

THE NATURALIST

KATHLEEN, THE RHINOCEROS CALF

THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY has recently received the smallest rhinoceros ever exhibited in the gardens in Regent's Park. Its size may be judged by comparison with the hand of the keeper holding the bottle of milk upon which it is feeding, as shown in our photograph. The animal, which is evidently only a few months old, and not yet weaned, although beginning to nibble at its hay, was captured in the forest on Mount Kenya and presented to the society by Mr. G. L. Bailey, of Nanyuki, Kenya Colony. As her name Kathleen indicates, she is a female.

There are two kinds of rhinoceros in Africa, usually distinguished as the black and the white rhinoceros; but since the two are equally black the reason for the names is not very clear. Perhaps the first "white" ones observed by some pioneer explorer in Cape Colony were standing in the sun and looked white from the reflection of the sun on their hides. Or possibly they were caked with dried mud of a sandy hue, giving them a pallid appearance. However that may be, the name "white" has stuck to the animal since, despite attempts to introduce the title "square-lipped," which at least has the merit of being distinctive, for the upper lip of this rhinoceros is truncated or cut square, whereas in the other, the "black" rhinoceros, it is angularly pointed. These structural differences in the mouth are accompanied by differences in the manner of feeding, the white rhino being a grazer, and the black rhino a browser, the mobile pointed lip being useful for plucking hold of the twigs of the low bushes on which this rhino feeds. The black rhino also is a more redoubtable, perhaps more intelligent, beast; and shares with the lion, elephant and buffalo the distinction of being one of a quartet regarded by sportsmen as the most dangerous of the game animals of Africa. At all events, the black rhino has succeeded in holding his own against human persecution, and is still plentiful enough in Africa, whereas the white rhino was long ago almost exterminated in South Africa, where he was formerly very abundant, and is now to all intents and purposes represented on that continent only by a few herds in the Sudan.

Kathleen is a calf of the common black rhino. She differs very little in proportions from the full grown animal, although her legs are somewhat longer and stronger as compared with the size of the body as befits a youngster which may have to follow its mother a few hours after birth. A similar development of the legs is a well-known thing in foals. The only very obvious difference is the almost complete absence of horns. The fore horn on the summit of the muzzle appears to be about 1 in. high, whereas the second horn behind it is represented merely by a slight thickening of the skin above the eyes. The creases on the skin of the flanks will lengthen and deepen with age. They are lines along which the skin is thinner so as to give it increased flexibility.

The hand-rearing in a zoological gardens of young unweaned animals like Kathleen, which ought still to be running with the mother, is always a difficult matter. But it is to be hoped that she will come safely through this period of anxiety and grow into a healthy and vigorous specimen. R. I. Pocock.



THE THRUSH FEEDING HER YOUNG IN THE NEST TIED WITH STRING TO THE PERGOLA

rescue was made. While the mother bird was busy gathering worms on the lawn the nest was pushed back into place, and by means of strong string was securely supported from beneath and tied to the woodwork of the pergola. All then went well. Another week passed. The young birds grew so quickly that the nest appeared to be uncomfortably crowded, but they had no objection to having their photograph taken. Shortly afterwards, when the owner opened his front door one morning, there was only an empty nest to greet him. K. ISITT. Baldon, Yorks.

country that I have been in, and they are many, between Scotland and the Antipodes.

When I saw it it was gorging on the aphid that swarm on a huge climbing rose rising from the border beneath the dining-room windows to the roof of the house. I was much obliged to it for ridding me of this infernal aphid pest, and hoped that its visit would be a long one and that it had brought its mate with it. Alas! the two days following came torrents of continuous rain, which must have given my welcome little visitor the shivers, for beyond several glimpses of it from a window that same afternoon of its appearance I have seen it no more, and now I sit lamenting. That it was a visitor from afar I feel certain. Can someone enlighten me? I would be greatly obliged if they would do so.

Swallows and swifts are back with us here again in hundreds. I have several nests of the former under the eaves of this house. It is a great bird year in Morayshire. FERINTOSH. Grantown-on-Spey, Morayshire.

