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*Non moriar, sed vivam, et narrabo opera Domini.*

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## Dates of Departure (continued).

	1895.
<i>Tringa</i> [? <i>striata</i> ] .....	Sept. 17
<i>Larus glaucus</i> .....	" 25
<i>Rissa tridactyla</i> .....	" 25
<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i> .....	" 30
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" " (young) .....	" 30
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<i>Mergulus alle</i> .....	" 1
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XXIV.—Further Notes on the Ornithology of the Cape Verde Islands. By BOYD ALEXANDER.

THE following observations are the result of a second visit to the Cape Verde Islands in October 1897. Before giving them, however, I should like to withdraw two suppositions made in my previous paper (*suprà*, pp. 74–118):—

Firstly, that the Kite of the Canary Islands recorded by Mr. Meade-Waldo under the name of *Milvus iclinus* is probably the Black Kite (pp. 79–80). This is not the case, *M. iclinus* being the species resident in the Canaries.

Secondly, the inference that all Desert-Larks lay no more than a single egg (p. 112). This was assumed on the strength of several nests of Desert-Larks, each containing no more than one young bird, having been found in May; but the dying away of all vegetable growth, and consequently of the insect-life which is usual at that time of the year on the islands, would be sufficient to account for many eggs of those early-breeding individuals being unfertile.

## NEOPHRON PERCNOPTERUS.

From October to the end of January few adult Egyptian Vultures are to be met with around the villages. During that time they have all gone in couples to the highest hills, where they breed, and keep away from habitations as much as possible, seldom coming into the valleys unless a goat or cow is slaughtered by the peasants. Then from February

onward the adults, with companies of young birds, begin to mobilize their forces outside the villages. On Oct. 28th, 1897, while on Boa Vista, we killed an adult female which would have laid her eggs in another week.

FALCO NEGLECTUS.

We took the two first eggs of this species on Raza on Oct. 11th, 1897, and a week later we obtained a series of clutches on Boa Vista. The nests were built on rocky ledges on the precipitous sides of hills. As a rule they were flimsy structures, consisting of fine roots and tufts of dead grass, with a little goat's-hair, and sometimes old rags, for a lining. The southern islands of the archipelago, especially Santiago and Maio, possess a larger form of this Kestrel. The *Falco neglectus* of Schlegel inhabits the northern islands, and is to be found breeding entirely in the precipitous rocks of hills, while the larger form invariably resorts to the tops of tall coconut-trees for nesting-purposes, and numerous pairs may frequently be found in one grove. Again, on the other islands the small form is met with in isolated pairs during the breeding-season. We obtained a fine series of both.

	Length. in.	Wing. in.	Tail. in.
Adult ♂, Santo Antão . . . . .	11·0	7·7	5·0
„ ♂, São Nicolau . . . . .	11·3*	7·8	4·6 (worn)
„ ♀, Santo Antão . . . . .	12·5	8·0	5·5
„ ♀, São Nicolau . . . . .	12·9*	8·4	5·6

The measurements of the two latter are almost identical with those of the typical specimen in the British Museum, which was obtained at São Vicente.

	Length. in.	Wing. in.	Tail. in.
Adult ♂, Santiago . . . . .	13·0	8·6	5·6
„ ♂, Maio . . . . .	13·5	9·0	5·58
„ ♀, Santiago . . . . .	13·9	9·15	6·2
„ ♀, Maio . . . . .	13·2*	8·95	5·86

\* Measured in the flesh.

In colouring and dimensions the eggs correspond with those of *Falco cenchris*. I have two clutches of seven eggs

each, but four to six are the usual complements. For Kestrels' eggs, each clutch is remarkably uniform as regards coloration.

STRIX INSULARIS.

We found this Owl by no means common. Holes in the rocky sides of valleys and the tops of coconut-trees are chosen as nesting-sites. On Dec. 2nd, 1897, while on Santiago, a native brought me two young birds in down, which I managed to bring home safely, and they are now in an aviary in my garden. They seem very popular, for all the White Owls of the neighbourhood pay them visits nightly, and no doubt envy them for their choice food, which consists of five Sparrows and three mice every night.

The female of this species is decidedly smaller than the male, and the breast-markings are fewer and less bright.

SYLVIA CONSPICILLATA.

Breeds on São Nicolau in November. In the following month we obtained several immature males on Santa Antão, and their plumage resembled that of the adult female.

SYLVIA ATRICAPILLA.

This Blackcap is a resident on the northern islands of the archipelago. On São Nicolau in November it was breeding in large numbers, and every valley was resounding with its musical song. About the end of February the numbers of the residents are increased by migrants. The nests were built in the coffee-bushes, and we obtained a fine series of clutches. The eggs of only one of these approach in any way the common type of our Blackcap's; all the others are very light in ground-colour, blotched, spotted, and streaked with dark and reddish brown, and underlying markings of purplish brown, so as to form a zone round the larger ends. The dimensions vary in length from 0".8 to 0".73, and in breadth from 0".64 to 0".5.

SYLVIA GULARIS.

