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PREFACE.

Though perhaps not possessing the interest to the ornithologist which Lundy Island (the only breeding-place of the Gannet in the South-West of England) or the Scilly Islands possess, or being able to produce the long list of birds which the indefatigable Mr. Gdetke has been able to do for his little island, Heligoland, the avifauna of Guernsey and the neighbouring islands is by no means devoid of interest; and as little has hitherto been published about the Birds of Guernsey and the neighbouring islands, except in a few occasional papers published by Miss C.B. Carey, Mr. Harvie Browne, myself, and a few others, in the pages of the 'Zoologist,' I make no excuse for publishing this list of the birds, which, as an occasional visitor to the Channel Islands for now some thirty years, have in some way been brought to my notice as occurring in these Islands either as residents, migrants, or occasional visitants.

Channel Island specimens of several of the rarer birds mentioned, as well as of the commoner ones, are in my own collection; and others I have seen either in the flesh or only recently skinned in the bird-stuffers' shops. For a few, of course, I have been obliged to rely on the evidence of others; some of these may appear, perhaps, rather questionable,—as, for instance, the Osprey,—but I have always given what evidence I have been able to collect in each case; and where evidence of the occurrence was altogether wanting, I have thought it better to omit all mention of the bird, though its occasional occurrence may seem possible.

I have confined myself in this list to the Birds of Guernsey and the neighbouring islands—Sark, Alderney, Jethou and Herm; in fact to the islands included in the Bailiwick of Guernsey. I have done this as I have had no opportunity of personally studying the birds of Jersey, only having been in that island once some years ago, and then only for a short time, and not because I think a notice of the birds of Jersey would have been devoid of interest, though whether it would have added many to my list maybe doubtful. Professor Ansted's list, included in his large and very interesting work on the

Channel Islands, is hitherto the only attempt at a regular list of the Birds of the Channel Islands; but as he, though great as a geologist, is no ornithologist, he was obliged to rely in a great measure on information received from others, and this apparently was not always very reliable, and he does not appear to have taken much trouble to sift the evidence given to him. Professor Ansted himself states that his list is necessarily imperfect, as he received little or no information from some of the Islands; in fact, Guernsey and Sark appear to be the only two from which much information had been received. This is to be regretted, as it has made the notice of the distribution of the various birds through the Islands, which he has denoted by the letters *a, e, i, o, u* ^[1] appended to the name of each bird, necessarily faulty. The ornithological notes, however, supplied by Mr. Gallienne are of considerable interest, and are generally pretty reliable. It is rather remarkable, however, that Professor Ansted has not always paid attention to these notes in marking the distribution of the birds through the various Islands.

No doubt many of the birds included in Professor Ansted's list were included merely on the authority of specimens in the museum of the Mechanics' Institute, which at one time was a pretty good one; and had sufficient care been taken to label the various specimens correctly as to place and date, especially distinguishing local specimens from foreign ones, of which there were a good many, would have been a very interesting and useful local museum; as it is, the interest of this museum is considerably deteriorated. Some of the birds in the museum are confessedly foreign, having been brought from various parts of the world by Guernsey men, who when abroad remembered the museum in their own Island, and brought home specimens for it. Others, as Mr. Gallienne, who during his life took much interest in the museum, himself told me had been purchased from various bird-stuffers, especially from one in Jersey; and no questions were asked as to whether the specimens bought were local or set-up from skins obtained from the Continent or England. Amongst those so obtained may probably be classed the Blue-throated Warblers, included in Professor Ansted's list and marked as Jersey (these Mr. Gallienne himself told me he believed to be Continental and not genuine Channel Island specimens), the

Great Sedge Warbler, the Meadow Bunting, the Green Woodpecker, and perhaps a few others.

