

College of Arts and Sciences
IRAQ NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
Publication No. 9

Field Observations
on
The Birds of Iraq

I. Podicipidae - Laridae

By

H. J. MOORE, B. A. (Cantab),

and

C. BOSWELL, B.Sc. (Hons.) Lond., D.I.C., Hon. Ph. D.
(Baghdad), F.Z.S.



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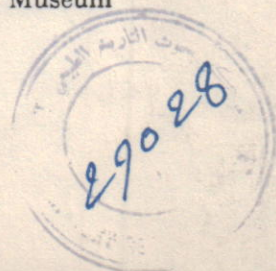
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PART I

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مقدمة

بقلم : بشير اللوس
مدير متحف التاريخ الطبيعي

لقد دأب متحف التاريخ الطبيعي منذ تأسيسه على تشجيع الدراسات العلمية ولاسيما تلك التي لها مساس بحيوانات العراق ومعاودة الباحثين بجميع الوسائل المتوفرة بما في ذلك نشر بحوثهم في سلسلة منشورات المتحف التي توزع على عدد كبير من المتاحف والجامعات والهيئات العلمية في الداخل والخارج على سبيل التبادل والاهداء .

وانه ليسرنا ان نقدم الآن ، وفي ثلاثة اعداد متتابعة من سلسلة منشورات المتحف ، تقريرا ضافيا للملاحظات الحقلية عن طيور العراق سجلها نفر من المختصين رافقوا الجيش البريطاني في العراق خلال الحرب العالمية الثانية (في السنوات ١٩٤١ - ١٩٤٥) وعلى رأسهم المستر اج . جى . مور (مدرس علم الاحياء في مدرسة كلايسمور في دوربست بانكلترة) والبروفسور جارلس بوزويل (استاذ علم الاحياء في كلية الطب الملكية العراقية) .

فعلى اثر نشر كتابي The Avifauna of Iraq في عام ١٩٥٣ وردتني بضع رسائل من المختصين في موضوع الطيور مليئة بالتشجيع . وكانت احدى الرسائل من المستر پي . آي . آر . ماكلارن (اكسفورد) الذي أشار الى الملاحظات الحقلية التي جمعها المستر مور بنفسه أو بواسطة زملائه فضلا عن ملاحظاته الشخصية التي ضمها الى تقارير مور ، واقترح ان يستفيد المتحف من تلك الملاحظات القيمة بطريقة من الطرق كما أبدى استعداده لارسال نسخة من ملاحظاته الخاصة للتصرف بها .

وفي ٢٤ تشرين الثاني ١٩٥٣ أخرجت المستر مور بان المتحف راغب في الاستفادة من مجموعة الملاحظات الحقلية التي لديه ، والنظر في أمر نشرها بعد أخذ موافقة الجهات المختصة على ان تعتبر حقوق التأليف مهداة الى المتحف . وقد وافق المستر مور على هذا الاساس وواعد بارسال المجموعة الكاملة الى زميله الاستاذ بوزويل ليتولى تقديمها الى المتحف والاشراف على طبعها عند اللزوم . وعلى أثر تسلم رسالة التقديم من المؤلفين في ٩ شباط ١٩٥٦ . أجرى المتحف الاتصالات الرسمية مع المراجع العليا للحصول على موافقتها على نشر تلك الملاحظات في سلسلة منشورات المتحف .

ان نشر هذا المجهود الطيب الذي يكشف عن نواحي مهمة من حياة الطيور وتوزيعها في العراق سيضيف الى معلوماتنا عن الطيور العراقية الشيء الكثير وسيحفز المؤلفين بهذا الموضوع من عراقيين وأجانب على متابعة البحوث والملاحظات التي وضعت أسسها هذه النشرة والنشرات التي سبقتها .

والمهم في هذه الملاحظات انها تتناول مناطق عراقية نائية كانت معلوماتنا عن الطيور فيها ضعيفة جدا . ومن هذه المناطق الجبال الكردية في الوية السليمانية واربيل والموصل . ومما تجدر الاشارة اليه ان طبيعة الملاحظات الحقلية غير المعززة بالنماذج مربكة بالنسبة لانواع الطيور التي لا توجد الا فروق طفيفة بينها ويكون من المتعذر تمييز بعضها عن بعض في الحقل . غير ان خبرة الملاحظ ودقته العلمية تجعلانه في مأمن من الوقوع في هوة الخطأ عند حصول الالتباس فيكتفى في مثل هذه الاحوال بتقرير المشاهدة دون ان يعطى حكما قاطعا عن النوع الذي التبس عليه التشخيص في الحقل . وقد ذكر المؤلفان في مقدمتهما اسماء الذوات الذين شاركوا في تسجيل الملاحظات التي عملوا فيها بالاضافة الى المناطق التي تناولتها الملاحظات . فالى المؤلفين الفاضلين شكرنا الجزيل على تقديم هذا المجهود الجليل الى المتحف وتيسير نشره خدمة للعلم .

Introduction.

During the second world-war, British Troops were again stationed in Iraq and opportunities arose for field ornithology. Boswell and I met there and were able to make many excursions together, particularly in the neighbourhood of Kut and Baghdad and were privileged to spend some time together at the R.A.F. rest camp at Seramadia in the North.

In addition to our notes and observations this work is based on contributions from the following observers: P.I.R. Maclaren, W.E. Williamson, W.G. Vosper and C.J. Gent. In particular we had access to the following unpublished sets of notes:

- Field Notes from Shuaibah and Zubair (near Basrah).
 February — May 1943 *P.I.R. Maclaren.*
- Short Notes from Hindiyah, Euphrates River.
 April — September 1934 *P.I.R. Maclaren.*
- Field Notes from the Kurdistan Hills (Penjwin).
 21 August — 7 September 1943. *P.I.R. Maclaren.*
- Field Notes from the Mosul District.
 15 November 1942 — 14 February 1943 and 9-31st. March
 1943 *P.I.R. Maclaren.*
- Some Notes on the Birds in the Mosul Area.
 1944 — February 1945 *W.E. Williamson.*
- Notes on Bird Watching. Shaqlawa — Rowanduz.
 26 July — 9 August 1943. *W.G. Vosper.*
- Notes on Bird Watching. Qaiyara.
 9 May — June 1943 *W.G. Vosper.*
- Notes on Birds of 'Iraq. Mosul, Baghdad and Hillah.
 April — December 1943 *C.J. Gent.*
- Notes on the Birds of Baghdad.
 1 January — 7 March 1944 *C.J. Gent.*

Also available through the kind offices of Mr. Sidney Jackson of the York Museum, were the Bulletins of the Baghdad (finally Paiforce) Naturalist's Club from which many records were extracted and these are initialled in the text PNC. All other entries

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are acknowledged by initials or by name. My own notes are referred to in the first person.

Observations were made in such leisure hours as our duties permitted, mine as a Political Officer and Boswell's as Professor of Biology at the Royal College of Medicine, Baghdad. My duties enabled me to cover Kut and Mosul Liwas intensively by car, horse or mule, so that a good general cross section of the avifauna was obtained; but inevitably birds were seen 'en route' and there was seldom the time to make protracted observations.

The notes therefore, are primarily distribution records and contain much less on the biology and ecology of 'Iraqi birds than we would have wished.

Owing to the war-time shortage of cartridges, few specimens were obtained. However, a tradition for observation in the field without killing birds, is growing up in Britain and elsewhere and these records are published in the belief that they may be of some value.

Attempts were made to secure specimens when there was doubt as to a bird's identity and descriptions of plumage etc. of such specimens are to be found in the appendix. Also these descriptions, together with the detailed notes on which this work is based have been deposited at the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology at Oxford where they are available for consultation.

When field distinctions could not be made, as in the case of female Harriers (*Circus* sp.), of some Warblers and of the many races of Yellow Wagtails (*Motacilla flava* sp.) or when birds were not sufficiently observed as in the case of the Rock Nuthatches (*Sitta* sp.) and the Short Toed Larks (*Calandrella* sp.) the notes have been placed under the generic heading.

The Species Order is based on the Wetmore Classification and in particular upon that adopted in the Check List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland. B.O.U. 1952 and the Avifauna Of Iraq, by Bashir Allouse, Iraqi Natural History Museum, Publication No. 3, 1953.

The compilation of a paper such as this presents a dual problem. That of overburdening the ornithologist who has no special interest in the country, with a mass of distribution data, as yet insufficient to allow a general picture of the status to be drawn; or bearing in mind how little known the country is ornithologically, particularly in the North, of failing to provide sufficient detail for the ornithologist working in the country, who will need all the information available.

As these are field notes, subspecific names have not been included except where there can be no doubt e.g. *Corvus corone capellanus*, the Pied Crow. The probable race has however been indicated in brackets. A list of some of the Arabic, Assyrian and Kurdish names that were met with is to be found in the appendix.

The authors do not consider that sufficient material is yet available for a general restatement of the Ornithology of 'Iraq to be attempted, and this work is to be regarded as supplementary to those already published by Ticehurst, Meinertzhagen and Allouse, details of which are given in the Bibliography.

It is hoped, however, that the publication of these notes will act as a stimulus to naturalists in 'Iraq, whether resident Iraqis or visiting foreigners, to help fill in the many gaps in the knowledge of the bird life of the country, and also that some of the problems pointed for enquiry on particular species (see Appendix) will be followed up by those with the available opportunity.

Map 1. shows where observers were stationed during the period under review. In addition to the sources quoted above my own itinerary is summarized below.

BAGHDAD.

- 1941-2. 18/10/41 — 13/8/42, 18/8/42 — 26/8/42, 22/9/42 — 5/10/42.
 1943. 18/9, 7-9/12.
 1944. 1/1, 12-13/4, 23-24/4, 2/5.
 1945. 1/5 — 11/8, 23/8 — 5/9, 17/9 — 25/10, 4/11.

DELTAWAH (Khalis).

1941. 20/11, 28/12, 1943, 8/12.

HILLAH .

1942. 20/3, 17-23/9.

HABBANIYAH.

1941. 9/12, 1942, 11/8.

KUT.

1942. 20/2, 24/10 — 31/12.
 1943. All.
 1944. 2/1 — 2/5, 17/5 — 12/8, 14/9 — 20/9.
 1945. 6/9 — 17/9, 24/9 — 30/9, 25/10 — 7/11, 14/11 — 5/12.

KUT — BASRAH — FAO and return.

7-13/11/45.

DIWANIYAH.

1942. 6-9/10/42.

KURDISTAN :—

PENJWIN.

1942. 27/8 — 18/9.

MOSUL — ZAKHO.

14-17/8/42.

MOSUL — ZAKHO — AMADIA — ROWANDUZ.

3-16/5/44.

SERAMADIA.

1944. 14/8 — 13/9.

MOSUL LIWA.

1944. 21/9 — 26/11. 9/12/44 — 27/4/45.

CHOARTA.

1945. 12/8 — 22/8.

For the more rapid reference to months in which birds were seen a monthly table is given for each species, above and below which are the areas concerned. e.g. in the South and Centre of 'Iraq, B indicates Baghdad area, K the area around Kut, and S refers to records in Basrah or further south. In the north, W (West) refers to records from Mosul, Jebel Hamrin, Erbil, Rowanduz, Amadia, Zakho and Billeh; while E (East) includes Suleimania, Kirkuk, Penjwin and Choarta.

This method of listing was thought necessary, as the status of many birds is not as yet determined in 'Iraq, and convenient, as ornithologists can see at a glance whether a record they have is outside the known temporal distribution. First dates in the notes refer to the first dates known to the authors. The gardens mentioned in the text are the 'bustan' (basatin) which are really orchards of mixed fruit trees planted with protective screens of taller Eucalyptus, often in semi-desert where they form a refuge for a rich bird fauna.

An account of the different biological regions and habitats has not been attempted in this already overlong paper, but the reader is referred to the section by P.A. Buxton and R.E. Cheesman in Ticehurst's (1921) major paper. In the appendix will be found outline descriptions of some of the areas visited, written by W.E. Williamson and P.I.R. Maclaren.

Acknowledgements.

We wish to express our grateful thanks to the Ministry of Education for permission to publish this work in the Journal of the Iraq Museum of Natural History; to W.B. Alexander, of the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology, Oxford, for patiently supplying advice and information at a time when library facilities were scarce; to Mr. Bashir Allouse, M.Sc., Curator of the Iraq Museum of Natural History who has done much to facilitate the publication, assisted with the proofs and who is responsible for the Arabic names.

Further, for the many happy memories that remain, we extend our thanks to the many Officials, Sheikhs and Aghas whose hospitality and generous help meant so much and to the Iraqi Police who accompanied H.J.M. on many mountain and desert journeys and put up with the many halts for the 'Frangi majnun' to watch birds.

Thanks are also due to secretaries and interpreters for helping with queries other than political and to the drivers who stopped so promptly when birds were sighted.

H.J.M.,

C.B.

Baghdad,

November, 1956.

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Order PODICIPIDIFORMES

Family PODICIPIDAE

1. GREAT CRESTED GREBE.

١ - غطاس

Podiceps cristatus (L).

C & S. 7 records.

			B									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
				K			K				K	

Two on a lake to the East of Hai on 24 May 43; Coot were breeding there and it is likely that these also bred. Boswell saw them on Habbaniyah Lake on 30 March 45; while Maclaren saw two adults and two immature birds by the Hindiyah Barrage on 24 July 43. One on the Tigris at Kut (9 Dec.), 4 on the Shatt-Al-Gass near Suweira (9 Dec.) and Williamson records them from the Shatt-Al-Arab in December.

North.

One on the stream Cham-i-Gizilga at Penjwin (15 Sep. 42) probably wandered from the Blue Lake just over the frontier in Persia, where I counted 40 in 1942, and Maclaren a year later estimated c50. No doubt they breed there as the site is ideal.

A single bird seen on the Tigris below Mosul on 25 Nov. 44.

2. BLACK-NECKED GREBE.

٢ - غطاس اسود الرقبة

Podiceps nigricollis (Brehm).

C & S. 8 records.

									B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
												K

It makes sporadic appearances on the Bund Pools and Clay Pit ponds at Sheikh Omar, Baghdad, between 27 September-15

January, fifteen being the largest number seen at a time. At Kut there is only one record of two on the river on 7 April 44. I did not meet it in the North.

3. LITTLE GREBE.

٣ - غطاس صغير

Podiceps ruficollis (Pallas)

(probably *iraquensis*, Ticehurst).

C & S. 20 records.

B	B	B	B			B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 12

In Baghdad it is found on the pools behind the bund to the N.E. of the city and also on the Brickworks pools at Baghdad West, four pairs being estimated on the former in May 42. The extent of these pools varies very much from year to year. In August larger parties are seen (14 on 20 August 42, 30 on 22 September, c30 on 5 August 43, reaching a maximum of 41 on 8 December 44.) The smaller pools such as the Brickworks pools had been deserted by September. From Kut there are no records, none of the inundations being of sufficient permanency to encourage the bird. It is also recorded from Babylon as numerous in December 45 (PNC), from Hindiyah in ponds and marshes by Maclaren, and 2 from Shahraban on 23 September 43 (PNC). No observations were made on plumage or behaviour.

North. 6 records.

In the North several pairs were found on the Cham-i-Gizilga in the Penjwin valley between 6-14 September 42, and Maclaren saw them there and on L. Marivan over the frontier in Autumn 43. They were encountered by Williamson, one on the Khosar at Mosul 28 December 44, and at Eski Kelek (29th December), and I saw two not far from Aqra on 14 April 45. Whether these northern birds are also *iraquensis* is not certain as no specimens were obtained.

Order PELICANIFORMES

Family PELICANIDAE

4. PELICAN.

٤ - جمع

Pelecanus sp.

As Pelicans were usually only seen from a distance, or if close, from a moving boat, what information we have is not likely to clear up the status of the species occurring in 'Iraq. Those birds seen well in the south were probably *onocrotalus* (white pelican); while Maclaren obtained one *crispus* from a flock of 23 at Mosul in March.

C & S. 26 records.

		B				B			B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		K	K	K				K	K	K	K

First met with at Maqil near Basrah in early October, when there was a diurnal migration of strings and skeins of Pelicans to the north. They start early in the afternoon at 1530 hrs. The strings are usually of c35 birds. No description can do justice to the sedate and easy flight of these birds. Appearing in the distance as straight wisps they keep exact distance and their flight actions are modulated to conform exactly with the air eddies and thermals. One can see them glide up over a bump of hot air, down the hill and then a lazy beat of the wings leads them gliding on to the next thermal. To watch a string of these birds as a whole is fascinating. The change of motion passes as a wave through the string as they meet the changed air condition. Maclaren observing the sequence of flapping and gliding in a string of birds at Mosul concluded that time was taken from the front and that the birds' slow mental reaction produced the metachronal effect, which he compares to the movement of the legs of a centipede. On 4 October 41 at Basrah the skeins came all together and the parties of 35 were massed in bigger groups of 300-500 birds. Parties which preserved their individual group manoeuvres travelled in a very wide V. Further observations of their flock movements would be

In the Penjwin district in September 42, a single juvenile used to visit a pool on the river, and a party of c150 Pelicans roosted for some time near to this pool. In the evening they performed marvellous evolutions low over the camp, gliding followed by a few wing-beats, in such close formation that the wings of adjoining birds clapped together. The younger birds had greyer bill pouches. On 12 September 42 I had a most memorable view of Pelicans on migration, from the summit of the Hazar Maia (7516 ft.). "We saw a cloud of pure white birds some 300 strong in the valley to the north, evidently migrating. The composite flock was made up of 4-5 smaller flocks, the last of which contained stragglers. Extensive use was made of thermals and the birds progressed mainly by soaring. Over Mt Kishadara they went into a close spiral on a thermal, so that the five parties were one above the other. As one group turned in the funnel the sun would catch the wings with a white flash. They climbed to about 12000 ft. and then we lost sight of them".

In the Mosul area we have records of odd birds or of small parties in February and March on the river Zab (at Eski Kelek) and near a stone weir on the Khosar river (at Mosul). Maclaren saw occasional small flocks on the Tigris at Mosul, and obtained a specimen of Dalmatian Pelican (*P. crispus*) on 22 March 43.

Family PHALACROCORACIDAE

5. SOUTHERN CORMORANT.

• - غاق

Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis (Shaw).

C & S. 17 records.

B	B	B								B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		K	K					K	K	K	K

In Central 'Iraq it was seen in small numbers mainly during winter on rivers and pools, though one record (PNC) mentions c300 seen on the Majara Cut on 16 December 45. Many of the birds seen were immature and one I noted as having a white belly and pure white secondaries giving a piebald appearance in flight.

One obtained of c10 seen on the Tigris near Kut on 8 March 44 was a juvenile.

North. 16 records.

								E				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	W	W	W				W		W	W	W	

In E. Kurdistan a single bird visited a pool on the Cham at Penjwin on 5 September 42. They occurred on the river Zab at Kiri N.E. of Amadia in a rocky gorge in August, and during the autumn and winter odd birds and parties frequented the river Tigris at Mosul, but more frequently they were seen on the smaller rivers where they splayed out on to the upland plain (Gomel Su c40 on 22 November 44). They were not seen at all on tour in Kurdistan in May 44. Out of a flock of c25 seen at Eski Kelek on 11 February 45, some had already got the breeding plumage of this subspecies, a pure creamy white crown, nape and flank patches. Maclaren notes that flocks on the Tigris at Mosul had adopted this plumage by mid-March.

Family ANHINGIDAE

6. AFRICAN DARTER.

٦ - وردة

Anhinga rufa (Lacépède and Daudin).

C & S. 2 records.

Being stationed north of the marshes I only met this bird once on a visit to Amara in November 45 when I saw one on a journey down the Buteira canal. It was a brown bird with white belly, neck and tail, with yellowish legs and yellow beak. It perched on the mud bank sunning its wings like a Cormorant. In flight the neck is held rigid, and there is a characteristic 'crick' in the posterior neck. It has a quick wing beat and the tail is fanned and rigid. Boswell saw one flying round an isolated pool near Baghdad in the evening in January 46. He shot it, but it sunk and was not recovered. We have no records from Kut nor from the North and no other observers saw it. It is evidently local and unlike the Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax* Sp.) not a wanderer.

Order ARDEIFORMES

Family ARDEIDAE

7. GOLIATH HERON.

مالك الحزين الجبار - ٧

Ardea goliath (Cretzschmar).

A huge heron seen on the Suweicha lake near Kut on 30 August 43 was believed to be of this species. There were two and they had a fulvous neck and mantle, resembling a Purple Heron, but appearing larger.

8. COMMON HERON.

مالك الحزين السنجابي - ٨

Ardea c. cinerea L.

C & S. 46 records.

B	B		B			B	B	B		B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
K		K	K			K	K	K		K	K

Despite many records they do not add much to the picture of its distribution and status as given by Ticehurst (1922). In the winter of 41-2 odd birds were seen around Baghdad up to 21 April. Then when the Hinaidi floods were visited on 1 July more than 35 were seen together, though a fortnight later with the area dried not one was to be seen. When such floods occur large numbers of fish may find themselves awkwardly placed and, as on this occasion, Pelicans, Storks, Gulls, Terns, Egrets and Spoonbill concentrate on the area and tuck in. The bird becomes more widely distributed in August with migrant parties arriving (c30 at Suweicha lake on 30 August 43). At that time many parties of birds are to be seen on shoals in the Tigris, and on an eleven days motor-boat trip on duty up the Tigris from Kut-Suweira in September, I counted 107 on 140 miles of river. My notes remark that with the mirage effects, one gets accustomed to the Common Heron appearing any shape, any size and any colour. It was abundant on the Suweicha in October (c50 in one area). Small num-

bers were seen January — 23 April at Kut; and was again common on the Tigris shoals in September and October 1945, the numbers perhaps being augmented as the Suweicha was by then dry. In November 45 few were seen at Kut, but they were more numerous further South in Amara Liwa. I saw one at Fao on the Khor Abdulla banks (11 November 45). Maclaren did not notice them after 4 April 43 at Hindiyah, and there were flocks of up to 20 on the Hammar Lake at Basrah throughout May and on 6 June 43. I observed one bird *seated* on a sandbank, and this was not a mirage effect.

