

Cambridgeshire Bird Club



E-Bulletin 41 December 2016

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



Great Northern Diver at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith

HEADLINES

RING-NECKED DUCK* Paxton Pits the female from November still present until the end of the month.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER* Grafham Water 2 from November then a single until the 23rd, then 3 on the 27th, all immatures, until the end of the month.

CATTLE EGRET* Nene Washes the bird from November still present until the end of the month, Histon one flew over on the 4th and Ouse Washes on the 9th.

GLOSSY IBIS* Ely the bird from November still present until at least the 4th, Barway - presumed same on the 10th.

DIPPER* Bassingbourn the long-staying bird was still present.

LAPLAND BUNTING* Ouse Washes one on the 3rd.

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

The month started as a continuation of late November with frost and clear cold days but dry, many water bodies became iced over in places, but by the end of the first week, a milder Atlantic system moved in and temperatures reached double figures with neither frost nor fog and this persisted for much of the month with occasional colder days until around Christmas Day Storm Barbara moved across the country (although Cambridgeshire escaped the worst of the wild weather) and this was followed by a cold spell with some sharp frosts and water bodies icing over once again.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan Trumpington Clay Farm maximum 8 on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm 6-12 all month.

Bewick's Swan Grafham Water 2 still present, then 6 from the 8th until the end of the month, Ouse Washes 15 on the 3rd, Littleport May Farm 28 on the 9th, 25+ on the 17th, Sutton North Fen 3 on the 17th, Nene Washes 300+ on the 27th.

Whooper Swan Ouse Washes 3,500 on the 3rd, Stuntney - Ely 14 in a field on the 5th, March Farmers 120 on the 7th, Littleport May Farm 224 on the 9th, 250+ on the 17th, Sutton North Fen on the 11th, 65 flying over on the 17th, Wicken Fen 5 flying over on the 11th, Chain Corner 91 on the 17th, Burwell Fen 12 on the 18th and 26th, Colne Fen GP 22 on the 18th.

Bean Goose Nene Washes one at March Farmers on the 22nd and 27th.

Pink-footed Goose March Farmers 4 on the 4th, 7th, 9 on the 18th, 30 on the 22nd.

White-fronted Goose Ouse Washes 7 on the 4th, Colne Fen GP 6 on the 18th, March Farmers on the 27th.

Greylag Goose Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 362 on the 20th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 153 on the 22nd.

Canada Goose Trumpington Clay Farm maximum 17 on the 22nd.

Barnacle Goose Ouse Washes 16 on the 2nd, Sutton North Fen 20 on the 11th, Chain Corner 11+ on the 17th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 4 on the 22nd.

Brent Goose Sutton North Fen on the 11th.

Egyptian Goose Eldernell 2 on the 11th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 12th, Littleport May Farm 2 all month.

Shelduck Burwell Fen on the 11th, 18th and 2 on the 26th.

Mandarin Wimpole 16 on the 9th, 20 on the 13th.

Wigeon Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) c350 on the 7th, Cam Washes (Upware) 250+ on the 7th, March Farmers c500 on the 7th, Burwell Fen c350 on the 11th, c470 on the 26th, Fowlmere NR a drake on the 11th - 15th, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 630 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm 40+ all month.

Gadwall Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 28 on the 7th, 29 on the 22nd, Burwell Fen 116 on the 11th, 179 on the 18th and c150 on the 26th, Littleport May Farm 2 on the 17th and 8 on the 30th, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 97 on the 20th.

Teal Trumpington Clay Farm 12 on the 5th, Fowlmere NR 15 on the 6th and 38 on the 16th, March Farmers c100 on the 7th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 280 on the 7th and c410 on the 22nd, Burwell Fen c160 on the 11th, and c75 on the 26th, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 580 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm 40+ all month.

Mallard Trumpington Clay Farm 12 on the 5th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 50 on the 4th and 44 on the 7th, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 122 on the 20th, Burwell Fen 51 on the 26th, Littleport May Farm c500 all month.

