

calculation. On Rhum, for instance, the pre-war deer population was estimated at 1,750 beasts and about 70 stags were killed annually—exactly 1:25. Since the war the population has been in the region of 900 deer, which has yielded about 35 stags annually.

I am sure, therefore, that Mr. Perry's figure of "probably less than 100,000" is vastly underestimated, for this would mean, when hinds are also taken into consideration, that approximately 16 per cent of Scotland's deer population is being shot annually—a figure which does not take into consideration death from other causes which in a severe winter can be extremely heavy.

The area of Scotland scheduled as deer forest is about three million acres, and it has been suggested, therefore, that my figure of 200,000 deer would indicate a density of one deer to about 15 acres, which is too great. It is, however, quite erroneous to suggest that all the deer are concentrated on the deer forests, which in all, cover *less* than 25 per cent of the total area of the counties in which deer are to be found. There are, therefore, vast areas of Argyllshire, Inverness-shire, Perthshire, and Sutherland, etc., which, although not scheduled as deer forest, nevertheless hold stocks of deer which in some areas are quite considerable.—G. KENNETH WHITEHEAD.

#### WHISKERED BAT IN NORFOLK

In the last number of *Oryx* (November, 1953, page 198), it is stated that the specimen of *Myotis mystacinus* (Kuhl) caught near Melton Constable in 1953 constitutes the first county record. This is not correct. The species was previously discovered in the neolithic flint mines at Grimes Graves, Norfolk, on 24th March, 1947, by Mr. D. E. Sergeant and Dr. D. L. Harrison (see *The Naturalist*, 1947, p. 152).—MICHAEL BLACKMORE.

#### LESSER HORSESHOE BAT IN SHROPSHIRE

A specimen of the lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros minutus* Montagu), sex not determined, was caught by Mr. George Mason at Nash Court, near Ludlow, Shropshire, on 27th October, 1953, and identified by me. It is the first record for the county. The bat was found in a cellar which is also used as a boiler-house. Probably disturbed by the opening of the door and the switching on of the light, it was flying when Mason entered but soon settled. No measurements were taken, but the size of the wings and body, and the characteristic face left no doubt as to its identity. During inspection the animal frequently

squealed, struggled and bit harmlessly with its needle-sharp teeth. Between attempts to escape it energetically licked its wings, prompted possibly by emotional stress.—E. G. M. GOODWIN (Lieut.-Col.).

#### BADGERS AND FOXES EATING WHORTLEBERRIES

In Switzerland and presumably in other wine-growing countries, it is a recognized fact that badgers and foxes eat numbers of grapes. So do dogs and mainly for this reason shooting in vineyards is not permitted until the grapes have been picked. In Switzerland and in the part of France adjoining it, both foxes and badgers are considered good to eat. A Swiss chasseur told me that he preferred fox cub to hare, but turned up his nose at an old dog fox.—ANTHONY BUXTON.

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### NOTICE

#### APRIL CONFERENCE ON BRITISH MAMMALS

It is announced that a three-day conference on British mammals will take place at the University of Birmingham's Centre for Continued Studies, Selly Oak, Birmingham, at the week-end after Easter, from Friday evening, 23rd April, to Monday morning, 26th April. During the conference it is proposed to launch a national society for the study of British mammals, with the object of collecting and collating local records of mammals, of promoting field research in mammals, and generally performing for mammals many of the functions performed for birds by the British Trust for Ornithology.

The suggestion originated from Mr. G. B. Hindle, Biology Master of Kings Norton Grammar School, Birmingham, and an informal meeting was held at the offices of the Zoological Society of London in September, 1953, to discuss it. This meeting was attended by G. B. Hindle, Oliver Hook, L. Harrison Matthews, T. C. S. Morrison-Scott, T. J. Pickvance, H. N. Southern, Sir William Taylor and H. V. Thompson. As a result a sub-committee consisting of Messrs. Hindle, Pickvance and Southern was appointed to make arrangements for the conference.

Particulars of the conference may be had from T. J. Pickvance, 116 Bunbury Road, Northfield, Birmingham, 31. In addition to the discussions on the proposed mammalogical society, there will be a programme of talks by leading British mammalogists.