

NOTES ON GENERAL ZOOLOGY, 1944.

By F. H. HAINES.

Mollusca (Cuttlies, Snails, Limpets, Shipworms and Bivalves). (E R) states that a very fine specimen of the Lesser Octopus (*Eledone cirrosa* Lamk.) was caught in the Solent. He believes it to be the first record. It was illustrated in *The Field*. It seems rather a northern species, and to be better known from the north of Britain and Ireland, though it occurs off the Devon coast and that of S.W. Ireland.

Crustacea (Crabs, Lobsters, Crayfish, Wood-lice, Barnacles, Water-fleas). (E F C) says a medium-sized Crayfish (*Astacus fluviatilis* L.) was picked up on the mud in a water meadow at Leckford, much infested by worm-like parasites. It was still alive, but died a few hours later. An interesting occurrence! The parasites were perhaps ectoparasite *Trematode* worms, allied to the families *Temnocephalidae* and *Polystomatidae*. Individuals of some species sometimes occur on the surface (rarely in the branchial chamber) of Crayfish.

Arachnida (Spiders, Harvestmen, False Scorpions, Mites and Ticks). On March 17th a very juvenile *Pisaura mirabilis* Clk. was on the move. On 29th March and 17th, 18th, 19th, 27th and 30th April and 1st May there were heavy falls of gossamer, the result of the aerial migration on web of minute spiders, such as *Dicymbium nigrum* Bl. and its allies which could be seen on examination running amongst the threads. On May 11th *Dolomedes fimbriatus* Wlk. of various ages was common on the pond here. On June 2nd *Evarcha falcata* Clk. was frequent in Webb's Copse, running amongst herbage. It and *Salticus scenicus* Clk. (the Zebra Spider) found on walls, are far the commonest of the salticid or jumping spiders here, and often noted. There were heavy falls of gossamer on 4th, 18th, 25th and 31st July and 10th and 26th August, on which the minute *Micryphantes rurestris* Clk., *Erigone atra* Bl. and *E. dentipalpis* Wid. are often to be seen in numbers. On September 9th and 16th, and specially on 17th, when the ground, bushes and lower branches of trees were thickly be-webbed, and on May 20th and other later mornings at this season and in autumn the spider activity compelled attention: spiders of such groups as the *Argiopinae*, *Linyphiinae* and *Erigoninae*, like *Dicymbium nigrum*, being present. (E R) informs me (*in litt.*, October 23rd, 1944) that the spider first reported from Bournemouth as *Miranda aurantia* Luc. is *Argiope bruennichii* Scop. I have not seen a specimen and do not know whether the correction is through synonymy or whether the first naming was tentative. *Argiope bruennichii* is a well-known, widely-distributed European spider, occurring in France and Belgium and extending to the Mediterranean and Japan. (E R) says that the spider is gradually spreading and is now reported from Iford, and that a specimen was found in Sussex in 1922 and sent to the British Museum. (L B H) tells me (*in litt.*, November 10th, 1943) that in September, 1942, he found several cocoons on gorse and two on rushes close to his house in Parkstone, on the common land. In 1943 he found several imagines, some in web, others on or near their cocoons. He suggests that his locality was probably colonized earlier than that in Southbourne because the prevalent winds are S.W. In the summer I took here a specimen of *Zelotes (Prosthesima) subterraneus* C.K. (*petiverii* Scop.) infested with a fungus (*Empusa*). *Tegenaria atrica* C.K. is very abundant here, indoors and out.

Pisces (Fish). (E R) (*in litt.*, October 23rd, 1944) sends the following note: "During last year a very large specimen of the Lump Sucker (*Cyclopterus lumpus* L.) was brought ashore from the Solent. It weighed nearly seventeen pounds; this may be a record weight. It was illustrated in *The Field*."

Amphibia (Frogs, Toads and Newts). Frogs and Toads are both peculiarly scarce at Appleslade. I have seen little of them here beyond a one-third-grown Frog in the pond on May 25th and a Toad on a garden path at evening on August 29th. Probably Grass-snakes are largely responsible for the scarcity of Frogs. (C A) writes that Toads swarm at Damerham in the mating season and it would be easy to count a hundred pairs in the brooks there, but that there seem to be fewer breeding places for Newts.