This museum, partly from want of interest being taken in it and partly from want of money, has never had a very good room, and has been shuffled and moved about from one place to another, and consequently several birds really valuable, as they could be proved to be genuine Channel Island specimens, have been lost and destroyed; in fact, had it not been for the care and energy of Miss C.B. Carey, who took great pains to preserve what she found remaining of the collection, and place it in some sort of order, distinguishing by a different coloured label those specimens which could be proved to be Channel Island (in doing this she worked very hard, and received very little thanks or encouragement, but on the contrary met with a considerable amount of genuine obstructiveness), the whole of the specimens in the museum would undoubtedly have been lost; as it is, a good many valuable local specimens—valuable as being still capable of being proved to be genuine Channel Island specimens—have been preserved, and a good nucleus kept for the foundation of a new museum, should interest in the subject revive and the local authorities be disposed to assist in its formation. In my notices of each bird I have mentioned whether there is a specimen in the museum, and also whether it is included in Professor Ansted's list, and if so in which of the Islands he has marked it as occurring.

No doubt the Ornithology of the Channel Islands, as is the case in many counties of England, has been considerably changed by drainage works, improved cultivation, and road-making; much alteration of this sort I can see has taken place during the thirty years which I have known the Islands as an occasional visitor. But Mr. MacCulloch, who has been resident in the Islands for a much longer period—in fact, he has told me nearly double—has very kindly supplied me with the following very interesting note on the various changes which have taken place in Guernsey during the long period he has lived in that island; he says, "I can well recollect the cutting of most of the main roads, and the improvement, still going on, of the smaller ones. It was about the beginning of this century that the works for reclaiming the Braye du Valle were undertaken; before that time the Clos du Valle ^[2] was separated from

the mainland by an arm of the sea, left dry at low water, extending from St. Samson's to the Vale Church. This was bordered by salt marshes only, covered occasionally at spring tides by the sea, some of which extended pretty far inland. The meadows adjoining were very imperfectly drained, as indeed some still are, and covered with reeds and rushes, forming excellent shelter for many species of aquatic birds. Now, as you know, by far the greater part of the land is well cultivated and thickly covered with habitations. The old roads were everywhere enclosed between high hedges, on which were planted rows of elms; and the same kind of hedge divided the fields and tenements. Every house, too, in those days had its orchard, cider being then universally drunk; and the hill-sides and cliffs were covered with furze brakes, as in all country houses they baked their own bread and required the furze for fuel. Now all that is changed. The meadows are drained and planted with brocoli for the early London market, to be replaced by a crop of potatoes at the end of the summer. The trees are cut down to let in the sun. Since the people have taken to gin-drinking, cider is out of favour and the orchards destroyed. The hedges are levelled to gain a few perches of ground, and replaced in many places by stone walls; the furze brakes rooted up, and the whole aspect and nature of the country changed. Is it to be wondered at that those kinds of birds that love shelter and quiet have deserted us? You know, too, how every bird—from the Wren to the Eagle—is popped at as soon as it shows itself, in places where there are no game laws and every man allowed to carry a gun."

This interesting description of the changes—agricultural and otherwise—which have taken place in the Islands, especially Guernsey, during the last fifty or sixty years (for which I have to offer Mr. MacCulloch my best thanks), gives a very good general idea of many of the alterations that have taken place in the face of the country during the period above mentioned; but does not by any means exhaust them, as no mention is made of the immense increase of orchard-houses in all parts of Guernsey, which has been so great that I may fairly say that within the last few years miles of glass-houses have been built in Guernsey alone: these have been built mostly for the purpose of growing grapes for the London market. These orchard-houses have, to a certain extent, taken the place of

ordinary orchards and gardens, which have been rooted up and destroyed to make place for this enormous extent of glass. But what appeared to me to have made the greatest change, and has probably had more effect on the Ornithology of the Island, especially of that part known as the Vale, is the enormous number of granite quarries which are being worked there (luckily the beautiful cliffs have hitherto escaped the granite in those parts, probably not being so good); but in the Vale from St. Samson's to Fort Doyle, and from there to the Vale Church, with the exception of L'Ancrese Common itself, which has hitherto escaped, the whole face of the country is changed by quarry works and covered with small windmills used for pumping the water from the quarries. These quarry works and the extra population brought by them into the Island, all of whom carry guns and shoot everything that is fit to eat or is likely to fetch a few "doubles" in the market, have done a good deal to thin the birds in that part of the Islands, especially such as are in any way fit for sale or food, and probably have done more to make a change in the Ornithology of that part of the Island than all the agricultural changes mentioned by Mr. MacCulloch. Indeed, I am rather sceptical as to the agricultural changes above described having produced so much change in the avifauna of the Islands during the last fifty years as Mr. MacCulloch appears to think; there is still a great deal of undrained or badly drained land in the Island—especially about the Vale, the Grand Mare and L'Eree—which might still afford a home for Moorhens, Water Rails, and even Bitterns, and all that class of wading birds which delight in swampy land and reed beds. Though no doubt, as Mr. MacCulloch said, many orchards have been destroyed to make room for more profitable crops or for orchard-houses, still there are many orchards left in the Island. I think, however, many, if not all the cherry orchards (amongst which the Golden Orioles apparently at one time luxuriated) are gone. There is also still a great deal of hedgerow timber, none of it indeed very large, but in places very thick; in fact, I could point out miles of hedges in Guernsey where the trees, mostly elm, grow so thick together that it would be nearly impossible to pick out a place where one could squeeze one's horse between the trees without rubbing one's knees on one side or the other, probably on both, against them, if one found it necessary to ride across the country. True, on a great extent of the higher part of the Island, all along on both sides