Pintail Grafham Water 2 on the 8th, 13 on the 18th, Burwell Fen 2 on the 18th,

Shoveler Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 2 on the 7th and 6 on the 22nd, Fowlmere NR on the 9th - 10th, Burwell Fen 5 on the 11th, 18 on the 26th, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 247 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm 4-6 all month.

Red-crested Pochard Paxton Pits on the 18th, a male on the 28th.

Pochard Fen Drayton Lakes c80 on the 8th, Paxton Pits 5 on the 14th, Littleport May Farm 18 on the 17th.

Tufted Duck Paxton Pits 32 on the 14th, Littleport May Farm 15-20 all month.

Scaup Fen Drayton Lakes a first-winter male on the 8th and 12th, an adult female on the 11th - 12th, then a male and female on the 14th, a female on the 15th, 3 on the 26th and a female on the 28th - 29th, Paxton Pits a female on the 18th.

Common Scoter Grafham Water a female/immature on the 18th, one on the 27th, 2 on the 29th.

Goldeneye Paxton Pits one looking unwell on the 6th, 57 on the 14th, c80 on the 16th, Fen Drayton Lakes 40+ on the 11th, a dead female on the 12th.

Smew Milton CP a redhead on the 1st -2nd, Grafham Water 3 redheads on the 5th, Fen Drayton Lakes a redhead on the 11th, 2 redheads on the 28th - 29th, Needingworth GP 14 on the 18th (one drake), 10 on the 23rd.

Goosander Paxton Pits 10 on the 4th, 6 on the 30th, Maxey GP 21 on the 5th and 16 on the 27th, Grafham Water a female on the 8th, 6 on the 17th and 4 on the 18th and 23rd, Upwell 3 on the Sixteen Foot Drain on the 19th.

Gamebirds

Red-legged Partridge Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 7 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 12-20 all month.

Grey Partridge Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 18 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm 7 on the 3rd and a remarkable 63 on the 10th.

Pheasant Littleport May Farm 50+ all month.

Cormorants

Cormorant *reported from:* Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 8 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm (8).

Egrets and herons

Bittern Farcet Fen on the 1st, Woodwalton Fen 2 on the 11th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 11th, 13th, Fowlmere NR on the 11th,

Little Egret *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water (7), Haddenham/Aldreth Fens, Hauxton, Littleport May Farm (6), Paxton Pits, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 6 on the 20th.

Great White Egret Paxton Pits still present all month, Ely one flew up from the river bank on the 4th, March Farmers 3 on the 8th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 12th, Littleport May Farm 12th - 16th.

Grey Heron Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 9 on the 20th.

Grebes

Little Grebe Trumpington Clay Farm 5 on the 5th, Burwell Fen in one of the dykes on 7th, Littleport May Farm 12-15 all month.

Great Crested Grebe Littleport May Farm 2 on the 30th.

Red-necked Grebe* Grafham Water from the 8th to the end of the month.

Slavonian Grebe* Fen Drayton Lakes on the 11th, 14th.

Raptors

Red Kite Great Fen 17+ on the 4th, 23 to roost on the 8th, Fowlmere NR seen occasionally, Paxton Pits on the 24th, Littleport May Farm seen overhead all month

Marsh Harrier Haddenham/Aldreth Fens a female on the 1st, Wicken Fen on the 2nd and 2 on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm 5 on the 3rd, 6 on the 11th, 2 on the 17th and 3 on the 30th, Woodwalton Fen 8 on the 4th, 5 (3 males and 2 females) on the 9th and 3 on the 17th, March Farmers 4 (a male and 3 immatures) on the 7th, Eldernell 3 on the 7th, Ouse Washes 6 on the 9th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 11th, Colne Fen on the 18th, Burwell Fen on the 26th.

Hen Harrier Wicken Fen a male on the 3rd, 'a pair' on the 7th and 2 males and a ringtail on the 11th, Great Fen area male and ringtail on the 4th, a wing-tagged male on the 8th, a male and a female on the 9th and a male on the 17th, Cam Washes a male on the 31st.

Sparrowhawk *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes, Great Shelford, Littleport May Farm (2), March Farmers, Wicken Fen and Willingham.



Sparrowhawk female at Willingham: photo by Colin Brown.