This subspecies of *S. atricapilla*, with the brown throat, is to be found only on Santiago. Their numbers are, how-

ever, augmented towards the end of February by the migratory species on passage. Coming, as we did, to Santiago on Dec. 2nd, direct from São Nicolau, where *S. atricapilla* was in full song, the valleys on the former island struck us as being very silent, for the subspecies had finished breeding, the young were abroad, and the adults moulting. The immature bird does not possess the brown throat.

CALAMOCICHLA BREVIPENNIS.

We arrived on São Nicolau on November 4th, just at the right time to secure a couple of nests with eggs of this rare Warbler. The nest, of a deep cup-shaped form, is bound to two or more of the upper stems of a coffee-bush or of a young orange-tree, and about 8 or 9 feet from the ground. Fine strips from the dried-up blades of maize, dead grass, and fibrous rind from the trunk of the banana-tree compose the body of the nest, while fine grass and bents form the lining. The eggs, generally three in number, are bluish white, spotted and blotched, especially at the larger ends, with pale greenish brown and purple-brown, and with underlying blotches of violet-grey. Their dimensions correspond with those of the round form of the eggs of *Acrocephalus streperus*. Although the affinity of this species to typical examples of the genus *Luscinola* is indicated by the possession of a long first primary, yet its flight, song, nest, and eggs show it to be a true Reed-Warbler.

PASSER SALICICOLA.

The Spanish Sparrow is almost as ubiquitous as *Passer jagoensis*. Nowhere else did we find this Sparrow in such numbers as on Maio. Small clumps of acacia-bushes in a valley close to the sea had their upper branches crammed with bulky domed nests, hardly a foot of space intervening between them.

PASSER JAGOENSIS.

This Sparrow is not at all particular as to where it builds its nest. Where trees are absent, hollows in the ground underneath boulders, or crevices in cliffs, are chosen. The proper breeding-season commences at the end of September.



When placed in a tree the nest is domed, but when in a hollow of the ground it is an open compact structure, and often lined with feathers. The eggs are four, rarely five, in number; in each clutch they are of a fairly uniform colour, with the exception of one, which is invariably lighter than the rest. In size, markings, and coloration they correspond with those of the Tree-Sparrow (*P. montanus*).

The adult plumage is not attained till the second year. The immature male resembles the adult female, but its upper parts and the stripe over each eye possess a decided rufous coloration, while the black on the chin and throat is a shade or two darker.

#### ESTRILDA JAGOENSIS.

On Nov. 17th, while on São Nicolau, we took a nest of this species. It was placed between the upper stems of a young orange-tree, domed like a Sparrow's, and composed of very fine freshly-plucked grass. The eggs, four in number, are white, and measure  $0''\cdot6 \times 0''\cdot45$ .

All the specimens we obtained on Santiago were caught at night by natives, who used to invade the strips of fish-cane where these birds roosted and dazzle them by means of a bright lantern. These birds are very partial to shady pools, which they frequent, at intervals, throughout the day.

*Adult female.* Like the male (*suprà*, p. 85), except that the eye-stripe is less extensive, the under tail-coverts are light brown flecked with black, and the tail dark brown.

*Young female.* General colour of the upper parts greyish brown, with faint traces of bars, shading into a rufous tinge on the rump and upper tail-coverts. Little or no rose-red on the breast and belly, which are washed with pale greyish buff, becoming brighter on the flanks and under tail-coverts, the latter flecked with brown.

#### ALÆMON ALAUDIPES.

The love-call of the male during the breeding-season has the ring of a clarion in it, and can be heard at a great distance. At this call, uttered three or four times in rapid succession, the female comes to his side, and he then shoots

up into the air with wings closed above her head, uttering the whole time his note, which becomes tremulous as the flight upward is completed, and then he drops down again with a float-like motion of the wings almost upon the head of his consort.

The eggs, two in number, are laid on the bare ground, in a depression, or underneath a stone, or among the ruins of a wall. Their ground-colour is a dirty white, blotched and spotted with reddish brown, with underlying markings of purplish grey, which often form a thick zone round the larger end. Measurements: length 1''·0–0''·9, breadth 0''·7–0''·63. Incubation is performed by the female, and while she sits the male bird will decoy with antics the intruder right into the opposite direction to where the nest is situated.

#### SPIZOCORYS RAZÆ.

On Oct. 7th we approached Raza for the second time within the year, and we discovered the males of this very local species all busy in courting their mates. With wings drooping and scraping along the ground, a male would approach and circumvent a female, and then rise above her head and pour out his song as he ascended vertically with a gentle beat of wings, and not in the spiral circles that characterize the impetuous singing flight of our Sky-Lark. The song, uttered both on the wing and when stationary, consists of the call-notes constantly repeated. In the early morning, when numbers of these Larks were singing overhead, it was not unusual to find some singing in chorus, and this tended to lessen the somewhat monotonous character of their songs. When on the ground a ventriloquial call-note was constantly uttered, becoming very persistent just towards dusk.

