



Cambridgeshire Bird Club

E-Bulletin 32 February 2016

(The records in this bulletin are unchecked and may be revised at a later date)



Dartford Warbler at Coates: photo by Mark Peck.

HEADLINES

GOSHAWK* Sutton Gault a male on 8th, Wicken Fen on 13th.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD* Thorney 22nd - end of the month.

AMERICAN HERRING GULL* Kings Dyke a 2 c.y on a skip at McCain Factory on 2nd. If confirmed this will be the first record for the County.

ICELAND GULL

Fen Drayton Lakes: an adult on 1st, 25th and 28th, a possible Kumlien's Gull on 6th and 21st, a 3 c.y. on 28th.

Ouse Washes: a 2 c.y. on 2nd and 7th.

Landbeach: a 2 c.y. on 10th and 13th.

Grafham Water: a 2 c.y. 'Kumlien's Gull'* and an adult on 26th and 27th.

GLAUCOUS GULL

Ouse Washes: a 4 c.y. on several dates, a 2 c.y. on 1st and 27th and 28th, a pale 2 c.y. on 18th.

Landbeach: a 2 c.y. and a 4 c.y. on 10th - 13th.

Fowlmere NR: a 2 c.y. flyover on 16th.

Grafham Water: an adult on 26th.

Reminder that c.y. refers to calendar year so a 2 c.y. is one of last year's young and could alternatively be described as a 'first winter'.

TURTLE DOVE Aldreth the male ('ninja') that has overwintered before has been singing since early January.

DARTFORD WARBLER * Coates from 18th - end of the month. This is only the 5th county record and the first since 2005.

Other records

All records below refer to the month at the head of the E-bulletin and where no numbers are given the record relates to single birds.

Where there is an asterisk after the name of the species this indicates that it is necessary to send a description to the County Recorder before the record will be accepted.

Weather: a more typical winter month; although starting with yet another westerly storm the weather settled into a mostly northerly airstream which delivered colder conditions including a run of frosts and daytime high temperatures largely in single figures. Drier too in general but not without rain, sufficient to maintain the high levels of standing water on saturated ground.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan Burwell Fen maximum 14 on 29th.

Bewick's Swan Ouse Washes c1,500 on 4th, 12+ on 25th.

Whooper Swan Ouse Washes c7,000 on 4th, Farcet Fen 8 on 17th, Tubney Fen 25 on 19th moved to Wicken Fen, (two birds that frequent the area of the Lodes around Wicken/Burwell and Tubney Fens are escaped birds from a local collection - a photograph of one of these birds at a Mute Swan nest with two Mutes was published in January's *British Birds*).

Bean Goose* Eldernell Nene Washes a single of the 'tundra' race on 25th.

Pink-footed Goose Needingworth Lakes 8 flew over on 4th, Ouse Washes on 27th and 28th.

Greylag Goose Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) maximum 15 on 27th, Burwell Fen maximum 57 on 29th.

Canada Goose Cam Washes Upware 126 on 3rd, Burwell Fen maximum 39 on 9th, Trumpington Clay Farm 29 on 15th.

Egyptian Goose Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 12th, near the Dog-in-a-Doublet 8 on 16th, Whittlesford near GP one in a field on 29th.

Shelduck Burwell Fen 2-5 all month, Cam Washes Upware 3 on 3rd, Paxton Pits 2 on 7th, one on 26th, Cam Washes 15 on 14th, Grafham Water 19 on 21st, Ouse Washes 81 on 27th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) maximum 2 pairs on 27th.

Mandarin Eye Green NR 2 on 16th.

Wigeon Cam Washes Upware c150 on 3rd, Paxton Pits 276 on 21st, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) maximum c135 on 27th, Burwell Fen maximum 146 on 29th.

Gadwall Cam Washes Upware 5 on 3rd, Burwell Fen maximum 16 on 9th, Grafham Water 114 on 21st.

Teal Fowlmere NR 12 on 1st, Cam Washes Upware 28 on 3rd, Burwell Fen maximum 83 on 9th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) maximum 84 on 27th.

Mallard Burwell Fen 33 - 59 all month, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) maximum 21 on 7th.

Pintail Burwell Fen 2 on 2nd, Paxton Pits 3 on 4th, a pair on 14th, Wicken Fen on 10th, Fen Drayton Lakes 5 on 13th.

Shoveler Fowlmere NR on 1st, Cam Washes Upware 17 on 3rd, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) maximum 35 on 7th, Cam Washes 72 on 14th, Burwell Fen maximum 23 on 19th, Paxton Pits 7 on 21st, Fen Drayton Lakes 195 on 28th.