of what is known as the Forest Road, there is little or no hedgerow timber, the fields here being divided by low banks with furze growing on the top of them. Furze brakes also are still numerous, the whole of the flat land on the top of the cliffs and the steep valleys and slopes down to the sea on the south and east side of the Island, from Fermain Bay to Pleimont, being almost uninterrupted wild land covered with heather, furze, and bracken; besides this wild furze land, there are several thick furze brakes inland in different parts of the Island. All these places seem to me to have remained almost without change for years. The furze, however, never grows very high, as it is cut every few years for fuel; in consequence of this, however, it is more beautiful in blooming in the spring than if it had been allowed several years' growth, covering the whole face of the ground above the cliffs like a brilliant yellow carpet; but being kept so short, it is not perhaps so convenient for nesting purposes as if it was allowed a longer growth.

The Guernsey Bird Act, which applies to all the Islands in the Bailiwick, and has been in force for some few years, seems to me to have had little effect on the numbers of the sea-birds of the district, though it includes the eggs as well as the birds, except perhaps to increase the number of Herring Gulls and Shags (which were always sufficiently numerous) in their old breeding-stations, and perhaps to have added a few new breeding-stations. These two birds scarcely needed the protection afforded by the Act, as their nests are placed amongst very inaccessible rocks where very few nests can be reached without the aid of a rope, and consequently but little damage was done beyond a few young birds being shot soon after they had left the nest while they were flappers, and the numbers were fully kept up; other birds, however, included in the Act, and not breeding in quite such inaccessible places, seem to gain but little advantage from it, as nests of the Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Terns, Oystercatchers and Puffins are ruthlessly robbed in a way that bids fair before long to exterminate all four species as breeding birds; perhaps, also, the increase in the number of Herring Gulls does something to diminish the numbers of other breeding species, especially the Lesser Black-backs, as Herring Gulls are great robbers both of eggs and young birds. The Act itself, after reciting that "le nombre des oiseaux de mer sur les ctes des Isles de cet

Bailliage a considerablement diminui depuis plusieurs annies; que les dits oiseaux sont utiles aux pcheurs, en ce qu'ils indiquent les parages ou les poissons se trouvent; que les dits oiseaux sont utiles aux marins en ce qu'ils annoncent pendant la durie des brouillards la proximite des rochers," goes on to enact as follows:—"Il est difendu de prendre, enlever ou ditruire les ceufs des oiseaux de mer dans toute l'entendue de la jurisdiction de cette isle, sur la peine d'une amende qui ne sera pas moindre de sept livres tournois et n'excidera pas trente livres tournois." [3] Sec. 2 enacts, "Depuis ce jour [4] au 15 Octobre prochain, il est difendu de tuer, blesser, prendre ou chasser les oiseaux de mer dans toute l'entendue de la jurisdiction de cette isle." Sec. 3, "Ceux qui depuis ce jour au 15 Octobre prochain auront iti trouvis en possession d'un oiseau de mer ricemment tui, blessi ou pris, ou qui auront iti trouvis en possession de plumage frais appartenant d'un oiseau de mer seront censis avoir tui, blessi ou pris tel oiseau de mer sauf h eux de prouver le contraire. Pareillement ceux qui depuis ce jour au 15 Octobre prochain auront iti trouvis en possession d'un oeuf de l'annee d'un oiseau de mer seront censis avoir pris et enleve le dit oeuf sauf ` eux de prouver le contraire." The penalty in each case is the same as in Section 1. Section 4 contains the list of the oiseaux de mer which come under the protection of the Act, which is as follows:—Les Mauves Mouettes, Pingouins, Guillemots, Cormorans, Barbelotes, Hirondelles de mer, Pies-marants, Petrel, Plongeurs, Grebes, Puffins, Dotterells, Alouettes de mer, Toumpierres, Gannets, Courlis et Martin pcheur.

