

The Mammals, Fishes, Reptiles and Amphibians

OF

Haslemere and District

(Approximately within a six-mile radius)

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etc.

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PREFACE.

THIS Pamphlet is an annotated Catalogue of the Mammals, Fishes, Reptiles, and Amphibians of Haslemere, and the surrounding country approximately within a six-mile radius of the town.

Notes on some Mammals which formerly existed in this area are appended.

The distribution in Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire of rare or uncommon species is indicated in the hope that further records may be forthcoming.

Reference has been made to introduced or re-introduced species, and a few notes of biologic, economic or antiquarian interest have been incorporated.

The source of all records is acknowledged either in the text or by a footnote, and I thank all who have assisted by supplying information.

I am under special obligation to Mr. Donald F. Leney, F.Z.S., for help in preparing the list of Fishes.

E. W. SWANTON.

*Educational Museum,
Haslemere, Feb., 1928.*

MAMMALS.

No less than 31 of the 42 species of British Land Mammals, if we include the Bats in the list, have been observed within a six-mile radius of Haslemere, but very few people are familiar with more than eleven!

There are 12 British Bats; nine of them have been recorded as occurring in our district.

GREATER HORSESHOE BAT (*Rhinolophus ferrum-equinum*).

In flight this species resembles the well-known Noctule, but to the trained observer the flying membrane is proportionately wider. It is very rare in Surrey. The Rev. W. A. Shaw has seen it at Peper Harow. There are no Haslemere records. It is rare in Hampshire, and the only Sussex record is a Brighton one.†

LONG-EARED BAT (*Plecotus auritus*).

A common frequenter of wooded country. It is easily distinguished by the enormous length of the ears, which are folded down when at rest; the upstanding earlets then resemble true ears. It hibernates in hollow trees and in the roofs of buildings, and is generally distributed in Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire. It has been observed that many people whose ears are not attuned to receive high-pitched sounds are totally unable to hear the shrill cry of this Bat.

BARBASTELLE (*Synotis barbastellus*).

In this Bat the eyes are enclosed within the bases of the ears, and the nostrils open in front of a naked patch, which is margined by the raised edges of the face.

In general colour it is the darkest of our Bats; the soft fur is deep black, but the tip of each hair is greyish.

Two Surrey records are noted in the Victoria History, viz., Richmond Park and Grays Wood (=Grayswood), near Haslemere. The Grayswood example—now in the Haslemere Museum—was taken by the late G. B. Buckton, F.R.S. I am informed by Mr. Gordon Dalgliesh that it is not uncommon at Midhurst, the only recorded Sussex station. There are only two Hampshire records for this rare Bat, both in the southern part of the county.

† W. Ruskin Butterfield, Vict. Hist., Sussex, Vol. I., p. 300.

SEROTINE (*Vespertilio serotinus*).

This Bat is said to be rare and local in the British Isles, but is probably often mistaken for the Noctule. It occurs in the neighbourhood of London, and has been taken at Folkestone and the Isle of Wight. Lord Lilford received Hampshire specimens. Three in the Haslemere Museum were taken by G. B. Buckton at Grayswood. We have no Sussex records.

NOCTULE (*Pipistrella noctula*).

Also known as the Great Bat or White's Bat. It is generally distributed in Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire, and is not uncommon about Haslemere. "Noctule" is an inappropriate name, for this Bat comes abroad early in the evening, sometimes in full daylight. Its occurrence in Britain was first noted by Gilbert White, who, in Letter XXV. to Thomas Pennant, alludes to "that large species of Bat which I call *Vespertilio altivolans* from its manner of feeding high in the air."

PIPISTRELLE (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*).

The commonest and smallest of our native Bats. Females frequently fly by day. It does not hibernate completely, but comes out on warm days in winter. An albino was killed at Grayswood about 1911; the Rev. W. A. Shaw reports that one was seen near Royal Common in the autumn of 1926.

NATTERER'S BAT (*Myotis nattereri*).

Also known as the Reddish-grey Bat from its prevailing colour. It is said to be rare in Surrey. Two were taken at Grayswood by G. B. Buckton in the fifties. The Rev. W. A. Shaw has seen it in the neighbourhood of Peper Harow. There are several Hampshire records. In Sussex it appears to be more frequent in the western than in the eastern districts, and is there called the "forest Bat." It frequents ponds, flying high above them. The fur on the under parts is sometimes quite white. Its disposition is "rather fierce, and having bitten, it retains its grip with the tenacity of a bull-dog."†

DAUBENTON'S BAT (*Myotis daubentoni*).

This Bat is uncommon. It frequents pools and streams, and may be at once known by the persistent habit of skimming over the surface of the water, flying backwards and forwards uniformly low, in a manner recalling that of a Swallow by day. It was taken by Buckton at Grayswood, and has been seen recently at Imbhams Pond, near Grayswood. The Rev. W. A. Shaw reports it as frequenting ponds in his district and the river at Eashing.

† O. V. Aplin, Zoologist, 3rd Series, XIII., 382.

WHISKERED BAT (*Myotis mystacinus*).