Pochard Trumpington Clay Farm 2 on 15th, Grafham Water on 21st, Ouse Washes 1,012 on 27th.

Tufted Duck Trumpington Clay Farm 4 on 15th, Burwell Fen maximum 17 on 19th, Whittlesford GP 26 on 29th.

Scaup Needingworth Lakes a drake on 11th, Ouse Washes a drake on 12th - 27th at least.

Goldeneye Grafham Water 60+ on 7th, 93 on 21st, Fen Drayton Lakes 30+ on 11th, Paxton Pits c30 on 14th, 41 on 26th, Holme Fen 2 on 20th, Ouse Washes 3 on 27th.

Smew Needingworth Lakes 9 - 14 (maximum 5 males and 9 redhead/females) all month, Ferry Meadows CP a female on 12th, Colne Fen GP 13 (one male) on 21st, Fen Drayton Lakes a redhead on 28th.

Goosander Grafham Water 14 on 7th, 16 on 18th, Maxey on 16th, Little Ouse on 23rd, Paxton Pits 2 on 27th.

Gamebirds

Grey Partridge Burwell 2 on 13th, Wicken Fen 2 on 14th, Fowlmere 8 on 17th.

Divers and cormorants

Great Northern Diver* Brampton an immature on a private site from 21st (approx.) until 28th at least.

Cormorant Burwell Fen maximum 5 on 9th.



Cormorant at Brampton Mill : photo by Pat Doody
Part of a sequence which can be seen on the Club's website.

Egrets and herons

Bittern Fowlmere NR on 1st, Wicken Fen on 16th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 20th and 28th, Woodwalton Fen on 20th.

Little Egret *reported from:* Aldreth Fen, Burwell Fen maximum 13 on 29th, Orton Brimbles, Paxton Pits, Rampton (3), Soham and Whittlesford GP.

Great White Egret Great Fen on several dates, Yaxley on 6th and 7th - presumed the same, Aldreth 19th, Rampton on 20th, and 29th presumed the same as the Aldreth bird.

Grebes

Little Grebe Fowlmere NR on 1st, Old West River Earith on 2nd, Cam Washes Upware on 3rd, Trumpington Clay Farm 4 on 15th, Paxton Pits on 27th.

Great Crested Grebe Burwell Fen maximum a pair on 19th and 29th, Whittlesford GP on 29th.

Slavonian Grebe* Fen Drayton Lakes the individual from January remained until 11th,

Raptors

Red Kite St Ives on 1st, Stilton 12 - 17 maximum 19 on 28th, St Ives 2 on 14th, Paxton Pits 2 on 14th and 27th, Ramsey Heights 3 on 20th, Colne Fen GP on 21st, Eldernell on 24th, Ouse Washes on 27th.

Marsh Harrier Sutton Gault on 2nd, Wicken Fen one on 3rd, 4 on 12th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 13th, Wicken Fen maximum 2 on 20th, Colne Fen GP on 21st, Burwell Fen 2 on 24th, Eldernell on 24th, Ouse Washes on 27th.

Hen Harrier Fowlmere NR on 1st, Great Fen a ringtail on 5th, Wicken Fen roost maximum 4 males and 3 females on 1st.

Sparrowhawk Burwell Fen 4 hanging around waiting for the Starlings on 24th!

Buzzard *reported from:* Chippenham Fen, Eldernell, Hinxton (2), Landbeach, Paxton Pits (6), Six Mile Bottom, Stapleford, Swaffham Bulbeck, Whittlesford, Wicken village.

Rails and crane

Water Rail *reported from:* Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen.



Moorhen at Fowlmere NR : photo by Lily Wilson (aged 9)

Coot Cam Washes Upware 31 on 3rd, Trumpington Clay Farm 26 on 15th, Whittlesford GP 17 on 29th.

Common Crane Burwell Fen/Wicken Fen 2-3 on several dates, Ouse Washes 3 on 7th, 7 on 27th, Eldernell 4 on 21st and 25th, Block Fen 3 flyovers on 28th.

Waders

Avocet Cam Washes 2 on 14th, Grafham Water on 27th.

Oystercatcher Paxton Pits 1-3 all month from 4th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 12th and 13th, Colne Fen GP 2 on 21st, Ouse Washes 9 on 27th.



Oystercatchers at Fen Drayton Lakes: photo by Colin Brown.

