

beads will mean more to a mother as she ties it round the neck of her child than her own care, a better protection than her own arms. There are charms everywhere: around the houses, in the farms, even in the field a long stick may be seen with a rag flying from the top. The neck of a bottle with a stone slung inside it, tinkling in the hot air like a bell, a broken branch, a broken stone from the roadside—all have a place. But they are really the expression of the deepest feelings of this fallen race.

Of course the Africans believe strongly in witch-craft—no one ever sickens or dies without the intervention of a neighbour with an evil eye. The cry is, in such a case, "He is witched!" "He is witched," and as they used to do in the days of the "Moss Hags," they seize some inoffensive person and subject them to the trial by ordeal. In conclusion, I might recall a curious instance of this recorded in my father's notebook:—"A man had a dream; he dreamt that the second man in the village had 'witched him.' If he had kept the dream to himself there would at once have been an end of the matter, but he told it to his neighbour, and in about an hour it was the talk of the village. According to native custom, this amounted to a criminal charge against the Chief, and if I had not happened to be in the vicinity he would have been compelled to mount a platform, and in the sight of his relations and neighbours, to drain a cup of poison—but as it was, I was obliged, as J.P., to settle the matter, and give them a scolding all round."

THE FEEDING OF WILD BIRDS IN CONFINEMENT.

By JAMES CLARK.

[Read 28th February, 1911.]

Goldfinches are fairly plentiful in Bute. In a state of Nature they feed on spear plume thistle, milk thistle, knapweed, groundsel, dandelion, cornflower, shepherd's purse. In confinement feed on the following mixture—2 parts canary seed, 1 part teasel, 2 parts hemp, a pinch of inga, and maw seed once or twice a week, also the above mentioned weeds in season.

Bullfinches are plentiful, and make delightful pets. They feed on the buds of larch, plums, black currants, hawthorn, flowering heads of dandelion, groundsel, shepherd's purse, ragwort, forget-me-nots, dock, meadow sweet, heather, privet, rowan and black currant berries. In confinement feed on 2 parts canary, 1 part teasel, 1 part German rape, a pinch of hemp and sunflower twice a week. Don't give much hemp as it darkens the plumage, and sometimes it turns the feathers jet black.

Siskins are fairly plentiful. In a wild state they feed on spear plume thistle, groundsel, ragwort, knapweed, milk thistle, and alder berries. In confinement feed on 2 parts canary, 1 part teasel, a pinch of maw, inga and hemp twice a week. Hemp should be sparingly given. Should they get too fat it is a good plan to let them fly about the room for a day or two.

Brown Linnets are very plentiful. They feed on shepherd's purse, chickweed, spear plume thistle, knapweed, daisies and

charlock. In confinement feed on 2 parts canary, 1 part German rape, 1 part teasel, 1 part linseed, and a pinch of hemp once a week.

Twites or Mountain Linnets are also very numerous and feed same as Brown Linnets.

Lesser Redpoles are very numerous. They feed similar to the Linnet or Twite. In confinement feed on same mixture.

Mealy Redpoles, a rare visitor to our shores, have been very numerous this winter. Feed same as Lesser Redpoles.

Greenfinches feed largely on flowering heads of dandelion, groundsel, milk thistle, dock, burdock, and the stones of the yew and laurel berries. In confinement feed on 2 parts canary, 1 part German rape, 1 part teasel, and a pinch of hemp and sunflower twice a week. Be very sparing with the hemp as it darkens the plumage.

Hawfinches are very uncommon, but I understand a few have been seen. I have had 14 of these birds, but they have all been caught in different parts of England. They feed on haws, hips, ivy, and yew berries, cherry and Portugal laurel stones, also green peas and other seeds. In confinement feed on 1 part canary, 2 parts sunflower, 1 part hemp, with the above-mentioned berries in season.

Crossbills are also uncommon. A fine specimen was caught in the Ascog district last year. In a wild state they feed similar to the Hawfinch; they are also very fond of the seed of fir cones. In confinement feed same as Hawfinch.

Chaffinches are very plentiful. They feed on flowering heads of groundsel, chickweed, charlock, dandelion, red-shank, and small insects. In confinement feed on 2 parts canary, 1 part rape, 1 part teasel, a pinch of hemp and sunflower twice a week. A few mealworms should be given once a week.

Yellow, Reed and Common or Corn Buntings are fairly numerous. They feed on all sorts of grain and insects. In confinement they very seldom eat any seed but canary. They should also have a few mealworms daily. During winter we have the *Snow Buntings*. I have kept several in confinement, but they don't take kindly to cage life, being greatly troubled with migratory fever. Feed same as other Buntings.

The Bramblefinch, another winter visitor, sometimes comes in large numbers. This year it has been rather scarce. They feed on grain, beech mast, etc. In confinement feed on 2 parts canary, 1 part German rape, 1 part teasel, a pinch of hemp and sunflower twice a week. This bird in confinement is also greatly troubled with migratory fever.

Waxwings are very uncommon. They feed on all sorts of berries and insects. In confinement feed on 2 parts ants eggs, 1 part dried flies, 1 part yolk of egg mixed with crushed puppy biscuits, also grocer's currants. The one I have will scarcely eat anything but currants.

Blackbirds, Song and Missel Thrushes, are very plentiful. They feed on snails, earth worms, and other insects; also all sorts of berries. In confinement feed on 2 parts poultry meal, 2 of dried flies, 2 of ants eggs, 1 part maize and barley meal and various fruits in season.