Buzzard *reported from:* Burwell Fen (4), Eldernell (5), Fordham, Fowlmere, Haslingfield, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens (3), Littleport May Farm (6), March Farmers (4), Paxton Pits (3), Sutton North Fen (a very pale bird) on the 17th, Swaffham Prior Fen (another pale bird) on the 30th and Wicken Fen (2).

Osprey Grafham Water one reported by fishermen on the 5th - the latest date ever in Cambridgeshire if confirmed.

Rails and crane

Water Rail *reported from:* Eldernell, Fen Drayton Lakes, Grafham Water (5), Paxton Pits, Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen (c12).

Moorhen Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 12 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm c40 all month.

Coot Trumpington Clay Farm 20 on the 5th, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 87 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm 12-20 all month.

Common Crane Nene Washes resident 7 (two families) with various numbers (maximum 33) coming in to roost all month, March 26 flying over on the 4th, Wicken Fen 9 flying over on the 11th, Thorney Toll 4 flying over the A47 on the 12th.

Following my conjecture last month, it seems that there is a resident group on the Nene Washes with other birds feeding in maize stubble which were roosting on Ouse Washes until it became too wet, since when they moved to Nene Washes. Records show that there is a minimum total of 34 Cranes (a new peak count for the County) in the fenland area.

Waders

Golden Plover Trumpington Clay Farm 44 flying around on the 5th, Fowlmere 140 in a field opposite the reserve on the 5th, Burwell (Factory Road) 30 with Lapwings on the 7th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 28 on the 7th, March Farmers c300 on the 7th, Littleport May Farm 50+ on the 11th, Chain Corner 220 on the 17th, Colne Fen GP 702 on the 18th, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 1,150 on the 20th, Paxton Pits 60 on the 31st.

Lapwing Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 2,000 - 2,500 on the 1st, Burwell (Factory Road) c250 in a recently ploughed field on the 7th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 350+ on the 7th, March Farmers c1,200 on the 7th, Paxton Pits 100 on the 16th and 130 on the 31st, Fowlmere NR 148 on the 17th, Colne Fen GP 4,000+ on the 18th, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 2,200 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm 74 on the 28th.

Curlew Paxton Pits on the 7th.

Black tailed Godwit March Farmers 5 on the 4th.

Ruff March Farmers 102 on the 27th.

Dunlin March Farmers on the 7th and 97 on the 27th, Grafham Water on the 8th, Colne Fen 24 on the 18th.

Green Sandpiper Paxton Pits on the 6th, 16th and 28th, Grafham Water on several dates, Sutton North Fen on the 17th, Colne Fen GP on the 18th.

Redshank March Farmers c30 on the 7th, Grafham Water 8 on the 8th, 7 on the 30th.

Jack Snipe Paxton Pits on the 3rd, 6th, Fowlmere NR on the 4th.

Woodcock Wicken Fen on the 7th, Monks Wood on the 11th, Colne Fen GP on the 18th, Paxton Pits on the 24th, Littleport May Farm on the 28th.

Snipe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3), Fen Drayton Lakes (4), Fowlmere NR (8), Littleport May Farm (50+), Paxton Pits (3+) and Wicken Fen (9).

Gulls

Black-headed Gull Trumpington Clay Farm 32 on the 5th, then 120+ on the 22nd, Swaffham Bulbeck c120 (these birds seem to be very site/field faithful having been there since the early autumn) on the 7th and 21st, and an additional 250+ on a recently ploughed field on the 21st, Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen WeBS count 320 on the 20th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) c500 on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Mediterranean Gull Ferry Meadows CP on the 25th - 26th.

Common Gull Trumpington Clay Farm 2 all month, Littleport May Farm 5 on the 3rd, 14 on the 28th, Wicken Fen on the 30th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Trumpington Clay Farm on the 5th and 5 on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm 10 on the 17th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 4 on the 22nd.

Herring Gull Littleport May Farm 6 on the 3rd and 26 on the 17th, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 5 on the 22nd.

Caspian Gull *reported from:* Cambridge Research Park, Fen Drayton Lakes (4), Grafham Water, and Paxton Pits,

Great Black-backed Gull Littleport May Farm 2 on the 10th.

