

NOTES ON GENERAL ZOOLOGY, 1943.

By F. H. HAINES.

Arachnida (Spiders and Allies). On 31st March, a young *Pholcus phalangioides* Fu. was remarked, as was one at the same date last year. It was common in our Dorset house, how introduced here is puzzling. After twenty years they could hardly be descendants of the Dorset stock which, curiously, does not appear to have been conveyed with us. On 30th May, a female Fox moth was seen struggling in a web of *Aranea cornuta* Clk. over the brook. The spider bit its prey, and it soon died. "Semblyng" failed. The female had evidently laid its eggs some time ago. On 11th September, a bug, a full-grown *Piexodorus literatus* F., was noticed in the web of *Araneus diadematus* Clk. There was also a *Lucilia* sp. or *Pyrellia* sp., in the web. Such bugs are, in my experience, very unusual as prey, as their evil scent, and probably evil taste, too, would suggest they would be. The spider had its fangs in its victim and was sucking complacently. *Araneus quadratus* Clk. was seen in a damp field on 13th, and one was sent to me from Alton by (LW). This fine species is rather local. On 17th September there was much gossamer, and small *Argiopinae* and *Linyphiinae* were present in the webs spread thickly round. Gossamer was abundant many mornings now to late in the year. The migrants on 26th appeared to be principally *Linyphiinae* and *Erigoninae*. On 10th October, a half-grown specimen of the abundant *Meta segmentata* Clk. and, on 28th November, a very small specimen of the characteristically coloured *Anyphaena accentuata* Wlk. were found. As usual, through the season, the canopies of the Wolf-spider, *Pisaura mirabilis* Clk., were on the stalks of herbage on all rough ground and in every possible spot, and the mothers seen with their egg-bags below their cephalothorax until hung in the web provided.

Amphibia (Frogs, Toads, Newts). On the 19th April the Common Smooth Newt., *Lophium punctatus* Gray, was observed to be back in the pond in numbers for breeding. Frogs and Toads have been very scarce here; one of the few Toads seen was near the house on 22nd August at 10.30 a.m. (S.T.).

Reptilia (Lizards and Snakes). A cat was seen to catch and eat a Sand Lizard, *Lacerta agilis* L., on 22nd March. On 15th April, several lizards of both this species and *Zootoca vivipara* Jacq. were active, and on 23rd May were observed very early in the day both here and on Rockford Common. In early August, and previously, a Sand Lizard again frequented a sunny doorstep, and may have laid its eggs in this warm position, as a very young specimen was seen on 6th August. The species was particularly in evidence on 14th August, but perhaps not as abundant as usual, and less so now than the Common Viviparous Lizard, but the weather had been too ungenial for both. Yet on the 24th the viviparous species was very common. On 6th September a quarter-grown and a half-grown example of this kind were watched on a stub. They continued to frequent it until after mid-October, despite an Adder visitor on 10th September. The smaller was sunning itself on 31st October.

Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis* L.). A large one was noticed on 5th April, another very large one on 10th August; later they appeared rather scarce. (ALFB) Burghclere, says, always seen here in small numbers. (HL) Linwood, saw it first on 17th April.

Grass Snake (*Tropidonotus natrix* Sch.). On 15th April, there was a rather small one in the pond. Later, and in August, the species was noted as uncommon. On 14th September, one was lying near the faggots so much frequented by Adders, and no further examples were seen. (AFLB) Burghclere, says, fairly common, and often swimming in the pond.

Adder (*Vipera berus* L.). On 4th April, a large Adder, very bright and distinct in its markings, was on a path here. It had, probably, just shed its skin after hibernation. On 17th June, another large female was seen. On 20th, quite a colony of perhaps five individuals, though not in evidence together, was noticed on a hummock, covered with faggots, near the brook, one being very large. It seemed a daily habit to lie together on these faggots. Nor was there particularity as regards weather. They would come out often when ungenial, when cloudy, or in a cold wind. Appearing very often at about 6 p.m. (S.T.), they would remain in view until about 9 p.m. (S.T.). On 6th August, a rather small, reddish example, with two large, probably female, snakes, were close together on the site. A daily quiet watch, for many weeks, suggested that late afternoon continued a favourite time for thus basking, or rather airing, gregariously. They were less generally seen before midday, and rain entirely dispersed the party. On 22nd August, one of the larger, although the day was cool, remained coiled, motionless, from before midday till late in the evening, as did a smaller one the next day. On 27th, on a cool, dull day, a large one was out from 10.15 a.m. (Mid-S.T.). They were not seen after the end of September. About the beginning of this month a black Adder was noticed at Waterslade. (AFLB) Burghclere, writes: "Rather more than usual on the commons, but never numerous." (HL) Linwood, considered it commoner than usual.

