

RARITY DESCRIPTIONS

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*. 28th May to 1st June, 1976.

On 28th May many visitors mentioned the presence of a strange heron with yellow legs and I saw the bird in flight at 18.00 hours and the next day several times attempting to roost in the wooded Millcombe valley.

A typical Night Heron in structure and colour except that this bird carried its legs very low, more like a Bittern, the left leg trailing particularly badly.

In some lights the coverts were seen to be bronze-brown presumably indicating a sub-adult although it had a well developed black cap and white plumes, grey primaries and white underparts.

M. ROGERS

The bird was first seen head-on standing at the edge of the pond. The head, neck and underside tinged buff like a pale Wheatear and the eye showed red even from a distance. The crown and back of neck were glossy black with a whitish crest feather.

After the bird flew to another pond I got a good view from above as it took off in flight and the back was dark grey, wings paler and the coverts above the secondaries seemed even paler and brownish. The legs were fairly bright yellow.

The bird called 'Kaak kaak' several times in flight.

L. V. BLACK

Little Bittern female *Ixobrychus minutus*. 2nd April, 1976.

My wife and I were walking along a track when some distance ahead I noticed a smallish buff coloured bird flying low over the bracken. Before we reached the area the bird took off again and pitched in an area of very boggy juncus behind us. A quick search failed to locate the bird and I went to summon aid in order to quarter the ground thoroughly but in my absence the bird took off in a south-easterly direction and we failed to relocate it.

Light brown upperparts with some streaking on the back, more on underparts. The most conspicuous features in flight were the wing patches buff in colour and extending over a large area. Fairly close in size to a Lapwing, perhaps smaller and looking like a miniature Purple Heron with very large feet protruding beyond the tail, but not so much of a neck as in the large herons.

M. and W. ROGERS

Alpine Swift *Apus apus*. 23rd August 1976. First seen by M. Darlston and later by M. and W. Rogers, M. Squires, I. G. and L. V. Black *et al.*

A large brown swift with wings swept back even more. The upper parts were paler, belly and chin white but chin not as white as belly and separated from it by a broken breast band.

M. DARLSTON, M. ROGERS

Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*. 9th April, 1976.

At about 10.30 hours my wife and I noticed a very pale grey warbler feeding at the top of Millcombe. It was seen on several occasions during the day and was trapped without difficulty at 18.00 hours when it appeared in our front garden.

Basically a garden warbler, grey with head several shades lighter, underparts silvery white with no trace of yellow but some buff on flanks, the bird was dumpier and bigger headed than Willow Warbler and primary and tail edges tinged lime green. The rump was much the same colour as the wing edges merging into the lower back and tail coverts. There was a slight tinge of yellow at the carpal joint. The superciliary was white or off-white, rather straight and fading rapidly behind the dark eye. Legs dark, upper mandible dark but lower horn