Reptilia (Lizards and Snakes). (A B) reports seeing a few Slow-worms (*Anguis fragilis* L.) at Burghclere. A Grass-snake (*Tropidonotus natrix* Sch.) was seen swimming in his pond to the consternation of bathing boy scouts. Two enormous (? female) examples, of great length, were disturbed in grass there. On April 23rd he watched a bright, clearly-marked Adder (*Vipera berus* L.) which stopped for a full minute near him. (C A) says that June 14th was a very hot day. Going through the woods to a pond near Sandleheath he saw, on approaching the water, two large Grass-snakes basking in the sun on the bare clayey margin. A little further on the ripples and swirls in the water showed the presence of another. The warm, shallow water was alive with Tadpoles, doubtless the attraction for the snakes. Looking down through the water he could see several more Grass-snakes crawling along the bottom. They would not have been noticed but for the lemon-coloured patches at the back of their heads. (E C), Sway, records two Grass-snakes and an Adder in their grounds during 1944. (C A) finds the Slow-worm common on Sandleheath, as also the Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara* Jacq.), but the Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis* L.) must be looked for further off. (H L) saw a Sand Lizard on March 20th, at Linwood. On April 8th he saw the first Adder. He killed sixteen close to his house, fearing for his dog, during the year. On April 2nd it was noted here that Common Lizards were still scarce. On May 1st one was seen in Appleslade Inclosure. By the 26th they were in good numbers. On June 12th all reptiles seemed scarcer than usual. Through July, August and September Common Lizards were restricted, but one or two were always present on a certain stub. None were seen after October 8th. Sand Lizards were active here on March 24th, and were seen again on 31st. Through April, May, June and July they remained very common and in August some large specimens were seen. During and at the end of September young individuals of various sizes, from quite small to half-grown were much given to basking on the step and on posts near a doorway. They were not noted after the early days of October. The Slow-worm appeared on April 20th. They were in only moderate numbers. Not a great many Grass-snakes were seen this season. Adders were not much in evidence until April 11th, when three, dull-coloured, were seen on the heap of faggots that appears to be their headquarters here; two smaller and one larger at mid-day. On 13th there was one large female Adder on the faggots of a beautiful blue colour. A smaller Adder, similarly coloured, was seen in another place. On 14th another of the same beautiful colour and somewhat smaller than the largest was on the faggots. Watched on succeeding days, all were noticed to be gradually losing their brightness. On 28th I heard that two Adders had been killed together at Holly Hatch. Soon afterwards a third was found coiled up with the dead bodies. On 29th one large, very dull Adder was on the faggots. Through the season, though some were seen in other places, the faggot heap was largely used for basking, and the times of siesta of different individuals, early and late, seemed to have considerable constancy. On July 26th an almost black Adder of good size was present. All were much "on view" in July and August, but in September they became more and more difficult to see and none were noted after the end of this month.

Cheloptera (Bats). (E C), Sway, writes that on the night of October 21st a Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus* L.) was flying round a bedroom. It settled at times, when its ears were very obvious. Its body was much lighter (greyish) underneath than above. Bats continued scarce at Appleslade. A few

Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* Sch.) are constant in their beat along a hedge and over the heathland near, but are rather capricious in appearance.

Insectivora (Hedgehogs, Moles and Shrews). Common Shrew (*Sorex araneus* L.) were abundant throughout April. On April 28th a cat had a Water Shrew (*Neomys fodiens* Pall.), but during May all Shrews seemed less common. On June 2nd a cat had a Pigmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus* L.) and another on July 30th, when the common species was not being so freely caught, but in August it was commoner again. No Water Shrews were seen. The cats caught some peculiarly fine Common Shrews in September. In October, November and December this species was in failing numbers. (EFC), Leckford, states that on June 9th a Pigmy Shrew was caught in a mouse-trap in the house. Later, she saw another in her garden. It had not been previously recorded from this locality. Moles were coming above ground on May 1st, but they were rather scarce at Appleslade. (AB) says that at Burghclere they were less in evidence than in most years. Hedgehogs have been very scarce also, throughout our New Forest neighbourhood.