North. 25 records.

			W	W						W	W	W
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

E

In the Penjwin valley it was quite frequent in September 1942 in parties of up to 10, and Maclaren also saw them in 1943. In the Mosul area it was frequent in small numbers (—7) from October-March 45, being most abundant in December. Maclaren noted in 1943 bunches of up to 40 by the Tigris, which did not appear to feed much during the day. It is met with sparsely in streams in the mountains (Billeh 5 March 45), Harik nr. Amadia (30 March). It does not linger. Williamson has a note from 26 April 44, but in early May of that year I saw none in a tour of Kurdistan between Zakho-Rowanduz. Its status appears to be that of a winter visitor and Williamson saw and heard one crossing Seramadia (6000 ft.) on 2 September 44 at the time of the Crane migration.

9. PURPLE HERON.

٩ - مالك الحزين الارجواني

Ardea p. purpurea L.

C & S. 26 records.

				B	B			B	B	B	B	B
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
				K	K	K		K	K		K	K

At Baghdad single birds were seen in April and there were more frequent records from August onwards but only of single birds in 1942. PNC notes a small party of 3-5 in September and October 45. It does not appear to be common near Baghdad and during the Hinaidi floods of April-July 42, it was conspicuous by

its absence. At Kut it was recorded in most months from April to December, up to 8 being seen in the Suweicha in June 43. From its behaviour there I suspect it was breeding. There were none on the Suweicha by October. Odd birds are to be seen on shoals in the river. Maclaren reports them as frequent in the marshes and willow beds at Hindiyah in April and August. On 10 August he saw an immature bird gasping in the heat of late afternoon with the bill open and throat throbbing. Outside records include a single bird at Zubair flying S.W. on 25 September 43 (Maclaren), 8 adults and juveniles at Shahraban on 2 and 23 September 45 (PNC).

North. 7 records.

From 4-11 September 42 a party of 11 birds settled in the valley at Penjwin. They came in one evening circling high at 4000 ft. above ground level, explored the valley and then came to rest in some willows by the river where they stayed a few days. Maclaren saw one in these willows the next autumn. None were seen in Kurdistan in May 44, nor in the Amadia district between July-September. They re-appeared in the Mosul district in April, with one on the wooded Rubar Dohuk on 8th April, one at Surana nr. Billeh (25th April), and Williamson saw one on the Khosar at Mosul the year before on 23 April 44. In the North it is evidently a passage migrant.

10. REEF HERON.

١٠ - مالك العزین البحری

Egretta schistacea.

(probably *asha*, Sykes.)

They were frequent on the Khor Abdulla mud banks at Fao on 11 November 45. The blue dimorph was seen frequently, and the white form only once. The white dimorph had greenish legs and a dull orange bill. They feed singly in a crouching attitude like *Egretta garzetta*. In flight they look short birds like Night Herons (*Nycticorax*). These mud banks are inhabited by huge numbers of Mud-skipper fish and by fields of a type of fiddler-crab.

11. LITTLE EGRET.

١١ - مالك الحزين الابيض الصغير

Egretta garzetta (L).**C & S.** 36 records.

B			B			B		B	B	B	B	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K				K	K	K		K	

The number of winter records materially alters the provisional status outlined in Ticehurst (1922). Around Baghdad there are no records from May-June, but a few were on the Hinaidi floods on 1 July and there are records of some 15 on September (PNC) and thereafter small numbers through the winter till 14 January 46. Again a gap of two months and then a record of their being frequent on the Hinaidi floods on 23 April 42. Gent saw them south of Hillah on 5 April 43, and Maclaren says they are sparse throughout April at Hindiyah.

At Kut I have no records from May-July with a single bird on 27 August and then small numbers through September on the river and on the Suweicha. On this lake they were abundant towards the end of October. As with the Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) there are no records for November, but between 8-12 November they were seen on the Buteira canal (Amara liwa), at Qurnah, and found to be abundant on the Shatt-Al-Arab. Parties of up to 26 were seen, and there were roosting flights up river at Basrah; while Williamson records several at Khamisiyah (15 December 45). A few appeared on the Suweicha and Tigris in December 42 and were first seen in spring on a lonely stream at Ziliab nr. the Persian frontier (8 April 44). Small numbers moved through Kut until 24 April. They were seen outside these areas at Shammiyah (7 October) and on 2 and 23 September 45 at Shahraban (PNC).

North. 12 records.

In the Penjwin valley in East Kurdistan they were a common passage migrant from 5-19 September, on one day parties of 25, 35 and 50 being seen. When such a party lands, a few land first, the main bulk of the flock settle simultaneously and the last few glide round the settled party before landing. In all a most graceful procedure to watch. In the Mosul area Williamson saw them on 15, 22 and 24 December 44, and Maclaren records them in December, January and March in 1943, and Williamson has records for

9 and 23 April, while I saw two on the Great Zab on 27 October at Quwair. Birds on the Suweicha at Kut in October had blue-grey legs, and beaks blue-grey with darker tip, appearing slightly decurved. Feet were green.

12. LARGE EGRET or GREAT WHITE HERON.

Egretta a. alba (L).

١٢ - مالك الحزين الابيض الكبير

C & S. 17 records.

B	B	B							B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
									K	K	K

It occurs locally as a winter visitor in small numbers. In November and December 41; one could usually be seen near Deltawah (Khalis), while in December 45 one or two were seen regularly on the Washash drain at Baghdad. The PNC bulletin records the arrival of 22 on the Washash on 19 October 45. They glided round in a flock in the bright sunshine, with their long legs apart and most of them had their beaks open. They settled in tree tops near the Royal Palace, but were very wary and did not stay long. (Arderne, Nunnam, Boyes and Jackson). This is the largest flock recorded in 'Iraq and it is not usual for this species to settle in trees. Gubbins saw c8 near Shithatha in February 42.

At Kut it was first seen on the Suweicha on 30 August 43, where it was most frequently seen and thereafter until December when a solitary bird visited an inundation near the town (9 December 43). It is evidently a winter visitor, but the presence of odd birds on the Tigris in November from Ali Gharbi to Abadan on the Shatt-Al-Arab points to it favouring the southern marshes.

North. 11 records.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	W	W	W	W						W	W

In the Mosul area in the North it is equally widespread in small numbers (—5) from 5 November — 5 May. It was not seen in the Penjwin valley in September. Localities for records include Mosul: R. Khosar, gravelly banks of Tigris, Gomel Su, Simel, Baqaq Su, nr. Aqra, and also from Alton Kopru. In flight the chest looks beaked as in a Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) and it has a curious snake like movement of the neck when walking. Birds seen in winter had the bill yellow.

13. SQUACCO HERON.

١٣ - واق ابيض صغير

Ardeola ralloides (Scopoli).

C & S. 20 records.

				B	B			B	B						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
				K				K	K						

Our records throw no further light on its status. It was apparently a passage migrant, but there are more records from April and May (3 April-11 May) than for the autumn at Baghdad. A single bird was seen on the Hinaidi floods on 1 July 42. At Kut it was also seen in small numbers in April (7th-8th), though not in May, and some seven seen on 15 April were flying North steadily in a V-formation at Kut in the evening. There are more autumn records than at Baghdad. c12 on the Suweicha (30 August 43) and several were seen on the Tigris between Kut — Suweira in early September. Outside my areas, I saw one at Diwaniyah on 9 October 42. During the first week of June 43 I saw it in large numbers on a river trip down the Tigris from Kut-Basrah, mainly below Amara. As these birds did not come upstream on migration it seems reasonable that they were part of the breeding population of S. Iraq. PNC records a few from Shahraban on 2nd and 23rd September 45; while Maclaren writing of Hindiyah says: Birds appeared suddenly on 10 April 43, and were sparse until 2 May. On 10 August 12 were seen and thereafter it was numerous.

North.

In Kurdistan it was frequent as a passage migrant between 6-19 September 42 on the river pools in the Penjwin valley, and though I saw none in Mosul from August-April, I have a record of four on the R. Khosar at Mosul on 5 May 44.

Birds observed in Baghdad in April had the bill grey with a black tip. They were nervous birds always taking to the air and settling down a few yards away or across the pool. When a Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) came over they all took wing, changing from inconspicuous brownish 'reeds' to surprisingly white birds in flight. When feeding they move forward in a crouched position and then make a sudden dab. The Penjwin birds in September had pale green irides and I noted the legs and loreal region as green (not yellow green).

14. BUFF-BACKED HERON or CATTLE EGRET. ابو قردان ١٤

Ardeola i. ibis (L).

Only three records. One on the Washash Drain at Baghdad on 21 April 42. Two near Hai on 7 May 43 on the Hor Burrioutheya, and a party of nine roosting in willow trees by a river at Qal'at Chulan (2750 ft.) in the Choarta district of Kurdistan in August 45. The Baghdad bird was far less wary than some Squacco Herons (*Ardeola ralloides*) and the bills and legs were a yellowish pink. The records suggest passage migrants, though a few non-breeders may stay through the summer.

15. NIGHT HERON.

غراب الليل ١٥

Nycticorax n. nycticorax (L).

C & S. 23 records.

					B	B	B							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
		K	K	K			K	K	K	K				

Three odd birds reported from Baghdad in June, July and August may have belonged to local breeding colonies (cf. Allouse 1953). In Kut there is a colony at Husseiniyah in the orchards at which twenty birds were counted in mid-November 45, and parties of 5-15 birds on migration are frequent on the Tigris in April and May; or flying steadily North over crops, as several parties were seen to do between 20-25 May 43. East of Hai. In August and September they are also frequent on the river and travelling by motor boat up stream from 2-11 September I counted 46 birds, with 45 more juveniles, between Kut-Suweira, on shoals in the river. A migrant party of 15 was watched making its landfall at Kut on 17 April 43. They circled round for some time and then came down on a mud creek among tamarisk. In flight the pale wings contrast with the darker backs in the adult birds. On the ground they crouch, leaning slightly forward and tip-toe about the mud in the most conspiratorial manner. They sleep on one leg. The call was a soft crow-like croak, not unlike that of a Roller.

North. 4 records.

Maclaren disturbed one roosting by day in willows at Penjwin

in the Autumn of 43. I saw none there in 42. I put one up from willows, and apparently from some kind of old nest, in the Gomel valley south of Aqrah (15 April 45). Williamson put them up on several seasons from some willows at Shinnaf on the Great Zab (20 October 44), and saw one on the same river at Eski Kelek (29 December 44). None others were met with in the Mosul area, and if they are common as Ticehurst (1926) says, they may have a local distribution.

The roosting association with Willows (*Salix spp*) seems fairly constant.

16. LITTLE BITTERN.

واق صغير - ١٦

Ixobrychus m. minutus (L).

C & S. 2 records.

PNC notes one on the Bund Pools at Baghdad on 25 March 45. Maclaren saw a few after 22 April 43 at Hindiyah. He remarks that they preferred the willow-brakes to the more open marshes.

North. 2 certain records.

One was flushed from herbage near the Jisr Bulbul on the Great Zab in the Seramadia region on 31 August 44, and Vosper saw a pair feeding in a flooded wadi near the Tigris at Qaiyarah on 9 May 43. Maclaren flushed a bird from willows by the Penwin stream in Autumn 43, which may have been an immature bird.

17. BITTERN.

واق - ١٧

Botaurus stellaris (L).

C & S.

One shot at Baghdad in November 41, PNC records two and 1 seen at Hawijah on 4 April and at Habbaniyah on 20 January respectively. Maclaren saw one on the 10th and 20th April 43 at Hindiyah. Boswell recorded one at Fellujah on 25 April 47. One shot near Kirkuk and sent me by Col. W. A. Lyon accidentally found its way to the table of the A.P.A. mess in Mosul, and a brother officer who up to the moment of identification had been enjoying it, hurriedly left the table, with counter-ornithological mutterings.

Family CICONIIDAE

18. WHITE STORK.

١٨ - لقلق

Ciconia c. ciconia (L).**C & S.** 44 records.

B	B		B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	K	K	K					K	K	K	K

We have little to add to the full account of its status in Ticehurst (1922). It was most numerous on the Hinaidi flood waters outside Baghdad in July 42 when over 300 were counted feeding on the stranded fish; and in April 44 I found it breeding at Jassan on the Kut-Bedrah road. They sometimes choose telegraph poles as sites for their nests, such a nest with the parents aboard presenting a somewhat quaint spectacle. One observer writes in the PNC bulletin that when travelling from Damascus to Baghdad in June, he saw White Storks feeding on locusts. One watched taking off at Marqil walked up on to a bank, flapped its wings and jumped off, bounced on its legs again, and then took off. When circling, Black Kites were noted to keep above them. These two birds often associated, especially near garbage heaps. In strong wind feeding birds face the same way into the wind. The bill rattling was noticeable owing to the large numbers of birds at the Hinaidi floods (cit. sup), and birds which were most numerous at Kut in March were rattling and wheezing in the irrigated fields where they were feeding (24 March 44). On the Shatt-Al-Arab they are numerous on the mud in November, two parties of 28 being noted between Fao-Basrah.

North. 15 records.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	W	W	W	W							

In the Mosul-Erbil area it is a bird of the rolling upland plains at the foot of the Taurus ranges, nesting in most villages. My furthest North breeding record is from Bersivi (2000 ft.) in the Zakho valley; but I have not seen it at any time north of Dohuk or near Amadia, in the Zibar valleys or further north. The 2000 ft. contour seems at a glance to limit its northward distribution. It is rather curious that all the records are from

the spring from February (14th) — May. I was not in Kurdistan during June or July, but Vosper in his notes says that it was common in May and early June at Qaiyarah (well to the south of Mosul) and that occasional birds crossed the camp in July. He does not state in which direction. From August-January there are no records, and it did not appear in the Penjwin valley during August and September (42). Maclaren found nests in the autumn in thirty foot oak trees at 4300 feet near the Persian border beyond Penjwin, so in the east, height is not itself a barrier. In West Kurdistan the ranges are less tree clad, but one would have expected to see them in the relatively fertile northern valleys between the mountain ranges. Presumably at the end of the breeding season when the Mosul-Erbil plain is very dry, the birds move to the south where irrigation and floods provide better feeding grounds. The first birds seen in 45 were at Eski Kelek on 11 February, and the pair were at their breeding quarters at Aloka on the Rubar Dohuk by 25 February. They nest at Tekrit, Baiji (at least 20 pairs), Wadi Qassab (on telegraph poles), Zakho (4 nests), Bersivi (1 nest), Dohuk, Ain Sifni, Zumar, Mosul. Maclaren noted nests being repaired in Mosul on 10 March 43.

This is a conspicuous and well known bird, and possibly through the good offices of the 'Iraqi Ministry of Education, it might be possible to carry out a nation wide survey by children and students of the migration and movements of Haji Lug-Lug through the country.

A bird ringed as a nestling near Wittichenau in Saxony on 17 June 39 was recovered at Nasiriyah on 8 February 45.

19. BLACK STORK.

لقلق أسود - ١٩

Ciconia nigra (L).

C & S. 1 record.

Boswell saw a single bird with a small party of White Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) feeding on marshy ground near Deltawah (Khalis) on 1 January 43.

North. 2 records.

Migrants pass through the Penjwin valley in September. Twelve circled round a pool on the Penjwin stream, but were too nervous to land (6 September 42). On the 19th September seven were watched in this pool, and looked not much bigger than

Common Herons (*Ardea cinerea*) which were also present. They flew off in a long straggling line (cf. Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*) towards a mountain where they got into a thermal and soared higher. There is a slight downcurve of the neck in flight.

Family PLATALEIDAE

20. SPOONBILL.

٢٠ - ابو ملعقة

Platalea leucorodia.

(probably *major*. Tem. and Schl.).

C & S. 10 records.

My records run from 1 July when c30 were seen on the Hinaidi floods at Baghdad to September and October (22nd) when they were abundant on the Suweicha (100+ counted), and I saw a few on the river Tigris (Kut). PNC records it from Basrah on 27 May 45, and Williamson in that bulletin reports flocks of 15, 20, 25 and c60 from Khamisiyah near Basrah on 15 December 45, which suggests that some are resident. In flight the neck is extended and half curved like a camel's.

North.

Maclaren has the sole record of an immature bird at Mosul on 21 March 43.

21. WHITE IBIS.

٢١ - ابو منجل الابيض

Threskiornis aethiopica (Latham).

None seen at Baghdad nor at Kut on the Suweicha marshes; nor on two trips from Kut to Basrah in June 43 and November 45.

22. HERMIT or RED-CHEEKED IBIS.

٢٢ - ابو منجل الناسك

Geronticus eremita (L).

No observers met with this bird, but Maj. C.B. Edmonds. C.B.E., had heard of a colony breeding in a cliff 30 miles out from the river W. of Abu Kemal in Political Syria.

earliest date was 25 August 43 when birds appeared on the Tigris. It was most abundant in the first half of April, and last seen on 9 May 43 near Hai on flood spills for 'daim' or unirrigated crops. No evidence of breeding.

North. 17 records.

								E				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	W	W	W						W	W	W	

Records from W. Kurdistan show it as first appearing in October and being frequent though never in large numbers until 23 March 45. Williamson saw 24 on migration near Mosul on 26 April 44. It is of interest that from 5-15 May in an extensive tour it was not seen. Recorded from Khosar river, Gomel Su, Great Zab, and on Tigris, on which river Maclaren found them sparse all the winter. At Penjwin in the east they were seen between 1-19 September 42, by which time flocks of 30-40 birds occurred in the valley. They were the duck most likely to figure in evening 'bags'.

27. GARGANEY.

٢٧ - حذف صيفي

Anas querquedula L.

C & S. 18 records.

			B	B	B	B						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K	K					K			

Most were seen on the spring passage, this species like the Shoveler (*Spatula*) often being found on flood spills. One record of 110 proceeding in a long echelon line up river near Aziziyah on 7 September 43 was the only autumn record. At Hindiyah they were the only duck to have returned by 20 September. 43 (Maclaren), and they had lingered there in larger numbers than other ducks till 2 May. At Basrah on the Hammar lake, Maclaren saw five on 6 June. 'Crackling' was first heard on 7 April, at Kut. At Kut they became frequent on passage at the end of March, when ducks as a whole were diminished in numbers with the river in flood. On 7 April some at Kut were paired.

North. 5 records.

Records are also from the spring migration. In 43 Maclaren

saw fair numbers at Mosul after 15th March; the first I saw in 45 were on the Khosar, two on 23 March, with 4 near Aqrah on 14 April, and c20 near Hadhra S.E. of Mosul (16 April 45). Williamson describes them as normally not infrequent at Mosul, with the 44/45 season as an exception.

28. GADWALL.

- ۲۸ بط سماري

Anas strepera L.**C & S.** 26 records.

B	B	B	B	B			B			B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			K	K				K	K		

Around Baghdad it was seen regularly from November to 5 May 42, being more numerous after the New Year and reappearing on 18 August. Unlike the Mallard with which it is often seen on the Tigris, it is a regular visitor to the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar Baghdad. In Kut liwa it was first seen in 1943 on 25 August after which it was the only common duck. It was not recorded after 8 September until March and April, with a last date on 15 April 44. This suggests that it is a passage migrant in this area. There is no great frequency of sheltered pools at Kut, but a few may stay on the river. Outside Baghdad it is recorded as abundant at Hawijah on 4 April 45. It is of course still abundant in winter in S. Iraq.

North.

I have only one record for Kurdistan from the Blue Lake at Mehran which is just over the Persian border (7 September 42). Williamson however described it as normally not infrequent in the Mosul area, though scarcer in the winter 44/45, for which season he has records from November and February from the Gomel Su and from the Great Zab river. He comments that it is usually commoner at the beginning and end of the season. Generally the North is not such a paradise for duck as the South with its extensive marshes and floodspills; and no doubt many birds pass through the Northern area.

Order ANSERIFORMES

Family ANATIDAE

25. MALLARD.

۲۵ - خضری

Anas p. platyrhynchos L.

C & S. 25 records.

B	B	B		B							B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		K	K					K	K	K	K

At Baghdad this was typically a duck of the open river especially near an island, large flocks being usually found near Karadah in January and ensuing months, last recorded on 24 March (PNC).

There are no records from the Bund Pools, the great haunt of waders at Sheikh Omar to the N.E. of the city of Baghdad, but a few visit such pools as remain in Summer. It is also found in the wild flooded area near Deltawah (Khalis) in moderate numbers. On the Tigris between Kut and Suweira it appears in September and by December becomes the dominant duck on the river. In the mainstream by the ox-bow lake above Suweira c1500 were estimated, further downstream near the islands opposite Husseiniyah and Umm Al Binni up to 500 have been counted. They also occur on the Suweicha lake, and return from there to the river in the evening in parties of fifteen to thirty birds. With the river in flood in March duck become scarce on the river at Kut. A last straggler was seen on 7 April. Maclaren records them as not very abundant at Hindiyah on the Euphrates and saw his last on 6 April 43. We have no evidence of their breeding. Williamson reports them from the Basrah area last on 15 April 45. There are outside records for Shammiyah (October), on the Shatt-Al-Arab between Abadan — Fao (10 November) and PNC records it as abundant at Hawijah on 4 April.

23. GLOSSY IBIS.

٢٣ - ابو منجل الاسود

Plegadis f. falcinellus (L).**C & S.**

Most of my records are from Kut where they were seen from 4 May — 30 August. When engaged on crop-estimation around Hai in May I twice saw flocks of 40-50 on the move. In July and early August there was a regular evening flight of birds (14 counted) over Kut. When they reached the Tigris they came down and flew very low just above the water with a steady, even series of beats interspersed with gliding. Some dipped their beaks into the water. None were seen on the Suweicha after the end of August. PNC reports them from Shahraban on 19 August and 2 September, but gone on the 23rd September. Maclaren saw a single bird at Hindiyah on 10 April 43; and Boswell saw 6 near the Fellujah Bridge on 25 April 47.