Doves, owls and Kingfisher

Stock Dove Swaffham Prior Fen c20 on the 30th, Littleport May Farm c10 all month.

Woodpigeon Littleport May Farm c300 all month.

Collared Dove Littleport May Farm c50 all month.

Barn Owl *reported from:* Burwell Fen (3+), Eldernell, Fowlmere NR, Littleport May Farm (5), March Farmers (2), Paxton Pits, Thriplow and Wicken Fen.

Little Owl *reported from:* Littleport May Farm (4) and Wicken Fen.

Tawny Owl *reported from:* Hare Park (2), Littleport May Farm (2), Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen.

Long-eared Owl Wicken Fen on the 4th.

Short-eared Owl Great Fen 5 on the 4th, Burwell Fen many reports of numbers from 3 on the 6th, to at least 15 in the air at the same time on the 26th, Nene Washes 2 on the 10th, Eldernell 2 on the 11th, 3 on the 15th, 2 on the 21st, 7 on the 29th and 4 on the 31st, Wicken Fen on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm 2 all month.

Kingfisher *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Fowlmere NR (2), Littleport May Farm (4), March Farmers, Paxton Pits (3) and Wicken Fen.

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel Burwell Fen 12 on the 26th, Littleport May Farm 6+ all month.

Merlin Nene Washes on the 2nd and 10th, Ouse Washes on the 3rd, Great Fen a female on the 4th, Swaffham Bulbeck a female on the 7th, Fowlmere NR on the 4th and 16th, Eldernell on the 7th, Burwell Fen on the 11th, Holme Fen on the 17th.

Peregrine Fowlmere NR on the 1st, Nene Washes on the 2nd, March Farmers 2 on the 4th, 3 on the 7th, one on the 8th, 3 on the 10th, 2 on the 11th, Wicken Fen on the 4th, Eldernell on the 7th and 24th, Burwell Fen on the 11th, Paxton Pits on the 18th, 24th and 28th, Cambridge (Riverside) on the 27th.

Ring-necked Parakeet* Coveney one reported on the 17th.

Shrikes and corvids

Great Grey Shrike* likely to be the same bird previously recorded on Burwell/Wicken Fens in November: Wicken Fen on the 2nd, Kingfishers Bridge on the 11th - 16th, back at Wicken Fen on the 20th until at least the 29th.

Magpie Littleport May Farm c20 all month.

Jackdaw Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) c200 on the 4th and c100 on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm c100 all month.

Jackdaw/Rook Chippenham Fen c2,000 emerging from a roost (mostly Jackdaws) on the 21st, Dernford Fen c500 going to roost (half and half) on the 21st.

Rook Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) c100 on the 4th and the 22nd, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Carrion Crow Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 24 on the 7th, Littleport May Farm c100 all month.

Raven Little Shelford 2 flying over on the 3rd, Great Fen 2 on the 4th, Fowlmere NR 1-2 from 2nd - 8th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 8th, Grafham Water on the 17th, St. Neots 2 on the 18th, Monks Wood 2 on the 19th, Bar Hill on the 22nd, Hauxton on the 26th. Almost all records were of birds flying over.

Tits and larks

Coal Tit Monks Wood 25 on the 11th.

Marsh Tit Grafham Water on the 10th, Monks Wood 21 on the 11th, Chippenham Fen on the 21st, Paxton Pits on the 24th.

Bearded Tit Woodwalton Fen (calling) on the 11th, Little Wilbraham Fen 5+ on the 18th, Wicken Fen on several dates (the catch total of 22 in December indicates a healthy population), Fen Drayton Lakes on the 29th.

Skylark Littleport May Farm c40 all month.

Warblers

Cetti's Warbler *reported from:* Fowlmere NR (3), Grafham Water (2), Littleport May Farm (3), Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen (8).

Chiffchaff Fowlmere NR 2-3 all month, Grafham Water on the 8th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 11th, 3 on the 12th, 2 on the 13th, 10 on the 14th, 5 on the 28th, Stirtloe STW on the 17th, Woodwalton Fen on the 17th, Haslingfield STW (4), Littleport May Farm 2-3 all month.

