OTOCORIS ALPESTRIS.

Shore-Lark.

Alauda alpestris, Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 289.
—— *flava*, Gmel. edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 800.
Phileremos alpestris, Brehm, Vög. Deutschl., p. 313.
Otocoris alpestris, G. R. Gray, List of Gen. of Birds, 1841, p. 62.
Otocorys alpestris, Cab. Mus. Heine., Theil i. p. 121.

This pretty species has of late occurred so frequently in various parts of England, that there are few collections of British birds which are not adorned with examples. Some of these have been shot, while others have fallen victims to the nets of the bird-catchers. The introduction of the bird into the English avifauna was made by the late Mr. Yarrell, who, in his 'History of British Birds,' states that in 1831, Mr. John Sims informed him of a specimen which had been shot on the beach at Sherrington, in Norfolk, in the March of the previous year. Since that period so many other instances of its occurrence have been recorded in 'The Ibis,' the 'Zoologist,' and other journals, that it would be tedious to quote more than a few of the more interesting of the notices that have appeared therein.

In a communication to 'The Ibis,' dated Brighton, Nov. 16th, 1861, Mr. George Dawson Rowley says:—"November might be called the ornithologist's month, at least on the south coast; for in it all the rare birds have been found which have come under my observation

"On Friday (15th) two fine specimens of the Shore-Lark (*Alauda alpestris*) were taken by a bird-catcher at Rottingdean, in clap-nets; the decoy-birds used were Common Larks (*A. arvensis*), for which he at first mistook these rare northern wanderers: the man who caught them said there were five. On the following morning at the same place he took a third. These arrivals were probably due to the late severe gales; yet all three birds were fat and healthy, with no appearance of privation. The first two were males, in good plumage, and had the elongated and pointed black feathers over the eye well developed."

In the same volume of 'The Ibis' Mr. Stevenson, of Norwich, says:—"In addition to the three specimens of the Shore-Lark taken at Brighton, in 1861, I am now able to record the capture of five others, in Norfolk, between the first week in November 1861 and the 10th of January 1862. The first was killed at Yarmouth, on the 17th of November, the second at Sherringham, on the 9th, and the third at Yarmouth, on the 12th; and no others were apparently noticed on any part of our coast until the last pair were also procured at Sherringham, during the first week of 1862. Having been shot in different localities, I have been unable to ascertain how many of these birds were seen on each occasion, or whether they were the only ones seen at the time. Most probably there were others, which escaped destruction; and as these birds were performing a southward migration, it is by no means impossible that the five specimens seen by the Brighton bird-catcher were the remnant of a flight already thinned on their passage down our eastern coast.

"Besides these recent specimens, occurring in so singular a manner about the same time, I know of three other examples killed in this county:—a young male, in March 1830; an adult male, at Yarmouth, in November 1850; and a third male, also adult, at Holkham, in December 1855. I have before alluded to the curious fact of all those procured being male birds; and it is worthy of notice in so accidental a visitant, that, with one exception, all in the above list appeared in the winter months." On a subsequent page Mr. Stevenson records that another specimen (a *male*, like the others), which had nearly assumed its full summer plumage, was killed at Yarmouth, about the 24th of April, 1862; and in a letter received from him while the present page was passing through the press is an enumeration of at least ten other examples which have been killed on the coast of Norfolk.

Among my MSS. I find a note by W. P. Turnbull, Esq., to the effect that Mr. Gray, the Secretary of the Natural-History Society of Glasgow, had informed him that three specimens were shot in the Tyne estuary in 1861. More recently (in December 1869) W. Thompson, Esq., of Weymouth, sent for my inspection a specimen which, with three others, had been killed on the 3rd of that month, on Lodmoor, a tract of marsh-land, within half a mile N.E. of that town, and separated from the sea of Weymouth Bay by a shingle beach and a turnpike road. Mr. Thompson's specimen was feeding in a dry portion of the marsh, apparently on grass-seeds.

It will be seen from the above quotations that, although the Shore-Lark does not breed with us, we are almost yearly visited by sufficient numbers to render it no longer a scarce bird in England. There is no record of its occurrence in Scotland or in Ireland, which leads to the supposition that those which have