K K K K

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

I have no winter records and in the areas I visited it certainly seems to be a passage migrant which may breed in the marshes. A few odd birds got up out of the Suweicha marsh in mid June 43, and it may have bred there.

North.

In Kurdistan four passed through the Penjwin valley on 5 September 42.

Order PHOENICOPTERIFORMES

Family PHOENICOPTERIDAE

24. FLAMINGO.

٢٤ - نعام

Phoenicopterus antiquorum Temminck.

C & S. 15 records.

			K			K		K	K	K	K
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

My own records refer to Kut. Gubbins saw two by a pool at Shithatha, west of Kerbela on 13 February 42. PNC records them as abundant at Hawijah (4 April 45), and present at Khan Nuqta (30 March 45).

Williamson records fifteen from Khamisiyah in Basrah Liwa (15 December 45) and Maclaren saw a single bird in May on the Hammar Lake. Boswell saw about fifty, feeding in a shallow gheel at Abu Jisr to the south of the Baqubah-Khanaqin road in February and March 44 and one at Fallujah on 4 May 47. The Kut records are generally from the vicinity of the Suweicha Lake, now drained (1946). Quite large flocks of up to c300 used to occur on this water. Some doubt was at first expressed when Col. W.A.T. Pennant. R.E. told us of a bird taking off from a swimming position; but he kept a further look out and confirmed their ability to do so (7 July 43). My notes on flight run: "About the middle of the neck there is a rhythmical wobble which has its counterpart in a serpentine wobble in the extended legs". The only other bird in which I have noted this neck wobble was a Darter (*Anhinga rufus*). Before taking off to fly, they run along on tip-toes. Juveniles may be seen on the Tigris occasionally (3 on 7 September 43 near Aziziyah); and one which accidentally found its way into a 'bag' had wing 400 mm., and the tarsus 240 mm. We have no records from the North.

29. WIGEON.

٢٩ - صوای

Anas penelope L.**C & S.** 10 records.

B	B											B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K	K								

I have few records and would not have called it a very common duck. My own records from Baghdad are all from the river. They were frequent near Karradah in January and at Deltawah (Khalis) outside Baghdad on 8 December 43, where they were the dominant duck. In Kut it was common on the river and on flood spills in March 44 and I last saw it on the Suweicha on 21 April 44. It is reported as abundant at Hawijah on 4 April 45 (PNC) and at Khamisiyah on 14 December 45 (Williamson). In the North it occurred on the Khosar stream at Mosul (24-30 December 44). Williamson reports it as "normally common on suitable stretches of rivers and streams with a preference for the latter, in the Mosul area. They arrive late and leave earlier than most other duck". Maclaren saw a small flock at Mosul on 4 December 43.

30. PINTAIL.

٣٠ - بلبول ، بط ابری الذنب

Anas acuta L.**C & S.** 20 records.

B	B	B										B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K	K	K				K	K	K	

Seen in small numbers in the winter months being locally common. c20 drakes were noted on the Tigris at Baghdad (15 February 42). At Kut they were seen in October and then not again until March and April; c70 both sexes at Kut 10 April 43. Late dates from Kut were 21 April 44 on the Suweicha lake and 15 migrating over the desert East of Hai on 21 May 43. Maclaren records birds on the Hammar Lake near Basrah on 23 and 26 May and 6 June 43. They frequent the river and shallow inundations. Recorded at Hawijah on 4 April 45 (PNC) and a bird with a Moscow ring was shot 10 miles West of Khanaqin on 21 January 45 (PNC).

North. 3 records.

One in eclipse on a pool on the river at Penjwin (15 September 42), and two pairs on the Khosar at Mosul (23 March 42) are my only records. Maclaren only saw them at Mosul in 43 after 15 March. Evidently to the north they are mainly passage migrants.

31. MARBLED DUCK.

بط معرق - ٣١

Anas angustirostris Ménétriès.

C & S. 24 records.

B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K	K			K	K	K			

On the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar and the river at Baghdad it is present in small numbers of stragglers in January, February and March. A flock of 8 was seen on 21 April 42 and thereafter throughout the summer. It is likely that they breed near Hinaidi. They are seen on the Bund Pools in August, and one was watched on 27 September 42. PNC records a duck with six ducklings on 29 May 44. At Kut it is essentially a summer resident, appearing in April and breeding in dykes and irrigation canals among corn crops in the Hai district in May, and also was seen on the Suweicha lake from June — October (16 June 43. c100). I do not know where they go to in November and December, apparently not to Khamisiyah (Basrah) where it was not noted among other duck (Williamson). It is the common breeding duck of S. Iraq. There are no records from the North. Its field characters are light brown mottled appearance, with a pale coronal stripe and a sepia brown band through and above the eye. It has no striking features in flight, which is heavy. The bill is grey black.

32. SHOVELER.

٣٢ - ابو مجرف ، ابو عروج

Spatula clypeata (L).

C & S. 39 records.

B	B	B	B					B	B		B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
		K	K	K	K			K		K	K	

It is a common duck, often abundant, and there are many records. An early arrival was seen at Baghdad (18 August 42) and

a late leaver on (23 April 42); Kut and Hai (24 May 43). With Common Pochard (*Aythya ferina*) and Teal (*Anas crecca*) it was the dominant duck on the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar Baghdad on 1 January 44, and there were c100 on the Shatt-Al-Gass near Suweira on 10 December 43. Many were in eclipse on 20 November 41, and one out of eclipse on (29 November 41). They were paired by 8 March 44 (Kut). It is met with more often on flood spills than on the river, and was the dominant duck on the Suweicha on 21 April 44, by then being very abundant. In the South at Khamisiyah it is noted as being after Teal the commonest duck (Williamson: 14 December 45); while Maclaren records 20 on the Hammar Lake on 6 June 43, which fits in with his other late migrant dates for this area. At Hindiyah he found it sparse after mid-April and last recorded it on 2 May 43; while Boswell saw c2 pairs on the Bund pools at Baghdad on 5 May 44.

North. 3 records.

Williamson comments that it is usually seen in numbers, but that in 1944/45 he did not come on it. Maclaren in 1943 saw fair numbers after 15 March at Mosul. I saw 5 on the Gomel Su on 5 November, and two females on a pool on the river at Penjwin on 6 September 42. To the North it is evidently primarily a passage migrant.

33. RED-CRESTED POCHARD.

٣٣ - ونس - ، بط احمر متوج

Netta rufina (Pallas).

C & S. 6 records.

Few records, and we would not call it fairly common so far as Baghdad and Kut liwas are concerned. Solitary males shot at Baghdad and Deltawah (Khalis) in December, five males on the Tigris at Baghdad on 15 February 42; a male shot by Boswell at Abu Jisr near Baqubah on 24 February 45, a pair seen at Kut on migration on 7 April 44, and a drake shot by Williamson on the Shatt-Al-Arab in December 45, complete the total records. It was not seen in the north.

34. SCAUP-DUCK.

٣٤ - زرقاوی اسود الرأس

Aythya m. marila (L).

There are two records. I saw a drake and three duck at Baghdad on the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar on 8 January 42. Here

it was distant 340 miles from the sea at Basrah and 400 miles from the Caspian. Maclaren saw a solitary female at a spring 30 miles East of Suleimaniya in the North East. The presence of odd birds of such species as this, Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) and Sanderling (*Crocethia alba*) is interesting, as they are typically marine in their winter quarters; perhaps they get caught up in the migration streams of other species.

35. TUFTED DUCK.

بط ابو خصلة - ٣٥

Aythya fuligula (L).

C & S. 12 records.

B	B	B					B			B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
										K	

Records of small numbers only (—7) from Baghdad for winter months November-March. At Kut I have one record only of birds in a composite duck flock on the Tigris on 20 November 45. Their scarcity at Kut may be due to the absence of any permanent pools in the area. Further downstream they were seen near Ali Gharbi (c50 on 7 November 45), and one drake on the Shatt-Al-Arab between Abadan — Fao (10 November 45). Williamson reports it as frequent at Khamisiyah (14 December 45), while Maclaren found 4 females on the Hammar Lake on 6 June, a late date.

North. 2 records.

I saw a solitary bird on the Khosar at Mosul on 23 March and Maclaren records fair numbers on the Tigris after 15 March in 43. Williamson notes it as usually seen in numbers apart from 1944-45.

36. COMMON POCHARD.

حمامى ، بط احمر - ٣٦

Aythya ferina (L).

C & S. 18 records.

B	B	B	B					B		B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			K						K	K	

At Baghdad a few were seen in November, Williamson counted 34 on 15 December 44, but in January and February 42 it became more abundant on the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar, and

thereafter less frequent. It was always more frequent than the Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) at Baghdad. Outside Baghdad at Deltawah (Khalis) c100 were seen on 28 December 41. Generally there was a preponderance of malés. In two years at Kut I only had one record, for March; but in 1945 it appeared on the river in October and November. PNC has records from Hawijah (4 April 45), and Williamson writing in their journal mentions it as less frequent than the Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) or Gadwall (*A. strepera*) at Khamisiyah in Basrah liwa. It does not linger and Maclaren does not record it from Hindiyah between April — September. My dates run from 27 September — 24 April.

North. 5 records.

For the Mosul area I have records from 27 October 44 (c60 at Quwair), on the Great Zab at Eski Kelek and Shinnaf (Williamson) in February and from the Khosar 12 on 23 March 45. Williamson says that it is normally frequent in the Mosul area, and Maclaren noted a few isolated birds at Mosul through the winter with an increase in numbers after mid-March.

٣٧ - بط ابيض العين

37. FERRUGINOUS DUCK or WHITE — EYED POCHARD.

Aythya n. nyroca (Güldenstädt).

Five records in November and January from Bund Pools at Baghdad 29 November 41, a male 8 January 42, 1 January 44, 20 January 45 ten (PNC), and from Deltawah (Khalis) (c5, 20 November 41). One specimen was obtained. It was not seen elsewhere.

38. RED-BREASTED MERGANSER.

٣٨ - بلقشه حمراء الصدر

Mergus serrator L.

A female, one of two birds, was shot near Baghdad from a pool, on 28 January 42 by Boswell, and Williamson saw a drake shot near Mosul.

39. GOOSANDER.

٣٩ - بلقشه سوداء الرأس

Mergus merganser L.

Maclaren saw 4 females at Dohuk in Kurdistan on 27 March 43. We never met with it.

40. SMEW.

٤٠ - بلقشة بيضاء

Mergus albellus L.

C & S. 7 records.

B B B

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

K

K

This is the Sawbill most likely to be met with. Odd birds are recorded from bags from January-March 42, and one 9 December 42, I saw four drakes near the Gharraf regulator at Kut. Two 'red-heads' on a pool at Baghdad were timed diving and did three dives of 42 seconds. This is a very long dive for this species which the Handbook states rarely exceeds 15 seconds. Perhaps it is correlated with the turbidity of the water mentioned by Ticehurst in his notes on this species (1922). Williamson obtained a duck near Basrah in December 45.

North. 3 records.

A female was shot on the Khosar at Mosul (28 January 45) with wing only 175 mm., and Maclaren noted single birds and pairs on the Tigris at Mosul throughout the winter.

41. COMMON SHELD-DUCK.

٤١ - شهرمان

Tadorna tadorna (L).

C & S. 8 records.

B

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

K K

K

This is certainly not a very common duck. There is one record from Baghdad (7 March 42) when one was seen flying up the Tigris. In 1945 Boswell saw c50 at Abu Jisr on the road out from Baqubah and some on 16th March; while near Hillah he saw c50 on 2 March 45. At Kut small parties up to eight were seen on the Suweicha lake in April and again on 15 October, and a single bird on the Tigris (8 March 44). One was shot at Khamisiyah near Basrah (15 December 45. PNC) and Maclaren saw a few pairs on the Hammar Lake on 23 May 43, but none thereafter. There are no records from Kurdistan.

42. RUDDY SHELD-DUCK.

٤٢ - ابو فرزة ، شهرمان احمر

Casarca ferruginea (Pallas).**C & S.** 26 records.

B	B		B							B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K		K		K	K	K	K	K	K

At Baghdad it was common on fields especially wet fields in winter months in flocks of up to 100. It was last seen in flock on 23 April 42. At Kut they reappeared on sand spits on the Tigris on 25 August and increased in numbers until November when maximum numbers were seen e.g. c8-900 near the Khor Es Suweicha 25 December 43. In the first half of November they frequent the freshly sown cornland when first under irrigation. It was noted that by 21st February such large parties had broken up. In 1945 after the draining of Suweicha they were not so numerous. I met a pair at Wasit, east of Hai, on the old Dijeila watercourse on 9 May 43 and suspect that they may breed nearby. I also found that the Custodian of the Archaeological buildings there ate them, an unusual achievement. Outside records include 9 between Sheikh Sa'ad and Musandaq (7 November 45) a pair near Samarrah (2 May 44), on the Hawijah (4 April 45), and at Shahraban (2 September 45).

They were noted feeding and flying with Pin-tailed Sandgrouse (*Pterocles alchata*). They are often found on desert pools, and they take to the fields when disturbed. Of the flocks at Suweicha I have the note "flight wobbling in long wedges, and the call like baying dogs, sounding like 'tora'." One specimen, a female, was obtained and had the rump closely speckled a sandy grey on black W. 330, T. 55, B. 43, Tail 105.

North. 7 records.

In the North they are primarily birds of the Mosul plain, and are commoner south of that city, and not seen in the Kurdish hills. Vosper records two pairs near Qaiyarah in May and early June, Williamson saw them on the Gomel Su on 20 October 44 (2), and two at Eski Kelek on 12 December 44. He remarks that as with other duck, 1944 saw less duck than hithertofore. He records 9 from the Tauq district near Kirkuk, Maclaren notes them as sparse along the river at Mosul in Winter 43, and generally paired. I saw pairs at Zumar and Ain Nufut in April 45.

Order FALCONIFORMES

Family AEGYPTIDAE

45. EGYPTIAN VULTURE.

رخمة - ٤٥

Neophron p. perenopterus (L).**C & S.** 17 records.

B		B	B	B	B	B	B			B	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		K	K	K							

That the appearances and disappearances of this bird are sporadic are evident from the following chain of observations made at the Bund pools at Sheikh Omar, Baghdad North where there is ample carrion and refuse, the region being as it were the head-quarters of Kites and Vultures in the district.

18 April 42. 8. 5 May 44.

11 May 42. nil.

— June 42. a party.

26 July 42. 79 in various plumages.

19 August 42. nil. (5 August 45 nil) (7 August 45 nil).

20 August 42. 1.

25 August 42. 12, some immature.

27 September 42. nil (18 September 43 nil).

23 December 45. 2.

4 January 46. 2.

With the food supply being constant it should be possible to get some measure of its movements by regular counts at these pools over some years. It appears to be a relatively frequent summer visitor to Baghdad, the parties, possibly of non-breeding and immature birds taking the place of the Black Kites on the offal heaps and in the blood pools. On the 20th August 42, their place had been taken by the Pied Crows (*Corvus cornix capellanus*). The flock of 79 birds on 26 July appears to be unusually large.

At Kut from October 42 — March 44 the only birds seen were one on the Dijeila (10 May 43), 3 soaring over Husseinayah (27 March 44), and 3 adults and 3 juveniles over a barren nullah in the foothills of the Pusht-i-kuh at Tel Ziliab (8 April 43), one

Kut (10 April 44) and one Shudheif (12 April 44). Its status at Kut is that of a scarce wanderer from the Persian foothills, where it may breed.

North. 38 records.

W W W W W W W
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
 E E E

In Eastern Kurdistan they appeared to be resident at Penjwin in August and September 42 and at Choarta in August 45. From the Rowanduz area Vosper reports them as abundant while he was there (26 July-9 August 43). Maclaren also found them common in the Penjwin valley (autumn 43), and abundant at Suleimaniya and at Kirkuk around garbage heaps. In western Kurdistan they were definitely absent in the autumn and winter from 28 September (44) — 25 March 45, when the first were seen on the Mosul-Zakho road. Maclaren saw none at Mosul until 28 March 43, when a single adult appeared. From then onwards occasional birds were seen up to 27 April near Dohuk, Tel Kotchek and the Spilik pass, but they were never numerous. In May 44, they were more numerous, being met throughout the plains and mountains, the first being encountered at Ain Dibbis on the Jebel Hamrin on 5 May.

Vosper reports from Qaiyarah that they decreased in numbers from May-July. On 9th May there were more than 30 over the camp and by the end of June and in July, there seemed to be a steady eight or so in the district, most of which were in adult plumage. They are most frequently seen wherever there are green strips of vegetation and streams in the arid mountains. Birds at Penjwin would either perch on the stony slopes of hills or soar around. When they fly over there is a general alarm among small birds. Though they are said to be timid, I noted that they kept Ravens off a carcass at Penjwin, and with Black Kites they chased Ravens in the air, at Choarta. At Seramadia there were odd birds in July, August and September up to the 8th. Returning from Amadia to Mosul, they were only seen round refuse at Dohuk on 13 September, and were last recorded on 22 September between Kirkuk-Erbil in the plain. In the North, then, the birds appear to be summer residents in the mountains, leaving the hills in winter. It is probable that they breed widely; and Boswell had reports of a nest being found near Sermadia in July 43.

46. GRIFFON VULTURE.

٤٦ - نسر

Gyps f. fulvus (Hablizl).**C & S.** 5 records.

	B		B										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
		K		K								K	

Not frequent in the plain, only one being seen in four years over Baghdad on 30 March 43, while a corpse was found at the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar on 1 June 44. In the Kut district which is near enough to the Persian foothills for birds to come over, parties were only seen twice: on 23 February 44 on the Bedrah road and 9 near Dibuni on 5 December 45. Two were seen on a day's visit to Tel Ziliab beyond Bedrah on 9 April in these foothills.

North. 37 records.

	W	W	W	W	W			W	W	W	W		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
					F			E	E				

In the Penjwin district in September, pairs were found frequenting the summits of two mountains (c5500 ft.), on one of which the birds were seen at their roosting place. They were also seen 38 miles to the south-west at Choarta in August 45. One carcase in the Penjwin valley produced a gathering of 33 of these large birds. When circling in a thermal, they fly very low over one's head, or disappear into the blue on the top of their circuit, reminding one as did Black Kites, of great *Paramoecia* drifting sideways. Lammergeiers do not associate with them. From textbook descriptions I was expecting the head to look more naked. The white ruff concealing it and close to the white hairs make it appear feathered in flight. Around a Goat's head a single Griffon appeared much larger than the Egyptian Vultures and Ravens. Maclaren also saw up to 30 in the Penjwin valley in Autumn 43, and noted them in the Suleimaniya foothills.

In the Mosul and West Kurdistan areas they were recorded in most of the months when observations were made, from the Zakho Pass, Sinat, Zawita, Pirman, Rowanduz Gorge, Ser Amadia, Bavin, Mosul, Simel and Eski Kelek.

Unlike the raptors and no doubt owing to their wide diurnal range of feeding, they stay up in the mountains during the winter,

migrans), and the Piris Dagh pair had a habit of picking up objects and letting them drop. I suspect the birds in the Zakho mountains were breeding. At no time were they seen away from the mountains, and they never associated with the Griffon Vultures when the latter sought out carrion. Birds seen in March had a good deal of black on the throat.

Family FALCONIDAE

49. GOLDEN EAGLE. عقاب ذهبية - ٤٩

Aquila chrysaetos (L).

North. 11 records.

	W	W						W	W	W	W	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
								E	E			

With one exception all records were from the Kurdish mountains where it very probably breeds. Golden Eagles were twice seen at Penjwin in East Kurdistan. A pair was seen to inhabit a certain crag for two years at Seramadia (6800 ft.) in July-September. They were also seen over the Zab gorge at Kiri. Two were seen at the Yezidi shrine of Sheikh 'Adi in October, one on the Sinjar road in November 44 and two and an immature bird in the Berserini Gorge near the Persian frontier in December. Other records are from Geli Spi near Zakho (18 February) and again in the gorge leading to Ser Amadia on 18 March.

50. GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE. عقاب سعفاء كبرى - ٥٠

Aquila clanga Pallas.

C & S. 11 records. One specimen.

	B	B										B
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
				K								K

At first only the 'spotted' immature birds were recorded under this species: later, dark birds with pale rumps and white stripes on wings were included. It is a relatively frequent winter visitor around Baghdad and on the marshes at Deltawah (Khalis) from December-March (28/12 — 20/3), more often being seen near water than the Steppe (*A. rapax orientalis*) or Tawny Eagles (*A.*

rapax raptor). We have seen them quartering a marsh behind Baghdad and settling on sandbanks in the Tigris. At Kut it appears with the majority of raptors from the hills in November and I then have no records until the 23 March. More mature birds, which were presumed to be of this species, appear black at rest, have noticeably heavy 'boots', a pale rump and two long pale wing stripes in flight due to the white tips of wing coverts and of secondaries. The cere was yellow and the bill blue grey. A most remarkable sight on the Buteira canal near Amara in November 45 was of 16 eagles probably of this species coming in to roost in two poplar trees.

North. 5 records.

W W W W

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Several were seen at the Eagle congregation on the Ain Dibbis plateau in May 44. They first appeared at Mosul on 9 February on the Tigris river flats. One was seen near Sharqat (16 April 45) when the Shammar told me that if a falcon sees one he is afraid and will not go for an Houbara Bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata*). At Nimrud (1 March), one was seen stooping at an immature Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). The records suggest that they move further south for the winter and that in the Mosul area they are passage migrants. A smaller eagle seen over the snow-covered Suwara Tuka pass above Dohuk on 21 January 45 might have been a specimen of the Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), but specimens of eagles from the mountains are of course desiderata.

51. TAWNY EAGLE.

عقاب لوع - ٥١

Aquila rapax.

probably *raptor* (Brehm).

C & S. 9 records.