As far as the eggs of many of the species actually breeding in the Islands are concerned, this Act seems to be a dead letter: the only birds of any size whose eggs are not regularly robbed are the Herring Gulls and Shags, and they take sufficient care of themselves; were the Act strictly enforced it would probably be found that there would be—as would be the case in England—a good deal of opposition to this part of it, which would greatly interfere with what appears to be a considerable article of food with many of the population. Probably the only compromise which would work, and could be rigidly enforced, would be to fix a later date for the protection of the eggs—say as late as the 15th June; this would allow those who wanted to rob the eggs for food to take the earlier layings, and the birds would be able to bring up their second or third broods in

peace; and probably the fishermen and others, who use the eggs as an article of consumption, would be glad to assist in carrying out such an Act as this, as they would soon find the birds increase so much that they would be able to take as many eggs by the middle of June as they do now in the whole year, especially the Black-back Gulls and the Puffins, which are the birds mostly robbed,—the latter of which are certainly decreasing considerably in numbers in consequence.

This plan is successfully carried out by many private owners of the large breeding-stations of the Gannets, Eider Duck, and other sea-birds in the north of England and Scotland. Of course, it must not be supposed that all the birds mentioned in the Act whose eggs are protected breed in the Islands, or anywhere within ten or fifteen degrees of latitude of the Islands; in fact, a great many of them are not there at all during the breeding-season, except perhaps an occasional wounded bird which has been unable to join its companions on their migratory journey, or a few non-breeding stragglers.

It has often struck me that a small but rigidly collected and enforced gun-tax would be a more efficacious protection—not only to the oiseaux de mer, but also to the inland birds, many of which are quite as much in want of protection though not included in the Act—than the Sea-bird Protection Act is. I am glad to see that there is some chance of this being carried out, for, while this work was going through the press, I see by the newspaper ('Gazette Officielle de Guernsey' for the 26th March, 1879) that the Bailiff had then just issued a *Billet d'Etat* which contained a "Projet de loi" on the subject, to be submitted to the States at their next meeting; and in concluding its comments on this *Projet de loi* the Gazette says, "Il n'est que juste en fait que ceux qui veulent se lier au plaisir de la chasse paient pour cette fantaisie et que par ce moyen le trop grand nombre de nos chasseurs maladroits et inexpérimentés se voit réduit au grand avantage de nos fermiers et de nos promeneurs;" and probably also to the advantage of the chasseurs themselves.

In regard to the nomenclature, I have done the best I can to follow the rule laid down by the British Association; but not living in London, and consequently not having access to a sufficiently large ornithological library to enable me to search out the various synonyms

for myself and ascertain the exact dates, I have therefore been obliged to rely on the best authorities whose works I possess, and accept the name given by them. In doing this, I have no doubt I have been quite as correct as I should have been had I waded through the various authors who have written on the subject, as I have invariably accepted the name adopted by Professor Newton in his edition of Yarrell, and by Mr. Dresser in his 'Birds of Europe', as far as these works are yet complete: for the birds not yet included in either I have for the most part taken the scientific names from Mr. Howard Saunders's 'Catalogue des oiseaux du midi de L'Espagne,' published in the 'Proceedings' of the Sociiiti Zoologique de France; and for the names of the Gulls and Terns I have entirely followed Mr. Howard Saunders's papers on those birds published in the 'Proceedings' of our own Zoological Society, for permission to use which, and for other assistance,—especially in egg-hunting,—I have to give him my best thanks.

As French is so much spoken in Guernsey and the other Islands included in my district, I have (wherever I have been able to ascertain it) given the French name of each bird, as it may be better known to my Guernsey readers than either the English or the scientific name. I have also, where there is one and I have been able to ascertain it, mentioned the local name in the course of my notes on each bird.

