKS, GEESE and SWANS

(Family *ANATIDÆ*)

### TEAL.

Length: 15 ins.

A small, handsome Duck, chiefly seen in winter.

**Colour:** The drake is grey, with a white streak on the wings, and a chestnut head with metallic green eye-stripe neatly outlined in cream or buff. The whitish breast is spotted with black. The female is mottled buff and brown, without the chestnut and green on the head.

**Bill:** Like that of other Ducks.

**Habits:** It is very swift on the wing, and is usually seen flying with others.

**Haunts:** Chiefly lakes and meres inland, but in winter it also frequents estuaries.

**Food:** Water insects, water-plants and grain.

**Notes:** Conversational ejaculations and a clear whistle.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round, but more abundant in winter. The nest of herbage lined with dark brown down, is on the ground in a wood or hidden in rushes. Eggs, 8 to 12, greenish or buff. May.

### MALLARD or WILD DUCK.

Length: 23 ins.

Our most familiar wild duck on ponds and marshes.

**Colour:** The bottle-green head of the drake is divided from the chestnut breast by a narrow white collar-line; the flanks are grey, the brownish wings are crossed by wide steel-blue bars bordered with white. The duck is brown, with a bar on the wing like that of the drake.

**Bill:** Like that of other Ducks.

**Habits:** Usually seen flying or feeding in pairs, or in larger numbers. Usual feeding times are dawn and dusk.

**Haunts:** Ponds, marshes, lakes, mud-flats, and in winter sometimes the sea-shore.

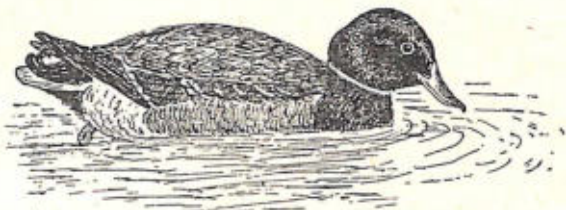
**Food:** Insects, worms, frogs, snails, slugs, shellfish, berries and grain.

**Notes:** Loud and soft quackings and a harsh "dreck".

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest of grass, leaves and down is on the ground by a lake or in a wood, hidden in vegetation. The eggs are usually covered over when the duck leaves them. Eggs, 8 to 14, pale olive or greenish-blue. March to May.

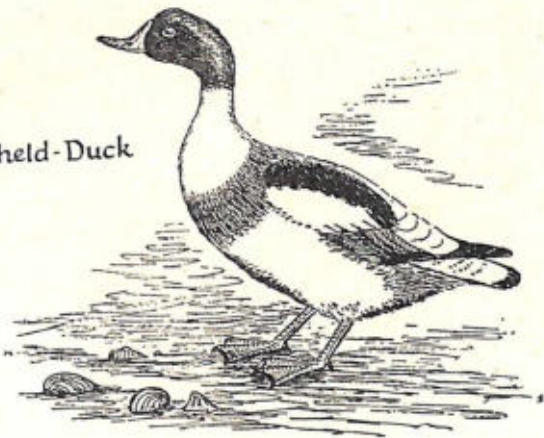


Teal



Mallard

Sheld-Duck



**SHELD-DUCK.**

Length: 26 ins.

A large, handsome, pied Duck, usually seen on tidal mud-flats and dunes.

**Colour:** Black head glossed with green, white neck, wide chestnut band round the upper breast and shoulders, white beneath with a black band down the centre, wings green-black, chestnut and white, legs and webbed feet pink.

**Bill:** Scarlet, flat, rather turned up, with a slight forehead-shield or pronounced knob.

**Habits:** The ducklings have to be led to the sea or estuary on foot by their anxious parents when they leave the nesting burrow, and if this is far from their destination, mishaps or difficulties are sometimes met.

**Haunts:** Dunes, mud-flats, the coast and tidal rivers.

**Food:** Sand-hoppers, sand-worms, shellfish, snails, seaweed and small sea-creatures.

**Notes:** Soft quackings and harsher sounds, and a whistle.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round. The nest is in a burrow, usually that of a rabbit. Eggs 6 to 12, creamy-white. May.

