



Cambridgeshire Bird Club

E-Bulletin 36 June 2016

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



Black Redstart at Cambourne: photo by James Hanlon

HEADLINES

WHITE STORK* Cottenham midday on 5th, then near Godmanchester late afternoon. *This is almost certainly the bird that escaped from Welney where it was being rehabilitated - ? successfully.*

CATTLE EGRET* Ouse Washes on 20th - 22nd.

BLACK KITE* Grafham Water a flyover on 2nd.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER* Knapwell an immature on 2nd.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE* Gorefield a female on 13th - 14th.

Only 17 records since it last bred in the county.

GREAT REED WARBLER* Paxton Pits the bird from May was present until at least 16th.

Only 3 records, the last as long ago as 1982.

MARSH WARBLER* Wicken Fen one singing by the far end of the reedbed from 8th -12th at least.

Only 23 records, the last in 2001.

Weather: after the stormy end to May which continued into the first days of June, the month turned fine and warm with a week of real summer but after the first ten days the weather began to subside into a long wet spell, with one or two cold days, the degree of rainfall leading to comparisons to 2012 which was one of the wettest Junes on record.

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.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan Burwell Fen 15 (brood with 5 young) on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 6 on 22nd.

Whooper Swan Wicken Fen area the escaped bird still around.

Greylag Goose Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 63 on 5th, and 15 (7 broods 26 young) on 27th, Burwell Fen 16 (2 broods with 12 young) on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 15 on 22nd, Sutton North Fen 315 in a moulting flock on 26th.

Canada Goose Burwell Fen 14 (2 brood with 9 young) on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 27 on 22nd, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 7 on 27th (1 brood with 5 young).

Barnacle Goose Sutton North Fen 13 on 26th.

Egyptian Goose Great Shelford - an extraordinary sight of a pair with 3 goslings walking along the footpath beside the Cambridge Road on the 6th, almost certainly the same birds at Trumpington Clay Farm on 22nd although only two young were seen with the adults. Paxton Pits on 20th, Sutton North Fen 2 on 26th.

Shelduck Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) on several dates maximum 4, Burwell Fen 5 on 19th and a brood seen on 21st.

Wigeon Paxton Pits on 6th, 20th, 2 drakes on 17th.

Gadwall Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 6 on 5th and 9 on 27th, Ouse Washes RSPB 40 on 15th, Fowlmere NR 4 on 18th, Burwell Fen 49 on 19th.

Teal Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 14 on 5th, Paxton Pits a pair on 2nd, 6 on 6th, a male on 12th, 20th, Fowlmere NR a drake on 8th then 3 on 17th.

Mallard Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 23 on 5th and 11 on 27th, Burwell Fen 81 on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 13 on 22nd.

Garganey *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2) and Wicken Fen.

Shoveler Fowlmere NR a drake on 5th-6th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 8 on 5th and 11 on 27th, Paxton Pits 4 on 6th, Wicken Fen 6 on 19th,

Pochard Wicken fen on 12th, Burwell Fen a brood seen on 21st - *this is a rare breeding bird in Cambs.*

Tufted Duck Fowlmere NR 1-3 adults and a brood of 8, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 4 on 8th and 27th, Burwell Fen 5 on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 10 on 22nd.

Gamebirds

Grey Partridge *reported from:* Fowlmere NR.

Quail Ouse Washes on 21st.

Cormorants

Cormorant Wicken Fen 2 on 17th and one on 30th, Burwell Fen 8 on 19th.

Egrets and herons

Bittern *reported from:* March Farmers and Wicken Fen.

Little Egret *reported from:* Burwell Fen (14), Fowlmere NR, March Farmers a total of 112 on 11th, Paxton Pits (9), Wicken Fen (15+).

Great White Egret March Farmers on 11th and 12th, then 2 on 14th-16th, Wicken Fen on 12th.

Grebes

Little Grebe Dunkirk bred successfully, Wicken Fen pair bred successfully on the brickpits, Burwell Fen 2 on 19th.



Tufted Duck female in attack on Little Grebe at Dunkirk: photo by Tony Martin

Great Crested Grebe Burwell Fen a pair with growing young on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 2 on 22nd.

Raptors

Red Kite Wicken Fen on 2nd, 11th and 12th, Abbots Ripton 3+ on 4th, Paxton Pits on 6th, 12th, 17th, 2 on 25th, Fowlmere NR on 8th, 16th and 18th, Oakington on 19th, Barton on 20th, Long Drove on 26th.

Marsh Harrier *reported from:* Chippenham Fen (4), Fowlmere NR (2), March Farmers, Ouse Washes RSPB, Wicken Fen (4).