Golden Plover *counts of 100+*: Burwell Fen c225 on 1st, Trumpington c800 near A10/M11 roundabout on 2nd, 133 on 20th, Toft 400 on 4th, Ouse Washes 1,100 on 7th, 400 on 27th, Croydon 400 on 16th, Fowlmere near the reserve 1,114 on 17th.

Lapwing Burwell Fen c600 on 2nd, Paxton Pits c70 on 14th, Fowlmere near the reserve 403 on 17th, Woodwalton Fen 200+ on 20th.

Ringed Plover Fen Drayton Lakes on 13th, Ouse Washes 3 on 27th.

Curlew Ouse Washes 9 on 7th, one on 27th.

Black tailed Godwit Ouse Washes 3,000 on 7th, 900+ on 27th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 13th.

Ruff Ouse Washes on 7th, 45 on 27th, Cam Washes 2 on 14th.

Dunlin Ouse Washes 6 on 7th, 150+ on 27th.

Green Sandpiper Paxton Pits 3 on 7th, 5 on 21st, Cam Washes on 14th, North Bank SW 2 on 16th, Grafham Water on 21st, Ouse Washes 3 on 27th.

Redshank Cam Washes Upware on 3rd, Paxton Pits 2 on 13th and 21st, one on 14th and 26th, Cam Washes 6 on 14th, Grafham Water 5 on 21st, Colne Fen GP 37 on 21st.

Snipe Paxton Pits 6 on 4th, 9 on 14th, 16 on 26th, Fen Drayton Lakes on 13th, Wicken Fen 4 on 18th, Fowlmere NR 13 on 17th and 4 on 29th.

Gulls

Black-headed Gull Farcet Fen 180+ on 17th, Burwell Fen maximum c75 on 19th.

Mediterranean Gull CEGB Reservoir 2 adults on 7th, Fen Drayton Lakes a 2 c.y. on 13th, 21st and 28th, Grafham Water 2 adults on 15th and 19th, Farcet Fen 2 adults on 17th.

Common Gull Aldreth Fen 25-30 on 25th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Burwell Fen 6 on 19th.

Yellow-legged Gull *reported from*: Fen Drayton Lakes (4), Grafham Water (3) and Landbeach (2).

Caspian Gull *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes (4), Grafham Water (3), Landbeach (6) and Ouse Washes.

Doves, owls and kingfisher

Stock Dove Farcet Fen 59 on 17th, Holme Fen 20+ on 20th.

Barn Owl *reported from:* Coates, Fowlmere NR, Ouse Washes, and Wicken Fen (2).

Little Owl *a simple entry on Cambirds inspired a glut of observations not all of which relate to this month but are worth recording:* Great Staughton on 16th and 2 on 26th. Reported as breeding pairs in 2015: Farcet Fen up to 6 pairs, Tick Fen Chatteris 3-5 pairs, Nene Washes 7 pairs, Milton/Castor/Etton 5 pairs, also birds reported during last year's breeding season at: Ferry Meadows CP, Stukeley Park and Witcham.

Tawny Owl *reported from:* Wicken Fen.

Short-eared Owl *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Eldernell (3), Fen Drayton Lakes, Great Fen (9+), Haddenham, Ouse Washes (2), Thorney (2), Yaxley (3),

Kingfisher *reported from:* Eldernell and Wicken Fen.

Falcons

Merlin Wicken Fen on 1st and 9th, Fowlmere a female on 16th, North Fen on 25th.

Peregrine Coates on 8th, Cambridge Trumpington St on 10th, March Farmers 2 on 16th, Paxton Pits on 21st, Ouse Washes on 27th.

Corvids

Jackdaw Farcet Fen 70+ on 17th.

Rook Farcet Fen 230+ on 17th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) c200 on 14th.

Raven Eltisely 2 reported weekend of 20-21st, Paxton Pits 2 on 26th.

Tits and larks

Marsh Tit *reported from:* Chippenham Fen, Woodwalton Fen.

Bearded Tit *reported from:* Wicken Fen.

Warblers

Cetti's Warbler *reported from:* Little Ouse, Paxton Pits (2), Wicken Fen.

Chiffchaff Needingworth SW 11 on 4th, Godmanchester SW 6 on 4th, Soham on 12th.

Nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Nuthatch Chippenham Fen a ringed pair retrapped on 10th.

Starling *roost reports:* Fen Drayton Lakes 5,000 - 8,000, Wicken Fen 12,000 - 15,000 early in the month then later 30,000 to 40,000. North Fen c2,000 on wires on 25th.

Fieldfare Farcet Fen 110+ on 17th, New Decoy (Great Fen) 200 on 20th, North Fen 30+ on 25th.