**GREY LAG GOOSE.**

Length: 34 ins.

Wild Geese flying in formation, with long necks stretched forward, are an unmistakable sight.

**Colour:** Grey-brown with white under the tail. The whitish tail is crossed by a brown band. The legs and webbed feet are flesh-colour.

**Bill:** Thick, flesh-coloured.

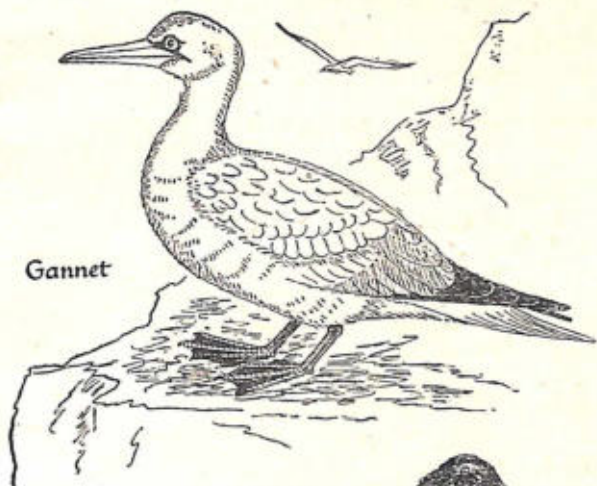
**Habits:** It is a shy and wary bird, not allowing close approach, and usually flying and feeding with others.

**Haunts:** Though seen on the coast, usually in the west, its breeding haunts are in the north, on marshes and moors, and on the northern isles off Scotland.

**Food:** Grass and other vegetable matter, and grain.

**Notes:** "Gaggle" or "kark, kark," notes like those of farm-yard geese.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round, but very rare except in the extreme north. The large nest, on the ground, is made of sticks, heather, grass, leaves and down. Eggs, 4 to 6 creamy-white. April.



Gannet

Geese in Flight



Grey-Lag  
Goose



Swan

**MUTE SWAN.**

Length: 60 ins.

This beautiful bird is so familiar and semi-domestic as to need little description. Though living in a wild state on many rivers and lakes, it is distinct from the really wild and rare Swans, the Bewick's and Whooper Swans which are winter visitors chiefly to Scotland.

**Colour :** Pure white with black legs and webbed feet.

**Bill :** Deep orange, with black near the eye and a black knob at the top, on the forehead.

**Habits :** It drifts up and down rivers and ornamental ponds, often stopping to see if passers-by have food to throw to it. In flight the wing-beats are slow and powerful and make a deep, throbbing sound.

**Haunts :** Lakes, rivers and ponds.

**Food :** Water-insects, water-plants and scraps thrown by passers-by. It will kill young water-fowl and frogs and toads without necessarily eating them.

**Notes :** It frequently hisses and also has a deep trumpet-call, and in the breeding season a low, soft song.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of vegetation and down is on the ground near water.

Eggs, 5 to 12, greenish-white. April. After leaving the nest, the signets are often carried on their parents' backs.

## GANNETS

(Family *SULIDÆ*)

### GANNET.

Length: 37 ins.

A magnificent bird, with flight rather like that of a great Gull, and wing-span of about 6 feet.

**Colour:** White, with dark wing-tips and a buffish tinge on the head. Immature birds are mottled brown and white, complete whiteness not being attained for four years.

**Bill:** Long, heavy, wedge-shaped.

**Habits:** The flight is truly magnificent, and the dive from a great height is spectacular. The bird can see a fish far below in the water, and will fall like an arrow into the sea with a great splash. The fish is swallowed beneath the surface.