Carnivora (Foxes, Badgers, Weasels, Seals and Allies). (EC), Sway, had two wasps' nests dug up by Badgers (*Meles taxus* Bodd.) in his grounds during the summer. (GK) tells me that a Badger was trapped at Hordle, November 4th, weighing 26lbs. (CP) gives an interesting account of the behaviour of a Stoat (*Mustela erminia* L.) which was caught by a cat in August and brought into the house situated in their built-up area, where she had not seen one previously. The Stoat seemed quite uninjured though a small punctured wound was afterwards found in the neck. Having got the Stoat upstairs the cat dropped it and turned its attention to a mouse. Whether the Stoat got the mouse and the cat the Stoat or otherwise is unknown, but all appeared together. The cat seemed unwilling to tackle the Stoat again and a dog was called into the room which killed the Stoat which was, unnaturally, hunched up, scratching at the wall and making very angry chattering noises. It was a large specimen and in good condition. (CP) states that she has in the past seen two Weasels (*Mustela vulgaris* Erx.) on the Stanpit Marshes. On February 26th three Weasels, apparently all males, were caught by a cat at Rockford. On the night of May 24th a Badger excavated a quantity of moss along the base of the house walls, doubtless for worms, slugs and larvae. The same night there were signs that a Fox had had its prey on the marsh near. The farmer's best friends in protecting his crops of hay, corn and roots are obviously foxes, badgers, stoats, weasels, cats and predacious birds, which exterminate rabbits, rats, mice and voles, and some of the bird pests. The poultry keeping and game preserving interests in this matter are opposed to those of agriculture, but the poultry can be protected.

Rodentia (Rabbits, Hares, Squirrels, Dormice, Rats, Mice and Voles). (AB) writes that Grey Squirrels (*Sciurus carolinensis*) were very bold and numerous everywhere at Burghclere, perhaps due to cartridge shortage restricting shooting. No Red Squirrels (*Sciurus vulgaris* L.) were seen. (EC), writing from Sway, says that there Red Squirrels often make use of nesting boxes intended for Owls. His cat killed a Bank Vole (*Evotomus glareolus* Sch.) August 30th, 1943, and his dog disturbed a Common Vole (*Microtus agrestis* L.) on March 10th. (MP) saw a Grey Squirrel near Webb's Copse, New Forest, on December 24th. On February 9th a Red Squirrel was seen at Rockford and on December 20th one was seen in Newlands, near Moyles Court. On March 5th a Field Vole was caught here by a cat. They did not seem common then. Presently the adults became numerous and very well conditioned. In June and July cats were catching many of all ages. In August they were in more moderate numbers and in September there were fewer still. In October and November very small Voles were being caught, as well as larger, mostly about two-thirds-grown, and adults in number. In December they were common and those seen were chiefly adult. Many young Rabbits (*Lepus cuniculus* L.) appeared in April and at the end of the month,

judging from the toll taken by cats, the parents had littered freely. In May there were a fair number about and in June small ones to three-fifths-grown were numerous. Hardly any Hares (*Lepus europaeus* Pall.) were seen in this neighbourhood and one, at Harbridge, on June 3rd, was rather exceptional to us. Wood Mice (*Mus sylvaticus* L.) were by no means abundant earlier and seemed rarer in September, cats catching comparatively few.

Ungulata (Deer and Allies). (V-F) saw three Roe Deer (*Capreolus capreolus* L.) in Chawton Park Wood, near Alton, on November 27th, where they are most unusual. On April 24th traces of deer were seen at Appleslade, the first traces for a long period. On April 25th two Fallow Deer (*Cervus dama* L.) were by one of the gates here. One or more Fallow Deer were on our hill on May 20th. A recently-shed antler of a mature buck was picked up near the place, of a fair size for a Forest specimen. A fine female, as Forest deer go, was near the house on June 9th. On June 16th a fair-sized doe was just outside the hedge on Rockford Common. On June 23rd two Fallow Deer, bucks, with very small antlers were in the garden. On July 10th two Fallow Deer, bucks, with small antlers, were on Rockford Common close by. In August Deer seemed to have deserted the neighbourhood, but traces were seen near Dockens Water in September. It is said that for the last eight years from 130 to 200 Deer have been killed annually in the New Forest, out of an estimated total of 600. Hardly any Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) are left, consequently few have been killed. Roughly five Fallow Deer are killed to one Roe. These are tragic figures and will make all naturalists, lovers of the picturesque and of old historical association, indignant. The evils of inbreeding, if any Deer are left, will, too, cause still further degeneration of the already degenerated Forest stock. The Fallow Deer of the New Forest is a specially interesting and unique form, so the too-often soulless behaviour of a Government department is still more to be regretted.

I have to thank the following for much kind help. These abbreviations have been used :—

C. W. Andrews	(C A)	H. Lea (Mr. & Mrs.)	(H L)
Capt. A. F. L. B. Bacon, M.A.	(A B)	Miss C. Popham, M.B.O.U.	(C P)
Miss Chawner, F.R.E.S.	(E F C)	E. A. Robins, F.R.P.S., F.L.S.	
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