B B

B

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

K

K

Commoner in winter at Baghdad than the Steppe Eagles (*A. rapax orientalis*) which is seen more often at Kut. Pale coffee-coloured eagles with dark primaries were recorded under this species, this coloration being characteristic of immature Tawny Eagles;

and one obtained from three in a tree outside Baghdad on 23 January 42, and prepared as a skin by Boswell and myself now resides in the Museum of the Royal College of Medicine at Baghdad. This bird fitted the descriptions of Tawny Eagle, and details of the plumage are to be found in the appendix.

Field identification of Eagles is unsatisfactory, but in few other countries can there be such opportunities for studying them at close quarters as on the Iraqi plain in winter months. Specimens were obtained but cartridges in this war were very limited indeed and as I had no gun, it required great powers of persuasion to induce a Sheikh to shoot an eagle (and they usually required several shots to kill) when sandgrouse, black partridge and bustard seemed of more immediate and palatable value. On one occasion a Sheikh with whom the writer was driving, slew two eagles from his car and his trusty servant was sent to despatch and to bring them in. The corpses were placed in the boot of the car. However, when home was reached and the boot opened, two very fierce live eagles advanced upon us, so that more cartridges were needed.

Only one bird was seen in the north at Nimrud near Mosul on 27 October 44. As adults are indistinguishable in the field from *A. rapax orientalis* it is likely that many recorded under that heading may have been of this species.

52. STEPPE EAGLE.

عقاب البادية - ٥٢

Aquila rapax.

probably *orientalis* Cabanis.

C & S. 15 records. Two specimens.

										B	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	K							K	K	K	

These records refer to large dark eagles with few other markings, and inevitably may include some *A. r. raptor*, though it is significant that none of the pale coffee coloured *A. r. raptor* immature birds near Baghdad were recorded from Kut. My Kut records start on 11 September and continue to 15 November, after which date no records were made though birds were seen in December 42 and 43. They were the most numerous species of eagle to be seen from a car on the margins of cultivation and would return year after year to certain favoured terrains. A brief description of a specimen obtained at Kut is in the appendix. Some idea of the

Imperial Eagles can be seen on the Mosul plains and on the plateau between that city and the mountains till March (9 March 45, Erbil). During the winter none were met with in the mountains to the north until 5 March when one was seen in a tree at Billeh.

A remarkable concourse of Eagles and other Raptors was met with on 5 May 44 at Ain Dibbis on a plateau bordered on the east by the Jebel Hamrin. Here in the early morning the ground was quite densely sprinkled with groups of Eagles, at a time when they had left the centre and south of Iraq. Imperial (*A. heliaca*), Spotted (*A. clanga*), Tawny (or Steppe) (*A. r. raptor*) or (*A. r. orientalis*) Egyptian Vulture (*N. perenopterus*), Black Kites (*M. migrans*), Large Black Kites (*M. lineatus*), and a Harrier (*Circus* sp.) all being seen in a small area. The only record of other than solitary birds was of two eating a dead dog between Mosul-Eski Kelek in February.

54. BONELLI'S EAGLE.

٥٤ - عقاب بونللي

Hieraaëtus f. fasciatus (Vieillot).

Though we expected to see this species we have no records which can with any certainty be attributed to it. Maclaren, however, reports one on 12 October 43 from near Rutbah.

٥٥ - صرارة ، عقاب الحيات

55. SERPENT EAGLE or SHORT-TOED EAGLE.

Circaëtus gallicus (Gmelin).

C & S. 7 records.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
									K	K	K

This bird which was not recorded in Ticehurst's papers (1922, 1926) is a regular passage migrant in autumn. It was first seen and studied at Penjwin in East Kurdistan from 27 August — 18 September 42 and later recognized as a familiar member of the 'pole-squatting raptors in the Centre and South. In 1943 it was first seen on 19 September when six were recorded between Kut-Baghdad, and it was not recorded that year after 9 October. In 1944 they were seen at the Kut end of the Baghdad road on 17th September and in 1945 on 6 September. Three late migrants were seen between Kut-Na'amaniyah on 12 November 42, and on 9 November 45 one was seen further south between Amara-Qal'at Saleh.

North. 22 records.

			W	W		W	W	W	W			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
						E	E					

In the North, it also appears to be a regular passage migrant in small numbers. In the West around Mosul in August and September it was recorded both from the plateau between Mosul and the mountains and also in the mountains at Seramadia (12 September 44). Boswell saw a bird at Seramadia on 12 July which seems to have been of this species. It is however more numerous on migration on the plateau, 5 being seen on 13 September 44 in a short distance.

Apart from Boswell's records mine run from 14 August until 12 October 44. The first returning birds were seen on 8 April 45 near Dohuk and at Aqra on 14 April. When on tour in the spring of 44 it was noted at the Geli Spi pass above Zakho on 6th and 8th May, while on the 11th May they were seen at Simel, Dohuk and at Sirsing near Amadia. We were unlucky in not getting a specimen, but the bird has very marked field characters. At Penjwin where several birds frequented the valley and appeared to divide up the stream into territories, it was fond of perching on the shingle where close views were obtained. The bird appears larger than a Buzzard (*Buteo*), with the wings too pointed and the tail though fanned like the Buzzard's is relatively longer. It is most likely to be first noted in flight as a bird with the underparts largely pure white with horizontal rows of thin darker bars on the underwings and body, dark primaries and a noticeable dark throat. It has not the diagonal dark line of markings across the under-wing that characterizes the Osprey (*Pandion*), and if it is seen closely, the broad owl-like head with staring yellow eyes is quite unlike the Osprey. It has not the dark distal areas on the underwings seen in Buzzards. When seen close the unfeathered tarsi are noticeable. Details of soft parts etc. of a bird I watched closely are to be found in the appendix. The call is 'quo-queer-queer-queer', a combination of the calls of Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*) and Buzzard. There was no evidence of it breeding, but this does not seem unlikely.

56. LONG-LEGGED BUZZARD.

٥٦ - عقيب طويل الساقين

Buteo rufinus (Cretzshmar).**C & S.** 23 records.

B	B									B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K					K	K	K		

First and last dates at Kut were 11 September (45) 1 April (43). In 1945 I had several records from the Kut area for September but I saw none between Baghdad-Hillah on 20 September of that year. In 1943 however they were first noted on 9 October at Kut. Maclaren notes them as sparse between Baghdad-Rutbah between 10-14 October of that year. There are no Kut records between 22nd November and the solitary April record. A sharp look out on 16 March 44 between Aziziyah-Baghdad produced none. I noted on 12 April 43 that the pole-squatting birds of prey including *Buteo ferox* and Eagles had all gone, the only hawks being seen on telegraph poles being occasional Kestrels *F. tinnunculus* and Lesser Kestrels *F. naumanni*. These records suggest that they only spend a part of their winter migration in the Kut area and move further south where in the neighbourhood of the marshes there may be more food. Maclaren has a late bird at Hindiyah south of Baghdad on 23 April 43. From Baghdad there are records until 6 February (Gent).

North. 12 records.

W	W	W								W	W	W
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
									E	E		

Maclaren saw one at Penjwin at the end of August 43, and I saw one there on 12 September 42. Between 31 October-28 March they were seen frequently on the Mosul plain between the Syrian frontier and Erbil. I think they remain paired through the winter. I saw none after 9th March, but Maclaren records them as especially abundant on 28 March, and he disturbed one off a nest by the Tigris — Great Zab junction on 22 March 43.

Apart from the records of *Buteo rufinus*, other Buzzards of at least 2 species were seen from time to time. One circling over Kut at a time of extensive migration with a pale tail with terminal dark bar was seen (6 April 44). Buzzards believed to have been *Buteo vulpinus* which were definitely not *rufinus* were seen at Fao (11 November 45), Baghdad (5 December 45), Zakho Gorge

(7 May 44), Mangesh (1 February 45) and near Syrian frontier west of Mosul (6 April 45). These observations however cannot stand without confirmatory specimens and moreover Steppe and Long-legged Buzzards may not be distinguished with certainty in the field according to Meinertzhagen (1954).

57. SPARROW-HAWK.

٥٧ - باشق

Accipiter nisus.probably *nisus* (L) or *nisosimilis* (Tickell).

C & S. 14 records.

B	B	B									B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K	K							K	

Winter records from Baghdad area run from 5 November (Gent) — 25 March; whereas at Kut the records suggest passage. Two or three were seen on 16 November 45, others between 23-27 March 44 and four appeared on 13 April 43, and one on 19 April 44. Maclaren saw two males at Hindiyah on 28 April 43. The only specimen examined unfortunately had the wings clipped (Tarsus 60, Bill 12, Middle toe 42).

North.

W	W	W	W								W	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
												E

In E. Kurdistan it was recorded between 10-19 September in the Penjwin valley down which a stream of migrants flows. In the Mosul area it was recorded at Mosul in January, February, but more winter records refer to localities in the mountains beyond the first range, at Dasht-i-takht above Zakho (16 November 44), Mangesh (1 February 45), Billeh (March 5th), Sirsing (17 March 45), and there are records from the plain at Zumar on the Tigris (6 April), Nimrud 15 April, and Gent saw one near Mosul on 27 April 43. A male obtained at Mosul on 4 January was *A. nisus nisus*, but the middle-toe without claw measured only 35 mm. Details in appendix. Its status is that of a winter-visitor in small numbers with an increase on the Mosul plain in spring due to passage migrants.

58. RED KITE.

٥٨ - خدأة حمراء

Milvus milvus (L).

One seen at close quarters on 24 April 45 on Spilik pass in Kurdistan, and another on 26 April at Surana on the track to Barzan, are the only records. The pale tawny head with thin dark streaks gives the bird a different appearance to the familiar Black Kite (*M. migrans*). However, a specimen is required to substantiate this record.

59. BLACK KITE.

٥٩ - خدأة سوداء

Milvus m. migrans (Boddaert).**C & S.**

B	B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			K	K			K	K	K	K	K

Early dates include :

- 1942. 27 September (none 25 August) Baghdad.
- 1943. 15 August. Kut.
- 1944. 17 September. Kut and Baghdad.
- 1945. 23 August Baghdad.

While last recorded birds each year were :

- 1942. 21 April. Baghdad.
- 1943. 17 April. Kut.
- 1944. 25 April. Kut-Baghdad.
- 1945. 6 June. Baghdad. (PNC).

In 1945 several late records were noted by contributors to the PNC bulletin : 12 on 2 May, 4 on 4 May, and an odd bird on 18th, 22nd May and 6th June. At Baghdad the peak month was January when several hundred were seen. In 1944 Boswell estimated c1000 on 20th January. However, they were not quite so abundant by February. At Kut in 43 numbers were down to 10-20 birds by mid-April at which time the birds take to frequenting the sandbanks and mudflats in the river along with Herring Gulls *L. argentatus*. A few re-appeared on 15 August 43, 25 in a few small parties on shoals in the river on 27 August. It does seem that they repair to the river before and when completing migration. They occur at Bedrah. (5 March 44). The first seen at Kut in 1945 between 2-9 September were again on sandbanks.

Their great haunt in Baghdad is at the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar on the East of the city, where offal is regularly dumped. The great flocks of these large raptors soaring round in thermals resemble the appearance of a culture of Paramecium seen under a microscope. Some were seen and heard circling in broad moonlight two hours after sundown at Kut (12 October 43). Spotted birds with streaked neck and nape are immature, and one of these I noted as having the cere blue-grey and the legs brown.

North. 26 records.

W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
E												

Their status in Kurdistan from present data is that of winter visitors mainly to the Mosul plain with a few in the higher valleys, and migrants pass through the area, being seen at migration times in small numbers passing along the remoter valleys in the mountains. We have no evidence of their breeding. In May 44 there were several near the Jebel Hamrin (5 May), with odd birds at Zakho, and the villages of Bersivi, Sharanish Islam, and Simel, in the neighbourhood, of Zakho, being last recorded near Eski Kelek on 13 May. Vosper notes them as common in May at Qaiyarah, south of Mosul, but by the 13 June there were only stragglers. At that time none was seen between Erbil-Rowanduz and down to Kirkuk (13-16 May). Boswell records them at Seramadia on 14th July, while Vosper only saw single birds occasionally between 26 July-9 August in the Rowanduz-Shaqlawah district.

At Seramadia two were seen on 15-17 August 44, their fresh clean plumage contrasting with the dirty scavenger of the Baghdad pools. On 3 September, Williamson and Boswell saw a string of 31 passing over the Seramadia pass at 10.00 a.m. (Height 6000 ft.). My notes for the wintering birds on the Mosul plain are incomplete and I first record them on 8 November 44 between Mosul-Tel Afar — Sinjar in small numbers on telegraph poles. Maclaren says they are very abundant at Mosul in winter, and saw a huge spiral estimated at over 500 birds over some freshly killed mules. They were noted at Eski Kelek (29 December). Ticehurst (1926), quoting La Personne, writes that none occur at Dohuk in winter. I saw a few between Dohuk — Suwara Tuka (21 January 45), one

at Mar Matti on 22 January 45. One was seen in the Amadia valley at Harik on 30 March 45. A few were recorded from the Mosul district from 6-13 April and my last records are from Harir and Barzan on 24-25 April 45.

In E. Kurdistan only occasional birds were seen in two August visits. Ten arrived in the Penjwin valley (28 August 42) and left soon after. At Choarta two were over camp on 15 August. Together with Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron perenopterus*) they were chasing some Ravens (*Corvus corax*).

60. BLACK-EARED KITE.

٦٠ - حداة سوداء الاذن

Milvus m. lineatus. (J. E. Gray).

At Penjwin in East Kurdistan a solitary large kite with white patches at the base of the primaries was seen on 10 September 42, and Maclaren notes it as a scarce bird in the same locality in the autumn of 1943. On 5 May 44, with many other raptors, a few Black Kites with the white wing patches were seen. Two others seen at Amadia on 12 May 44 were thought at the time to be of this species. These sight records unsubstantiated with detailed field notes, must be treated as probable records only.

61. WHITE-TAILED EAGLE.

٦١ - عقاب ابيض الذنب

Haliaeetus albicilla (L).

C & S. 6 records.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
								K	K	K	K

Southern records are from the Hor Es Suweicha 22 September 43, 15 October 43, 5 December 42 and a pair from a shallow depression 11 miles North of Qurna. I saw one on the Shatt-Al-Arab on 10 November 45 and Williamson saw one near the Khamisiyah marshes on 15 December 45.

In Kurdistan one was seen standing on a shingle spit among ducks and waders at Penjwin on 6 September 42, one on the river Zab in the gorge at Kiri near Amadia (31 August 44). Mac-laren saw a pair on an island in the Tigris at Mosul (27 November 43) and later a single bird near mule carcasses. I saw one on the Wadi Khosar at Mosul on 30 December 44.

62. WHITE-CROWNED EAGLE.

٦٢ - عقاب بحرى

Haliaeetus leucoryphus (Pallas).

Two on separate sandbanks on the Tigris at Kut on 27 August 43 and one on floods near Kut on 23 March 44. Not a common visitor.

63. MARSH-HARRIER.

٦٣ - مرزة البطائح

Circus aeruginosus.probably *aeruginosus* (L).

C & S. 52 records.

B	B	B	B	B			B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			K	K	K		K	K	K	K	

At Baghdad it occurs regularly in the marshy Clay Pit Pools West of the city, at the Bund Pools, Sheikh Omar, East of the city, on the Tigris backwaters, and may be seen on sandspits in the Tigris. It certainly breeds at the bund pools where nesting material was being carried on 23 April 42, and it probably breeds also at the other pools mentioned. Williamson saw three perching in a tree in December, and I saw one in a palm tree (24 August). During May 45, one was a daily visitor to the British Embassy grounds. Few adult males were seen, and adult females and immature males were the birds most often seen. Maclaren writing of the birds at Hindiyah where they are still abundant (cf. Ticehurst 1922) notes: "Birds in immature plumage were extremely abundant in all the marshy areas up to mid-April and less so thereafter. On several occasions these attempted coition. Only one adult female and no adult males were seen in April, though common in June".

The absence of June-July records from Baghdad can be attributed to the incidence of heat on bird-watchers. Outside Baghdad birds were recorded from Deltawah (Khalis) (December), Shahrahan (September), Diwaniyah (October), Agar Quf (November). At Kut birds are frequent on the Suweicha marshes when these are present, but it is more characteristic of irrigated cornlands round Hai, in which marshy patches occur, and non-breeding birds, or out-of-season, are frequent on flood spills and seepage pools. Its distribution is likely to be affected by irrigation and drainage

flight, and the rump colour not noted. Pallid Harriers were present for comparison. The status of the Harriers must unfortunately remain confused until specimens can be procured.

65. PALLID HARRIER.

مرزة باهنة - ٦٥

Circus macrourus (Gmelin).

C & S. 54 records.

B				B					B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
K	K	K	K	K				K	K	K	

This is the Harrier of 'Iraq and we have nearly 60 records. It did not occur in the immediate vicinity of Baghdad, being more a bird of open country and the records from October-April refer to birds seen at Deltawah (Khalis), Diyala Bridge, near the Aqar Quf and on the Ramadi road. Under this species have been recorded all 'ring-tail' females or juveniles, unless there was a very special reason for allotting them to another species. The insufficiency of sight records of female harriers is shown by the following. A bird which had been carefully watched and which from all field observations had pure white upper tail coverts with no rusty markings and should have been *cyaneus*, was shot and found to be a juvenile *macrourus*. The last date for Baghdad was 25 April 42, when several females were seen on the Agar Quf scrub; but it should be noted that a male Montagu (*C. pygargus*) was seen there at the same time.

At Hindiyah Maclaren recorded several at the end of March and a single male on 16 April 43. At Kut it was far more numerous being recorded throughout the area. In 43, they first re-appeared on August 1st, and were seen in pairs and small parties throughout the winter over open country, on tamarisk flats by the river, over vegetable gardens and scrub. In April accompanying migrating passerines was a full complement of these birds, their flattened-v shaped figures gliding over the green corn being a characteristic sight. From their method of quartering, the Bedu of the Shammar call them 'Meshat Al Haridthan', the land-surveyor. Males in flight often look like large gulls (*Larus* sp.) until the head and bill is seen. A late record was of a female or young bird on 23 May 43 near Hai, but this may have been of another species of Harrier. In the Basrah area, there are again late records of migrants, Maclaren having seen a pair at Zubair on 20 May, and a male

on the 26th May 43. There appears to be a late wave of migrants at Basrah and Fao, as Maclaren's dates from that area for several species are much later than the last dates from Kut and Baghdad.

When one flies over a pool all the wildfowl rise, and one in the north was noted flying down the Gomel river scattering Corn Buntings (*Emberiza calandra*) and other birds like driven leaves. One at Kut, an immature male, made passes at an Hoopoe (*Upupa*). When hovering over prey with the talons hanging down, the barred tail is fanned. Two specimens were obtained, a female at Baghdad (27 December 42) and an immature bird near Kut (11 November 43). Details of plumage in appendix.

North. 16 records.

			W	W				W	W	W	W			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
								E	E					

In East Kurdistan birds were seen in the broad valley at Penjwin in August and September, occurring at all heights in the district, often resting on stony slopes of mountains. With Peregrines (*Falco peregrinus*), Kestrels (*F. tinnunculus*) and Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) they had regular hunting beats every night at roosting time. There was a preponderance here of females and immature birds. In the Mosul district it occurred, though not frequently, from October — December after which it was not seen until the spring when several birds were seen on the plain west and south-west of Mosul from 6-16th April (Hadhra-Tel Kotchek). On 5th and 11th May single birds were seen at Sharqat and Simel respectively. Maclaren's Mosul records also bear out its absence during the winter months, as he saw them only in November and March, in rocky places not far from the river. It probably follows the valleys of the bigger rivers on migration and so will not be found in the Kurdish hills. Unidentified Harriers were frequent in small numbers migrating across the Seramadia Pass, soaring round the peaks near the camp from 3-8 September 44.

66. MONTAGU'S HARRIER.

مرزة مونتاجو - ٦٦

Circus pygargus (L).

C & S. 1. **North.** 2.

Only definite males were recorded. Of the large number of 'ringtails' recorded may be some were of this species or *cyaneus*,

but no specimens were obtained. A male was watched at close quarters on the scrub near the Agar Quf (25 April 42). All grey with dark primaries and dark bars on secondaries. No white rump. The underparts were rufous streaked near the vent. It was not as white as the male Pallid Harrier (*C. macrourus*). A very dark bird, thought to be a melanistic male was seen at Ain Dibbis near the Jebel Hamrin in the concourse of Eagles and other raptors mentioned above (5 May 44) Among Harriers on passage across the col at Seramadia on 4 September 44 was one definite male *pygargus*. Its status can only be guessed at. It is evidently only an occasional visitor to most parts, in contrast to the ubiquitous Pallid Harrier, and is we would say the rarest of the four Harriers.

67. OSPREY.

٦٧ - عقاب نساری

Pandion haliaëtus.probably *haliaëtus* (L).

C & S. 7 records.

								B				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
								K	(S)	K		

It was not seen at Baghdad, but one was recorded between Baghdad — Hillah on 20 September 45. In the Kut region it was seen on the Tigris on 2 September 43 above Na'amaniyah, and there are December records for Kut for 42 and 43. On a journey to Fao in November birds were seen on the Buteira canal, at Azair, and on the Shatt-Al-Arab near Khorramshar. It evidently prefers the southern marshy part of the 'Iraqi plain in winter.

North. 15 records.

			W	W				W	W	W		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
								E	E			

It is more frequent in the North, birds drifting southwards down the valleys through the mountains. At Choarta 18-20 August 45 two birds were seen on the river, and at Penjwin there was one from 4-6 September 42 and again on the 15th September. Maclaren records three working the same stream in 1943 after 1st September. In the West, on 11 and 13 May 44 Ospreys were seen on telegraph poles ten miles from water at Simel and in Erbil at a time when migration was in full swing. On 30 August

one was seen on the R. Zab at Kiri beyond Seramadia, and on 10 September one in the valley below Seramadia to the north. A 'polesquatter' was seen on the Dohuk-Mosul road on 15 October, and one over a backwater of the Zab at Quwair on 27 October 44. They were not seen in the winter but reappeared on 8 April 45 on Rubar Dohuk. Williamson saw one on the Khosar river on 9 April. 45. I had no evidence of breeding. They appear to be passage migrants in the North. One watched taking fish held the prey horizontally with the left claw after emerging (Penjwin), and one on the Rubar Dohuk having caught a fish was chased by a Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*). It uttered shrill calls and outpaced the Kite.