**Haunts:** The sea, the coast, and its breeding haunts on rocky stacks off our north and west coasts.

**Food:** Fish.

**Notes:** Short, harsh cries.

**Other Points:** With us all the year round, but rather uncommon, and only seen in large numbers at the nesting-sites. The nest of thrift, grass, and seaweed is in a large colony on ledges of rocky stacks off the north and west coasts of Scotland, Wales and Ireland. One bluish-green or chalky-whitish egg is laid in March or April. It is covered by the parent's foot or feet while he or she is sitting on it, and does not hatch for 6 weeks. The young (as in the case of Gulls) feed from their parents' throats on the fish which is disgorged for them.

## GREBES

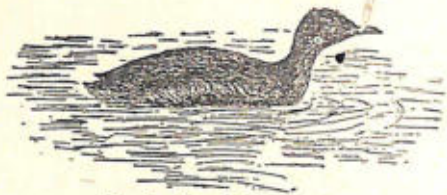
(Family *PODICIPIDÆ*)

### GREAT CRESTED GREBE. Length: 21 ins.

A most beautiful bird, with graceful head and neck.

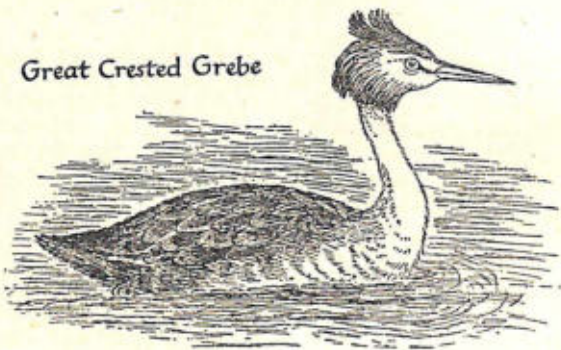
**Colour:** Grey-brown above, shading to chestnut on the flanks, and silky white beneath. In breeding dress the slender white neck emerges from a chestnut and black frill round the base of the head. The grey crest forms two ear-like tufts. The greenish feet have a margin of webbing round each toe.

**Bill:** Fairly long, tapering and pointed.



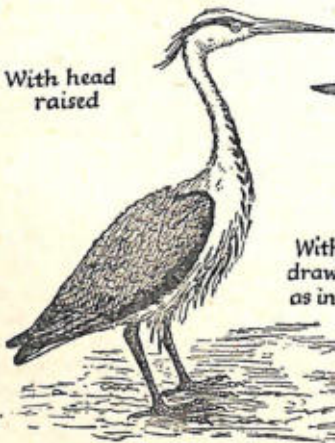
Little Grebe

Great Crested Grebe



Hérons

With head  
raised



With head  
drawn back  
as in flight



**Habits :** On the water it is constantly diving and searching for food beneath the surface.

**Haunts :** Broads, meres and lakes.

**Food :** Fish, tadpoles, shellfish, insects, etc.

**Notes :** Short, harsh notes, "jik, jik."

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of water-weed may be a floating mass tethered on a lake, or it may be at the edge of the water. Eggs, 3 or 4, nearly white. April to July. The bird covers the eggs with weed before leaving them.

**LITTLE GREBE or DABCHICK.** Length: 10 ins.

This is a small, round-about, tailless bird, very unlike the last in appearance.

**Colour :** In summer it is nearly black, with chestnut cheeks and throat and brown flanks; in winter it is paler and the underparts and throat whitish. The olive-coloured toes are lobed like those of the Great Crested.

**Bill :** Not long or thick or in any way noticeable.

**Habits :** It is a constant diver when swimming, and searches for food beneath the surface.

**Haunts :** Lakes and other inland waters, also estuaries, and in hard weather, the coast.

**Food :** Largely fresh-water insects and shellfish; also small fish and crustaceans.

**Notes :** A soft note and a trilling cry.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The nest of water-weeds is floating or may be at the edge of the water. Eggs, 4 to 6, white, in April to June are covered with weed by the parent before leaving. The young, like those of other Grebes, travel on their parents' backs, nearly hidden in the feathers, when leaving the nest.

HERONS  
(Family *ARDEIDÆ*)

**HERON.**

Length : 37 ins.

A handsome grey-and-white bird with long, snaky neck, often withdrawn until the head is sunk on to the shoulders. See Plate 32.