Hen Harrier Wicken Fen a male was reported on 5th and a 'grey harrier' was seen on the 7th. *This late date is still a fair way short of the all-time record of June 30th, also at Wicken Fen.*

Buzzard *reported from:* Abbots Ripton, Babraham (2), Barton (4), Bottisham, Chippenham Fen (2), Comberton, Fowlmere, Great Abington, Horseheath, Paxton Pits (2), Six Mile Bottom, Wicken Fen (several).

Osprey Fowlmere NR a flyover on 5th.

Rails

Corncrake reported calling from both the Ouse and Nene Washes.

Coot Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 23 on 5th and 8 on 27th (2 broods and 2 nests), Burwell Fen 89 (8 young) on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 12 on 22nd.

Waders

Avocet Wicken Fen on 6th, 11th and 2 on 16th and 20th.

Oystercatcher Paxton Pits (maximum 6, bred - pair with chicks on 17th), Burwell Fen on 19th, Sutton North Fen 2 on 26th.

Lapwing Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 9 on 5th and c100 on 27th, Paxton Pits 8 on 2nd, 68 on 6th, c20 on 17th, c50 on 25th, Fowlmere NR a pair bred with up to 4 young, Wicken Fen 8 on 18th, Burwell Fen 6 on 19th (possible breeding).

Little Ringed Plover Paxton Pits 1-2 on several dates, May Farm Littleport 2 on 7th, March Farmers 7 on 15th.

Ringed Plover Paxton Pits on 4th (tundra), 20th.

Curlew Fowlmere NR a flyover on 22nd.

Black tailed Godwit Burwell Fen 3 on 10th.

Turnstone Paxton Pits on 2nd - 4th.

Ruff March Farmers 3 on 11th.

Common Sandpiper Burwell Fen on 7th.

Green Sandpiper Burwell Fen 3 briefly on 1st, one on 7th and 19th, 5 on 21st, March Farmers on 11th, Sutton North Fen on 26th.

Greenshank March Farmers on 12th, 15th.

Redshank March Farmers 6 on 15th, Ouse Washes RSPB 12 on 15th, Paxton Pits 2-3 on several dates, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 7 on 5th and 18th (3 pairs), Burwell Fen on 19th.

Snipe *reported from:* Wicken Fen (6).

Terns and gulls

Little Tern Berry Fen one on 4th.

Common Tern *reported from:* Burwell Fen pair bred (maximum 9), Fowlmere NR (2), Paxton Pits (c 40 pairs), Trumpington Clay Farm (2), Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen), Waterbeach.

Black-headed Gull Burwell Fen 15 on 19th, Trumpington Clay Farm 36 on 22nd.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Burwell Fen 3 on 19th, Long Drove 425 on 26th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 3 on 27th.

Herring Gull Long Drove 13 on 26th.

Yellow-legged Gull Burwell Fen 3 on 6th, Paxton Pits 2 on 6th, 3 on 17th, Sutton North Fen a 2 c.y. on 26th.

Caspian Gull Long Drove a 2 c.y. on 26th.

Great Black-backed Gull Long Drove 7 on 26th.

Doves, cuckoo, owls and kingfisher

Turtle Dove *reported from:* Abbots Ripton (2), Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Fowlmere NR (3), Reach (2) and Wicken village (2) and at Wicken Fen (2).

Cuckoo *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Kneesworth, Ouse Fen, Paxton Pits (2), Waterbeach, Wicken Fen (3).

Barn Owl *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Fowlmere NR, Nene Washes March Farmers (7), Wicken Fen at least two nests.

Little Owl *reported from:* Newborough and Tubney Fen.

Tawny Owl *reported from:* Wicken Fen.

Short-eared Owl Burwell Fen on 6th, 14th, May Farm Littleport on 7th, March Farmers on 11th.

Nightjar Chippenham Fen a possible on 22nd.

Kingfisher reported from: Fowlmere NR (pair), Kingfishers Bridge, Paxton Pits, Wicken Fen (a juvenile ringed on 7th).

Falcons and parrots

Merlin Comberton on 3rd.

Hobby Wicken Fen 7 on 5th, May Farm Littleport 8 on 7th, Fowlmere NR up to 3 on several dates, Paxton Pits on 12th, March Farmers on 15th, Ouse Washes on 15th, Burwell Fen on 21st, Waterbeach on 25th, Sutton North Fen on 26th.



Hobby at Fowlmere NR: photo by Neil Bramwell

Peregrine Fowlmere NR on 2nd and 11th, Comberton on 3rd, Abbots Ripton on 4th, Wicken Fen on 8th, March Farmers a male on 11th, Cambridge on 23rd.