Fieldfare at Fowlmere NR : photo by Lily Wilson (aged 9).

Redwing Soham 17 on 12th, Farcet Fen 13 on 17th.

Starts and chats

Black Redstart Upper Cambourne on 19th and other dates to the end of the month.

Stonechat Wicken Fen 2 on 13th and 19th, Coates 2-3 with the Dartford Warbler 18th - end of the month, Holme Fen on 20th,

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

Tree Sparrow Farcet Fen 42 on 17th, Ouse Washes 35 on 19th.

Grey Wagtail *reported from:* North Bank SW (2) and Paxton Pits.

Pied Wagtail *roosts:* Addenbrookes 200-300, BP Garage Whittlesford 500-700.

Meadow Pipit Paxton Pits 25 on 26th.

Water Pipit Ouse Washes 3 on 27th and 2 on 28th.

Finches and buntings

Brambling Ferry Meadows CP 5 on 3rd - 5th, 3 on 7th, 2 on 11th, Hare Park 2 on 11th, one on 15th, Ouse Washes 3 on 19th, Elton 2 on 29th.

Greenfinch Fen Drayton Lakes 75 on 13th.

Goldfinch Burwell Fen maximum 23 on 29th.

Siskin *reported from:* Chippenham Fen (15), Fowlmere NR (70), Fen Drayton Lakes, Grafham Water (30+), New Decoy (Great Fen) (5), Holme Fen (10+) Needingworth Lakes (25), Paxton Pits (29+), Soham (15), Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen (5+).

Linnet Ouse Washes c200 on 14th, Paxton Pits c30 on 15th, New Decoy (Great Fen) 50+ on 20th, North Fen 150-200 on 25th.

Reed Bunting Paxton Pits c40 on 15th,



Bullfinch female and male at Fen Drayton Lakes: photo by Colin Brown.

Exotica

Gouldian Finch Paxton Pits on 14th.



This is what it looks like!

Contributors:

John Allcock, Louise Bacon, Andy Bayes, Peter Beesley, Peter Bircham, Alan Boddington, Colin Brett, Colin Brown, Ellie Burke, Howard Butler, Pete and Anna Cook, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Vic and Pauline Couzens, Robin Cox, Martin Davis, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, Kevin Du Rose, Ian Ellis, Andrew Gardener, Don Gardener, Ed Gill, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Mark Hill, Michael Holdsworth, David Hopkins, Richard Jackson, Vince Lea, Diana Leech, John Le Gassick, Bruce Martin, Paul Mason, Donal McCarthy, Duncan McNiven, Matt Mellor, Martin O'Leary, Daniel Osborne, Richard Palmer, Gill Parish, Richard Patient, Mark Peck, Doug Radford, Clive Sinclair, A.J. Steele, Simon Stirrup, Brian Stone, Jonathan Taylor, Paul Taylor, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Andrew Tongue, Calum Urquhart, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, Kevin Wilson, Kevan Wolstencroft, Hugh Wright

Addition to the British List and to the Cambridgeshire List

The wise men of the British Ornithologists' Union Rarities Committee, who oversee the definitive British List have decided that the Northern Harrier, previously considered to be a sub-species of the Hen Harrier is a separate species and is thus added to the British List. Not just that but it is added to our county list also following the 2013 record of a bird on the Ouse Washes.

WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for February 2016

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 13 different days in February. The month's ringing total was 140; a further 178 different birds were retrapped, so the overall total for the month was 318. Individual species totals (the first figure new birds, the second retraps) were:

Great spot Woodpecker	0, 1	Robin	0, 13
Goldcrest	2, 1	Blackbird	5, 10
Blue Tit	29, 59	House Sparrow	1, 3
Great Tit	4, 22	Chaffinch	12, 6
Coal Tit	0, 2	Greenfinch	21, 3
Long-tailed Tit	15, 21	Goldfinch	14, 1
Treecreeper	2, 4	Siskin	4, 0
Pied Wagtail	3, 0	Lesser Redpoll	1, 2
Wren	4, 3	Bullfinch	8, 6
Dunnock	3, 9	Reed Bunting	12, 12

Old birds retrapped during the month were:

Robin X077999 at 6 years 6 months,
Chaffinch L504062 at 5 years 3 months,
Long-tailed Tit DDA101 at 4 years 11 months,
Blackbird LB03670 at 4 years 5 months,
Blue Tit Y408872 and
Great Tit Y408508 both at 3 years 5 months and
House Sparrow TL11348 at 3 years 3 months

Next indoor meetings:

Friday 11th March, St Johns Hall, Cambridge - tomorrow night.