68. HOBBY.

٦٨ - کونج ، شویہین

Falco subbuteo subbuteo L.

Passage migrants were seen at Kut on 19 April 43 and 11 April 44. In the North it was seen at Seramadia on 11 and 12 September 44, and on the Mosul-Zakho road on 9 October. Two winter records I made on 8 November and on 3 January 45 must be regarded as doubtful, as this species is not recorded hithertofore as overwintering.

69. LESSER PEREGRINE FALCON.

٦٩ - شاعین

Falco peregrinus.probably *brookei* Sharpe or *babylonicus* Sclater.**C & S.** 15 records.

B	B											B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
		K	K						K	K		

Recorded three times from Baghdad and on 10 April from Hindiyah. At Kut the records run from 20 March — 19 April and again from 15 October — 25 November they probably go further South in the winter where more wildfowl occur and are passage migrants at Kut. Usually seen about the river flats or on shoals, and on temporary spills where duck and waders abound.

North. 17 records.

W	W	W					W	W		W		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
							E	E				

The January record is of one seen by Williamson which was chasing two Eagle-Owls (*Bubo*) down a wadi. The August and September records are from Seramadia where they are frequent and indulge in aerial games with Ravens (*Corvus corax*). Odd birds seen on the plain during the winter. They occur in the Penjwin valley and they had a regular evening beat over the crops, in August and September.

70. SAKER FALCON.

٧٠ - حر ، صقر

Falco cherrug.probably *cherrug* J.E. Gray.

These appeared on telegraph poles on the road from Baghdad-Kut-Sheikh Sa'ad in the first week of November and were seen sparingly through the winter. Last recorded 20 February. On the westbound road to Jordan, I saw one in December between T.3-H. 4, and Maclaren found them very abundant beyond H. 4 which is in Jordanian territory. In the North, Maclaren found them frequent near the river at Mosul in the winter and spring, and I saw them on the Mosul-Shaikhan road on 12 October and on the Tel Afar-Sinjar road on 8 November. They breed in the Jebel Sinjar and in the Jebel Makhul where the Shammar obtain fledglings towards the end of April. I was privileged to see Sheikh Sfuq Al Ajil Al Yawar's falcons at Sharqat in April 45, and his falconers brought two down to show to H.B.M. Ambassador in May. I had engaged to accompany the falconers on an expedition to the breeding places, but unluckily was transferred to Baghdad. Like many of the larger birds of prey, these come down to the plains for the winter. In flight they are heavier than a Peregrine. An immature bird seen at Sharqat had the breast white with heavy brown drops; supercilium and ear coverts pale, eye-stripe dark; mantle and back, chestnut spots on brown; cere and legs blue grey. The pale nape is a good field character.

71. MERLIN.

٧١ - بؤبؤ

Falco columbarius L.

Recorded three times from Baghdad 20 and 28 November (Gent), 30 January and 4 July 42. This last record, of a female, was from Hinaidi at the time of a flood, when many unusual birds had appeared. I saw one at Rutbah Police Post on 18 December 45. Maclaren reports them as sparse by the Tigris at Mosul in winter.

72. LESSER KESTREL.

٧٢ - عويسق

Falco naumanni Fleischer.**C & S.** 11 records.

			B	B								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K	K					K			

Three records of parties at Baghdad from 18 April — 11 May and no autumn records from Baghdad. (c12 on 18 April, 76 on 23 April). They roost in gum trees in Alwiyah when on passage. From Kut, a single bird and then four appeared with immigrant *Merops superciliosus* on 27 March 44. The year before c300 were seen on 7 April in the same locality, the gardens of the Amir Rabia at Husseiniyah.

Occasional birds may be seen resting on telegraph poles. Two on the water tower of a sheikh's palace at Hai may have been breeding (25 May 44). One autumn record is of a single bird at Bedrah at the foot of the Pusht-i-ku on 21 October 43. Maclaren has an early date with 6 on 22 February 43 at Marqil.

North. 6 records.

			W	W	W							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

In the Amadia valley towards Harik there were frequent small numbers of migrants circling everywhere on 30 March 44. 20 on 14 April between Mosul — Shura and 3 at Barzan on 25 April 45. It is probable that they breed in or near the giant cave at Harir where they were seen on 25 April 45, and 14 May 44.

73. KESTREL.

٧٣ - عوسق ، صقر الجراد

Falco tinnunculus L.**C & S.** 47 records.

	B	B		B				B		B	B	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
				K			K	K		K		

It is certainly a winter visitor in Central and Southern Iraq. Baghdad records run from 17 September-22 April, with no breed-

ing records or indeed records of birds seen from May-August. At Kut there are several records for April from 2-17th 43 and from 6-19th 44 suggesting passage. It reappeared in Kut on 31 August and was frequent in September and again in November, when on the 110 mile drive from Kut-Baghdad 11 were counted on wires. After this it may well move south as there are no further records until the spring immigration, but there are December-January records from Basrah. Scattered records include a pair on Nebuchadnezzar's palace near Hillah (20 March), Diwaniyah (6 October), Hindiyah (fairly common in April, Maclaren), Zubair (a pair or two in tamarisks, May and June, ? breeds, Maclaren). They were breeding in the Malwiyah ruins at Samarah (3 May 44). Two hunting over the Tigris near Kut were seen to be dipping into the water in flight (31 August 43). Three specimens were obtained and the measurements are to be found in the appendix.

North. 40 records.

W	W	W	W	W		W	W	W	W	W	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
						E	E				

In Kurdistan it has been present in most localities during the months I was there. At Penjwin and Choarta in the East, and at Mosul, Zakho, Sharanish, Ser Amadia, Dohuk, Zawita, Mangesh, Mar Yakoub, Eski Kelek, Billeh, Zumar, Hadhr, Harir, it was seen. The presence of c15-20 on 5 September 42 near Penjwin perched on hummocks in grassland at distances of 30 yards in the late afternoon suggests migration, as they were all male but one. Williamson saw one make a stoop from below at a bat which escaped.

Order GALLIFORMES

Family PHASIANIDAE

74. SEE-SEE.

حجل - ٧٤

Ammoperdix griseogularis (J. F. Brandt).**C & S.** 3 records.

Apart from one at Samarra (August 42), my only records from the Centre and South come from a visit in April 44 to the foothills of the Pusht-i-kuh East of Bedrah where they were met with at Tel Ziliab and at Kan-i-sakht, especially in sheltered nullahs. Pitman in Ticehurst's paper (1922) compares the call with that of *Ammomanes*, while I noted that Alpine Swifts (*Apus melba*) had a call resembling it.

Boswell claims that a few coveys can always be found during the winter months, inhabiting the deep cracks on the right bank of the Diala above Baqubah, near the Delli Abbas Road.

North. 17 records.

							E					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
W	W		W	W		W			W	W	W	

In the Mosul area it was resident and frequent in small numbers, especially on steep cliffs with level stratification near rivers, where it haunts the cracks and gullies, but also in the lower and first range of scrub-covered hills forming the North boundary of the Mosul plateau. (Zakho Gorge, May 44; Mar Yakoub (c4000 ft.) 29 January 45). Williamson observed birds in territory near to Mosul in April, and saw a hen with thirteen chicks, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, on 23 July 44. He notes that, throughout August — September broods of all ages are seen, and that in some years two if not three broods may be reared. By the end of September some chicks are only just able to fly. In East Kurdistan it occurs at 5000 ft. on the Azmar pass between Suleimaniya and Choarta. On the river Zab at Quwair where there are low cliffs and extensive 'islands' with shingle and sand, and a scrub of tamarisk and poplar, parties of 3-10 preferred the edge of the shingle in dry river courses next

to the tamarisk. It would be interesting to collect more data on the distribution of this bird relative to height. The deserts of 'Iraq give place in the North and East to the oil bearing arid tableland which, rising in shelves eventually culminates in a fringe of mountains which are clothed down to a certain height in scrub oak. The See-See may well be confined to the arid marginal shelves. It seems to be a bird with a preference for a very specific habitat, and the question "Why"? inevitably occurs. What is its food? There is no doubt that the fauna living in this arid belt has to contend with more stringent conditions than either the fauna of the plains or of the mountains proper with their lush valleys, and possibly the species that can live in this zone show special adaptations.

77. CHUKAR.

٧٧ - حجل رومی ، (كوكلك)

Alectoris graeca.(probably *kurdestanicus*. Meinertz).**North.**

It was recorded from E. Kurdistan at Penjwin and Choarta, where abundant coveys occur in scrub-oak hills up to 7500 ft. In W. Kurdistan it was recorded between 2500-6000 ft., at Zakho Gorge near Dohuk, Piris Dagh, Seramadia district, Rowanduz and Diana. Williamson notes a local movement from higher to lower ground after the snows have fallen in the Dohuk area. None were seen below 2500 ft., though Mackintosh flushed a pair in the Wadi Antelias at c1500 ft. in the Lebanon (Zool. Society of Egypt, Syria-Palestine Supplement to Bulletin No. 6). The birds pack in winter as Williamson records 100 birds together in a small area at Zawita below the snow line on 21 January 45. In the snow at Mangesh the inhabitants were chasing the birds until they were tired and then capturing them. They are extensively kept as pets by small boys. The families must coalesce earlier as I saw an adult with thirty cheepers following in single file up a steep earth bank near Choarta on 18 August 45. Records of their distribution and overlap with *Ammoperdix* and with *Francolinus* would be of interest. Vosper records families of young able to fly by the end of August. In the field they appear like a fat pigeon when settled, and are of a nondescript unicolor plumage, brown grey above and below with a black and white patch on face and through the eye. The tail appears long for a partridge in flight.

I have seen them fly out in flocks from trees and ground cover on the heights to glide down the valley and settle on rocks. Williamson considers that they are prone to run rather than fly compared with Chukar in Cyprus. The noisy call 'tok-tok-tok-tok' can be heard long before the birds are seen especially at sundown. They also emit a 'pees'chu' call.

We have no information on their food in 'Iraq. It might prove the key to their distribution.

78. BLACK PARTRIDGE or FRANCOLIN.

٧٨ - دراج

Francolinus francolinus.

(probably *arabisticus* Sarudny and Harms in C. & S.
francolinus (L) in North).

C & S. 26 records.

It remains quite frequent within easy reach of Baghdad, and haunts camel-thorn scrub, 'gardens', and crops as well as riverain jungle. During the breeding season the males perch on a ridge or bank and let out their clarion call (represented by the Morse signs for T-C-A. i.e. —/—.—./.—). This is done mainly in the morning and the evening and only occasionally at mid-day until June. Maclaren noted that they were calling by mid-March in Mosul. In display, the male fluffs up his feathers, trails his wings and rushes at the female, who is described as negligently avoiding him (PNC). Young birds on the wing were seen near Hai by 20 May. They are not so common between Kut and Sheikh Sa'ad, but are numerous in the vicinity of Husseiniyah.

North. 12 records.

In the vicinity of Mosul they are according to Williamson, common in scrub on river banks, islands and in bushes near cultivation, but numbers are never as large as in the South. They suffered greatly in the abnormal floods of February 1941, when in some areas it is estimated that a 90% reduction of population occurred. North of Mosul I saw them on the Gomel Su and Hazir river junction, and came on two pairs breeding near the Dohuk stream. Williamson records a half grown hen bird on 23 July 44, and an old cock killed on 5 November 44 with exceptionally long and sharp spurs of 8 mm. length. Records of distribution in the north are desired.

79. QUAIL.

٧٩ - سلوى

Coturnix c. coturnix (L).**C & S.** 17 records.

	B	B		B					B		B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
K	K		K	K						K	

No generalizations can be made from the fresh data as to status. In Baghdad odd birds were met with in winter months, while in the Kut-Hai area they were frequent in green corn in the latter half of April and in May. Local farmers described their nesting there. PNC recorded them from Shahraban (2 September 45) and I saw them at Diwanayah on 9th October, the date on which first records from other areas were noted. No extensive spring migration was seen at Baghdad but one flew into a bedroom window on May 12th (PNC). Some notes on a female obtained are in the appendix.

North. 11 records.

									F		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	W		W								W

The earliest record was of one at Penjwin on 12 September 42. They were especially frequent in the Mosul area in November, from which month half the records come, being found in the swamp and scrub where the rivers emerged on to the plateaux from the mountains. Maclaren remarks that a fair number wintered in the river plain, but gives no dates. I saw none between the end of November and February. In the spring migration as Williamson says they are more numerous, and all birds met with then were in pairs.

80. SNOWCOCK.

٨٠ - كديرى ، دراج الثلج

Tetraogallus sp.

We never were able to visit the haunts of this bird, though we often heard of it from the Kurds and Assyrians who call it KOUDERI. It is found in Eastern Kurdistan in the high mountains above Diana and near Rayat near the Persian frontier. Major

Edmonds saw one shot on Algird Dagh at 11,000 ft. on 18 September 31, and obtained photos and measurements. Captain Vernon-Jones writes in PNC: "I saw a covey somewhere above Rayat. In summer they are only found in the highest hills and are very wild. They appear about three times the size of a Chukor, and have a distinctive call. They frequent much the same rocky ground as do Ibex".

The first record was at Rayat on 12 September. It was a very young bird, in the first year of its life, and was shot by Captain Vernon-Jones. It was a very young bird, in the first year of its life, and was shot by Captain Vernon-Jones. It was a very young bird, in the first year of its life, and was shot by Captain Vernon-Jones.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
W W W W W W W W W W W W

The second record was at Rayat on 12 September. It was a very young bird, in the first year of its life, and was shot by Captain Vernon-Jones. It was a very young bird, in the first year of its life, and was shot by Captain Vernon-Jones. It was a very young bird, in the first year of its life, and was shot by Captain Vernon-Jones.

W W W W W W W W W W W W
W W W W W W W W W W W W

We never were able to visit the hills of the high, though we often heard of them from the local people and soldiers who call them KOUZAL. It is a very high mountain, and is very difficult to reach. It is a very high mountain, and is very difficult to reach. It is a very high mountain, and is very difficult to reach.

Order RALLIFORMES

Family BALEARICIDAE

81. COMMON CRANE.

کرکی - ۸۱

Megalornis grus (L).**C & S.** 14 records.

	K	K	K			K		K	K	K	K		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
	B	B											

A common winter migrant on the margin of the Suweicha lake at Kut, but very few were seen in 1945 after the drying of the Suweicha. 30 were still left from the huge March flocks on 6 April 44, and none were seen there on 10 April. The first to return were on 25 July 43, but these may have been passage migrants as none was seen during August or September visits. A few passed through in October (15 October 43). 150 were present on 25 November, and from then onwards they were common, associating with a few Storks (*Ciconia ciconia*), some Egrets (*Egretta* Sp.) and large flocks of Grey Lag Geese (*Anser anser*). Notes on their flight differ slightly from the habits described in Handbook. The legs and neck were extended slightly down, and a sketch made at the time emphasizes this. In their flights around the lake, there was a good deal of gliding. Although gregarious, the flocks are loosely knit. For example on the ground they face all different ways. When danger approaches, they mostly look up, but if one section takes off, the impulse does not go right through the flock immediately. They take off gradually until one is very close, when the main body gets up with a clamour. In the autumn of 1945 they were first seen on 28 September when 12 flew over Umm Al Binni near Husseiniyah high up, going S.W.; and in November of that year only odd birds or small parties were seen. PNC reports 6 at Hawijah on 4 April 45. Boswell counted 120 feeding in flooded plough near Baqubah (23 March 45). We did not distinguish any Demoiselle Crane (*Anthropoides virgo*) though on the look out for them.

North. 17 records.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
W	W	W						W	W	W	W		

When Boswell and I were staying at Seramadia camp, migration was observed. On 1 September 44 in the evening at 1845 and 2030 hrs. two large flocks of c200 and c150 flew over the camp, calling, and silhouetted against the orange moon. With them were chirruping small birds also on migration. It was a memorable sight and sound. They went due south having crossed our col of 6100 ft. flying perhaps another 1000 ft. up.

The following evening at 1915 hrs. more came over in a V formation, again accompanied by small birds. The legend that the small birds get rides on them persists here among the Assyrians. On the 7th September c100 came over at 0630 hrs. crossing the peaks in a southward direction. Parties of 30 were seen at Quwair on the Zab (27 October 44), and in November, 20 and 54 were sailing round the Gomel Su plain south of Aqrah, and 30 flying steadily south at 0930 hrs. near Dohuk (12 November). From December-March it was often seen in small numbers near Gomel Su, R. Khosar, Somel, Dohuk, Ain Sifni, Aqrah and Erbil. Maclaren writing of 1943 says: "a few wintered near Mosul. They fed in parties of 3-7 among the grassy hills, and after dark came to roost near the river beneath our camp. They left before first light. In addition flocks of varying size were moving southwards as late as the end of November, and northwards again after 21st March".

March 21st (1945) was the date also on which I saw northbound migrants passing over Mosul city at c700 ft. One flock of 70 and another of 50 passed over at 1430 hrs. My last record for the area was 25 March. None were seen in the Penjwin Valley migration route. Again no Demoiselle Crane (*A. virgo*) were distinguished.

Family RALLIDAE

82. WATER RAIL.

٨٢ - مرعة الماء ، تفلق

Rallus aquaticus (L).

Recorded five times. At Baghdad Wallis saw one on the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar in June 44. Williamson records it from Khamisiyah in the Basrah vilayet on 14 December 45.

In the North, Maclaren saw a few on the Penjwin stream in the autumn of 1943, and I twice saw one on the Gomel Su NE of Mosul on 5 and 23 November 44.

83. SPOTTED CRAKE.

مرعة رقطا - ٨٣

Porzana porzana (L).

Williamson shot one when out with Boswell on 24 March 42, in what was known as the pig garden, on the Kut road about 2 miles beyond the Salman Pak turning.

This bird was skulking under rose bushes by an irrigation ditch, from where it was flushed with difficulty.

84. LITTLE CRAKE.

مرعة صغيرة - ٨٤

Porzana parva (Scopoli).

Twice recorded. A live immature bird brought in to me at Kut on 11 September 45, and it was kept as pet in the meat safe. It fed on rice and water. A full description will be found in the appendix. Maclaren had a good view of one by the stream at Penjwin in E. Kurdistan on 6 September 43. He also saw another Crake on 2 May 43 at Hindiyah which might have been *P. porzana*.

85. CORN-CRAKE.

مرعة البر - ٨٥

Crex crex (L).

Five records. 4 met with between 18-21 May 43 in green corn near Hai, one in liquorice at Kut on 9 September 45, and PNC reports a dead male at Basrah on 18 May 45.

86. MOORHEN.

دجاجة الماء - ٨٦

Gallinula chloropus (L).

C & S. 10 records.

				B				B	B			B	B
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
					K							K	

It appears to be local and not common, at any rate in Central Iraq. At Baghdad up to 6 were seen on the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar chiefly in winter months. At Kut, it was seen on a lake East of Hai on 25 May 43, and a migrant was caught in the garden of a club at Kut on 23 November. Williamson saw one at Khamisiyah near Basrah in December.

North. 3 records.

Maclaren saw several, including immatures on the stream at Penjwin in Autumn 43, eight were seen at Eski Kelek on the Zab on 29 December 44 and one on the Gomel Su in its upper reaches (5 November 44). Perhaps they are shyer than in Europe, but they were certainly not conspicuous in the areas I covered.

87. PURPLE GALLINULE.

٨٧ - برهان ، فرفر

*Porphyrio poliocephalus.***C & S.**

I flushed one from the Suweicha lake reeds on 16 June 43, and it is possible they were breeding there. They are more typical of the Southern areas.

88. COOT.

٨٨ - غرة

Fulica atra (L).**C & S.** 34 records.

B	B	B	B				B			B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
				K	K		K	K	K	K	K

In Baghdad area (including Deltawah (Khalis), Yusufiyah, Baquba, Shatt-Al-Gass) they were most common from November-January, thinning out in February and last recorded on the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar on 23 April, when one pair was perhaps staying to breed. 53 were counted by PNC on 30 November 45. The birds fly around a lot, and get shot for duck by inexperienced guns — just now and then!

At Kut they were only met with in numbers on the great spills such as the Suweicha in October and on an inundation near Hai, where we ate Coot's eggs for supper, and where Great Crested Grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*) were present on 25 May 43, I counted 400. We had our camp near this lake where there were swarms of May flies covering all out tents, nets and clothes. Flying with birds homing to roost in the dead flat desert were Bats. Where were they going? There were no 'minara' (ruins) in sight. On the Suweicha in June a pair of Coot was found breeding. Crude oil put on pools and backwaters of the Washash at Baghdad had oiled up many Coots in December. Williamson reports them from Khamisiyah in December and in November I saw quite a

few on the Shatt-Al-Arab between Basrah-Fao, apart from a group of six, all single birds. PNC reports them (5) from Shahran in September.

North. 10 records.

Maclaren saw a few on the Penjwin stream in autumn 1943, and we both noted them as numerous on L. Marivan just over the Persian frontier. Odd pairs were found on most of the waters on the Mosul plain (Zab, Gomel Su, Khosar), and Maclaren noted flocks on backwaters of the Tigris in the winter of 1943. Records run from 5 November-11 February.

Family OTIDIDAE

89. GREAT BUSTARD.

٨٩ - حبارى كبيرة

Otis tarda L.

North. 5 records.