**Colour :** White, with blue-grey back, and a black line above the eye falling back to a drooping crest. The black markings down the breast end in a mane or breast-plate of long shaggy feathers. The grey wings are nearly black at the ends.

**Bill :** Yellow, long and heavy, but tapering to a sharp point.

**Habits :** The beat of the huge wings is exceptionally slow and seemingly languid, but the pace made with them is often great. In flight the head is drawn back (as illustrated) unlike those of Swans and Geese. It may often be seen standing with hunched shoulders and upright position on mud-flats in an estuary, but when stretching the long, thin head and neck among the sedges of a marsh, the effect is very different.

**Haunts :** Estuaries, rivers, lakes, marshes and woods.

**Food :** Eels, fish, frogs, water-voles, insects, and occasionally water-fowl or their young.

**Notes :** A deep, ringing croak.

**Other Points :** With us all the year round. The large nest of sticks is usually in a tree in a heronry with others. Nests on marshes or cliffs have also been known. Eggs, 3 to 5, green-blue. February or March.

# Classified List of Families, General and Species described in this work

## Family CORVIDÆ

- Raven—*Corvus corax corax*.  
Carrion Crow—*Corvus corone corone*.  
Hooded Crow—*Corvus cornix cornix*.  
Rook—*Corvus frugilegus frugilegus*.  
Jackdaw—*Corvus monedula spermologus*.  
Magpie—*Pica pica pica*.  
Jay—*Garrulus glandarius rufitergum*.

## Family STURNIDÆ

- Starling—*Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris*.

## Family FRINGILLIDÆ

- Greenfinch—*Chloris chloris chloris*.  
Hawfinch—*Coccothraustes coccothraustes coccothraustes*.  
Goldfinch—*Carduelis carduelis britannica*.  
House-Sparrow—*Passer domesticus domesticus*.  
Tree-Sparrow—*Passer montanus montanus*.  
Chaffinch—*Fringilla cœlebs cœlebs*.  
Linnet—*Acanthis cannabina cannabina*.  
Bullfinch—*Pyrrhula pyrrhula nesa*.  
Corn Bunting—*Emberiza calandra calandra*.  
Yellow Hammer—*Emberiza citrinella citrinella*.  
Cirl Bunting—*Emberiza cirlus cirlus*.  
Reed Bunting—*Emberiza schœniclus schœniclus*.

## Family ALAUDIDÆ

- Skylark—*Alauda arvensis arvensis*.  
Wood Lark—*Lullula arborea arborea*.

## Family MOTACILLIDÆ

- Pied Wagtail—*Motacilla alba yarrellii*.  
Grey Wagtail—*Motacilla cinerea cinerea*.  
Yellow Wagtail—*Motacilla flava rayi*.  
Tree-Pipit—*Anthus trivialis trivialis*.  
Meadow-Pipit—*Anthus pratensis*.  
Rock-Pipit—*Anthus spinoletta petrosus*.

## Family CERTHIIDÆ

- Tree-Creeper—*Certhia familiaris britannica*.

