

trap any of these ringed birds will kindly inform me, or the Curator, Bombay Natural History Society. Next year I have a plan to band many more birds with aluminium rings bearing the inscription 'INFORM MAHARAJA BHAVANAGAR B.H.F. 1' onwards. Moreover, I keep a detailed account of each bird banded in a proper Register. I do hope others by seeing what we are doing will take interest and commence banding this interesting bird instead of mercilessly destroying it during the breeding season (May to October). I wish to quote E. C. Stuart Baker who states in *Fauna of British India, Birds*, Vol. vi, page 71 :—'This is one of the Indian Game-birds which requires most rigid protection, as it is constantly shot and harassed during the breeding-season'.

I am grateful to Mr. Prater for having supplied me with the necessary aluminium rings and instructions for banding in the correct way.

BHAVANAGAR,

K. S. DHARMAKUMAR SINHJI.

September 4, 1943.

X.—WHIMBREL AND FIDDLER CRABS.

We were watching a flock of whimbrel (Elephanta Island, Bombay Harbour, 10 Jan. 1943) on a mangrove-bordered mud-shore, swarming with fiddler-crabs (*Gelasimus* sp.) of all sizes.

The bird caught the crab by its 'fiddle', lifted it up into the air and then sharply jerked its head. The fiddle broke off, and the whimbrel then methodically dropped the fiddle, picked up the owner and swallowed him! The place was littered with inedible claws. The size and shape of the whimbrel's beak also appeared to help it to extract the crabs from their holes.

The ease with which the crustacean discards its claws and limbs is often quoted as an adaptive device to help it to escape. In this case the crab is hoisted on its own petard!

FRENCH BRIDGE, BOMBAY 7,

M. R. RAUT.

September 15, 1943.

XI.—THE MOULTING OF DUCK AFTER ARRIVAL IN INDIA.

In *J.B.N.H.S.* xlii, p. 444, Mr. Salim Ali has referred to common teal and shoveller being rendered completely flightless due to moult, at Bharatpur, during October.

In X'mas 1933, I was shooting at an irrigation lake in the Nasik District. The quality of the shooting and the scarcity of guns over the huge area resulted in pot shots being taken at young spotbill in the 'flapper' stage. My notes record that a female wigeon, similarly obtained was moulting primaries on both wings and unable to fly. I have shot at the same place (but not before

December) on several occasions subsequently, but have not come across another instance. At Bharatpur this appears to be an annual and regular state of affairs well known to the local people.

BOMBAY,

HUMAYUN ABDULALI.

September 15, 1943.

[On p. 365, Vol. xxiii of the Journal Capt. Logan Home recorded a female Shoveller shot at Nowshera, N.W.F.P., with wing quills in moult and unable to fly.—EDS.]

XII.—DUCKS OF KAIRA DISTRICT.

We have been shooting ducks fairly regularly in Kaira district for some thirteen years and have kept notes on our bags. This list of ducks for our locality may be of some interest inasmuch as no previous list has been published for this district.

The waters of this district suitable for ducks consist of several large artificial irrigation tanks. The quantity of water in these tanks is dependent on the annual rainfall, and in some seasons the water is very low. Most of these tanks, even the largest are dry, or practically so for a few months before the rains break. (This is of interest as it would indicate that the ducks indigenous to India, and listed here as occurring in our district must be, at least in part, local migrants; coming into the district to breed, after the monsoon breaks.). Following a good heavy monsoon the duck shooting is excellent; after a light monsoon, the reverse is true. The first of the migrants to arrive are the blue-winged teal, and these in large numbers, sometime in the second week of October. They and the common teal are the last to leave about the middle of March. The average bag consists of blue-winged teal, common teal, and white-eyed pochard in larger numbers; and a fair number of pintail and gadwall.

The following is our list of ducks recorded in Kaira District:—

Nukhta or Comb-Duck (*Sarkidiornis melanotus* Pennant) Fairly common, as long as the tanks are well filled. They disappear later in the season.

Cotton-Teal (*Nettapus coromandelianus* Gmelin)—Rare. Only three recorded; a drake and two ducks shot at Pariaj, Dec. 12, 1942. (The party consisted of eight guns, and the total bag was 121 ducks.).

Grey Lag Goose (*Anser anser* Linn.)—Rare. A flock of six seen at Pariaj, Dec. 30, 1931. Two shot by D.S.P., Kaira, on Jan. 15, 1932, at Pariaj. Three shot at Chitersumba, Dec. 24, 1939.

Lesser Whistling Teal (*Dendrocygna javanica* Horsf.)—Common early in the season as long as tanks are well filled.

Brahminy Duck (*Casarca ferruginea* Pallas)—Not rare. A few to be found along Mahi and Sabarmati rivers and occasionally around the larger tanks.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos* Linn.)—Rare. Only an occasional straggler seen in the district; while they seem to be a bit more



Abdulali, Humayun. 1943. "The Moulting of Duck After Arrival in India." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 44, 300–301.

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