There are a few records from Kurdistan. On 18 September 1942 a migrating party of 14 was put up in knee-deep liquorice in the Penjwin valley. The first impression was of vast white winged birds with a heavy flight. They settled about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile off where their long grey necks showed above the liquorice. Then they sat down with only the heads visible. As we approached one neck shot up as guardian. When a little nearer, all the birds stood. One took off and then they all took wing. Their behaviour was much like that of migrant geese. They were seen the next day on open ground. Notes made on plumage and soft parts are in the appendix.

A party of three was feeding in plough at sunset on 27 October 44 at Salamiyah near Mosul. They flew up and settled individually and most conspicuously on top of hillocks. Two were seen near the R. Khosar at Mosul on 30 December 44. Williamson records two flocks of 15 and 20 near Shinnaf on 9 February 45, and in May 43 they bred in downland N.W. of Qaiyarah. Williamson describes it as relatively common in winter in Mosul area in normal years, but the widespread military camps throughout the area after May 1941 made it scarcer; but it was beginning to re-establish itself in the winter of 44-45. Maclaren saw none at Mosul. Its tentative status is a local resident on the northern plains, with numbers increased by winter immigrants.

90. LITTLE BUSTARD.

جبارى صغيرة شرقية - ٩٠

Otis tetrax orientalis Hartert.

I did not meet it, but Col. W.A. Lyon. C.B.E. described to me a flock of c35-40 at Mutrad near Werdek in February 42 and had also seen them at Qal'a Tepe. There is considerable confusion owing to sportsmen referring to the Houbara as the 'Lesser Bustard'. But this does not apply to the above records. Mention may here be made of a bird shot 2 miles from Abu Sef at Mosul in mid January 42 by Brigadier Corrie. This was examined by Williamson and thought to be a female Florican (*Sypheotides indica*). He describes it as a huge and very long necked quail, not bigger than a Houbara. It would be interesting if this bird's presence could be confirmed. It may be an accidental wanderer.

91. HOUBARA.

جبارى مائوفة - ٩١

Chlamydotis undulata.probably *macqueenii* (Gray & Hardw.).

C & S. 8 records.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
								K	K		K

On only two occasions, both in October, have I found this bird numerous: in the desert W. of Hai (24 October 42) when I saw some twenty, many of them in pairs, and on the half made desert road from Bedrah to Aziziyah when 18 were seen. Generally it keeps well away from desert communications. In February they were frequent 20 km. W. of Ukheidha (Kerbela Liwa) and a description of a specimen obtained there by Gubbins, will be found in the appendix. We have not enough data on which to establish their movements, but they have been surprisingly absent from known localities some years e.g. desert E. of Hai (May 43), Dijeila desert (November 43), and on the road from Baghdad-Mosul via Baiji none were seen in May 44. Williamson shot one 3 miles W. of Lukait near Basrah on December 45.

North. 3 records.

From the North we have few records. One was seen on 16 April 45 near Hadhra S.W. of Mosul, where Col. Meinertzhagen saw them in November (Ibis October 1924, pp. 601-625). A Shammar Sheikh with Williamson killed one a few miles E. of Tel

Kotchek, and Williamson comments that they apparently replace the Great Bustard S & W of Mosul, whence it moves further to the south when the rains start. Maclaren saw a flock of 11 in rocky hills west of Mosul in the winter of 1943. They are hunted with Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) by the Arabs, and the following is a description from PNC bulletin of hunting with the Shammar west of Majara. "There were seven flights. In no case did the Bustard attempt to take off, but ran round fanning its tail. Five were killed, but the other two succeeded in spraying the Hawk with the glutinous liquid that they eject with such good effect that he was unable to continue the attack, or to fly properly for nearly an hour afterwards. The Bustard then flew off.

Order CHARADRIIFORMES

Family CHARADRIIDAE

92. WHITE-TAILED PLOVER.

٩٢ - طيطوى ابيض الذنب

Chettusia leucura (Lichtenstein).

C & S. 50 records.

B	B	B	B	B		B		B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		K	K	K				K	K	K	

They appear to move away from Kut from the river and pools in the winter, and some clue as to their winter quarters was the discovery of a flock of 50 in the dried outlet margin of the Suweicha lake near Fellahiyah on 15 October 43, which consisted of islands of dried reed patches with a green lawn of some halophyte. The only other inhabitants of this strange habitat were a few Streaked Wren Warblers (*Prinia gracilis*). In contrast to the Red-Wattled Plover (*Lobivanellus indicus*) which in autumn is riverian, they are essentially lacustrine. Outside the breeding season they appear very tame, and quiet, and do not get up as easily as other waders. They have an upright stance, and birds with smoky breasts and bright yellow legs were seen by 26 February. Maclaren noted at Hindiyah that they were paired, though still in loose flocks, at the end of April; and that the flocks were joined again in August. They nest at Baghdad around the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar, the male stands near the sitting female and will duel in the air with other males sweeping and swooping with the abandon of a Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*). They also chase off Hooded Crows (*Corvus corone*). They are noisy at the breeding sites having a call 'cheryuk', resembling that of a Gull-Billed Tern. (*Gelochelidon nilotica*). At Kut they become quite suddenly numerous in their breeding haunts at the end of April. In the desert E. of Hai the breeding pairs were noted to nest near a solitary sandy hillock or 'tel'. PNC records 2 nests at Baghdad on 29 May 44, each with 4 eggs, on salty ground with rushes. The nests were lined with dried rushes. Boswell noted one displaying on 4 May 47 when it lowered its head and spread out the wings. In winter they are common at Baghdad on the Washash drain, and out at Deltawah

(Khalis). I record them in company with Red-Wattled Plover (*L. indicus*) and with Sociable Plover (*Chettusia gregaria*), but they do not fly off with them. A description of one obtained at Kut at a 'beida' on 16 November 45 is to be found in the appendix.

North.

Not met with in Kurdistan, but one October record of 2 pairs at Quwair on the Great Zab (27 October 45), on the same river at Shinnaf (9 February 45, Williamson), and a single bird at Mosul on 24 March 43 (Maclaren). Williamson remarks that in other years it is seen infrequently elsewhere in the Mosul area.

93. SOCIABLE PLOVER.

قطيعة - ٩٣

Chettusia gregaria (Pallas).

We have four records from Baghdad from 14-27 February 42 and one from Husseinayah near Kut on 16 November 45. First examined in a flock of c5 in winter plumage in plough and fields near the river at Karradat Miriam, Baghdad. The crown of one of these was of a chestnut brown colour, the winter plumage. A solitary specimen met in the desert at Aqar Quf a few days later had the breast more grey. Two very unsociable specimens were watched in the same fields at Karradat Miriam. The upright stance is very noticeable and the cap (black in this case) contrasting with the white 'tonsure' gives the impression of a plate on its head. In flight the wings appear black and white, the tail has a black band. The legs were dark in most, but grey in one, and the bill appeared dark and narrow. Also seen (6) at Hib-Hib near Deltawah (Khalis). These small isolated parties are evidently not the main flocks described by Ticehurst et al. (1922).

94. SPUR-WINGED PLOVER.

زقراق - ٩٤

Hoplopterus spinosus (L).

Seven records. At Baghdad on 14 February 42, there were three on the banks of a creek with Red-Wattled Plover (*Lobivanelus indicus*). They were shy. Two at Diwaniyah on 9 October 42; one near a roadside ditch at Aziziyah on 20 September 43; and two in the north on the Kirkuk-Erbil road 22 September 44. On these slender data it would appear to be a local winter visitor in small numbers. Since a description of the species may not be readily available to bird-watchers in 'Iraq, We will give our

impression of the bird. A grey brown bird not unlike a Red-Wattled Plover (*Lobivanellus indicus*), but with the breast and abdomen black, a black band on the tail, and a noticeable crest from the black crown hanging like a cap over the neck. Legs black and head dark. Maclaren saw two at Hindiyah on 22 April 43; and Boswell one at Fellujah on 5 May 47 and six at Salachiyah (Baghdad) on 12 March 43.

95. COMMON LAPWING.

٩٥ - قطاط شامي

Vanellus vanellus (L).

C & S. 11 records.

B	B	B									B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
										K	K	

Dates and estimate of status do not differ from Ticehurst (1922). Records run from 20 November-26 February in Baghdad area, twenty being the largest number seen together. It appears to avoid the Kut area. There were a few calling at Umm Al Binni near Kut on 20 November 45, and two in the ox-bow bend of the Tigris above Suweira in December. Further south down the Tigris 10 were seen near Ali Gharbi (7 November) and it was quite frequent on the muddy banks of the Buteira canal at Amara in November.

North. 16 records.

W	W	W								W	W	W
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
												E

It is a more frequent winter visitor to the north, being widespread on the Mosul plain in small numbers, more so as Williamson points out, than the Red-Wattled Plover (*L. indicus*). Dates from Mosul run from 31st October-7 March. Small flocks occurred on the rolling plain south of Dohuk in November, Maclaren found small flocks by the Tigris in Winter 1943 including one of c200 birds, and in January and February flocks (—20) were common in the area West of Mosul towards Tel Afar and Sinjar. It is most usual, of course, near streams. In the Penjwin valley in East Kurdistan it was seen between 5-15th September 42, one flock of 40 consisting solely of immature birds.

96. RED-WATTLED PLOVER.

تقطاط مغيب - ٩٦

Lobivanellus indicus G. R. Gary.

C & S. 39 records.

B	B	B	B	B				B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

There is little to say about its distribution in the Centre and South. It is most common on the pools around Baghdad in January and is frequent in small parties (5-10) on plough, often on ridges of irrigated fields, where it occupies the niche of the Lapwing (*Vanellus*) of Europe. Despite the black and white in the plumage the disruptive pattern makes these birds hard to pick out on dried mud at 300 yards. When a Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) flew over the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar, Baghdad (18 August) all the waders and terns took off, but a pair of these plover chased and attacked it. Some birds remain possibly paired, although in loose flocks. Of a flock of 10 near Baghdad on 1 November, most flew away, but one pair remained, apparently fearless, and only flew short distances, with short clipped strokes, occasionally dipping suddenly down and turning upside down with a sharp twist. This behaviour is probably territorial. Maclaren thought that birds he saw near Mosul in winter, might be still paired though in flocks. The calls consist of a staccato whistle like a Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), and the well known 'did-you-do'it' call responsible for its popular name. Breeding places include near the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar, Baghdad, in fields around the Pig Garden near Diyalah Bridge. Nests were found at Baghdad on 26 May, 2 eggs (PNC), 19 May with 4 eggs, (PNC) and 12 April with 3 eggs near Agar Quf in a small hollow unlined and far from smooth (PNC). Maclaren notes isolated pairs near Hindiyah in the drier spots by the river, but also on the plain some miles away. Vosper makes a similar observation about them at Qaiyarah in the Mosul area, though the wadis distant from the river still contained water; and he saw none after June. At Kut it is less often seen except in the autumn when a lot of birds may be seen on the mud banks and on shoals in the River Tigris upstream of Kut. Parties of up to 30, including immature birds with their white foreheads, may be seen in late August and September, at which season the bird appears to be essentially riverain.

By this time of the year outlying flood spills have largely dried up, and birds of necessity gravitate towards the river mar-

gins. Of outlying records may be mentioned a pair breeding between Bedrah-Zorbatiyah and 3 seen at Ziliab on the Persian frontier on 8 April 44.

North. 12 records.

	W	W	W	W					W	W	W
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

In Kurdistan the bird does not penetrate into the hill country and consequently was not seen in the Penjwin valley. On the Mosul side it is met with on rivers and streams on the Mosul plain up to the foothills in small numbers. There are records from the Baqaq, Gomel, Khosar streams, from the Great Zab at Eski Kelek and near Quwair, at Altun Kupri (PNC), and from the Tigris at Mosul, where Maclaren met small flocks in the winter 1943, and at Qaiyarah (Vosper).

97. RINGED PLOVER.

زقزاق مطوق - ٩٧

Charadrius hiaticula (L).

The records suggest that it is a passage migrant to Central Iraq. It was twice recorded from the Baghdad bund pools at Sheikh Omar (25 August and 22 September 42). At Kut, one on the Tigris near Aziziyah (8 September 43) and on the Suweicha marsh (22 September 43), with two records for the spring migration (7th and 10th April 44). PNC record it from near Fellujah (15 May 45), and Maclaren found it occurred with *Ch. dubius*.

I identified one (4 September) and later 6 (15 September 42) on the river at Penjwin. This was somewhat surprising as I did not see *Ch. dubius* there which I was expecting. Maclaren however did (q.v.).

98. LITTLE RINGED PLOVER.

زقزاق مطوق صغير - ٩٨

Charadrius dubius Scopoli.

C & S. 35 records.

B		B	B	B		B	B	B	B		B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		K	K	K			K	K	K		

Noted as abundant at Baghdad on 28 July 42 on the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar with few about by 27 September. Its numbers are

somewhat variable and our notes do not contribute anything to what Ticehurst has already written on its distribution. Curiously none were recorded from Baghdad or Kut in November and only odd birds in December. Like other species of wader, large numbers no doubt congregate further south in more suitable winter feeding grounds. 60 were seen on the Suweicha lake at Kut in October. Two pairs were on the watercourse at Tel Ziliab on the frontier of the Pusht-i-Ku (8 April). Recorded from Diwaniyah (October), Samarra (May), and at Hindiyah, Maclaren found it more frequent on the autumn than on the spring migration.

North. 9 records.

W W W W W
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
 E E

In Mosul liwa it appears to be a summer visitor. Maclaren found it frequent at Mosul after 11 March 43. I saw it at Hadhra (16th April) and at Barzan (25th April 45), while Vosper found its numbers constant on the Tigris at Qaiyarah during May and June, and towards the end of July once saw it near Rowanduz. On 6th and 9th May I found it on the R. Khabur at Zakho. In August Maclaren saw 3 at Penjwin in 1943, but I saw none in 1942, though in August 1945, it was frequent near Choarta on a stream (2250 ft.). It was not seen on the Great Zab in the Amadia district in autumn.

99. KENTISH PLOVER.

٩٩ - زقراق اسکندرانى

Charadrius alexandrinus L.

C & S. 24 records.

B B B B
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
 K K K K K

My records from Baghdad indicate only the frequency of its appearances at the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar. It was only frequent in January and August and definitely absent in November and February.

In the Kut area it was not seen from November-March at all and was most frequent on shoals in the Tigris near Suweira on 11 September 43 and again in April when flocks of up to 40 were met with on flood pools and around the Suweicha. Summer records

are up to 17 May near Hai. In April the single 'chip' call was heard and a rattle like that of a Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*). Often seen on or by the roadside, one struck by a Jeep was brought to me and lived in my bathroom at Kut until recovered.

Boswell found chicks in down at Khan Nuqta near Baghdad on 9 May 47.

Maclaren notes it was very abundant and presumably breeding in May — June near Shuaibah and Hammar Lake. He saw two 'dive-bomb' a Fox driving it off their territory. At Hindiyah he found it not very common, on salt pans and beside marshes. Birds were paired by the end of April, frequent during June and July, and forming up flocks by the end of July. In November it was found to be very abundant on the mud banks of the Khor Abdullah near Fao. These mud-banks are inhabited by huge numbers of Mudskipper Fish and further out by large numbers of a kind of Fiddler Crab (?). Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), and Broad-billed Sandpiper (*Limicola falcinellus*) were abundant in both these zones. On the inner margin of the Mudskipper zone were Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), and Large Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*) and a single Terek Sandpiper (*Xenus cineria*). Sanderling (*Crocethia alba*) and Grey Plover (*Charadrius squatarola*) were notably absent.

North.

It was only met with on the mountain streams of Kurdistan at Penjwin on 28 August and 15 September (one) and on the Great Zab at Kiri beyond Seramadia on 21 August 43 and 31 August 44 in company with Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*).

100. LARGE SAND PLOVER.

۱۰۰ - زهراوی ، زقزاق دملی کبیر

Charadrius leschenaultii Lesson.

On 7 December 41 outside Baghdad in the desert near Salman Pak, Boswell and I saw a group of plovers running in the sand which we chased in the car, but did not see too well. A party of the same long-legged plovers, of slender build, running fast over the desert were met near Hillah on 20 March 42. A specimen in winter dress was obtained but unhappily not preserved, since its identity remains in doubt. Its measurements were Wing 147 mm, tarsus 40 mm, and bill (culmen to base of feathers) 20 mm. Among details of the plumage may be mentioned that the axillaries were definitely white and not grey, that the outer tail fea-

mud desert East of Wasit ruins. In autumn Caspian Plover were met with on 22 September 43 in the grass desert of the dried Suweicha lake (normally a haunt of Pratincoles). One in autumn plumage was shot (vide appendix). By the 15 October only one was seen there. In September 45 a pair were seen regularly at a 'beida' (threshing floor) at Umm Al Binni near Kut. For comparison with the unidentified plover described under *Ch. leschenaultii* both specimens had brown shafts to tail feathers.

102. GOLDEN PLOVER.

١٠٢ - زقزاق ذهبي

Charadrius dominicus Müller.

Golden Plover of some species were heard calling at night on migration on 12 March 42 at Baghdad, and three were seen on the Suweicha marsh near Kut on 15 October 43. These are likely to be *dominicus fulvus*. No other records.

103. DOTTEREL.

١٠٣ - زقزاق اغبر

Charadrius morinellus L.

Evidently very local in its winter haunts. There is but one record of a flock of c20 seen by Maclaren in grassy hills to the West of Mosul on 24 January 43.

104. TURNSTONE.

١٠٤ - قنبرة الماء

Arenaria i. interpres (L).

There are three records, from autumn migration. One on Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar, Baghdad (19 August 42) had arrived with a passage of wagtails (*Motacilla* sp.) and a Sanderling (*Crocebia alba*), and was gone the next day. One was seen on shoals in the Tigris above Aziziyah on 7 September 43, and Boswell and I saw c20 on the Suweicha on 22 September 43. One of these was obtained and measured W. 140-1 mm, Bill from feathering to culmen 19-20 mm. Tarsus 24 mm. It had only traces of chestnut on the outer tail feathers. None were seen here on the 15 October. The passage of these marine waders some 400 miles from the Caspian or from the Persian Gulf is of interest (cf. Sanderling, Broad-Billed Sandpiper, Scaup and Sheldrake). There are no records from the North. Maclaren saw several on the Hammar Lake at Basrah on 23 May 43.

Boswell records one from Fellujah on 9 May 47.

Family SCOLOPACIDAE

105. COMMON SNIPE.

جھلول - ۱۰۰

Capella gallinago (L).

C & S. 31 records.

B	B	B					B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			K					K		K	

There is little to add to what has been published on its distribution. The earliest record was at Baghdad on 20 August 42, and it was last recorded at Baghdad on 25 March 45 (PNC). Maclaren found it numerous at Hindiyah until mid-April with the last bird seen on 22nd April 43. It returned on 13 September 43. There are fewer records from Kut, odd birds from September-November 45 and one spring record of 10 April 43. At Shahraban it had become frequent by 23 September 45 (PNC). Localities where it is found at Baghdad are the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar, the Pig Garden by Diyala Bridge, Salachiyah, on the Washash drain, and it is abundant at Hib-Hib near Deltawah (Khalis). c30 were noted at Baghdad by PNC on 31 December 45.

North. 16 records.

								E			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		W	W	W				W	W	W	W

In the Mosul liwa it is well distributed in small numbers. It was first recorded from Mosul Railway Loco shed on 20 September 44 (Williamson) and thereafter frequently through the winter becoming more numerous in March. On the R. Khosar at Mosul, 5 were seen on 5 May 44. Maclaren found it sparse on marshier bits of flood channels near Mosul in winter 1943. At Penjwin there are odd records from September.

106. GREAT SNIPE.

جھلول کبیر - ۱۰۶

Capella media (Latham).

Only three records. Col. Wallis describes in a letter one that he saw at the Bund Pools, Sheikh Omar at Baghdad on 20 April 45; and Maclaren records one from Penjwin on the Persian border near Marivan on 1 September 43. It does not appear to be a common visitor.

snowfall that lies put throughout the winter. Thus when the Kirkuk and Avroman mountains go white, the shooting of woodcock is best in the Alana Su and in the many streams in the Halebja valley. If one is then on the spot the woodcock are very plentiful. I have shot a dozen in a half a mile on the Rishen stream — because all the migrating birds coming over the high snowy mountains drop down in the first unfrozen spot. After a day or so they are less abundant, and have presumably moved on. With the warm south wind they return north in spring. The Kurdish name for them is MERISHIK-I-SHOWI (hen of the night) on account of their silence in flight and their habit of flying at night”.

109. COMMON CURLEW.

Numenius a. arquata (L).

C & S. 5 records.

From 1942-5 it was not apparently as common as it was during the period under review by Ticehurst (1922 and 1926). For the central area we have only one record of 2 seen on the Tigris at Husseinayah near Kut on 8 March 44. Maclaren saw one at Basrah on 2 March 43 flying overhead, and Williamson records 20 from Khamisiyah near Basrah on 15 December 45, where he obtained one. On the Shatt-Al-Arab between Basrah and Fao I saw 8 and they were frequent, calling and ‘bubbling’ on the mud banks of the Khor Abdullah near Fao on 11 November 45. In the North the solitary record is of birds heard passing overhead at Mosul by Maclaren on 24th and 25th March 43. This suggests that the species does not linger on migration but passes direct to its southern feeding grounds, travelling mainly at night. Col. Lyon with many years experience of the north can not remember to have seen one.

110. WHIMBREL.

Numenius p. phaeopus (L).

C & S. 2 records.

Records from the second world war suggest that it is in central Iraq, at any rate, a scarce passage migrant. I saw two on pools near Kut on 28 April 44. Maclaren saw 7 at Zubair near Basrah on 26 May 43.

111. BLACK-TAILED GODWIT.

Limosa l. limosa (L).**C & S.** 22 records.

