

bited; and upon the table there were several new kinds of roots, including the new vegetable (*Tropæolum*), &c., presented by Mr. Kernan. After the usual discussion, the Meeting was adjourned until the 16th March.

March 16.—John E. Gray, Esq., F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

The Curator delivered his second lecture on *Roots*, &c. to the Members and their friends. The Society proceeded to ballot for Dr. J. Streiten of Worcester, who was accordingly elected. The Secretary announced that since the last Meeting the Society had received from H. B. Fielding, Esq., of Stodday Lodge, near Lancaster, a valuable donation of plants from all parts of Europe, comprising upwards of a thousand species, some of which were exhibited. A paper was then read from J. Riley, Esq., of Nottingham, in answer to a paper by Mr. White on the *Hybridity of Ferns*, which excited much interest. Mr. D. Cooper exhibited and explained the principles of the *Endosmometer*, after which the Society adjourned until April 6th.

MISCELLANEOUS.

NOTES ON IRISH BIRDS.

KITE. *Milvus iclinus*, Sav.—In the Magazine of Zoology and Botany, vol. ii. p. 171, this bird is mentioned as of doubtful occurrence in Ireland; but from what I have subsequently learned from the very intelligent gamekeeper at Shanes Castle (the seat of Earl O'Neil, on the borders of Lough Neagh), who, from having frequently taken the species in Northamptonshire, is quite conversant with it, and describes it accurately, I have no doubt of its occasional appearance in this country. He states that in cold weather (the season is not remembered), about eight years ago, he saw a kite on two or three occasions hovering over Glenarm Park (county of Antrim), and that in March, 1835, his attention was called to a strange bird, which appeared for three successive days in Shanes Castle park, and which proved to be of this species. In both instances the forked tail served for specific distinction: neither specimen was obtained.

TAWNY OWL. *Ulula stridula*, Selby (vide Mag. Zool. and Bot., vol. ii. p. 179).—By the same person I am assured that an owl of this species was killed within the last few years in Shanes Castle park. Having served in the capacity of game-keeper in England, before coming to this country, he then became acquainted with this bird, which was correctly described to me under the name of Brown

Owl. From his evident knowledge of both species, I have perfect reliance on the accuracy of my informant.

REDSTART. *Sylvia Phœnicurus*, Lath.—Since the article was written which appeared in the first number of this work (p. 17), I am enabled to add the following note on this species:—Some years ago in the autumn, a specimen which was shot in the neighbourhood of Belfast, was, when quite recent, obtained by Dr. J. D. Marshall, who informs me that it proved identical with English specimens of *S. Phœnicurus* in his collection. It has been unfortunately destroyed by moths.

SPOTTED REDSHANK. *Totanus fuscus*, Leis.—As I did not give any particulars of this bird when it was first recorded as Irish in the Magazine of Natural History, vol. v. p. 578, it may be here mentioned that the specimen alluded to fell by my own gun in Belfast Bay, on August 22, 1823. It was in immature plumage, as admirably represented by Bewick.

NIGHT HERON. *Nycticorax Europæus*, Steph.—In the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London for 1834 (p. 30), I noticed a specimen of this bird, which was stated to have been sent from Letterkenny to Dublin, and received there in a recent state at the beginning of that year. Subsequently, one of these birds, in the plumage of the first year, or that of the Gardenian Heron, was shot in the county of Armagh, and presented to the Belfast Museum.

FORK-TAILED GULL. *Larus Sabinii*, Sab.—I have to record the occurrence of a fourth individual of this species in Ireland. It was shot in company with Terns (*Sternæ*) in the bay of Dublin, on September 12, 1837, and came into the possession of H. H. Dombrian, Esq., of that city. This gentleman has kindly informed me that the specimen corresponds with the description of the *L. Sabinii* in the plumage of the first year (Mag. Zool. and Bot., vol. i. p. 460) in every respect but one, that of having “the under part of the throat and the upper part of the breast” white, instead of “pale ash colour,” as in the bird originally described. Having just seen the notes of the late Mr. Montgomery on the first of these gulls obtained in Ireland, I am enabled to add the colour of the bill, legs, &c., which in the immature bird has not been described. Under the name of “*Larus minutus*”, which it was considered to be, it is remarked of this individual, “irides dark, bill black, legs pale flesh colour, weight $5\frac{1}{2}$ ounces.” The dates of the occurrence of the *L. Sabinii* in Ireland approximate very closely, though they were all obtained in different years. In Belfast Bay they were shot on the 15th and 18th of September, and in Dublin Bay on the 12th of the

same month. The date when the first specimen was procured here is unknown.

The Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*) breeding in Ireland.—Within the last few years these birds have bred in several of the Irish counties, including northern, central, and southern. The details on this subject, as well as on the spotted redshank and night heron, are reserved for their due place in my intended series of papers on the Birds of Ireland, of which three have already appeared in the second volume of the Magazine of Zoology and Botany, and one in the first number of this work.—W. THOMPSON, *Belfast, March 1838.*

FOSSIL SALAMANDER AND COPROLITE.

In a Letter from M. de Paravey to the French Academy, the writer states that he saw at Leyden, in the cabinet of M. van Breda, the fossil skeleton of a salamander, about three feet long, and in a more perfect state than that figured by Scheuchzer in his *Homo diluvii testis*. What increases the value of this specimen is that it contains in the part corresponding to the abdomen several coprolites, in which we detect fragments of the bones of frogs and of eels, &c., so that we have proof that the antediluvian species had the same kind of food as the larger salamanders of the present day. A very large salamander, brought by M. Siebold from Japan, is still living at the Leyden Museum, and is fed chiefly with frogs. This celebrated traveller brought to Europe the male and female, but the latter was one day devoured by its companion, which no doubt had been kept too long without food.—*Comptes Rendus*, Nov. 19, 1838.

HABITS OF THE BLUE TITMOUSE (*Parus cœruleus*).

A redstart (*Phœnicura ruticilla*), and a blue titmouse built nests in an old wall within a few feet of my parlour window. The nests were placed within three feet of each other; that of the redstart in a very open rent, while that of the titmouse was better secured by having a very small entrance, as is usually the case with the situations chosen by this bird. My attention was at first attracted by the violence with which I frequently saw the titmouse drive away both the parent redstarts when approaching their own nest with food for their young; and, knowing the pugnacious disposition of the titmouse, I at first thought that it wished to destroy its neighbours, as after chasing them to a little distance it would fly into the redstart's nest. As the redstart was to me the rarest bird, I began to debate with myself whether I should not destroy the titmouse, that the other might not be prevented from bringing up its young. In the



Thompson, William. 1838. "Notes on Irish birds." *Annals of natural history* 1, 156–158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222933809512257>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/19581>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222933809512257>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/27803>

Holding Institution

Natural History Museum Library, London

Sponsored by

Natural History Museum Library, London

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.