This species is sometimes confused with the Pipistrelle. One in the Haslemere Museum was taken at Grayswood by G. B. Buckton. It was observed by the Rev. W. A. Shaw at Peper Harow on July 27th, 1922. There is only one other Surrey record, the caves at Godstone, where it was taken by Mr. Robert F. Tomes. In Hampshire it has been reported from Christchurch and the Isle of Wight.

HEDGEHOG (*Erinaceus europæus*).

This familiar mammal feeds on insects, worms, snails, lizards, snakes, bird's eggs, rats and mice, and is sometimes kept in kitchens and cellars to rid them of cockroaches and beetles. It is strictly nocturnal and hibernates throughout the winter. J. E. Harting includes this inoffensive little beast amongst the Vermin of the Farm. Its chief enemies are foxes and badgers.

MOLE (*Talpa europæa*).

Common, but more abundant in the valleys than on the hills. The old English name of this highly interesting mammal is Mouldwarp or Mouldiwarp, from the Anglo-Saxon "Molde," soil and "Weorpan" to throw or turn up.

Wand, the old Danish name, still lingers in the western counties, where Moles are frequently called Wants. Contrary to popular belief, Moles are not blind. Weasels and owls are among the natural enemies of the Mole, "but whether the Mole is injurious or not from an agricultural point of view is a question upon which, probably, there will always be difference of opinion."†

COMMON SHREW (*Sorex araneus*).

Shrews, it may be noted, are not related to mice; the latter are rodents, the former are insectivores.

The Common Shrew is generally distributed. It feeds chiefly on worms and insect larvæ. A nocturnal species, it is more frequently seen dead than alive.

PIGMY SHREW (*Sorex minutus*).

The smallest of our native mammals, widely distributed, but always uncommon. It has been taken on several occasions about Haslemere and Hindhead. One captured by Capt. O. Salvin at Fernhurst was sent to the Haslemere Museum. Mr. Gordon Dalgliesh has observed it at Midhurst.

WATER SHREW (*Neomys fodiens*).

Rare in Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire. It is of aquatic habit, and makes its burrow in the bank of a pond or stream.

† J. E. Harting, Journal Roy. Agric. Soc., Vol. LIII., p. 465.

It has been seen to pursue small fish "with all the grace and agility of an otter." The Rev. W. A. Shaw saw one at Cut Mill in 1910 or 1911.

FOX (*Vulpes vulgaris*).

Common. "To a large extent, owing to its preservation for the purpose of hunting, the Fox is still a common animal throughout England, but had it not been for this artificial protection it would doubtless, in the more cultivated and open southern portions of the country, have shared the fate that has befallen the Wild Cat."† Harting notes that "Foxes are very fond of field mice, and will dig out and eat scores of them, in this respect rendering real service to farmers."** He also comments on the curious fact that a Fox generally abstains from poaching in the immediate neighbourhood of its lair.

STOAT (*Mustela erminea*).

This well-known and common mammal is larger than the Weasel, and is easily recognised by the black tip of the tail, which does not change colour in the ermine or winter dress. White Stoats are frequently seen in winter in this district, and are mostly females; white males are of rare occurrence in the south of England. Lydekker notes that "the change from the brown to the white dress does not appear by any means always coincident with the advent of winter, or even the approach of cold weather, Stoats having been often killed, even in the south of England, which had undergone partial change of colour during the early autumn."†

WEASEL (*Mustela vulgaris*).

Much smaller than the Stoat, and equally common. The tip of the tail is never black. It prefers fur to feathers, and preys almost exclusively on rats, mice and voles. It has been shewn that a single Weasel may easily destroy two dozen field mice, or even more, in one day. The female is much smaller than the male, and is "the little reddish beast not much bigger than a field mouse, but longer," which Gilbert White tells us was called "cane" by country people in his day. It is still known by that name in some of the villages near Haslemere. The Weasel never turns white in winter. The few records of white Weasels all concern true albinos, pure white ones with pink eyes.

BADGER (*Meles taxus*).

This harmless and interesting mammal, though subject to senseless persecution, still survives in our district. The ancient badger earth at Meadfield is now carefully protected by Dr.

† R. Lydekker, "British Mammalia," p. 102.

* Journal Roy. Agric. Soc., 1892, Vol. LIII., p. 476.

† Lydekker, op. cit., p. 118.

Derry. Though Harting (op. cit.) includes the Badger under "Vermin of the Farm," the worst he can say of it is that it has a predilection for young rabbits. Discussing the question whether the Badger is destructive to game, Harting observes "that in certain old woodlands well-known to us, where Badgers are common, game is also plentiful."

The gestation period is long. About 25 years ago a Badger and her cubs were dug out in Castle Copse, Blackdown, and kept in confinement. She gave birth to two young 13 months later.

Badger earths afford the best retreats for Foxes; where Badgers exist Foxes harbour.

OTTER (*Lutra vulgaris*).

It still frequents the local tributaries of the Wey and Arun. Occasionally one pays an unwelcome visit to the Trout Farm at Shottermill. It has been suggested that Otters sometimes cross over to the Wey from the Arun, instead of ascending from the Thames, for they travel over land long distances and quickly.