Family *SITTIDÆ*Nuthatch—*Sitta europæa affinis*.Family *REGULIDÆ*Goldcrest—*Regulus regulus anglorum*.Family *PARIDÆ*Great Titmouse—*Parus major newtoni*.Coal Titmouse—*Parus ater britannicus*.Marsh Titmouse—*Parus palustris dresseri*.Blue Titmouse—*Parus cæruleus obscurus*.Long-tailed Titmouse—*Ægithalos caudatus roseus*.Family *SYLVIIDÆ*Whitethroat—*Sylvia communis communis*.Lesser Whitethroat—*Sylvia curruca curruca*.Blackcap—*Sylvia atricapilla atricapilla*.Reed Warbler—*Acrocephalus scirpaceus scirpaceus*.Sedge Warbler—*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*.Willow Warbler—*Phylloscopus trochilus trochilus*.Chiffchaff—*Phylloscopus collybita collybita*.Family *TURDIDÆ*Mistle-Thrush—*Turdus viscivorus viscivorus*.Song-Thrush—*Turdus ericetorum ericetorum*.Redwing—*Turdus musicus musicus*.Fieldfare—*Turdus pilaris*.Blackbird—*Turdus merula merula*.Redstart—*Phænicurus phænicurus phænicurus*.Black Redstart—*Phænicurus ochrurus gibraltariensis*.Robin—*Erithacus rubecula melophilus*.Nightingale—*Luscinia megarhyncha megarhyncha*.Stonechat—*Saxicola torquata hibernans*.Whinchat—*Saxicola rubetra rubetra*.Wheatear—*Ænanthe ænanthe ænanthe*.Family *PRUNELLIDÆ*Hedge-Sparrow—*Prunella modularis occidentalis*.Family *CINCLIDÆ*Dipper—*Cinclus cinclus gularis*.Family *TROGLODYTIDÆ*Wren—*Troglodytes troglodytes troglodytes*.

Family *MUSCICAPIDÆ*

- Spotted Flycatcher—*Muscicapa striata striata*.  
 Pied Flycatcher—*Ficedula hypoleuca hypoleuca*.

Family *HIRUNDINIDÆ*

- Swallow—*Hirundo rustica rustica*.  
 House-Martin—*Delichon urbica urbica*.  
 Sand-Martin—*Riparia riparia riparia*.

Family *PICIDÆ*

- Great Spotted Woodpecker—*Dryobates major anglicus*.  
 Lesser Spotted Woodpecker—*Dryobates minor comminutus*.  
 Green Woodpecker—*Picus viridis virescens*.

Family *CUCULIDÆ*

- Cuckoo—*Cuculus canorus canorus*.

Family *ALCEDINIDÆ*

- Kingfisher—*Alcedo atthis ispida*.

Family *MICROPODIDÆ*

- Swift—*Micropus apus apus*.

Family *CAPRIMULGIDÆ*

- Nightjar—*Caprimulgus europæus europæus*.

Family *TYTONIDÆ*

- Barn-Owl—*Tyto alba alba*.

Family *STRIGIDÆ*

- Long-eared Owl—*Asio otus otus*.  
 Brown Owl—*Strix aluco sylvatica*.  
 Little Owl—*Carine noctua vidalii*.

Family *FALCONIDÆ*

- Buzzard—*Buteo buteo buteo*.  
 Golden Eagle—*Aquila chrysaëtus chrysaëtus*.  
 Sea Eagle—*Haliaëtus albicilla albicilla*.  
 Sparrow-Hawk—*Accipiter nisus nisus*.  
 Peregrine Falcon—*Falco peregrinus peregrinus*.  
 Kestrel—*Falco tinnunculus tinnunculus*.

## Family PHALACROCORACIDÆ

- Cormorant—*Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*.  
 Shag—*Phalacrocorax aristotelis aristotelis*.

## Family SULIDÆ

- Gannet—*Sula bassana*.

## Family ANATIDÆ

- Grey Lag-Goose—*Anser anser*.  
 Mute Swan—*Cygnus olor*.  
 Sheld-duck—*Tadorna tadorna*.  
 Mallard—*Anas platyrhyncha platyrhyncha*.  
 Teal—*Querquedula crecca crecca*.

## Family ARDEIDÆ

- Heron—*Ardea cinerea cinerea*.

## Family RALLIDÆ

- Corncrake—*Crex crex*.  
 Moorhen—*Gallinula chloropus chloropus*.  
 Coot—*Fulica atra atra*.

## Family SCOLOPACIDÆ

- Woodcock—*Scolopax rusticola rusticola*.  
 Snipe—*Cappella gallinago gallinago*.  
 Dunlin—*Erolia alpina schinzii*.  
 Sandpiper—*Tringa hypoleucos*.  
 Curlew—*Numenius arquata arquata*.

## Family CHARADRIIDÆ

- Ringed Plover—*Charadrius hiaticula hiaticula*.  
 Lapwing—*Vanellus vanellus*.