**Annual General Meeting followed by
Bird conservation in Nepal by Carol Inskipp**

Carol's talk will briefly introduce us to the high diversity of Nepal's birds (878 species) and their main habitats; conservation measures including protected areas, community forests, initiatives to improve livelihoods of local people living near protected areas; the Nepal national bird Red Data Book and Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas of Nepal and the contribution that visitors can make to conservation of Nepal's birds. She will also talk about the impact of the 2015 earthquakes on Nepal's people and environment.

Carol Inskipp has visited Nepal many times and has written several books on Nepal's birds and bird conservation. She is currently co-authoring the *Nepal Bird Red Data Book* and *Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas of Nepal*.

At this meeting you will be invited to make a donation to a small charity that Carol is supporting: 'Go School Initiative' which is funding materials for temporary schools in one of the areas the worst hit by the 2015 earthquakes.

Friday 8th April, Cottenham Village College

Bewick's Swans in Northwest Europe: Addressing a population decline by Eileen Rees

Eileen's talk will focus on WWT research on the declining Bewick's Swan population and will also outline WWT's involvement in Bewick's Swan research, beginning with initial observations made by Sir Peter Scott. Eileen has worked on wildfowl research and conservation projects at WWT for over 30 years, since joining the organisation in the late 1970s to continue the long-term study of Bewick's Swans wintering at Slimbridge in Gloucestershire. During this time she has been active in promoting international research programmes along migratory flyways, including a collaborative study of the Icelandic Whooper Swan population, and the Anglo-Russian study of Bewick's Swan breeding biology. She is Chair of the IUCN-SSC/Wetlands International Swan Specialist Group, and also of the Bewick's Swan Expert Group responsible for implementation of the AEWA (African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement) Bewick's Swan Action Plan. Recent studies include tracking swan migration in relation to wind farm development and, with WWT partners and international colleagues, determining the reasons for the Bewick's Swan population decline. Her "Bewick's Swan" book was published as a Poyser Monograph in 2006.



Friday 13th May, Cottenham Village College

A Very Fine Swan Indeed: Art, science and the unfeathered bird by Katrina Von Grouw

The book, *The Unfeathered Bird*, originally intended as a manual for bird artists, has been 25 years in the making. Only much later did it blossom into something far more ambitious. A world away from textbooks and diagrams, this is a work equally intended for scientists and artists, indeed anyone with an appreciation of birds or an interest in their adaptations and behavior. It includes illustrations of 200 species, all made from actual specimens, many in lifelike positions. Virtually all the complete skeletons were prepared and reconstructed at home from specimens donated from zoos, wildlife hospitals and conservation charities.

Join Katrina as she explains her aims and inspirations, shares her insights about birds beneath their feathers, and relates how her home was turned upside down as more and more specimens joined the queue.

Katrina van Grouw is a graduate of the Royal College of Art. Her formal education was in Printmaking and Natural History Illustration, but she's also a dedicated ornithologist, a former Natural History Museum curator, a qualified bird ringer, and an experienced preparator of natural history specimens.

Summer Garden Bird Survey 2016

The [Summer Garden Bird Survey](#) runs between 6th March 2016 and 1st October 2016

If you have a garden in this area and you like to watch the birds in your garden, we would like to invite you to take part in the [Cambridgeshire Bird Club Summer Garden Bird Survey 2016](#).

Click on the above link for more details.

From the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education

Club members are invited to the annual Open Day at Madingley Hall on the 24 March 2016.

What's on

Throughout the day, there will be opportunities to attend taster sessions on a variety of different subjects. As a Biology and conservation group you may be particularly interested in attending the following talks and tours:

- “The story of life on earth”, a talk by Dr Ed Turner.
- “Biodiversity tour of Madingley Hall Gardens”.
- “Love and loss in contemporary nature writing”, a talk by Dr Jenny Bavidge.

There will also be Academic drop-in sessions where you will be able to have a 1 to 1 chat with our academics to talk about your future study options here at the Institute, as well as special offers and discounts for enrolling on to our courses on the day.

How to book

The Open Day is free to attend and takes place at our headquarters, Madingley Hall near Cambridge. Free tea and coffee will be available throughout the day, with light lunches for sale between 12 and 2pm. You can find the full programme and the online booking form on our website, at: www.ice.cam.ac.uk/OpenDay

You may also be interested in the various forthcoming Biology courses taking place here at the Institute. You can find the full list of these courses on our website, at: www.ice.cam.ac.uk/biological-science

Next E-bulletin due on April 10th, items for inclusion should reach me by the 4th please.