Two were killed in 1892 at Rodgate, below Anstead Brook. Two cubs were seen by Mr. H. P. Broad at Sydenhurst, Chiddingfold, in May, 1925; Mr. Duncan Derry saw one at Meadfield in September, 1926.

SQUIRREL (*Sciurus vulgaris*).

Always more abundant where conifers occur, this engaging little mammal is not uncommon in the pine woods throughout our district. One afternoon early in October, 1927, a Squirrel entered Haslemere Museum from the lawn to the astonishment of two visitors, who met it in the Hall corridor.

DORMOUSE (*Muscardinus avellanarius*).

Widely distributed and not uncommon about Haslemere. Copse cutters frequently find it in February hibernating in the very compact and ball-like nest, which is made of grass. When talking to a woodman in a copse near Weycombe a few years ago, I saw a nest lying near my feet. The maker was hibernating within and quite uninjured, though the nest must have fallen from one of the recently felled chestnut trees. If warmed too suddenly a torpid Dormouse dies in a few minutes.

HARVEST MOUSE (*Mus minutus*).

Apparently dwindling in this neighbourhood; none has been brought to the Haslemere Museum in recent years. "Rare, though I sometimes find their old nests." (Rev. W. A. Shaw, *in litt.*) Mr. Ruskin Butterfield comments, in the Victoria History of Sussex, upon its somewhat restricted range in that county, and notes that fifty years ago it was extremely plentiful in districts where it is now scarce. Mr. A. Trevor Battye attributes

its decrease of late years in certain parts of Hampshire "to the loss of stubble by close cutting machinery and the cleaning up of waste borders to cornfields." Gilbert White was the first to note that this Mouse is indigenous to Britain.†

WOOD MOUSE OR LONG-TAILED FIELD MOUSE (*Mus sylvaticus*).

The most prolific representative of the rodent family, and common in our district. Its chief enemies are kestrels, owls, crows, stoats and weasels. All these are classed by gamekeepers as "vermin"—though it is well-known that kestrels and owls do no harm in game preserves—so it is not surprising that this very mischievous mouse is sometimes remarkably abundant. There are local records of albinos. A few years ago one, with a white star on its forehead, was caught in the kitchen garden at Lythe Hill.

YELLOW-NECKED MOUSE (*Mus flavicollis*).

It is larger than the Wood Mouse, and is easily distinguished by the yellow band across the breast and the pure white of the under parts.

This Mouse was first recorded as British in 1894 by Mr. W. E. de Winton. It was not observed in the Haslemere district prior to 1902. In the winter of that year the writer captured two in a garden at College Hill, Haslemere, and a few years later caught others in a house on Museum Hill, Haslemere. The Rev. W. A. Shaw reports it as common at Peper Harow. It has been observed at Fernhurst (Capt. O. Salvin) and at Midhurst (Mr. Gordon Dalgliesh). We have no records from over the Hampshire border.

HOUSE MOUSE (*Mus musculus*).

Common everywhere. Those which occur in corn stacks are not infrequently of a lighter and brighter colour than the others. "There are few animals," Bell* observes, "more generally associated with mankind or whose very existence appears to be more essentially dependent upon human arts and human civilisation than this pretty but annoying little pest. . . It has accompanied man on all his adventures for colonisation, and identified itself with every new territorial occupation of our race."

BROWN RAT (*Mus decumans*).

Too common throughout our district. This pestilent rodent arrived in Britain about 1730. A great westward migration from Central Asia took place in 1727, and the whole of Europe was populated in the following year.

† See his 12th letter to Pennant.

* British Mammals, Ed. 1837, p. 308.

The damage caused by rats in Britain and other countries is enormous. "Boelter assumed the rat population of Great Britain to be 40,000,000., i.e., about one to each acre cultivated, or one per head of the human population. He further assumed that each rat on an average occasioned a daily loss of one farthing; on these assumptions the total annual damage done by rats in this country amounts to £15,000,000."† Many investigators think that Boelter's premises are too low. Rats disseminate diseases; we may instance plague, trichinosis, influenza, foot and mouth disease, and dysentery.

FIELD VOLE (*Microtus agrestis*).

The "Short-tailed Field-Mouse" of the countryman. The Voles are often called "mice." They differ from rats and mice in their blunt muzzles, short tail and short ears. The Field Vole is very common. It multiplies with remarkable rapidity, and sometimes becomes a serious pest. There was a vole-plague "in the south of Scotland in 1892, when between 80,000 and 90,000 acres were rendered useless. If owls, kestrels and buzzards were not destroyed to the extent they are, these visitations would not occur."* Last summer I saw two brown owls and a kestrel suspended on a keeper's tree near Midhurst!

WATER VOLE (*Microtus amphibius*).

Commonly known as the Water Rat. It frequents most of our ponds, and feeds on water plants and insects. The weasel pursues it in its burrows, and it is also preyed upon by herons.

BANK VOLE (*Evotomys glareolus*).

Also known as the Red Vole. It frequents our woods and gardens, damaging the bark of holly and other trees, and devouring bulbs and newly-sown peas and beans. Owls and kestrels are its chief enemies. Widely distributed and common in our district.