		B					B	B			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	K	K	K				K	K	K		K

It was seen more frequently on autumn migration than in spring, at Baghdad frequenting the Bund Pools. No more than 6 were seen at a time. Presumably fresh arrivals were sleeping in the morning at 0700 hrs. at a time when other wanders were active and feeding. Only once recorded in spring on 12 March 44. We had no indication of their passing the winter in the Baghdad area itself. Outside, near Suweira, on the Shatt-Al-Gass ox-bow loop of the Tigris it was abundant on 9 December 43. In the Kut area it was abundant on the Suweicha lake on 30 August 43 and fair numbers were seen through September and October in parties of up to c40. Again in late February and early March it was abundant on migration on flooded cultivation near Kut feeding with starlings (*Sturnus*), and white storks (*Ciconia ciconia*). Last dates were 10 April 43 (7 April 44). Maclaren saw a solitary bird at Hindiyah on 23 April 43, with first return bird on 13 August. Williamson found it numerous at Khamisiyah in Basra district on 14 December 45.

Ticehurst (1922) describing its status as a common winter visitor. We would modify this to read 'a common winter visitor to the south and a passage migrant in central 'Iraq'.

North.

There is a single record of two at Mosul seen by Maclaren on 24 March 43.

112. BAR-TAILED GODWIT.

Limosa l. lapponica (L).**C & S.**

Were only seen at Fao where several small parties were on the mud-banks of the Khor Abdullah on 11 November 45.

113. GREEN SANDPIPER.

١١٣ - طيطوى خضراء

Tringa ochropus L.

C & S. 44 records.

B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
K											

Around Baghdad they were first seen at the Hinaidi floods on 13 July becoming more frequent by 20 August 42 at the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar. A few were seen throughout winter on these pools, on the Washash drain and near Deltawah (Khalis) (abundant 28 December 41) until March, with a single straggler on 18 April and one at Fellujah on 4 May 47 (Boswell). Maclaren found them sparse at Hindiyah in early April with the last record on 23 April 43 and birds re-appearing on 23 July. A small party of 7 were seen on the shores of L. Habbaniyah on 11 August. They occur at Diwaniyah in October. In Kut it was only seen as a passage migrant (up to 6, and four records between 7-28 April) in spring. PNC records it at Shahraban on 2nd and 23rd September.

North. 19 records.

								E			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
W		W	W				W	W		W	W

Small numbers were seen between 2-19 September 42 at Pen-jwin on the river or the upper reaches of the Cham-i-Gogasur, and in ditches in the valley. It was frequent around Mosul in small numbers with most records from March and April when migrants appeared on passage. One of the few waders to be seen in the hills; at 3000 ft. in paddy-fields above Zawita, and in deep snow at Mangesh (21 and 31 January 45). It was never as frequent as in Baghdad.

Though in Iraq it is often found on its own, it certainly frequents the same feeding grounds as other waders, especially Wood Sandpipers (*T. glareola*) and Marsh Sandpiper (*T. stagnatilis*).

114. WOOD-SANDPIPER.

١١٤ - طيطوى الفياض

Tringa glareola L.**C & S.** 13 records.

			B	B		B	B	B				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K	K				K				

Birds appeared on spring passage at Baghdad, Kut and Hai in April and May (Baghdad 24 April-5 May) (Kut 22 April-23 May). Small flocks appeared on the Hinaidi floods on 1 July 42, and small numbers were seen in August and September at Baghdad and once on the Tigris at Suweira (8 September 43). We can find no winter records and confirm Ticehursts original contention that compared with *T. ochropus* this is primarily a bird of passage in Iraq.

It associates with Green (*T. ochropus*), Common (*T. hypoleucos*) and Marsh Sandpipers (*T. stagnatilis*). Outside Baghdad it was recorded at Samarra on 4 May 44, but not in Kurdistan in May. Some records suggest that this species was confused with others. Boswell caught a wounded bird at Fellujah on 4 May 47.

North. 5 records.

A few were seen on Autumn migration in the Penjwin valley near big muddy pools on the stream from 4-19th September 42, where Maclaren saw them the following year. First seen Mosul on 15 April 45 at Ain Nufut.

Most striking was the broad frontal V formed by the pale supercilia meeting above the bill when seen head-on.

115. COMMON SANDPIPER.

١١٥ - طيطوى سمراء

Tringa hypoleucos L.**C & S.** 32 records.

		B	B	B	B		B	B			B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
		K	K								K	

Noted as frequent at Baghdad at the end of November becoming abundant by 18th April and again on the 5th May. This agrees with Ticehurst's status "a winter visitor ... but commoner as a passage migrant". 2 were on the Hinaidi floods on 13th July and

it was frequent again on 18th August. PNC has one summer record from the Washash upper region on 30 June 45. Maclaren found it fairly frequent all April at Hindiyah and quite abundant on 12th May 43. It returned on 23 July. At Kut it was noticed in flocks on the 12th April (43) and over twenty were counted together on the 15th April 44. In the Kut area it appears to be primarily a passage migrant, most of the birds being seen in April with the first on 23 March. Birds watched on 15th April 44, when it was abundant, were rising to fly in slow circles with a continual tremor of the wings without gliding for periods of 30-40 seconds, repeating all the time the morse-code like call ".— .—" Possibly this was a display flight as birds were behaving like this in pairs; while a solitary bird did not behave thus, but flew in the ordinary low butterfly-like sweep to the shore where it bobbed nervously up and down.

It was seen at Samarra on 4th May 44, and at Maqil near Basrah on 2 March 43, and on Lake Habbaniyah in August. It shows no particular preference of habitat, occurring both on flood pools and on the banks of the Tigris. It occurs on the Shatt-Al-Arab between Basrah-Fao in November.

North. 15 records.

								E	E			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
		W	W	W			W			W		

In Eastern Kurdistan it was seen at 2250 ft. on a stream near Choarta on 20 August 45, and in small numbers on passage in the Penjwin valley from 4-19th September, and in Autumn 43 by Maclaren.

In Central and West Kurdistan it is a bird of the mountain stream on passage. I found it in the steep valleys behind Amadia at Duri and Kiri and Maclaren saw it at Mosul in November and again in March. There were no winter records from Mosul but the return passage in 1945 began on 23 March and it was seen throughout April, including the locality of Hadhra well in the desert (16th April 45). On 5th May 44 there were several feeding singly in the plough and in cultivation near the Khosar stream. We have no evidence of its breeding in the north, though it may well do so.

116. REDSHANK.

١١٦ - طيطوى حمراء الساق

Tringa totanus (L).**C & S.** 53 records.

B	B	B				B	B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
K	K	K	K				K	K	K	K	K

At Baghdad it was first recorded on the Hinaidi floods 1 and 13 July 42, where it was frequent. A few are seen in August, but curiously it is not conspicuous in September (only 1 record 25 September 45 PNC), and is then present in regular small numbers, becoming more frequent in December and January (42), when flocks may again be seen. None were recorded after the 25th March or throughout April and May. It is a winter visitor and never very numerous. At Fellujah, Boswell saw it on 4 May 47.

At Kut it was first recorded on 30 August, and flocks were seen near Suweira on 9 December 43 on the oxbow arm of the Tigris, the Shatt-Al-Gas. It is regular in small numbers from September onwards. We have several dates from April but by 21st April few were to be seen. Outside records include Fellujah (15 May. PNC), at Hindiyah, frequent in early April, but none after 10th April 43 (Maclaren), appearing in small numbers after 23 July (Maclaren); on L. Habbaniyah on 11 August 42. In November 45 it was seen at Ali Gharbi, Fao and Basrah. Williamson reports it as common at Khamisiyah near Basrah on 14 December, while Maclaren saw them in the ditches in the Rest Camp at Maqil in March and two near Zubair on 6th June 43.

North. 18 records.

							E	E			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
W	W	W					W		W	W	W

Small numbers were seen on the river at Penjwin 30 August-19 September 42. In Mosul its status is much as at Baghdad, though smaller numbers are met with, many records being of solitary birds. The last date was 30 April 44 when 10 were seen. (Williamson). It confines itself to the streams on the Mosul plain and was not recorded from the mountains proper.

117. SPOTTED REDSHANK.

طيئوى دكنا، - ١١٧

Tringa erythropus (Pallas).**C & S.** 15 records.

B	B	B								B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			K					K			

At Baghdad it is occasional in the winter from November to March and two on 11 May 42 at the Bund Pools were already in summer plumage. It frequents these pools, the Diyala River and the banks of the Tigris. No more than 5 were seen at a time.

At Kut it was seen first in the year on 22 September 43 on the Suweicha and there are several records for the spring passage in April (11 in summer plumage on 7th April 44). Last seen on 23rd April. One seen between Fao and Basrah (12 November 45) and c40 on a pool 11 miles north of Qurnah on 9 November 45. Its status appears to be a regular passage migrant in small numbers, with a few birds lingering to winter in suitable localities.

North. 5 records.

Between 5-19 September 42 seen three times on a pool in the Penjwin valley, and one on the river at Choarta on 20 August 45. At Mosul I only saw one in pools by the ruins of Hadhra in the desert. Maclaren found it not uncommon through the winter of 1943 along the river at Mosul. Its status is as for the Central area, though there are obviously fewer localities suitable for its winter residence

118. GREENSHANK.

طيئوى خضراء الساق - ١١٨

Tringa nebularia (Gunnerus).**C & S.** 38 records.

B	B	B					B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	K	K	K	K			K	K	K	K	K

Around Baghdad it occurs regularly as a winter visitor on the margins of the Tigris at Karradah, at Lancashire Bridge on the Diyalah, and on the Washash drain. Not often met with on the Bund Pools. Usually seen in ones and twos wading and, on one occasion, swimming in the water. Birds were not heard to call in their winter quarters. Records run from 28 August-27 April (both PNC). Maclaren found them most numerous at Hindiyah in April and recorded a few up to 2 May 43. He also saw 3 near

Basrah on 6 June. They first returned to Hindiyah on 23 July.

At Kut also, it was most often seen on the banks of the Tigris, though recorded in more months from 25 August 43-7 May near Hai, and also occasionally seen on flood waters, especially on the margins of the Suweicha. It was noted at Tel Ziliab Police Post at the foot of the Pusht-i-Ku on 9 April 44. Proceeding down the Tigris in November 45 by road, they were noted as more frequent, eight being seen in a day on the Buteira canal at Amara and several on the banks of the Shatt-Al-Arab at Basrah. Williamson records 7 at Khamisiyah near Basrah (14 December 45). Outside records include Shahraban (2 and 23 September 45) and Fellujah (15 May), recorded by PNC.

North. 14 records.

									E			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	W	W	W						W	W	W	

At Penjwin, in Eastern Kurdistan I found a flock of c20 on migration on 5 September 42 at a pool. They soon went on and only 2 were there on 19 September 42.

In the Mosul area, as at Baghdad, the birds were seen in winter months on the Tigris, on the Gomel Su, Great Zab and Khosar streams. Two records, away from rivers, were on the Sinjar road 32 miles West of Mosul on 5 February 45, and on 16 April 45 on pools at Hadhra in the desert, where it was in company with Spotted Redshank (*T. erythropus*), Common Sandpiper (*T. hypoleucos*), Green Sandpiper (*T. ochropus*), Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*), Stilt (*Himantopus*) and Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*), on some very salty pools. Gent reports one from Mosul on 20th April 43. Maclaren found it more frequent than other members of the genus, but not numerous in winter at Mosul.

119. MARSH-SANDPIPER.

١١٩ - طيطوى البطانج

Tringa stagnatilis (Bechstein).

C & S. 23 records.

	B	B	B				B	B	B		B	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K				K	K	K			

A regular visitor to the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar Baghdad, being most numerous when first arrived. (flocks of 15-20 on 28 July 42, flocks of 50-60 on 19 August being abundant and with

Stilts (*Himantopus*) and Stints (*Calidris temminckii*) the dominant waders, presumably on autumn passage). Thereafter in small numbers until March 23rd when the last few were seen. These birds provided wonderful opportunities for study at close quarters, and the sight of large flocks of these flying round calling with legs trailing, and even more Black-Winged Stilts in the air at the same time was satisfying. Calls heard include a single plaintive 'tchuiwe', and high 'chick-chick-chick-chick etc.' call, but not as shrill nor as weak as that of the Stilts.

At Kut, where there are fewer good wader pools of any permanence they were first noted on the Suweicha at the end of August and thereafter till half-way through October. They were seen again on spring passage in April, frequently in small numbers. I saw one near Ali Gharbi on 7 November 45. Maclaren saw one on 4 April 43 at Hindiyah, and found them frequent there in the first half of August. I saw four at Samarra on 4 May 44.

North. 3 records.

Four paused at the 'Pelican Pool' in the Penjwin valley stream on 6 September 42. Maclaren saw one at Mosul on 12 December 43, and I saw two by the roadside between Mosul-Tel Kotchek on 10 April 45. In the north they appear to be a scarce passage migrant, and were not seen at all in the mountain regions.

120. TEREK SANDPIPER.

١٢٠ - طيطوى مقبرة

Xenus cinerea (Güldenstädt).

There are four records. Maclaren found them abundant on the Hammar Lake at Basrah on the flood edge on 23 May 43. Boswell and I saw a single one on the bund Pools at Baghdad on 20 August 42. It was feeding with Curlew-Sandpiper (*Calidris testacea*), Stilt (*Himantopus*), Temminck's Stint (*C. temminckii*), Green (*Tringa ochropus*) and Marsh Sandpiper. Smaller than the Curlew-Sandpiper and than the Marsh Sandpiper (*T. stagnatilis*), it was intermediate in size between Green and Wood Sandpipers. Two seen in the same locality on 24 April 44 with Wood Sandpiper (*T. glareola*) were a bit larger than the latter. I also saw one on the Khor Abdullah mud banks at Fao. For the benefit of observers working in 'Iraq I add my field notes. "It had long recurved slender dark bill, pale orange yellow, delicate legs. A trim Sandpiper body. Upper parts grey brown, beneath white. A grey

brown suffusion on throat and upper breast. Axillaries white. In flight the rump is grey brown. White only showing on secondaries and more pronounced on inner secondaries. In behaviour, solitary, lingering behind when others fly, and returning to the same spit of mud (from the August bird)".

Its status in Central 'Iraq is that of a scarce passage migrant.

121. LITTLE STINT.

١٢١ - فطيرة صغيرة

Calidris minuta (Leisler).

C & S. 6 records.

							B	B	B			B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

It is less common at Baghdad than *C. temminckii*. It was frequent at the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar on 28 July 42 and abundant on 21 November 41. At Kut it was only seen on passage near Hai in the irrigated tails of cultivation on 10 May 43. Maclaren found it abundant in early August at Hindiyah, while there were a few up to 13 September.

North. 4 records.

At Penjwin on the river on autumn passage on 6th and 8th September 42 and recorded from the Tigris at Mosul on 27 February 45, and from Hadhra in the desert S.W. of Mosul on 16 April 45.

122. TEMMINCK'S STINT.

١٢٢ - فطيرة تمنك

Calidris temminckii (Leisler).

C & S. 30 records.

B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
			K	K	K			K	K		

First recorded in the year at Baghdad Bund Pools on 28 July 42 when it was very abundant. In 1945 none had arrived by 5 August. It is frequent in August, September and until November. There are fewer after the New Year and the last recorded was on 5 May 44. It is one of the characteristic waders of the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar Baghdad, always being more numerous than the Little Stint (*C. minuta*). When humans, hawks or crows disturb them, they arise in flocks uttering their 'pt-r-r-r' calls,

and wheel quickly showing the glittering white under wings, and settling again close-by.

At Kut they were first recorded on 30 August 43 on the Suweicha and last date was 17 May 43 near Hai. In April they are often seen in flood pools by the roadside. Maclaren found them fairly numerous at Hindiyah until 22 April 43, but saw none in Autumn. I saw them at Samararrah on 4 May 44.

North. 3 records.

Recorded from Penjwin valley (5 September 42) and two dates from Mosul area, on the Great Zab at Quwair on 27 October 44, and on 9 November on the Baqaq Su.

123. DUNLIN.

١٢٣ - دريعة

Calidris alpina (L).

C & S. 35 records.

B	B	B	B	B		B	B	B		B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		K	K	K				K	K	K	K

First recorded at Baghdad on 26 July 42 (c20) on the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar, frequent flocks in September and last recorded at Baghdad on 24 April. Typically found on the Bund Pools, the numbers varying with the degree to which these are desiccated. PNC has a record of Dunlin near Fellujah on 15 May 45, and Maclaren saw many on the Hammar Lake on 23 May 43 with fewer on the 6th June. At Hindiyah he saw them on 22 April 43, and one on 1st August 43.

At Kut they were first recorded on 22 September 43, were the dominant wader on 9 December 42, in flocks of up to c100 on 22 April 44, and last recorded on 28 April. They were abundant on the Khor Abdullah banks at Fao. (11 November 45).

North.

There are few records. A few were on passage in the Penjwin valley in September 42, Boswell saw one at Mosul on 20 July, and Maclaren who, as I, saw none throughout the winter at Mosul notes 6 in winter plumage on 24 March 43.

the wing appears very dark by contrast in flight. The call is a twitter like the Temmincks' Stint (*C. temminckii*), but louder.

Small parties of waders with Dunlin on the Suweicha lake at Kut on 21 April 44 were also, I think, of this species, but the record must remain a probable as no specimens were obtained and this is not a known habitat such as the Khor Abdullah. The presence of other waders that spend a maritime winter, on passage on waters in Central Iraq makes it not unlikely that Broad-billed Sandpipers do in fact pass through.

127. RUFF.

حجولة - ١٢٧

Philomachus pugnax (L).

C & S. 34 records.

	B	B	B	B					B			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	K	K	K	K			K	K	K			

This is a common passage migrant, the birds not hurrying through the area. At Baghdad spring passage began in February and March with parties of up to 10 birds. PNC recorded large numbers in 1945, with c200 on 24th March and c100 on 1 April. There are a few in May, up to the 11th. Maclaren saw 10 at Hindiyah on 4 April 43, and found them numerous from 23 July-13 August 43, many males having remains of the summer plumage.

At Kut, the first record of spring passage in 43 was on 7th April when c10 were seen on pools by the roadside. By the 11th April they had become the dominant wader, and there were frequent records through April and May, getting fewer in numbers in May with the last record on 17th May near Hai. Birds were in breeding plumage on 4th May. In the following year, 1944, they were very abundant on 24 February, feeding in flooded cultivation with Starlings (*Sturnus*) and Black-Tailed Godwits (*Limosa limosa*); and by the 23rd of March were the dominant wader on pools in the district. Thereafter they were frequent but no larger flocks than 30-50 were seen. Last seen on 28 April 44 after which date, I went north and did not meet it en route for, or in Kurdistan. First returned birds were seen on the Suweicha on 30 August and they were still frequent by 15 October 43. There appear to be two peak waves of migration. The birds frequent pools and flood spills, but are frequently met with in packs on the road especially in the evening, and a motorist may have to slow for them.

North. 5 records.

There were 4 in the Penjwin valley on 15th September 42, and Maclaren found a single bird there with a broken leg in autumn 43. I saw 6 migrants on the road between Mosul-Ain Sifni (14 March 45) and 5 on the R. Khosar at Mosul on 23 March. Maclaren saw a flock of c20 by the river at Mosul during the last week of March 1943.

Family RECURVIROSTRIDAE

128. AVOCET.

١٢٨ - نكات • طراد الباشي (في العمارة)

Recurvirostra avosetta L.

C & S. 23 records.

B	B	B		B	B	B	B		B		B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Near Baghdad, a flock of c60 were seen on the Hinaidi floods on 1 July 42 and 50 were met with on the Shatt-Al-Gass ox-bow loop of the Tigris at Suweira (9 December 43), but otherwise they were seen in small numbers (—7) mainly on migration. When disturbed they fly around in a close but loosely co-ordinated flock with sinuous convolutions. Maclaren noted that they were less common than Stilts (*Himantopus*) at Hindiyah during the summer of 43, preferring the stretches of riverside mud to the bare marshes. Williamson saw flocks of 10-50 at Khamisiyah in December 45, where they were more abundant than the Stilt. Gubbins records 1 at Shithatha west of Kerbela on 13 February, and at Beledruz in March 37. PNC records one from near Fellujah on 25 May 45, and we saw them at Deltawah (Khalis) on 27 February 42. At Kut they are infrequent and sporadic in appearance. Most records are from April and May of birds that appeared with a rush of migrants. They are often seen in roadside pools following on flooding.

North. 1 record.

The solitary record from the North is of 2 seen at Mosul on 24 December 43 by Maclaren.

129. BLACK-WINGED STILT. (في العمارة) كرسوع ، ابو مغازل ، ١٢٩ -

Himantopus himatopus (L).

C & S. 62 records.

B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K	K	K			K	K	K		

If an ornithologist can endure the smell of dumped offal in which Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*), Hooded Crows (*Corvus capellanus*), Egyptian Vultures (*Neophron*) and 'Pi-dogs' feed with evident relish, the Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar behind Baghdad East are the place to see Stilts at all times of the year, often in large numbers. In fact we have seen Stilts paddling in blood. Some sample estimates and counts read:

29 November 41. c20.

27 September 42. c50.

1 January 44. c100.

21 October 45. c50-52.

16 November 45. c40.

11 November 45. c100.

But it is abundant for all months except June and influxes are noted in March (43) and after the breeding season at the end of July. They were still abundant on 5 May. PNC records nests with eggs near Fellujah on 9 June 44. It is one of the least shy of waders throughout most of the year, flocks often lingering on when other birds have taken flight. Feeds in parties, moving forward with the whole body and tibia bent together and the neck held in a rigid position. The bend comes at the tibio-tarsal joint, and as these joints project outwards their feeding gait looks bow-legged. As the right foot advances and bends the beak swoops down sideways to the right and up again. In May they were more nervous, and did not seem to like the White-winged Black Terns (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) at the Bund Pools. When the latter came hovering over in a party, the Stilts would get up and fly away piping and cackling.

Around Kut it was not seen in winter but occurs in small numbers from March-May and on the Suweicha lake from August-October. Never more than 3 or 4 were seen near Kut. In the desert crops E. of Hai this species and White-winged Black Terns chased off a Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*). In November they were seen further south, a flock of 24 recorded near Qurnah.