[Perhaps some of our avicultural readers can identify the bird described by our correspondent. Many exotic species are now imported to this country; and when any of them escape, as not infrequently happens, they are a source of great bewilderment to those acquainted with the birds of our countryside.—Ed.]

NOTES AND QUERIES

A WHITE FOX.—During the course of a recent walking tour through the Alps of Savoie I saw in the Natural History Museum at Chambéry a white fox with only the paws of the usual reddish-brown colour. It was stated on the label attached to have come from Mt. Blanc. It was not an albino, judging from the colour of the artificial eyes. Is the European fox in the habit of assuming a white coat at high altitudes in the winter time?—WILLIAM HARCOURT (Bath). [In no part of its range, not even in the coldest parts of Canada, does the common fox turn white in winter.—Ed.]

KNOT AT BARNES.—On May 19th a workman in the Barnes district told me that earlier in the day he had found a freshly dead "snipe" which was being eaten by a crow. When I pushed home my enquiry he volunteered to recover the remains of the bird, and on looking at it I found that, instead of being a snipe, it was a knot in breeding plumage. In Bucknill's book, *The Birds of Surrey*, 1900, a few occurrences of the knot within the county are given. Since the year 1900 the number of bird watchers has increased greatly, and probably there are more recent records of which I have no knowledge. But, even so, the knot must be counted a rarity, and a specimen in breeding dress at so late a date is worth mention.—DONALD GRAY.

THE FOOD OF LITTLE OWLS.—Mr. J. S. Gibbons, and others, may be interested in Dr. Collings' investigation of the stomach contents of 98 little owls in May, June and July—the months being significant. In May no remains of birds found. In June, 7.82 per cent. of wild birds; 5.25 per cent. of game birds; in July, 1.00 per cent. of wild birds; .09 per cent. of game birds, or an average over the three dangerous months of 2.94 per cent. of wild birds and 1.78 per cent. of game birds. Of other food averages, worms were 20.28 per cent.; mice, 7.71 per cent.; vegetable matter, 8.38 per cent.; insects, beetles, etc., 56.78 per cent. His concluding paragraph that some take to evil habits, and some do not, is correct; and the same is true of kestrels.—M. P.

A FOX AND HIS WAYS.—I was recently reading a book called *Nest to the Ground*, Chronicles of a Countryside, by Martha McCulloch-Williams, printed by Heinemann in 1902, the countryside being in Tennessee. In the chapter on fox-hunting and foxes, she says that, since the year 1900, as so tradition avouches, the fox goes about thorny pastures collecting locks of wool, until his mouth is full. He then backs gradually into the water until he is under, all but his eyes, neck and mouth. The sheep takes refuge on the wool, and when the last one is safe there, the fox leaps ashore, spits the wool back in the water, and gallops away fleasless and happy. The next day when I opened the *Field*, I came across "H. R. K.'s" letter among others on the same subject, and thought perhaps *Nest to the Ground* was the book he read years ago.—S. B. B.