HARE (*Lepus europæus*).

Common. The writer saw an albino on Blackdown about 1915. Hares are born in the open, not in a burrow, with open eyes and a coat of fur, and they can run in a few hours.

RABBIT (*Lepus cuniculus*).

This destructive rodent is a native of the Mediterranean region, but the date of its introduction into England is not even approximately known. Two black ones have been seen at Grayswood, also some sandy coloured forms. In 1923 the writer saw an albino in a field near the Punch Bowl, Hindhead.

† M. A. C. Hilton, "Rat and Mice as Enemies of Mankind," p. 16.

* "Guide to British Vertebrates exhibited in the British Museum of Natural History," p. 6.

INTRODUCED & RE-INTRODUCED MAMMALS.

AMERICAN GREY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus carolinensis*).

This engaging little mammal, so well known to frequenters of Regent's Park, into which it was liberated from the Zoological Gardens, has been gradually extending its range outwards from London, and has reached Haslemere, where it was first observed, at Inval, in February, 1928, by Mr. Llewellyn Hutchinson.

ROE DEER (*Cervus caprea*).

In the large woods bordering on Moses Hill, and in Frillinghurst Wood. There are a few in Witley Park. All may be descendants of migrants from the New Forest.

RED DEER (*Cervus elephus*).

The aboriginal stock in Woolmer Forest vanished early in the 18th century.† The late Lord Pirrie's herd in Witley Park (it contained two albinos) has been gradually reduced since 1915; in 1925 there were only about twenty head.

FALLOW DEER (*Cervus drama*).

Of those put down in Witley Park about 20 years ago only one was surviving in 1924. It is not an indigenous species.

JAPANESE DEER and IRISH HARES were put down in Witley Park about 1906, but the majority have been destroyed. About 50 head of HIGHLAND CATTLE and a similar number of ABERDEEN or BLACK POLL ANGUS are still maintained in Witley Park.

† See p. 15.

EXTINCT MAMMALS.

In Roman and Saxon times the dense forests of the Wealden plain and its boundaries sheltered four mammals that are now extinct in Britain, viz., the Brown Bear, the Beaver, the Wolf and the Wild Boar.

There is at present no direct evidence of the former existence of the BROWN BEAR and the BEAVER in our district, though it cannot be doubted that they frequented it. There is documentary testimony to the presence of the Bear in England as late as the 8th century.

According to Giraldus there were Beavers in Wales in 1188, and they survived in Scotland till the close of the 14th century. The little Beverley Brook in north-east Surrey probably gained its name through having been the haunt of Beavers.

There are places which testify to the presence of the WOLF in our district in Saxon times. We may instance Wulfmeare, the wolves' pond, now called Woolmer, and Wulfsholen, the wolves' den, which seems to have been the Saxon name for the valley now known as the Devil's Punch Bowl. Wolves were abundant in the New Forest and other parts of Hampshire, including Woolmer, in the 12th century. They became extinct in England within the next 300 years, but lingered on in Scotland and Ireland till about the middle of the 18th century.

Mr. J. E. Harting remarks in his edition of White's Selborne (p. 27): "It is not a little remarkable that the three great meres of that district—Hogmer, Cranmer and Woolmer were named after wild animals which are now extinct in Britain, namely, the hog or wild boar, the crane and the wolf."

The WILD BOAR inhabited "the forests about London so late as the reign of Henry II.,"† and survived in Britain till the close of the 16th century. Our sport-loving Norman and Plantagenet sovereigns held Woolmer Forest in high estimation; King John had a hunting lodge there, and if that monarch was in Haslemere on January 15th, 1209, as has been suggested,* it is probable that he passed through on a journey to or from a hunting expedition at Woolmer.

Many boars' tusks have been dug up at Shulbrede Priory. These may have belonged to domesticated swine, for immense herds were turned out into the woodlands in Norman times and earlier to feed on beech mast and acorns. The total number of hogs that Domesday records as received by Sussex lords from the

† L. Jenyns, "British Vertebrate Animals," 1835, p. 40.

* W. H. Blauw's "Royal Journeys in Sussex," Sussex Arch. Coll. II., 134.

tenants is 3,483. Mr. W. H. Legge† thinks that the proportional payment was one in ten, and, on this basis, calculates that over 30,000 pigs procured their provender in Sussex woods.

Four mammals, viz., the Wild Cat, Pine Marten, Polecat and Red Deer, no longer exist in the wild state in this district, though they still survive under natural conditions in other parts of our island. It is not known when the WILD CAT finally vanished from the southern and midland counties. Cobbett* thought he saw a true Wild Cat near Waverley (about 100 years ago), and Edward Newman†† refers to the trapping of one on property known as Blunden's situated south of Godalming in a district at that time "densely wooded, the woods in some instances covering hundreds of acres."

The PINE MARTEN was common in this district in bygone times. In the latter part of the 16th century it frequented the great woods in the neighbourhood of Midhurst. Camden refers to Verdley Castle‡ as a place "only known to such as hunt the Marten Cat."