It now only remains to give my best thanks to the various friends who have assisted me, especially to Mr. MacCulloch, who, though he says he is no naturalist, has supplied me with various very interesting notes, which he has taken from time to time of ornithological events which have occurred in Guernsey, and from which I have drawn rather largely; and I have, also, again to thank him for the interesting accounts he has given me of the various changes—agricultural and otherwise—which have taken place during his memory, and which may have had some effect on the ornithology of the Islands, especially of Guernsey.

My thanks are also due to Col. L'Estrange for the assistance he has given me in egg-hunting, and also to Captain Hubback for his notes from Alderney during the times he was quartered there.

BIRDS OF GUERNSEY.

1. WHITE-TAILED EAGLE. *Haliaeetus albicilla*, Linnaeus. French, "Aigle pygarque," "Pygarque ordinaire." — The White-tailed Eagle is an occasional but by no means uncommon visitant to all the Islands. I have seen specimens from Alderney, Guernsey, and Herm, and have heard of its having been killed in Sark more than once. It usually occurs in the autumn, and, as a rule, has a very short lease of life after its arrival in the Islands, which is not to be wondered at, as it is considered, and no doubt is, mischievous both to sheep and poultry; and in so thickly populated a country, where every one carries a gun, a large bird like the White-tailed Eagle can hardly escape notice and consequent destruction for any length of time. It might, however, if unmolested, occasionally remain throughout the winter, and probably sometimes wanders to the Islands at that time, as Mr. Harvie Brown records ('Zoologist' for 1869, p. 1591) one as having been killed, poisoned by strychnine, in Herm in the month of January. This was, no doubt, a late winter visitant, as it is hardly possible that the bird can have escaped for so long a time, as it would have done had it visited the Islands at its usual time, October or November. All the Channel Island specimens of the White-tailed Eagle which I have seen have been young birds of the first or second year, in the immature plumage in which the bird is known as the Sea Eagle of Bewick, and in which it is occasionally mistaken for the Golden Eagle, which bird has never, I believe, occurred in the Islands. Of course in the adult plumage, when this bird has its white tail and head, no such mistake could occur, but in the immature plumage in which the bird usually makes its appearance such a mistake does occasionally happen, and afterwards it becomes difficult to convince the owner that he has not a Golden Eagle; in fact he usually feels rather insulted when told of his mistake, and ignores all suggestions of anything like an infallible test, so it may be as well to mention that the birds may be distinguished in any state of plumage and at any age by the tarsus, which in the White-tailed Eagle is bare of feathers and in the Golden Eagle is feathered to the junction of the toes. I have one in my possession shot at Bordeaux

harbour on the 14th of November, 1871, and I saw one in the flesh at Mr. Couch's, the bird-stuffer, which had been shot at Alderney on the 2nd of November in the same year; and Mr. MacCulloch writes to me that one was wounded and taken alive in the parish of the Forest in Guernsey in 1845. It was said to be one of a pair, and he adds—"I have known several instances of its appearance since both here (Guernsey) and in Herm," but unluckily he gives no dates and could not remember at what time of year any of the occurrences he had noted had taken place. This is to be regretted, as although the bird occurs almost every autumn—indeed, so frequently as to render mention of further instances of its occurrence at that time of year unnecessary—its occurrence in the spring is rare, and some of those noted by Mr. MacCulloch might have been at that time of year. As it is, I only know of one spring occurrence, and that was reported to me by Mr. Couch as having taken place at Herm on the 23rd of March, 1877.

The White-tailed Eagle is included in Professor Ansted's list, but its range in the Islands is restricted to Guernsey. There is one in the museum, probably killed in Guernsey, in the plumage in which the Channel Island specimens usually occur, but no note is given as to locality or date.