Cheiroptera (Bats). As usual, very few, either species or individuals, have been noticed here. *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* Sch. always seems in more evidence in August and September, perhaps because of greater convenience of observation. (AP) tells me that a Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus* L.) was picked up, by his house, on 27th October. A note of great interest to lepidopterists and others, on "Bats taking Moths at sugar," by (V-F), is in *The Entomologist* for August, 1943.

Insectivora (Hedgehogs, Moles, Shrews). Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus* L.). We find few here or in New Forest. (AFLB) Burghclere, reports: "I think they are less numerous than formerly; seldom seen. Mole (*Talpa europaea*). Have not been so common as in some years. Two were noted on 28th April, above ground, one on the floor of an outbuilding, the other in the wood. The Pigmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus* L.) and the Water Shrew (*Neomys fodiens* Pal.) were again not seen at all, and the Common Shrew (*Sorex araneus* L.) was scarce; one seen on the marsh on 18th April, one found dead on a roadway on 27th September, and a large one, caught by a cat, on 24th November were almost the only ones seen."

Carnivora (Cats, Foxes, Badgers, Weasels, Seals and Allies). Foxes (*Canis vulpes* L.) were in their usual numbers: one was seen with a rabbit here on 7th July, and one was barking in the evening of 23rd November. (V-F) writes that they have increased enormously round Corhampton. Badgers (*Meles taxus* Bodd.) on 23rd May, were heard making a bark-like sound, and were seen indistinctly through undergrowth. Apparently, one or two young were abroad in every early evening, not far from their burrows here. Stoats (*Mustela erminea* L.) were not common again this year. One was doubtfully seen on 23rd May. On 21st July a large, probably male, stoat ran just by me, being stalked by a cat. (AFLB) Burghclere, writes: "I saw one killing a rabbit in my path. It whipped off, leaving it dead at my feet. Two big rabbits have recently been found in my grounds killed by Stoat or Weasel. They are evidently increasing in numbers. Dr. H. C. Williams speaks of two white Stoats as having been seen at and about Chawton. The colour may have been due to the seasonal change that sometimes whitens all or a great part (save tail) of the fur in extreme cold, but this is unlikely, to such an extent, in so mild a winter. Real albinism may have affected two of the same litter. Weasels (*Mustela vulgaris* Erx.) have been very scarce here. Only one, judging from its size, a male, was seen: on 8th July."

Rodentia (Rabbits, Hares, Squirrels, Dormice, Rats, Mice and Voles). There have been very few Rabbits here, and practically no Hares. Squirrels (*Sciurus vulgaris* L.) have been very scarce here and in the adjoining Forest, and no Dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius* L.) nor their winter nests, are ever found here now. (AFLB) Burghclere, says of the native species of Squirrel: Formerly very common here, now never seen. The Grey Squirrel (*S. carolinensis*) is swarming; two or three are seen about at a time in our woods. They seem to have driven our indigenous species away. (V-F) writes: "During the year the Grey Squirrel invaded Winchester. I saw my first at Stanmore on 4th January. They have increased enormously round Corhampton." Wood Mouse (*Mus sylvaticus* L.) was not numerous early in the year, but got much commoner at the end. On 14th March, one that was very tame, and perhaps ill, got accidentally drowned. Many were very thin, either starving or diseased, and would come into the house after provisions, and would make their nests in drawers or furniture. In July, litters were being produced, and adults and a fifth-grown young ones were being caught by a cat. A wounded blackbird, under treatment in a hutch, was killed by them on the night of the 9th September. In October and November the species had got much commoner and was seen at various ages. There were no House Mice at Appleslade, and scarcely any Rats. (AFLB) Burghclere, says that Rats were exceptionally numerous there. Field Voles (*Microtus agrestis* L.), which had been scarcer, became commoner in May, and especially in the autumn, as was the case with Wood Mice. As late as December all sizes were seen, some very small. Not more than one or two Bank Voles (*Eutamias glareolus* Sch.) were among them. Water Voles (*Arvicola amphibius* L.) were noticed on the 21st April as having somewhat recovered their numbers in our ditches and streams. Some were gnawing off flags (*Iris*) in the pond where they were rather common on 12th May, but it remained uncommon to the end of the year.

Ungulata (Deer and Allies). Fallow Deer (*Capreolus dama* L.). On 23rd April, one or two were seen here towards evening. On 2nd June, two, apparently second or third-year bucks, with their horns still unshed, were seen just outside the house at midday: the white spotting on the ground colour was well marked. On 23rd July, a small herd of bucks was seen on the Forest, just outside the dividing hedge. Their horns looked almost perfect.

I have received much help from many, for which I thank them. The following abbreviations have been used:—

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