It has "now practically disappeared from the greater part of the southern and midland counties of England, although occasionally stray examples are now and then met with."|| Mr. G. F. Lodge saw one in Redlands Wood near Dorking in May, 1879. There is a Hampshire specimen (in the Alton Museum) which is thought to have been killed at Hackwood, near Basingstoke about 1849. One was caught about 1841 at Findon, and another near Arundel. The last Sussex example was killed by the Crawley and Horsham foxhounds near Crawley about 1866.

In November, 1904, J. G. Millais was informed that one had been trapped in Horsham. In 1923, and again in 1924, the writer was told that one had been seen near Woolbeding.

The POLECAT is almost, if not quite, extinct in the south of England. Gilbert White noted its presence at Selborne in his day, but it has long vanished from Hampshire. Seventy years ago there were Polecats in our district at Stoatley and Blackdown. The last local example is said to have been killed in the neighbourhood of Polecat Lane near Hindhead about 1860. Mr. Gordon Dalgliesh (*in litt.*) remarks: "When I was a small boy, about the year 1887, I was shewn a couple of freshly killed ones by a gamekeeper at Milford." This is probably the last record for Surrey. Two examples in Hastings

† "Forestry," Vol. II., Vict. Hist., Sussex.

* "Rural Rides."

†† Letters of Rusticus on the Nat. Hist. of Godalming (1849).

‡ A hunting lodge of the Bohuns. It stood in Verdley Wood; the ruins were pulled down about the middle of the 19th century.

|| R. Lydekker, "Handbook to the British Mammalia," 1896, p. 107.

Museum were killed at Peasmarsh, Sussex, about 1860. In 1922 Mr. John Smithers, an octogenarian residing at Henley near Fernhurst, told the writer that in 1830 his father, whilst exploring the ivy-clad ruins of Verdley Castle for birds' nests, was attacked by a Polecat and bitten in the right leg.

The RED DEER must have been a familiar sight on the hills of south-west Surrey in Saxon and Norman times. The first parks in this country were formed by the Normans in order to enclose the Red Deer for hunting. Under Henry II. the whole of Surrey was practically reduced to forest land, and the royal manor of Guildford became a deer park.

Wild Red Deer existed in Woolmer in Queen Anne's time, when, on the authority of Gilbert White, they "amounted to about five hundred head, and made a stately appearance." They were reduced to about fifty head many years before White commenced his correspondence with Thomas Pennant. By Royal Command the survivors of the herd were taken alive and conveyed in carts to Windsor,† and White himself saw one of the last that was captured.

The Red Deer was known to the Saxons as Heort, and its favourite food plant was the heort-berie, which is the well-known bilberry or whortleberry. It is of interest to note that with slight variation in spelling the word "heort" is still used in this district. Children setting out to gather whortleberries are "going a-heriting" or are "off to pick herts"; that is, to gather heort-berries, though but few are aware of the interest connected with these expressions.

† See Letter VI., Gilbert White to Pennant.

FISHES.

If we include the Lampern, our local list comprises 15 species. Of these, the Pike and the Carp have a special interest, through their association with the large ponds which were established in connection with the bygone iron industry. The Pike attained great weight, and the Carp were highly prized. For example, Anthony Smith, the owner of the Hammer Ponds at Thursley, frequently squabbled with his tenants over fishing rights.* By a codicil to his will (dated 1668-9) he left 200 of the best Carps in these ponds to his friend, Arthur Onslow, of Clandon, and 300 more of the next best to his wife.

PERCH (*Perca fluviatilis*).

Abundant in some of the larger ponds. At Frensham Great Pond, on June 16th, 1925, Major F. Coulon and Mr. A. G. Edwards caught 101 in one day; the total weight of the catch was 84½ lbs. Fish of up to 2 lbs. have been taken at Hammer Pond.

MILLER'S THUMB or NOGGLE-HEAD (*Cottus gobio*).

Common in gravelly streams.

THREE-SPINED STICKLEBACK (*Gastrosteus aculeatus*).

Common. Boulenger notes† that the smooth form only is found in inland ponds and streams. The larvæ of the common freshwater Mussel are parasitic on the Stickleback and other small fishes.

PIKE (*Esox lucius*).

Frequent in the large ponds, often attaining great size and weight. A mounted specimen—from Frensham Great Pond—"supposed to weigh about 40 lbs." may be seen at Frensham Pond Hotel. A lean one, taken by Mr. Roger J. Hutchinson at the Little Pond, Frensham, in 1906, weighed 15½ lbs.; its head, mounted and cased, was presented to Haslemere Museum. In 1917 one of 26 lbs. weight was caught in Frensham Great Pond; Capt. Pollard informs me that one of 20¾ lbs. was taken in that pond a few years ago, and a monster of 34½ lbs. was captured there in 1925. Mr. D. F. Leney tells me that one of about 28 lbs. was caught in 1925 in the Little Pond; and that one of 17 lbs. from the Hammer Pond, and another of 16½ lbs. from the same chain of ponds have been taken within the last ten years.

* See paper by Montague S. Guiseppi in the 18th Vol. of Surrey Arch. Collections.