Corvids

Jackdaw/Rook Chippenham Fen 500 out of roost on 22nd.

Raven Ferry Meadows CP a flyover on 2nd.

Crests and tits

Firecrest Fowlmere NR on 7th and 10th.

Marsh Tit Chippenham Fen a juvenile caught and ringed on 22nd, Wicken Fen a juvenile caught and ringed on 25th may have been raised on the Fen but may also be a bird dispersing from Fordham Wood or even Chippenham Fen.

Bearded Tit Good breeding seasons at Wicken Fen and Kingfishers Bridge revealed by the numbers ringed in June (mostly juveniles) 36 at Wicken Fen and 27 at Kingfishers Bridge.

Hirundines and warblers

Sand Martin Sutton North Fen 120 nest holes on 26th.

Cetti's Warbler *reported from:* Fowlmere NR (3), March Farmers, May Farm Littleport and Wicken Fen.

Grasshopper Warbler *reported from:* Chippenham Fen (recently fledged juvenile ringed on 22nd), Fowlmere NR, Ouse Washes, Swaffham Prior Fen and Wicken Fen.

Sedge Warbler Wicken Fen 31 birds handled in June and Kingfishers Bridge 27.

Reed Warbler Wicken Fen 38 birds handled in June and Kingfishers Bridge 45.

The ratio of Sedge to Reed Warblers in June at these two sites suggests a recovery in Sedge Warbler numbers, it remains to be seen how productive they are.

Nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Nuthatch New Shardlow's Farm on 17th.

Starling Burwell Fen c130 on 19th.

Spotted Flycatcher *reported from:* Abbotsley (2), Fowlmere NR and Ramsey.

From Michael Holdsworth:

The Club's Spotted Flycatcher survey has gone well. Most pairs returned to their traditional sites, and the numbers of nests found has been boosted by reports from non-birders responding to publicity in parish magazines and on websites. Fieldwork has been very intense during the final weeks of June when nests - quite extraordinarily synchronised - nearly all at once had large young and were more easily located. Over forty pairs have been located, with birds (though often just solo unrequited males) at another twenty or so sites. As usual, the species is mainly concentrated in Old Hunts and in the south of Old Cambs, often in clusters, sometimes almost like loose colonies.

Substantial numbers of pulli have been ringed, as have adults, several of which have had geolocator tags fitted. This BTO tagging project, the first of its kind for the species anywhere, uses tags weighing 0.34gm, less than 3% of a flycatcher's weight.

Flycatchers thus join Grafham Nightingales and Fowlmere Swifts as the County's representation at the cutting edge of this important new kind of migration research. At present, we have absolutely no idea where British flycatchers winter in Africa.



Dunnock at Paxton Pits: photo by Phil Smith

Starts and chats

Black Redstart Cambourne on 3rd, Cambridge a singing bird reported on several dates.

Stonechat Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 3 on 5th (including one juvenile) 2 on 6th. *Another rare breeding bird in Cambridgeshire; the birds at Wicken have bred for several years after a county absence of over fifty years.*

Sparrows and wagtails

Tree Sparrow Ouse Washes RSPB 2 on 15th.

Yellow Wagtail Sutton North Fen 2 broods seen in potato field.

Grey Wagtail Clayhithe on 27th.

Finches and buntings

Siskin Haddenham a juvenile seen on a garden feeder. *This bird may have been as a result of juvenile dispersal, equally, given the extent of the invasion in the winter, it may have been the progeny of a local breeding pair. Siskin breeding records in Cambridgeshire remain few and far between (none were reported in 2014).*

Crossbill Glinton a flyover on 25th.

Contributors:

Colin Addington, Richard Allison, Louise Bacon, Richard Bashford, Peter Bircham, Paul Bolton, Richard Bradbury, Neil Bramwell, Chris Brown, J.D. Bryden, Ian Burfield, Howard Butler, Ian Carter, Saimon Clark Steve Cooper, Godfrey Curtis, Martin Davis, Tim Dee, Ian and Sheila Dickerson, Brendan Doe, Ed Gill, Richard Grimmett, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, S.M.J. Heather, Michael Holdsworth, David Hopkins, Charlie Kitchin, Colin Kirtland, Owen Marks, Giles Merritt, Martin O’Leary, Doug Radford, John Raven, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Gary Thornton, Calum Urquhart, , Luke Wake, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, John Wells, M.K. Wightman, Kevin Wilson,

WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for June 2016

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 7 different days in June (5 of these being CES sessions); additionally, several pulli were ringed, mainly in the Group’s nestboxes.