The nest is placed in a small depression in the loose stony soil, either among a patch of grass, or underneath a boulder or a small creeping plant common on the island. It is a frail structure of dry grass, and if any attempt be made to detach it from its surroundings it falls to pieces in the hand. Incubation lasts for a period of 13 days, both sexes sharing in the task. The eggs, three in number, resemble both in

coloration and dimensions those of the Wood-Lark (*Alauda arborea*), from which, if they were to be mixed up, there would be great difficulty in picking them out again.

PYRRHULAUDA NIGRICEPS.

Breeding commences at the beginning of October. Flat stone-covered places near the sea are the favourite resorts, the birds breeding together in large societies. The nests are extremely difficult to discover. If you stand still, the male birds will now and again proclaim their presence by rising up from the ground and indulging in their jerky little songs; but to passers-by they never betray themselves, sitting close the whole time, and creeping very often under some large stone. There is little variation in the song, which might be expressed by the words "All alive, ho!" constantly repeated. While on Boa Vista we were fortunate enough to frighten a male off his nest, containing two eggs, which were well incubated. The nest, composed of a little dead grass, was placed underneath a large stone. The eggs are a dirty white in ground-colour, evenly spotted and blotched all over with light brown, and with minute underlying spots of purplish grey; they measure  $0''\cdot8 \times 0''\cdot59$ .

CYPSELUS UNICOLOR.

Breeds in holes in the precipitous sides of hills. On Nov. 13th, on São Nicolau, we found a nest containing two eggs. Ground-colour white, minutely freckled with reddish brown, chiefly at the larger end, where a faint zone is formed. Measurements  $0''\cdot87 \times 0''\cdot64$ .

COTURNIX CAPENSIS.

It was a disappointment not to have met with a typical example of the Red-throated Quail. It certainly does occur on the islands, since we obtained specimens of the intermediate form, which was breeding in November at altitudes of over 4000 feet on São Nicolau. On the low lands of Maio, which are overgrown with a thick high weed, Quail got up in dozens at our feet, but they were chiefly migratory birds.



## NUMIDA MELEAGRIS.

The Guinea-fowls were breeding on São Nicolau in November. The almost inaccessible parts of the highest hills were their strongholds. Every morning and evening the pairs congregated and came down on to the lower ground, only to fly back again at the slightest noise. Throughout the day they sheltered themselves from the heat behind boulders and clumps of bushes that grow on the summits. We found that the Black Kite preyed to a great extent on their young, as well as on those of the Quail.

## PUFFINUS MARLÆ.

While on Raza we found that this Shearwater had young. The eggs are laid in September, and should the first be taken another is laid. Albinism occurs in this species, but unfortunately I arrived on the scene too late to prevent the destruction by some fishermen of a perfect albino specimen. However, we managed to obtain several specimens which exhibit a distinct tendency towards albinism. During the two weeks we stayed on Raza over 3000 of these Shearwaters were captured by the fishermen, who prepared them for food.

## MIGRATORY SPECIES.

The eastern islands of the archipelago—Sal, Boa Vista, and Maio—appear to receive by far the greatest number of migrants. Although the Little Egret (*Ardea garzetta*) is a local breeding-species on the islands, the majority of the birds observed are migrants. These are to be seen up to the end of April, and it is probable they return again in the autumn, but they certainly do not winter in the archipelago.

I take the following notes from my diary:—

*October 7th.* A Montagu's Harrier circling above the little island of Branca, also a party of Turnstones (immature birds) on the low rocks fringing the sea.

*October 18th.* Some more Turnstones close to the harbour on Boa Vista, also three Whimbrels and a pair of Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

*October 29th.* While reconnoitring the pools close to

Coralinho Bay we disturbed two large flocks of Dunlins, among which were some Kentish Plovers; a little later on, three Curlew-Sandpipers and two Black-tailed Godwits.

*November 11th*, São Nicolau. A Swallow in company with a number of Swifts (*Cypselus unicolor*).

*November 20th*, Maio. The extensive salt-pans close to the sea were crowded with migrants. Dunlins, Knots, Greenshanks, and Sanderlings observed, while two Avocets kept flying from one pool to another. Over a large stretch of soft mud further inland Kentish Plovers ran to and fro busily feeding, uttering now and again their plaintive, tremulous whistles, which we still heard long after dusk had fallen.

*November 22nd*. A pair of Wheatears among some ruined huts close to the shore. They were very shy, but we succeeded in obtaining the female (in moult), which proved to be the large northern form of our *Saxicola œnanthe*. Around the same huts we killed a male specimen of *Eurystomus afer*.

On leaving Lisbon on December 20th, the sea, as far as Corunna, presented an extraordinary sight, for over its surface skimmed countless numbers of Gannets (*Sula bassana*), that looked like innumerable moving specks of white in the far distance.

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XXV.—*Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club.*

Nos. XLIX.—LI.

No. XLIX. (December 29th, 1897.)

THE forty-eighth Meeting of the Club was held at the Restaurant Frascati, 32 Oxford Street, on Wednesday, the 15th of December, 1897. *Chairman*: P. L. SCLATER, F.R.S. Twenty-four Members and four guests were present.

THE HON WALTER ROTHSCHILD sent descriptions of the following species of birds from New Guinea:—

CYCLOPSITACUS MACILWRAITHI, sp. n.

Forehead to middle of crown and line round eyes black,