Redwings and Fieldfares, two winter visitors, are usually very numerous and feed same as other Thrushes.

King Ousels are not very numerous; a few may be seen in the wilds of Bute. The adult male with the white crescent across breast is a beautiful bird. Food same as for Blackbird.

Magpies are not very plentiful. I have only seen one male. No doubt the Gamekeepers keep them under as they destroy large numbers of young birds and eggs. They feed on grain, insects, eggs, and young nestlings. In confinement feed on barley meal and a good supply of cooked and raw lean meat.

Jackdaws are very plentiful and make nice pets. Feed similar to the Magpie.

Starlings are very plentiful, they are beautiful birds and feed same as Blackbird and Song Thrush. This bird is a great friend to farmers and gardeners. I don't know of any bird which consumes more grub than this one. I have watched them feeding young, and 9 times in 10 it was grub they were feeding with.

Coal, Marsh, Long-Tailed, Greater and Tom Tits are very numerous. They feed on all sorts of small insects and the kernels of various nuts, such as beech mast, acorns, etc. They don't do very well in confinement, being active little birds, they should always be kept in a large aviary. In confinement, feed on 2 parts ants eggs, 1 part dried flies and crushed biscuits, also hemp, sunflower, and a piece of suet to peck at.

Hedge Accentors are very numerous. They are sweet songsters and feed on various seeds and small insects. Feed in confinement same as Tits.

House Sparrows are very plentiful, and feed on all sorts of grain and insects. In confinement feed on canary rape hemp and a little boiled rice, also a few mealworms daily.

Tree Sparrows are not very numerous, but I am told a colony of them can be seen at the Plan Farm. Feed same as House Sparrows.

Robins are fairly numerous and feed on all sorts of insects. In confinement feed same as Thrushes.

Skylarks are very plentiful. They feed on all sorts of grain and insects. In confinement feed same as Thrushes, with hemp and canary seed.

Golden Crested Wrens are fairly plentiful. They feed on all sorts of small insects. It is very difficult to keep in con-

finement, and no one should do so, unless they have had a good deal of experience in the keeping of insectivorous birds. When first caught they will scarcely eat anything but live flies. Gradually get them on to a mixture of ants eggs, dried flies, yolk of egg, mixed with crushed biscuits, slightly moistening same when using.

Fire Crests are very uncommon. I have only seen one in Bute. They resemble the Golden Crest, but have a much larger crest. Food same as Gold Crest.

Stonechats are fairly plentiful. They feed on all sorts of small insects. In confinement feed on 2 parts ants eggs, 1 part dried flies, 1 part yolk of egg mixed with crushed biscuits. The Stonechat is a very difficult bird to keep in confinement and needs a good deal of attention.

The Whinchat, a summer visitor, is fairly common, and can be seen in large numbers in the vicinity of Loch Ascog. Food same as Stonechat.

Wheatears are fairly numerous in and around Loch Ascog. They feed on all sorts of insects. In confinement feed same as Stonechat.

Sedge Grasshopper, Garden, Willow, Chiff-Chaff and Wood Warblers are fairly common. They are all active little birds, and feed on all sorts of tiny insects. In confinement feed on 1 part dried flies, 2 parts ants' eggs, 1 part yolk of egg mixed with crushed biscuits.

Redstarts some seasons are fairly numerous. They feed on all sorts of insects. In confinement feed on 2 parts ants eggs, 1 part dried flies, 1 part yolk of egg mixed with crushed biscuits; give also two meal worms daily.

Black Caps are fairly plentiful. This bird also goes under the name of the Scottish Nightingale, owing, I suppose, to his beautiful song. They feed on all sorts of small insects. In confinement feed same as Redstarts.

Spotted Flycatchers are very numerous. They feed on all sort of flies and small insects. Any one will be able to identify this bird by his mode of feeding. He generally sits on a post or wire fence, lets a dart at a passing fly and then alights where he started from. In confinement feed same as Redstarts.

Wagtails are plentiful, and make delightful pets. I have kept the Yellow, Grey, and Pied, and don't know of any bird which takes so kindly to cage life. They will follow you all over the place to get a meal worm from you. They feed on all sorts of flies and small insects. In confinement feed same as Redstarts.

Jenny Wrens are very plentiful, and feed on all sorts of small insects. In confinement feed same as Golden Crested Wren.

NOTE ON OVIPOSITION OF A DRAGONFLY.

By A. J. A. WOODCOCK, M.Sc.

A great many interesting facts in the life histories of this group of insects are yet unknown—the number of those who investigate them being very small. The following observations, which I made two years ago and confirmed again this summer, concerning one particular species, may be worth recording, as I have not read of any similar observations in accounts of the species. The dragonfly is a large black and yellow banded species, known to entomologists as *Cordulegaster annulatus* on account of the club-like appearance of its abdomen, and the only reference I can find to its egg-laying processes is the solitary statement that it *apparently* lays its eggs by dipping its abdomen at random beneath the surface of the water.

My observations were made during the month of August. The females observed haunted a running stream and deposited their eggs close to its banks. The method adopted was to bounce rapidly up and down in a shallow part of the stream, the insect holding itself in a vertical position while the whole of the abdomen was at times immersed in the water. As this part of the body is more than three inches long and the water was certainly not so deep as that the process must have involved touching the mud at the bottom, in which, perhaps, the eggs would be caught and so be saved from being carried away by the stream. That the insects were ovipositing while engaged in this process is clear from the fact that two which were caught left, in each case, several eggs upon the net. These were very small for so huge an insect, oval in shape, and of a greyish white colour.