The month’s ringing total was 240; retraps were 130, so the overall “catch” was 370.

Common Tern	3, 0	Garden Warbler	2, 1
Woodpiegeon	1, 0	Blackcap	9, 11
Barn Owl	2, 0	Chiffchaff	24, 11
Kingfisher	1, 1	Willow Warbler	1, 2
Wren	11, 10	Bearded Tit	33, 3
Dunnock	6, 4	Long-tailed Tit	16, 5
Robin	25, 5	Marsh Tit	1, 0
Blackbird	7, 2	Blue Tit	25, 6
Song Thrush	4, 3	Great Tit	14, 8
Cetti’s Warbler	1, 4	Tree Creeper	2, 1
Grasshopper Warbler	1, 0	Magpie	2, 0

Sedge Warbler	17, 14	Jackdaw	3, 6
Marsh Warbler	1, 0	Goldfinch	0, 1
Reed Warbler	17, 21	Bullfinch	3, 5
Lesser Whitethroat	1, 0	Reed Bunting	5, 5
Whitethroat	2, 1		

Old birds retrapped during the month were:

Chiffchaff CHX207 at 5y 10m (a WFG record);

Reed Warbler L505240 at 5y 0m;

Bearded Tit L505963 at 4y 10m;

Sedge Warbler Y114397 at 4y 2m;

Blackcap L504775 at 4y 0m and

Robin Y408900 at 3y 9m.

Field Meeting

Friday 12th August, Paxton Pits (north end)

by arrangement, a trip to the north end of Paxton Pits with site ranger, Jim Stevenson. time 7pm. Meeting place will be provided to those who book, but expect a reasonable walk to be part of this visit. Book with Louise Bacon (recorder@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk), places limited to 15.

Next Indoor Meeting

Friday 9th September, Cottenham Village College

Climate Change and Local Wildlife by Brian Eversham

In this talk, Brian will discuss how wildlife has responded to past climates, including the series of Ice Ages, how plants and animals are being affected by changes now, and how climate interacts with other threats to local wildlife. He will consider the ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ in the face of climate warming, and will conclude by explaining how we should respond to the threats, and what the local Wildlife Trust is doing already.

Brian Eversham is Chief Executive of the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants. He was previously conservation director, responsible for nature reserves, wider countryside

conservation, and training. He introduced landscape-scale conservation to the Trust, helping launch the Great Fen, and schemes in the Nene Valley, the North Chilterns and Cambridgeshire's ancient woodlands. He is author of the Atlas of the Dragonflies of Britain and Ireland and author of over 200 scientific papers and reports.

Cambridgeshire Bird Club/BTO Conference

Rare Breeding Birds in East Anglia

Saturday, September 24, 2016 09:00 to 17:30. Cottenham Village College

Booking details to follow. Conference times given are approximate.

Birds of Nine Wells

This is a sample from a very comprehensive survey undertaken by John Meed, very relevant given the level of development in the area and the incursion into green belt. A full account is likely to appear in the Cambridgeshire Bird Report for 2015.

Introduction

For the last four years I have surveyed breeding populations of farmland birds on a square kilometre of green belt south of Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge (grid reference TL4654), to assess the levels of the biodiversity of an area close to the city.

The area studied is largely arable land, with 2.5km of mature hedgerows, 1km of streams/ditches, and 4+ha of scrub and woodland, including the Nine Wells nature reserve. It includes a cycle path and footpath, and sensitive land management has created several permissive footpaths, flower-rich field margins and additional woodland (see Appendix 1). It is widely used by walkers, cyclists, families and dog owners.

Breeding red list species (9)

- 22 pairs of Skylarks
- 15 pairs of Linnets
- 13 pairs of Grey Partridges
- 11 pairs of Yellowhammers (above)
- 3 pairs of Corn Buntings
- 2 pairs of Starlings
- 2 pairs each of Song and Mistle thrush
- 1 probable pair Yellow Wagtails

Red list visitors include: Lapwing, Herring Gull and in winter, Fieldfare and Redwing. Merlin visited in January 2016.

Breeding amber list species (7)

- 10 pairs of Whitethroats
- 8 pairs of Dunnocks
- 3 pairs of Swallows and
2 pairs green Woodpecker
- 1 pair each of Reed Bunting, Bullfinch and Stock Dove
- Kestrels, Swifts and House Martins nest nearby and visit regularly.

Amber list visitors include: Mallard, Mute Swan, Red Kite, Black-headed and Lesser black-backed Gull and in winter, Little Egret, Kingfisher, Snipe, Golden Plover and Meadow Pipit.

Next E-bulletin on August 10th, any contributions to be received by the 4th please.