

SOME NEW SCOTTISH AND BRITISH BIRDS.

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE PINE BUNTING, THRUSH NIGHTINGALE, AND BAIRD'S SANDPIPER IN SCOTLAND.

By WM. EAGLE CLARKE.

PINE BUNTING (*Emberiza leucocephala*) AT FAIR ISLE.—On the 30th of October last, Mr Wilson, the bird-watcher at Fair Isle, found this bird among a rush of migrants, and knowing that it was a stranger, secured it and sent it to me for identification. It is a male in full winter plumage, in which stage the brilliant chestnut on the head, throat, and neck are masked by the white tips to their feathers. In spring these tips are shed, and reveal the bird as one of the handsomest of Buntings.

The Pine Bunting is a native of Siberia, from the Ural to the Amoor, and winters in North China, Mongolia, Turkestan, and the Himalayas. It is only a straggler to Europe—Austria, Turkey, Italy, the south of France—and has once occurred at Heligoland, namely, on the 16th of April 1881. It has never before been known to have visited the British Isles.

In its native haunts it is found on the borders of pine woods and bush-covered country and fields. Its nesting habits and eggs are similar to those of our familiar Yellow Bunting, which it also resembles in coloration of its mantle, lower back and upper tail coverts.

The Scottish specimen has the crown and nape whitish and much streaked with grey; mantle and scapulars a mixture of greyish buff and rufous streaked with black, especially on the middle of the back; lower back and upper tail coverts rufous, the latter edged with white; primaries blackish, narrowly edged with white; secondaries and wing coverts with black centres, rufous bands, and white fringes; lores, band over eyes to side of neck,—checks, throat, and chest chestnut margined with white, which more or less conceals the rich underlying tint; ear coverts dusky, with a central band

of greyish white which extends to the gape ; an inconspicuous white patch on the throat, the feathers having grey margins ; abdomen white ; flanks white streaked with pale brown ; tail blackish, narrowly edged with white, the two outer pairs of feathers with the terminal portion of the inner web chiefly white. Feet yellowish grey. Wing 3.65 ins.

THRUSH NIGHTINGALE (*Luscinia luscinia*) AT FAIR ISLE.—This was one of the rarities which rewarded us during our visit to Fair Isle in the spring of 1911. This waif arrived in company with a crowd of birds of passage (of which no less than twenty-four species came under notice) on the 15th of May 1911. It was observed seeking food among the rocks at the foot of a cliff behind the south lighthouse.

The summer range of the "Sprosser," as it is sometimes called, extends from Denmark to south-western Siberia, and its winter retreats are in eastern Africa. There is one previous record for the occurrence of this bird in Britain, namely, one obtained at Smeeth, in Kent, on 22nd October 1904 ; but this has hitherto been regarded as unsatisfactory.

This species differs from the Common Nightingale, in having the upper plumage darker and of a more olive tint ; the tail dark brown with only a slight reddish tinge ; the feathers of the chest and sides of the breast darker, with light edgings and basal shaft spots, which give these parts a mottled or clouded appearance. In addition, the first primary is shorter and narrower, and is much shorter than the primary coverts ; while the third primary is the longest, and the second generally equal to the fourth. It is a larger bird than its congener, the wing measuring 3.6 ins.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*Tringa bairdi*) AT ST KILDA.—This was one of the rarities that fell to my lot during my recent visit to St Kilda. On the 28th September 1911, a small Sandpiper was observed wading and swimming in a pool in the rocks fringing the Village Bay. It was shot on suspicion that it was something uncommon, and proved to be an adult female, in full winter plumage, of this North American species—one which had only been known to visit the British Isles on two previous occasions, but had not

hitherto been detected in Scotland. Baird's Sandpiper summers on the Arctic coast of America between Bering's Straits and Hudson's Bay, and winters in Chili, Argentina, and Patagonia. In this specimen the head and hind neck are pale ashy brown, streaked with dusky, broadly on the crown; feathers of the mantle, scapulars, lower back, secondaries, and wing coverts dusky brown, with darker centres and white edges; primaries, upper tail coverts, and tail dusky brown, the outer feathers of the latter paler and edged with white; chin and throat white; chest and sides of the breast pale ashy brown tinged with buff, and slightly streaked and spotted with dusky brown; remainder of under surface and axillaries white. Legs black. Wing 4.9 ins. Bill 0.9 in.

It has been considered desirable to describe these birds, as no description of them is to be found in any works devoted to British birds. The plumage of Pine Bunting and Baird's Sandpiper is that in which they are most likely to occur as visitors to our islands.

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE WOODCHAT SHRIKE IN FORTH AREA.

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BY the kindness of Mr Baigrie, assistant light-keeper on the Isle of May, we are enabled to record the first authenticated occurrence of the Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator senator* = *L. pomarinus* of Saunders, etc.) for Scotland. A bird of this species was taken at the lantern by him at 2 A.M. on 19th October 1911, and sent to us. The wind had been easterly for several days, and a great many birds had arrived on the island. It is a young bird, mainly in the dress described by Dr Hartert as the "nest-kleid." This species breeds in north-western Africa and southern Europe. In the north its breeding range extends as far as Belgium and Holland, and it breeds locally in Germany; it also nests in southern Russia and Asia Minor. It occasionally strays to England, and