† Vict. Hist., Surrey, I.

Some interesting notes on large Pike caught in Witley Manor Ponds in the early part of the 19th century are recorded at the end of the Baptism Register of the Parish of Witley, period 1805 to 1832. They were copied by the Rev. E. J. Newill, Vicar of Witley, and were brought to my notice by Mr. John H. Wenham, of Witley Manor :

“April 17th, 1824.

Be it remembered that yesterday (being Good Friday), a Pike was seen floating dead on Mr. Chandler's Lower Pond, and on being brought up to the House was this Day weighed, measured and dissected. The weight was 28 lbs.; the length 3 feet 6 inches. No hook was found in her (for it was a female) or any other ostensible Cause of Death. She was exceedingly fat, and contained an immense quantity of spawn.

(Signed) J. F. Chandler, Vicar; John Chandler; Mary Chandler, spinster; George Farley; C. F. Newland, B. Newland, spinster.”

“March 30th, 1825.

On this day another Pike was seen floating dead on the Upper Pond, which weighed 37 lbs. 5 ounces. Like the other, it contained an immense Quantity of Spawn. It was seen by many Persons, who can be witness to its size and weight. Amongst others : J. F. Chandler, Vicar; John Chandler, his son; Mary Chandler, mother and daughter; Rev. R. Longe; Chas. Taylor, M.P.; R. Frankland, Esq.; Rev. G. Price; Rev. Stewart, etc., etc., etc. The length was 3 feet 6 inches.

His Body was buried in the Island, and the Head hung on a tree on the Island.”

“March 30th, 1826.

Mr. Chandler fished the Upper Pond, and took alive three Pike in good condition, the weight as follows :

The largest, 33 lbs. and $\frac{1}{2}$.

The next, 15 lbs.

The next, 11 lbs.

(Witness) J. F. Chandler, Vicar;

Thos. Greene, B.D., C.C.C.C.;

J. G. Currie, Cornhill, no. 29.”

“March 21st, 1834.

Fished the Lower Pond. Present, Major Newland, his son Henry, Mrs. Wyndham, and others—found the pond overrun with Pike and Myriads of white fish [? Roach]. One Pike of 23 lbs. and $\frac{1}{2}$, a few others about 8, 9, or 12 lbs. about. No Tench, hardly any Carp or Perch—a fine, cold day.”

CARP (*Cyprinus carpio*).

In muddy ponds. Inval, Lynchmere, Shillinglee, etc. A native of Asia, this fish was introduced into England in the latter half of the 15th century. In the middle ages Carp were kept in ponds by the monks in order to provide a supply of fish for Lent and Good Friday.

GUDGEON (*Gobio fluviatilis*).

Frequent in stony-bottomed lakes with spring feed, but not in mud-bottomed ones. It does not occur high up in streams, and has been greatly reduced in recent years through pollution from road tar.

ROACH (*Leuciscus rutilus*).

Common in ponds. Attains 15 inches in length at Shillinglee, and in the Till at Frensham Mill.

RUDD (*Leuciscus erythrophthalmus*).

"The upper lip of this fish is horny and rigid, whereas that of the roach can be pulled forward."† Introduced and very local. Frensham Hall ponds. Mr. Charles Walker notes that in Sussex "there is a history of artificial introduction in most cases."‡

TROUT (*Salmo fario*).

The natural fish of all local fast running streams right up to the spring heads, but less abundant than formerly through tar pollution. Fish of 3 lbs. 5 ozs. have been taken at Headley, and 8 lbs. in the Wey below Shottermill.

EEL (*Anguilla vulgaris*).

Common. The spawning grounds of this fish "comprise a restricted area in the western Atlantic, north-east and north of the West Indies."* The larvæ do not reach the fresh waters of Europe until the third year. "Larval migrations of such extent and duration as those of the eel are altogether unique in the Animal Kingdom."*

PRIDE or MUD LAMPREY (*Petromyzon branchialis*).

Eel-like in form. The mouth is suctorial. It ascends rivers in the breeding season. The larvæ, formerly known as *Ammocætes branchialis*, bury themselves in the mud and grow slowly; known locally as "Nine-eyes." The larvæ occur in the Punch Bowl stream, Hindhead, the stream below Grayswood, Lowder Mill, etc.

Ponds at Petersfield and Liphook; the Rother above Rogate, probably escaped from the Petersfield Pond.

† F. G. Aflalo, Nat. Hist. of the British Isles, p. 404.

‡ Viet. Hist. Sussex, Vol. I., p. 269.

* Dr. J. Schmidt in "Nature," Jan. 13th, 1923.

DACE (*Leuciscus dobula*).

Mr. Leney reports its occurrence in the Wey at Farnham, the Till at Frensham, and the Rother below Petersfield.

It is said to occur "in all rivers and ponds in Hampshire."†
Mr. Leney observes that it is not native to the fast running streams in our district.

MINNOW (*Leuciscus phoxinus*).

The Wey, in the neighbourhood of Farnham.

TENCH (*Tinca vulgaris*).