- 23 April 44. Bund Pools. 15.
 14 April 44. Bund Pools. 25 (Boswell).
 19 August 42. Bund Pools. 1. (none on 20th).

Fellujah Bridge :

- 25 April 47. Frequent c50. (Boswell) and on 4 May 47 many flying in at dusk.

Kut :

- 7 April 44. c98 on flood lake.
 12 April 44. Aziziyah road, a few in roadside pools.
 21 April 44. Suweicha lake 1.
 23 April 44. Husseiniyah. 6 of which 2 with red-neck.
 9 May 43. Desert E. of Hai, a few on flood spill.
 16 May 43. c30 on a salty flood pool outside Kut town.
 22 October 43. Suweicha lake 40.

Basrah :

- 23 May 43. Hammar Lake. large flocks totalling hundreds (c8-1,100) birds on 23 May and 2-300 on 6 June on edge of flooded lake. (Maclaren).
 (Vide. Journ. Bombay N.H. Soc. Vol. 46, No. 2, p, 401).

Though the flocks rise and fly together, turning swiftly, uttering an agitated rippling call, they do not all feed facing in the same direction. The 'twirling' behaviour was noted. None were seen in the north.

Family BURHINIDAE

132. STONE-CURLEW.

۱۳۲ - کروان جبل

Burhinus oedicephalus (L).

C & S. 7 records.

B												B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
K												

There are few records. Three in shingly desert between Baghdad — Habbaniyah (9 December 42), one on the Tigris banks (6 January 42), two records of single birds from Kut liwa, one in the desert E. of Hai (22 May) and one on tails of cultivation nearer

'kek' then 'kekchek' ... 'chek'. In July 42 flocks were seen near the Hinaidi floods outside Baghdad but when the floods had dried out by 23 July, were not met with. Single birds and pairs were seen in the crops and desert E. of Hai in May 43 and they were among the birds noted at the Suweicha in June 43. In the dried grass desert near the margin of the lake parties of grey brown immature birds were seen (30 August 43). In the desert between Kut — Bedrah they were observed soaring high in thermals. c50 were seen at Dibuni on 23 April 44, and some of these appeared to have black axillaries as did birds seen at Baghdad in 42. However no specimens were obtained, and the records of possible *nordmanni* are subsumed under *pratincola* (Meinertzhagen (1954) considers *nordmanni* to be a colour phase of *pratincola*). PNC records several from Shahraban on 2 September 45. Maclaren did not see them at Hindiyah in 43 till April 10 and they were not common until the end of that month. The same observer found them sparse round the Hammar Lake near Basrah in May 43.

North.

Vosper notes a pair crossing the river at Qaiyarah in mid-June and a flock in cornland a few miles north at the same time. I saw them but once in the Wadi Qassab below Mosul on 5 May 44.

134. CREAM-COLOURED COURSER.

١٣٤ - جليل ، كروان عسل

Cursorius cursor (Latham).

C & S. 13 records.

We confirm its preference for pebbly desert ground, though a pair was seen close to the Bund Pools at Baghdad (5 August 45), and also on uncultivated 'bor' near Husseinayah, Kut (26 October 45). In fact it comes in closer to cultivation outside the breeding season than does the Houbara (*Chlamydotis undulata*). It was recorded from Diyalah Bridge (7 December 41), near Habaniyah (9 December 41), 2 pairs at Shithatha W. of Kerbela (2 February 42 per R.E. Gubbins). It was quite frequent on gravel desert on the Baghdad — Mosul road near Taji and Tekrit in May and August. My most interesting record was of a pair with two fledged young on a stony plateau between Zorbaliyah and Ziliab on the Persian frontier N.E. of Kut on 9 April. This is an

early date. Equally interesting is a very late nest with one egg found by Boswell in the first week of September 1946 in the Injanah Desert beyond Deltawah (Khalis). A bird seen out of the breeding season uttered a curious call that I rendered 'tur-witr', possibly the same as that recorded by O.V. Aplin in the Handbook (Witherby 1940). Maclaren at Basrah recorded a pair near Shuabih (February 43), and they occasionally passed over his camp at Zubair, and were seen by the Hammar Lake in May 43. They were not common in the area. Williamson records four pairs between Shuabih — Luqait (1 December 45). At Hindiyah, Maclaren saw pairs in July and August in the scrubbiest parts of the plain, and did not find it common between Baghdad — Rutbah in mid-October. A bird I watched near Baghdad stood upright like a Stone Curlew (*Burhinus*), ran away, stopping abruptly to stand upright again. In this position its coloration rendered it indistinguishable from a stone in the desert.

There were no records from north of Tekrit.

Family LARIDAE

135. LESSER BLACK-GULL.

١٣٥ - نورس اسود الظهر

Larus fuscus L.

I saw c30 with slate backs on the mud banks of the Khor Abdullah at Fao on 11 November 45. Probably these were *taiymyrensis* (= *affinis.auct*) *But.* Maclaren saw two at Qaiyarah on 27 March 43. No other records.

136. HERRING-GULL.

١٣٦ - نورس فضي ، سميجي

Larus argentatus Pontoppidan.

C & S. 59 records.

B	B	B	B	B		B				B	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	K	K	K				K	K	K	K	K

At Baghdad it occurs from November to May, and at Kut from September to April (Last date for adults at Kut 21 April 44 on the Suweicha). Juveniles were frequent on the Hinaidi floods

outside Baghdad on 1 July 42, and on 5 May 44 Boswell counted 83 immature birds and it appeared on the Tigris at Kut on 27 August 43. The largest numbers seen at Baghdad were c300 on 26 February, while at Kut the flocks had concentrated on 23-4 February 44. By the 6th of April in that year the centre of population had drifted down stream from Kut to Sheikh Sa'ad, a distance of twenty miles, where large numbers in all plumages and scattered in groups of 3-10 were seen. This flock included many immature birds which had not previously been at Kut. At this time the Herring-Gulls, apart from odd stragglers, had deserted Kut itself. At Baghdad they have been seen to maintain their position in the fast flowing Tigris, taking off after they have been swept back some hundreds of yards, to fly lazily back and settle again. They are inveterate camp followers at Basrah where Maclaren found them at Shuaibah, and abundant on the Shatt-Al-Arab and round the docks. They have been seen scavenging some distance out in the desert between Baghdad-Hillah. Maclaren found them abundant at Hindiyah up to 12th April, and on 2 May saw several small parties flying upstream. The impression of their distribution is that they spread up rivers in autumn, concentrate again in February and then drift downstream in March. Non-breeding birds may linger. Outside Baghdad and Kut they were met with at Shahmiyah (7 October, 21 September), on the Diyala R. near Baquba (December). Birds seen at Baghdad in January had the beak dark at the tip, and legs yellow brown. Boswell found Herring Gulls and Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*) gorging on locusts from a flying swarm at Habbaniyah on 13 April 45. Birds on the Suweicha Late at Kut were calling on 21 April 44.

North.

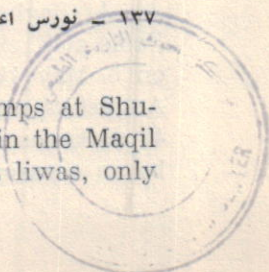
Three records. One at Eski Kelek on the Great Zab (29 December 44). Maclaren saw a few at Mosul on 23 March 43 and more a week later; while I saw one on the Khosar at Mosul on 21 March 45. They do not spend the winter at Mosul.

137. COMMON GULL.

Larus canus L.

Maclaren records this species as frequenting camps at Shuaibah between 17 February-2 March, and as sparse in the Maqil dock area. It is not a bird of the Baghdad and Kut liwas, only

۱۳۷ - نوس اعتيادي



one being seen on the Suweicha marsh on 21 October 43. Maclaren notes odd birds at Mosul in January and March, in 1943. I saw none there.

138. BLACK-HEADED GULL.

١٣٨ - نورس اسود الرأس

Larus ridibundus L.

C & S. 23 records.

B	B	B	B	B		B					B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		K	K				K				

Birds seen in Baghdad from 9 November to 5th May. A few frequent the Bund Pools, but it is more familiar in a flock by the King Faisal Bridge on the Tigris where PNC recorded up to 70 at a time with peak numbers in March. By 12th March some heads are turning black. At Kut they move upstream in March and April. At Hindiyah Maclaren only saw them in early April. He found them sparse in the docks at Basrah in February, but abundant on the Shatt-Al-Arab. Four birds in winter plumage were on the Hinaidi floods on 12 July 42.

North.

Maclaren found it not uncommon through the winter 1943 at Mosul, becoming more frequent after mid-March. I saw none there in 1944-45.

139. SLENDER-BILLED GULL.

١٣٩ - نورس مستدق المنقار

Larus genei Brehm.

C & S. 32 records.

		B	B	B		B					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		K	K	K	K	K		K		K	K

At Baghdad, we only have records from 23 March on Bund Pools at Sheikh Omar, c30 flying down the Washash on 21 April, on 5 May 44 at the Bund Pools and c8 on Bund Pools on 20 August. A very large flock of gulls on the Hinaidi floods in July 42 were suspected to be of this species. At Baghdad it appears to be an occasional wanderer. Maclaren found it numerous at Hin-

diyah from June-September. It is at Kut that most of my own records were made. Small numbers (—20) were occasionally seen on the Tigris in November and January, but were not a regular feature of the bird-life. At the end of March and in April there are, however, signs of movement and the numbers increase. In 1943 on 14-15 April numbers were moving up-stream between Kut and Sheikh Sa'ad, the birds proceeding in the leisurely manner described for *L. argentatus*, except that in this case they have to make up for downstream drift by further flights upstream. This method of progress suggests that there is some food available in the river at this time which the flocks wish to secure. On 19 April 43 there were countless numbers of these gulls on a short stretch of river at Kut, drifting down and then flying back in parties. I counted about one quarter of the flock and reached c700. This may have been the concentration seen a few days previously at Sheikh Sa'ad. In 1944 the first were seen on 20 March inland on irrigated fields, and were frequent (c30+) on the flood pools at Kut on 23rd March. On 26th March larger parties (30, 50, 70, 120 counted one afternoon) were on the river, and on 6th April a huge flock of c600 were seen at Fellahiyah downstream of Kut, and a further concentration (7th April) just upstream of the barrage. In 1943, Gulls were met with throughout May flying to and from their roosts at dawn and sundown in the grain farms of the Hai area, which we were estimating. The roosts are in temporary 'khors' or flood-spills. They are very noisy at the roosts. It is a common sight to come on flocks of them all over the dusty road, collecting just before sundown prior to the 'fly-in'. The units of these flocks number between 5-20. In the daytime they are met with over cultivation. In the first week in June, a trip was made down the Tigris from Kut-Basrah. Lower down the river, the density of this species decreases. There were a few at Kumait on flood waters with immature Herring Gulls (*L. argentatus*), and none below that in the Qurnah marshes. From 5-15th June it was still plentiful at Kut, but not in the numbers seen on 19 April.

Small numbers were on the river in August with immature birds, but none were seen on the Tigris in an extensive tour between Kut — Suweira in September; they were, however, present on the Suweicha lake in large numbers, c260 adults being seen on 15 October 43. As P.N.C. has no records for this species, and it is likely to be overlooked or confused with *L. ridibundus* in winter. I append a few field notes. It is about the size of a *L. ridibun-*

dus, and resembles that species in its winter plumage, except that it has a snow white head with no dark spot, and the neck is rather long and erect when swimming, the stern well jerked up in water, and the wing feathers are not crossed as in *L. ridibundus* at their extremities when at rest. The wings are long, blue grey, have a white leading edge and the wing darkens towards the apex, this being visible in the under wing also. The flight is strong and heavy. Underparts and under tail coverts are white, and the breast has a rosy flush in spring plumage. The bill is long and decurved and dark during the winter and spring. A table of dates and soft part colours is given:—

23 March 42. BD. Bill dark. Legs red.

26 March 44. Kut. Bill black.

19 April 43. Kut. Bills black (a few red).

13-16 May 43. In this period all legs and beaks have turned from dark to red: corresponding with the first hot spell, with low humidity.

20 August 43. Kut-BD. bill and legs red.

In breeding plumage the bill and legs are a coral red.

This evidence is by itself fragmentary, but here is evidently a problem that could profitably be investigated. From the specimens in the British Museum (12 examined) I was unable to reach any conclusions on the colour-change of soft parts. Immature birds have the white tail with a broad sub-terminal dark band and some brown on the wing coverts. The call is noisy and quacking, sounding like 'Ghagh' (the Arabic name for Gulls). I found some on the Husseiniyah road near Kut on 10 June each with a mature locust in its bill.

At Basrah, they were frequent in small numbers on the Shatt-Al-Arab in November flying upstream at sunset, and Maclaren found them abundant, the majority being immature, on the Hammar and Zubair lakes in May and early June. None were seen in the North.

140. WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN. خطاف بحرى مبيض الجناح ١٤٠

Chlidonias leucoptera (Temminck).

C & S. 30 records.

				B				B	B			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
				K	K				K	K		

At the pools on the edge of Baghdad city they are passage migrants being seen only in May, August and September. On the river at Kut the same may be said to apply. In the second half of April and in early May it appears that the tern fraternities drift up the river, the centre of density of the migration moving slowly up and taking advantage of the insects around the crops at this time of the year. The early harvest may preclude them staying in large numbers. From the rivers they spread out over the cultivation strip which may be, say, fifteen miles deep on either side of the Gharraf. Between 3-20th May 43 they were the dominant birds of the wheat and barley lands. Wherever you look over the sea of green and yellowing corn the vivid black and white of these graceful birds can be seen against the blue sky as they wheel and hawk. Local centres may form round the flooded depressions and a few pairs may stay to breed. The inconstancy of depth, extent and even existence of these 'spills', which the farmer may turn to his advantage by diverting their flow over areas which he will cultivate in the ensuing year (chibbis), probably precludes regular breeding sites; and this applies to many of 'Iraq's water birds. On the fringes of the cultivated areas where the 'tails' merge into and spread green fingers into the desert, Terns of any kind are rarely seen. It was noted on 16th May that they were not over the crops once these had been cut. By the 20th May they were less frequent than *Ch. hybrida*, while on 25th May neither was as common as *Sterna hirundo* though the numbers of the latter never attained those of this species in early May. Travelling by boat from Kut-Basrah on 2-3rd June neither this nor *Ch. hybrida* were seen. On 27 August 1943 birds which were juveniles or changing to winter plumage were on shoals on the Tigris and up to 8 September many were seen on the river between Kut-Suweira.

At Baghdad c30 were in winter plumage on 18 September 43. Some had returned to the Brick Pools at Baghdad on 7 August 45, and were in mixed plumage. The last seen at Kut in 1945 were c10 hovering round the masses of fish which were endeavouring to get up the sluices at the Barrage. They do not feed on fish such as these. I have spent much time watching them in flight over pools. They fly straight, swoop on to the water without touching, flutter, swoop forward and so on. Some, at Baghdad, were hovering and settling in parties on an island, with the wind against them. They dip by a swift jerk of the centre tail feathers and the wings also take a part, but it needs a ciné or high-speed flash

camera to analyse the movement. It was a beautiful sight in the early morning to see these hovering flocks just keeping loitering against the wind. I have never seen them plunge into water like a Little Tern (*S. albifrons*). They are not silent, but have an open Tern-like call, quite distinct from the hoarse wheeze of *Ch. hybrida*. They are, of course, far more striking in plumage, and more swallow-like than this species, and are smaller than a *St. hirundo*. Flocks at the Baghdad pools disconcerted the Stilts (*Himantopus*) who would get up noisily when they appeared overhead. I have seen them mob a Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*). When they are at rest on sandbanks the tail and wings curve upwards like scimitars. The bills (but not the legs) are black in winter and remain so well into the breeding season. On 11 May at Baghdad beaks of all were black and legs red-brown, as were some 150 birds in varied plumage in August. The dominance of black-billed birds at Baghdad was confirmed by Boswell when they came through in May 43.

Maclaren saw several on a flood edge near Zubair in the Basrah area on 23 May and 6th June, and there were many over the marshes with others moving slowly spstream af Hindiyah on and after 2 May 43.

North. 13 records.

W
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
E E

At Penjwin in East Kurdistan there were both parties of migrating birds and diurnal movements to roost in L. Marivan just over the Persian border. Up to 20 birds being seen frequently between 6-19th September 42 when I left. Maclaren also saw them on the Blue Lake (L. Marivan) in Autumn 43. One on a stream near Choarta at (2250 ft.) on 20 August 45 was in almost complete winter plumage.

On the west side I was not in Kurdistan from May onwards (in 1945) when they are most likely to be passing through; but in May 44 I saw 6 at Wadi Qassab South of Mosul (5 May) and they were present on the Khabur river at Zakho (9 May).

141. WHISKERED TERN.

١٤١ - خطاف بحري ذى الشارب

Chlidonias hybrida (Pallas).

C & S. 20 records.

B												
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
K		K	K	K	K		K	K	K			

It is not a conspicuous bird at Baghdad. Two or three were hovering round the smaller Bund Pools on 7 January 42. At Kut it was met with in most months except November and December, though it was seen lower down the river in November (c10 over flooded rice near Ali Gharbi, 7 November 45 and two on a piece of floating debris in the Shatt-Al-Arab on 10th November). In 1943 at Kut c15 were seen on sandbanks with *L. genei* on 19 April, and in early May it was with *Ch. leucoptera*, a characteristic bird over the wheat and barley crops on the left bank of the Gharraf river near Hai, but towards the end of May neither was as frequent as the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*). When the Suweicha lake was visited on 16 June, one pair was seen, and from their clamour they probably had a nest. Juveniles and birds in winter plumage were on the Tigris on 27 August, and they were to be seen at the Suweicha in September and October, being abundant on 15th October. One solitary bird was seen on a sandbank in January and they began to re-appear over flooded arable land or over pools by the last week in March. In 1944, of several, one was in breeding plumage on 7th April, and c40 were seen at the Suweicha on 21st April. As this species was often seen in company with White-Winged Black Tern (*Ch. leucoptera*), some comparative notes on field characters may not be out of place. On the ground and on sandbanks, it appears a small scraggy tern, slighter in build with a shorter tail than *Ch. leucoptera*. In flight it is steadier, but has the desultory flight characteristic of marsh terns. The winter birds at Baghdad appeared short and stumpy with scarcely forked, short tail and short sharp pointed bill held with head directed well down. The wings though long appear rounded for terns, and in many ways, unlike *Ch. leucoptera*, it looks gull-like. The flight is heavy, leisurely and strong. Hawking round the ponds it would twist and plunge at the water and then wheel up. The heavier flight, the head directed down and the characteristic call a strangled 'ghizz', harsh and almost a soft growl, are good characters for separating it from *Ch. leucoptera*. The winter birds had

145. LITTLE TERN.

خطاف بحري صغير - ١٤٥

Sterna albifrons Pallas.

C & S. 30 records.

			B	B	B	B	B	B				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
			K		K		K	K				

A summer visitor. First records of the year: Baghdad 21 April 42 (PNC), Kut 21 April 44. Last recorded 17 September 43 Baghdad (Gent), and 28 September 45, Kut. Although a lot of ground was covered especially cultivation near the Tigris in April and May 43 around Kut and Hai, no Little Terns were seen during the big migration of the other terns. This is perhaps due to their diet being primarily fishy whereas the other terns were all seen to take insects. On 13 July 42 with the floods at Hinaidi near Baghdad, they became very abundant, fishing in the broad dykes at the edges of roads. The fish were by then concentrated and dying in hundreds as the water evaporated. It may here be mentioned that in the desert between Bedrah — Aziziyah in October 43, I found in the dry road ditches hundreds of dead and mummified Jurri fish (*Silurus triostegus*), presumably left by flood waters coming from the north, and they showed no signs of bacterial decay in this dry spot.

In September 45 at Kut, Little Terns were common in various plumages at a time when the river was unusually low, on the sand spits or fishing round the sluices of the Barrage. (—12 seen).

On a trip down the Tigris from Kut-Basrah early in June 43 they were frequent from Kut-Sheikh Sa'ad (2 June) and thereafter scarce e.g. only half a dozen being seen in the Qurnah marshes. In April 44 a few were seen at Kut, but they were either on the river or on the nearby Suweicha lake. Recorded at Hab-baniyah in May (PNC) and August, Maclaren saw several on 23rd May and 6th June on the Hammar Lake at Basrah and at Hindiyah found them quite common by 20th April, but they left the area by July. Juveniles were seen at Baghdad on 28 July 42, and on 19th August parents were still feeding young.

Their habitat appears to be more restricted than the other terns, especially on passage, being found only on the rivers and large bodies of water in Central and South 'Iraq, though frequenting smaller streams in Kurdistan.

North. 4 records.

A pair on the Khosar stream, fishing, at Mosul (5 May) and on the Rubar Dohuk at Aloka (6 May 44), one at Alton Kopru (1 May 45, PNC) and quite common on the Tigris at Qaiyarah in June and July (Vosper).

146. LESSER CRESTED TERN.

١٤٦ - خطاف بحري متوج صغير

Sterna bengalensis Lesson.

Maclaren who is familiar with this species saw a few on the Khor Zubair on 29 May 43.

North - 1908

A part of the known species of North 1908 and on the other hand at Alaska (May 1908) and in the State of Texas (May 1908) and quite common on the Texas (May 1908) and in the State of Texas (May 1908).

THE TEXAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Department who is familiar with the species and a few of the specimens of the species.



كلية الآداب والعلوم

متحف التاريخ الطبيعي العراقي

نشرة رقم (٩)

ملاحظات حقلية عن الطيور
في العراق

(القسم الاول)

وضع

هـ . ج . مور

ب . ع . (كمبردج)

مدرس علم الاحياء في مدرسة كلايسمور ، دورست (انكلترة)

و

جارلس بوزويل

ب . ع . شرف (لندن) ، د . ف . فخرية (بغداد)

استاذ علم الاحياء في الكلية الطبية الملكية العراقية ببغداد



مطبعة الرابطة - بغداد

١٩٥٦