## Family HÆMATOPODIDÆ

- Oyster-catcher—*Hæmatopus ostralegus occidentalis*.

## Family LARIDÆ

- Common Gull—*Larus canus canus*.  
 Herring Gull—*Larus argentatus argentatus*.  
 Great Black-backed Gull—*Larus marinus*.  
 Lesser Black-backed Gull—*Larus fuscus grællsii*.  
 Black-headed Gull—*Larus ridibundus ridibundus*.  
 Common Tern—*Sterna hirundo hirundo*.

Family *ALCIDÆ*

- Razorbill—*Alca torda*.  
Guillemot—*Uria aalge albionis*.  
Puffin—*Fratercula arctica grabæ*.

Family *PODICIPIDÆ*

- Great Crested Grebe—*Podiceps cristatus cristatus*.  
Little Grebe—*Podiceps ruficollis ruficollis*.

Family *COLUMBIDÆ*

- Wood Pigeon—*Columba palumbus palumbus*.  
Turtle Dove—*Streptopelia turtur turtur*.

Family *PHASIANIDÆ*

- Pheasant—*Phasianus colchicus*.  
Partridge—*Perdix perdix perdix*.

## APPENDIX

### NOTES ON BIRDS' FOOTPRINTS

A study of the footprints of various birds is both interesting and often valuable as a further guide to their identification. A careful scrutiny of the mud or soft earth around a pond, near a stream, on marshy land or the wet sand of the seashore, will clearly reveal the tracks of birds, particularly those whose natural life is spent on or near water, together with those of the smaller hopping or walking species when approaching the water for a drink or a bath.

A simple point to remember is that hopping birds, such as the Sparrows, Blackbirds, Thrushes and other Finches, leave their footprints in pairs, side by side; walking or running birds, like the Wagtail and Starling, leave a line of alternate impressions, similar in form to human tracks.

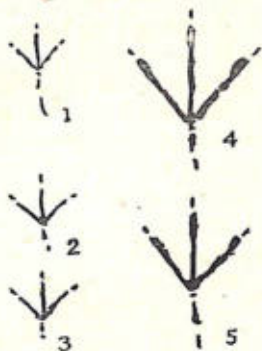
In the case of the Waterhen, which leaves abundant imprints of its rather long and spreading toes on the soft, wet soil near ponds, ditches and similar places, these

can be further identified by the peculiar position of the footmarks. They show that the bird, in walking, makes a single line track by placing one foot immediately in front of the other with the toes almost touching, and giving the appearance that they were made by a one-legged bird!



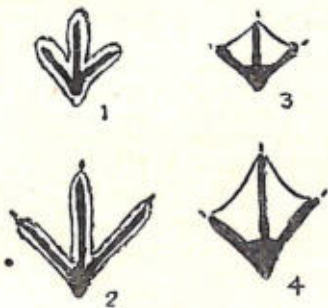
Track of  
the  
Waterhen

The footprints of the Skylark may be recognized on wet soil or snow by a long, tell-tale scratch, made by its very long hind-claws. This feature which is unique amongst the tiny footprints of our smaller birds, will, at once, identify them and distinguish them from the Wagtails and other small running birds.



- |                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Lark          | 4. Blackbird |
| 2. Wagtail       | 5. Thrush    |
| 3. House Sparrow |              |

The footprints of Ducks and Gulls are easily recognized by the impression of their webbed feet. In the case of the Ducks it will be noticed that they turn inwards when walking, whilst those of the Gulls are smaller and straighter, and where the tracks end in a few deep scratches, showing only a portion of the footprint, it



- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 1. Grebe | 3. Gull |
| 2. Coot  | 4. Duck |

has been caused by the Gull running forward a short distance before taking to flight.

The footprints of the Coot show the rather long, thin toes to be only partly webbed, as the feet are used occasionally for running as well as for swimming. The footprints of the Grebe are smaller and slightly more webbed, but leave similar characteristic impressions on any wet soil.

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