Frequent in ponds, often in company with Carp or Perch; attains 4 lbs. in weight at Hammer Ponds, Thursley.

BREAM (*Abramis brama*).

Mill pond at Shillinglee Park and towards Petersfield.

LOACH (*Nemachilus barbatulus*).

Widely distributed in the small streams, usually in company with Trout.

† Victoria Hist., Hampshire, Vol. I., p. 201.

INTRODUCED FISHES.

The following do not occur in the wild state, but are acclimatised in the Haslemere district.

MIRROR CARP or **KING CARP** (*Cyprinus regina*).

Ponds at Frensham Hall, near Shottermill.

CRUCIAN CARP (*Cyprinus carassius*).

Sometimes called Prussian Carp. Ponds at Shottermill. It is wild in the Thames.

GOLDEN CARP (*Cyprinus carpio*, variety).

A variety of the Japanese Carp, and a native of China and Japan. Frensham Hall Ponds.

GOLDFISH (*Carassius auratus*).

This fish lacks the mouth barbels which are characteristic of the Carps. "There is no record of its introduction into Europe, but it is commonly stated to have reached England in the seventeenth century. . . In thunderstorms they sometimes die, but this is not a failing peculiar to Goldfish."||

IDE or **SILVER ORFE** (*Leuciscus idus*).

This is a silvery fish, like a Chub. Ponds at Shottermill.

GOLDEN ORFE (*Leuciscus orfus*).

A golden coloured variety of the Ide. It has been introduced at many ponds in our district, and attains 3 lbs. or 4 lbs. weight.

RAINBOW TROUT (*Salmo irideus*).

It breeds at Witley Park (a rare occurrence), and attains 5 lbs. or 6 lbs. weight in the district.

The **CUTTHROAT TROUT**, the **AMERICAN BROOK TROUT**, and the **GREAT LAKE TROUT** are three species of American Trout which have been acclimatised at Shottermill.

The **BLACK BASS**, the **RAINBOW BASS**, and the **PEACOCK-EYED BASS** are three American Bass acclimatised at Shottermill; as are also the following :—

CATFISH (*Ameirus nebulosus*).

SUNFISH (*Eupomotis gibbosus*).

AUSTRIAN DOG-FISH (*Umbra Krameri*).

PIKE PERCH (*Lucio perca*).

THUNDERFISH (*Cobitis fossilis*).

|| H. G. Seeley, "The Freshwater Fishes of Europe," p. 110.

BITTERLING (*Rhodeus amarus*).

The female introduces her eggs into a cavity within the shell of freshwater Mussels, where the ova undergo development.

The **GOLDEN RUDD**, a very rare variety of the common Rudd, and the **GOLDEN TENCH**, a very rare variety of the common Tench, are acclimatised at Shottermill.

REPTILES.

Reptiles are poorly represented in the British Isles by three species of Lizards and an equal number of Snakes. All occur in our neighbourhood. The Snakes prey upon the Lizards. Lizards are able easily to part with a portion of the tail and renew the loss, though somewhat imperfectly. The ability to shed the tail is a distinct advantage when that organ is seized by a pursuing Snake. Whilst the aggressor is devouring the tit-bit the loser makes its escape!

COMMON LIZARD (*Lacerta vivipara*).

Smaller than the Sand Lizard and more widely distributed on the heaths in this district. It is usually between 6 and 7 inches in length, brown or reddish above, with small spots; the under parts orange-red or yellowish, and spotted with black.

SAND LIZARD (*Lacerta agilis*).

Slightly larger and less agile than the Common Lizard. The colour is variable, but the rows of dark and white spots give a very distinctive and characteristic striped appearance. The under parts are cream coloured and spotted or specked with black. During spring and early summer the males are bright green on the sides and lower parts, and from Gilbert White's time onwards have been often mistaken for the Green or Jersey Lizard, which does not occur in the wild state in England, but is indigenous in the Channel Islands. In this country, as in Europe and Western Asia, the distribution of the Sand Lizard is pretty nearly the same as that of its chief enemy, the Smooth Snake. The British stations are restricted areas in Dorset, Hants and Surrey. In our district it occurs only in the neighbourhood of Churt.

BLINDWORM or SLOWWORM (*Anguis fragilis*).

Widely distributed, but not common. Boulenger† notes that "owing to its slow movements and confident disposition, the Slowworm, so useful from its subsisting mainly on Slugs, falls an easy victim to the ineradicable superstitious aversion of many country people, and its numbers decrease year after year; and hence this once abundant reptile is in greater danger of extermination by human agency than any other of its kindred of the British fauna." Length, 12 to 15 or 16 inches. It is easily distinguished from a Snake by the notched, but not forked tip of the tongue and the presence of movable eyelids.

† Viet. Hist., Surrey, Vol. I.

A living young one only $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches long was picked up by Miss Clarke in Polecat Lane on March 24th, 1925, and brought to the Haslemere Museum. According to Dr. Gerald Leighton* young Blindworms see the light in August, but if the season is late and cold their advent is delayed until September.

RING SNAKE (*Tropidonotus natrix*).

Frequent near ponds and streams, but certainly not so abundant about Haslemere as it was thirty years ago.

