

NOTES ON GENERAL ZOOLOGY.

By F. H. HAINES.

Arachnida. Notes by arachnologists are much needed. The list given in the *Victoria History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* probably contains but a third of the species occurring in the County. The season of 1940 appeared a poor one for spiders, though plenty of the tent-like webs of *Pisaura mirabilis* Clk. and the characteristic cavern-like webs of *Agalena labyrinthica* Clk. were to be seen amidst rough growth in the summer. The egg-cocoons of an *Agroeca*, no doubt *A. proxima* Cb., were in abnormal abundance, here, on herbage and woodwork. Before the silk was covered, for prudential reasons, with earth, they were extremely pretty objects. The common *Aranea* (*Epeira*) *diademata* Clk. was less abundant than usual and developed later in the autumn. The handsome *A. quadrata* Clk. was not seen until September, but on 21st one was seen preying on a wasp. Species of Wolf Spider (*Lycosa*) appeared to have an unusual second brood: females of both *L. amentata* Clk. and *L. lugubris* Wlk. were noted carrying egg-bags in late September. A two-fifths grown *Dolomedes fimbriatus* Wlk., a marsh spider, entered the house on 3rd November! Harvestmen (*Phalangidea*) seem fond of milk. They appear able to run over the webs of true spiders (*Araneae*) and devour the owners.

Amphibia. Common Frog (*Rana temporaria* L.). Frog-spawn, which had evidently been shed some time, was still unhatched at Linwood on 25th March. Common Toads (*Bufo vulgaris* Laur.) were still in the open, unhibernated, on 2nd November. The Common Smooth Newt (*Lophium punctatus* Gray) was breeding in numbers in a pond here in April.

Reptilia. The Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara* Jacq.) was not observed. The Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis* L.) appeared at Bournemouth on 11th March (FCF). A small one was caught by a cat here on 5th April: it was extremely abundant in April and continued so till the latter part of September, as did the common Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis* L.), which was not noticed until 5th May. The Grass Snake (*Tropidonotus natrix* Sch.) was seen on 1st May, and was not very common later. The Adder (*Vipera berus* L.) appeared on a bank at Linwood as early as 25th February (HL). F.C.F. noted two near Bournemouth on 11th March. It was common here. A large, very lethargic, female was seen on 21st April, and on 1st May it and a Grass Snake were basking side by side. A half-grown one was found in shade, very torpid, quite late in the evening on 6th September.

Cheiroptera. Bats, other than the Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* Sch.) were hardly seen. A bat noticed, chased by a Sparrow-Hawk, on 17th October by daylight, may, from its size, have been Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri* Kuhl.). R.W.C. reports a very large bat which he thinks is a Serotine (*Vesperugo serotinus* Blass.), as having a beat across Ringwood. Though occurring in four continents, it is rare in England, but Mr. W. R. G. Bond caught one at Tyneham, in Dorset, on 6th May, 1939, and several are recorded from near Lowestoft in 1939 and 1940 in *Trans. of Suffolk Nat. Soc.*, 1940.

Insectivora. A curious variety of the Water Shrew (*Neomys fodiens* Pal.) was found far from both the stream and ditches on 5th May. A narrow strip along the back was of the usual character, but on both sides the colour was that of the Common Shrew, the size being that of a Water Shrew. A Pigmy Shrew (*Sorex minimus* L.) was caught by a cat on 19th August. Shrews were not common; probably worms and certain of their insect food were scarce at times, owing to the droughts.

Carnivora. A young Otter (*Lutra vulgaris* Erx.) was seen here in Dockens Water on 7th April (Dr. Beddard) and another, apparently about a third-grown, was seen swimming across the West Moors river, above Hern, on 19th June. A cat caught a fine male Weasel, measuring 8 inches from nose to base of tail, the latter 2½ inches long, here on 28th July. Badgers (*Meles taxus* Bodd.) dig out very many of the ground-building wasps' and humble-bees' nests in this neighbourhood.

Ungulata. Four Fallow Deer (*Cervus dama* L.) were seen on Rockford Common on 10th April, two bucks, one with more and one with less developed horns, and two does. A doe frequented here, by itself, for weeks in June, but no fawn was seen. More lately others have been present, probably disturbed in their usual haunts by the military: browsing much on the tops of young ash, and barking willows. A good character for distinguishing between our three species of deer, at any age, when briefly seen before they bound into the brushwood, by the less experienced, is to look at the tail, which is longer than the ear in the Fallow, very short in the Red, and indistinguishable in the much smaller Roe Deer.

Rodentia. Wood Mouse (*Mus sylvaticus* L.) was, as in 1939, not common in January and February. At the end of February, very young to a third-grown young appeared, and the species was rather plentiful at the end of March. In April a pretty fawn variety occurred. A few not quite full-grown were brought in by cats in July, but there was evidently a considerable dearth of rats, mice and voles which continued to October. After midsummer more successful litters must have been produced. A third to two-thirds grown young were common until about the end of the year, with some diminution in December. House Mouse (*Mus musculus* L.). A cat brought in one of the more ruddy, outdoor, variety on the 18th August. Two, more typical, were brought in on the 6th and 8th of November. Bank Vole (*Evotomys glareolus* Sch.). A two-thirds grown specimen was brought in on 8th November, the only one seen for months. It is much rarer here than formerly. Field Vole (*Microtus agrestis* L.) was in small numbers early in 1940. In February, a quarter and third-grown ones were about, and many full-grown specimens in March, after which through July they waned, to become abundant, both young and old, until December, when they were gradually rarer. Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius* L.) was fairly common: a cat had two half-grown young ones on 8th, and another, doubtless of the same litter, on 9th April: an early date. Rabbit (*Lepus cuniculus* L.) were again commoner here than they had been for so many years.