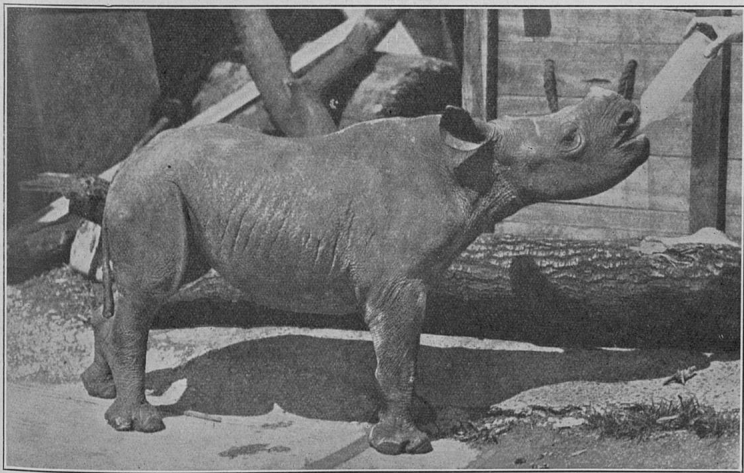
NESTING OF WILD DUCK.—Is it usual, I wonder, for wild duck to nest on the bank of a river where the water would in the ordinary way be covered by a high tide. The grounds of the lawn tennis club at Rye include a stretch of such land covered by long rank grass and other vegetation, and the nest of a wild duck was recently found there in a tussock of grass cleverly covered, and containing ten eggs. The nest was unfortunately disturbed by a dog when the eggs were on the point of hatching, but these were rescued and successfully brought up under a hen. Another unusual point is that the nest was within a very few yards of a path along which the players daily go to and fro—a fact which is hardly in keeping with the reputed shyness of this species. It happened that the day after the eggs were removed a high tide occurred which would have completely submerged the nest. The whole of the circumstances seem unusual, and worth recording.—F. HERBERT CHAPMAN (The Knoll, Rye).

For instructions as to questions see our note on the page containing "Answers to Correspondents."

CORRESPONDENCE

HEN PHEASANT CARRYING A CHICK

SIR,—I am writing to enquire whether any readers have ever seen a hen pheasant carrying her young? We are all familiar with the idea of a woodcock carrying her young, although everyone may not be agreed on that question, but the following incident struck me as being something so strange as to be worth recording. The other day I was quietly watching a large open pheasantry in which a few hen pheasants have been allowed to remain, after all the necessary eggs for hen rearing had been taken, in order to see if they would sit on and hatch out any further eggs they might lay. I noticed a hen scuffling about in the dust and thought that she was dusting herself, and two other hens were beside her. Presently she ran out into the open, carrying a small object in her beak. I then involuntarily moved and she dropped the object from her mouth. Being curious to see what it was I entered the pheasantry and found it was a young pheasant about a week old. It was still alive, but seemed somewhat unhappy, to say the least of it. I put it down on a spot which I should recognise again, and on returning some



KATHLEEN, THE RHINOCEROS CALF, TAKING HER MILK

F. W. Bond

THE TRUSTFUL THRUSH

AT A HOUSE in the country, where wild birds had been well fed all through the winter, many of them became very tame. All the same, it was a surprise for the owner on opening his front door one morning in May to find that a good-sized nest had been built on the woodwork of a small pergola not more than 4 ft. away and straight in front of the doorway. At first it seemed impossible for the mother bird—a thrush—to rear a family in such a public place; but the eggs were laid, and she settled down to hatch them regardless of the postman, newspaper boy and many callers of various sorts who came to the door each day. To make matters worse, she had chosen the time of "spring-cleaning"; and during the first week painters were busy all day disturbing off the old paint and redecorating. But in spite of all these disturbing elements, a little family of four ultimately arrived, causing much flying to and fro and great excitement on the part of the parents. But disaster came. A gale sprang up, accompanied by a heavy deluge of rain. This proved too much for the nest, which was not firmly fixed to the woodwork. It tilted over and was on the verge of tipping out the struggling youngsters. A hearty

hours later I found the hen pheasant brooding a single chick almost on that spot. I can only conjecture that under the somewhat unnatural conditions of an aviary, the other hens, possibly barren, were attacking the young chick, and this was the mother's way of saving it. I should be glad to hear if such an incident has ever been observed previously, and I trust I have not been too verbose in describing it. J. R. W.

AN UNKNOWN BIRD

SIR,—I cannot identify a bird which appeared here at the beginning of July. I have Howard Saunders's *Manual of British Birds* by me, and have gone through its pages, but nothing resembling this bird is to be found there, nor have I ever before seen its like in this country.

It seemed to me that it was about the size of a starling, or less, of very dark plumage above, perhaps lighter beneath in the afterpart, with brown feathers under the tail; but the striking thing about it was its long curved red bill, like that of a chough; indeed, at a little distance it much resembled a small chough and I think that its little piping note was quite the sweetest thing that I have ever heard from any bird in any