2. OSPREY. *Pandion halioeetus*, Linnaeus. French, "Balbusard."—I have never met with the Osprey myself in the Channel Islands, nor have I, as far as I remember, seen a Channel Island specimen. I include it, however, on the authority of a note kindly sent to me by Mr. MacCulloch, who says:—"An Osprey was shot at St. Samsons, in Guernsey, on the 29th of October, 1868. I cannot, however, say whether at the time it was examined by a competent naturalist, and as both the Osprey and the White-tailed Eagle are fishers, a mistake may have been made in naming it." Of course such a mistake as suggested is possible, but as the Guernsey fishermen and gunners, especially the St. Samsons men, are well acquainted with the White-tailed Eagle, I should not think it probable that the mistake had been made. The bird, however, cannot be considered at all common in the Islands; there is no specimen in the Guernsey Museum, and

Mr. Couch has never mentioned to me having had one through his hands, or recorded it in the 'Zoologist,' as he would have done had he had one; neither does Mrs. Jago (late Miss Cumber), who used to do a good deal of stuffing in Guernsey about thirty years ago, remember having had one through her hands. There can be no reason, however, why it should not occasionally occur in the Islands, as it does so both on the French and English side of the Channel. The wonder rather is that it is so rare as it appears to be.

The Osprey, however, is mentioned in Professor Ansted's list, and only marked as occurring in Guernsey.

3. GREENLAND FALCON. *Falco candicans*, Gmelin. —I was much surprised on my last visit to Alderney, on the 27th of June, 1878, on going into a small carpenter's shop in the town, whose owner, besides being a carpenter, is also an amateur bird-stuffer, though of the roughest description, to find, amongst the dust of his shop, not only the Purple Heron, which I went especially to see, and which is mentioned afterwards, but a young Greenland Falcon which he informed me had been shot in that island about eighteen months ago. This statement was afterwards confirmed by the person who shot the bird, who was sent for and came in whilst I was still in the shop. Unfortunately, neither the carpenter nor his friend who shot the bird had made any note of the date, and could only remember that the one had shot the bird in that Island about eighteen months ago and the other had stuffed it immediately after. This would bring it to the winter of 1876-77, or, more probably, the late autumn of 1876. In the course of conversation it appeared to me that the Snow Falcon—as they called this bird—was not entirely unknown to the carpenter or his friend, though neither could remember at the time another instance of one having been killed in that Island. It is, however, by no means improbable that either this species or the next mentioned, or both, may have occurred in the Islands before, as Professor Ansted, though he gives no date or locality, includes the Gyr Falcon in his list of Channel Island birds. As all three of the large northern white Falcons were at one time included under the name of Gyr Falcons, and, as Professor Ansted gives no description

of the bird mentioned by him, it is impossible to say to which species he alluded. We may fairly conclude, however, that it was either the present species or the Iceland Falcon, as it could hardly have been the darker and less wandering species, the Norway Falcon, the true Gyr Falcon of falconers, *Falco gyrfalco* of Linnaeus, which does not wander so far from its native home, and has never yet, as far as is at present known, occurred in any part of the British Islands, and certainly not so far south as the Channel Islands. This latter, indeed, is an extremely southern latitude for either the Greenland or Iceland Falcon, the next being in Cornwall, from which county both species have been recorded by Mr. Rodd. Neither species, however, is recorded as having occurred in any of the neighbouring parts of France.

4. ICELAND FALCON. *Falco islandus*, Gmelin. — An Iceland Falcon was killed on the little Island of Herm on the 11th of April, 1876, where it had been seen about for some time, by the gamekeeper. It had another similar bird in company with it, and probably the pair were living very well upon the game-birds which had been imported and preserved in that island, as the keeper saw them kill more than one Pheasant before he shot this bird. The other fortunately escaped. The bird which was killed is now in my possession, and is a fully adult Iceland Falcon, and Mr. Couch, the bird-stuffer who skinned it, informed me a male by dissection. Though to a certain extent I have profited by it, so far as to have the only Channel Island example of the Iceland Falcon in my possession, I cannot help regretting that this bird was killed by the keeper, as it seems to me not impossible that the two birds being together in the island so late as the 11th of April, and certainly one, probably both, being adult, and there being plenty of food for them, might, if unmolested, have bred in the island. Perhaps, however, this is too much to have expected so far from their proper home. It would, however, have been interesting to know how late the birds would have remained before returning to their northern home; but the breeding-season for the Pheasants was beginning, and this was enough for the keeper, as he had actually seen two or three Pheasants — some hens — killed before he shot the Falcon. As these Falcons can only be considered very