Average length, 2 ft. 6 ins. to 3 ft. ; rarely specimens measuring 5 ft. have been recorded.

Easily known from the Adder by the greater length and attenuated tail, the olive-green body tint and the absence of a dark line down the middle of the back. It is quite harmless. It feeds principally on Frogs and Mice, and the eggs and young of small ground nesting Birds.

SMOOTH SNAKE (*Coronella austriaca*).

Rare in this district, and apparently occurring only in the neighbourhood of Churt, where it was first observed by Mr. Bryan Hook in 1891, and again in 1898.† It was first noted in Surrey by Mr. H. N. Ridley, who found it at Chobham in 1882.

It is a little smaller than the Adder, which it somewhat resembles in colour, but lacks the prominent dark zig-zag line, there being two rows of irregular dark spots instead.

The Smooth Snake will bite when caught, but it is not poisonous. It has a curious habit of holding on to anything until it is shaken off. It preys chiefly upon Lizards, and the Sand Lizard by preference.

ADDER or VIPER (*Vipera berus*).

Not so common on our heaths as formerly, but is still fairly numerous. The dull coloured ones are females ; the males are smaller and of a more brilliant hue. The average length of the male is 2 feet ; the female is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches longer.

"The throat is often a sure test of sex. Adders which have the throat scales black or edged with black are males ; those with reddish or yellow scales are females."‡

The Adder preys largely upon Mice and Blindworms ; failing these, it will take any amphibian. It is our only poisonous reptile, and may be easily recognised by the dark zig-zag line along the back, but is often mistaken for the harmless Ring Snake.

* "British Lizards," pp. 37 and 38.

† See "Surrey Magazine," June, 1899.

‡ Gerald Leighton, "British Serpents," p. 95.

AMPHIBIANS.

The Amphibians are equally poorly represented in Britain as are the Reptiles, but the six British species are all included in our list, and the heaths of south-west Surrey are remarkable in possessing all the British representatives of the Reptilia and Amphibia.

FROG (*Rana temporaria*).

Very common. It feeds chiefly upon minute Insects, small Slugs, and other pests. The ova are deposited in clusters in ditches and shallow ponds about the middle of March.

TOAD (*Bufo vulgaris*).

Very common. Insectivorous and very useful in gardens. The ova are deposited in long chains in shallow ponds in the latter part of March.

NATTERJACK TOAD (*Bufo calamita*).

This interesting creature frequents the heaths about Thursley, but does not occur in the immediate neighbourhood of Haslemere. We have not determined its exact distribution in our district, and have no records from Sussex and Hampshire. It would be well to record all its present stations, for the Natterjack has the curious, and at present unexplained habit of shifting its quarters. It is at once known by the yellow stripe down the back. It cannot hop, but it runs well, stopping very frequently. It can burrow in sand. During the breeding season (May and June) Natterjacks congregate in large numbers at their favourite breeding ponds, frequenting the water only at night and making such a loud chorus as to be heard a mile or more away. Boulenger remarks† that the Natterjack is called "jar-nob" near Farnham, and that he has never seen it in east Surrey.

GREAT CRESTED NEWT (*Molge cristata*).

Not uncommon in spring-time in ponds and ditches. The largest of our three species, it is easily known by the bright orange or orange-yellow colour of the lower parts marked with conspicuous round black spots, which often coalesce. The nuptial crest of the male is deeply serrated; the female is larger than the male, but lacks the crest. Newts are not poisonous, and may be handled without misgiving.

† Vict. Hist., Surrey, I., 201.

SMOOTH NEWT (*Molge vulgaris*).

Often called the Common Newt, but in this district the Palmated Newt is perhaps the more frequent. The nuptial crest of the male is high in front and regularly crenate, not deeply serrated. The tail generally tapers to a point. The hind toes are edged by a membrane, but are free.

PALMATE NEWT (*Molge palmata*).

This species is more widely distributed than the Smooth Newt, from which it may be at once distinguished by the transparent flesh tint of the throat, which is without any trace of pigment. The nuptial crest of the male is low and straight-edged. The tail is suddenly truncate before the apex, and terminates in a slender filament three lines in length. The hind feet are palmate, and the toes are united by a dark membrane.

INTRODUCED REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS.

The following do not occur in the wild state, but are acclimatised in the Haslemere district.

ALLIGATOR - TERRAPIN or SNAPPING - TURTLE (*Chelydra serpentina*), a native of North and Central America. In the latter part of 1925 one was found in the neighbourhood of the Surrey Trout Farm, Shottermill, and was sent to the Zoo. It probably wandered from a pond at Frensham Hall, where, many years ago, the Hon. Charles Ellis introduced many reptiles and amphibians, *inter alia*, the GREEN LIZARD, the EUROPEAN POND-TORTOISE or SPOTTED TERRAPIN (*Emys orbicularis*), the PAINTED TERRAPIN (*Chrysemys picta*) of Eastern North America, the EUROPEAN EDIBLE FROG (*Rana esculenta*), and the NORTH AMERICAN BULL-FROG (*Rana catesbyana*).

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