'Siberian' Chiffchaff: Fen Drayton Lakes on the 13th - 14th, Stirtloe STW a probable on the 17th,



'Siberian' Chiffchaff at Fen Drayton Lakes: photo by James Hanlon

Waxwing, nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Waxwing Somersham on the 1st, Melbourn on the 28th, Helpston 3 on the 28th, Anglesey Abbey (reported) on the 29th, Horningsea 10 near the Garden Centre on the 31st.

Nuthatch Littleport May Farm one heard on the 11th, Chippenham Fen heard on the 21st.

Starling Burwell Fen c120 on the 11th, Littleport May Farm c3,000 all month.

Fieldfare Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 50+ on the 1st, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen) 250+ on the 7th, Eldernell c100 on the 7th, Newton-Fowlmere 400+ in a mixed flock with Redwings (c80% Fieldfare).

Redwing Little Wilbraham Fen c260 on the 4th.

Starts and chats

Black Redstart Cambridge (Pembroke College) on the 14th.

Stonechat Wicken Fen a pair all month, Paxton Pits a pair all month, Ely on the 4th, Burwell Fen a male on the 7th, Trumpington Clay Farm on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm 5-6 all month.

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

House Sparrow Littleport May Farm c25 all month.

Tree Sparrow Ouse Washes 35 on the 9th, Earith GP 3 on the 26th.

Grey Wagtail *reported from:* Grafham Water, Haslingfield STW (2), Littleport May Farm on the 12th, Paxton Pits, Stirtloe STW (3) and Wicken Fen.

Pied Wagtail Stirtloe STW 98 on the 17th, Whittlesford BP garage roost of 200-300 on the 21st.

Meadow Pipit Stirtloe STW 38 on the 17th, Littleport May Farm c100 all month.



Meadow Pipit at Grafham Water: photo by Garth Peacock.

Water Pipit Sutton Gault on the 17th, Burwell Fen on the 18th.

Finches and buntings

Brambling Littleport May Farm 6 on the 6th, Southey Wood c30 on the 17th, Hare Park 4 (with Chaffinches) on the 18th, Roman Road c20 between Copley Hill and Signal Hill on the 29th.

Greenfinch Littleport May Farm c40 all month.

Goldfinch Chippenham Fen c40 on the 21st, Littleport May Farm c80 all month.

Siskin Holme Fen 30+ on the 17th, Chippenham Fen c40 on the 21st, Paxton Pits 2 on the 24th.

Linnet Haddenham/Aldreth Fens two different groups of 60-100 and 150 on the 1st, Littleport May Farm c60 all month.

Lesser Redpoll Monks Wood 'small flocks' on the 11th, Woodwalton Fen 20+ on the 17th.

Bullfinch Fen Drayton Lakes 15 on the 12th.

Corn Bunting Littleport May Farm 59 on the 3rd, 74 on the 11th, 9 on the 17th and 54 on the 28th, Trumpington Clay Farm 14 on the 5th.

Reed Bunting Littleport May Farm c150 all month.

Exotica

Black Swan Fen Drayton Lakes on the 12th.

Alexandrine Parakeet Hilton on the 24th (as Mark Hawkes pointed out this species is remarkably similar to Ring-necked Parakeet - beware).

Red-fan Parrot Grafham Water - still present.

Contributors:

Colin Addington, Jill Aldred, Richard Allison, Richard Astle, Malcolm Ausden, Louise Bacon, Tim Bagworth, Don Barrell, Ian Barton, Andy Bayes, Peter Bircham, Mark Brandon, Richard Broughton, Chris Brown, Ellie Burke, Ade Cooper, Ali Cooper, Steve Cooper, Terry Cooper, Martin Davis, Ian Dawson, Ian and Sheila Dickerson, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, Steve Dutton, David Ellis, Ian Ellis, Stuart and Jill Elsom, Ian Gordon, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, per Vicki Harley, Ron Harold, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Michael Holdsworth, Malcolm Holley, David Hollin, David Hopkins, Carl Howard, Stephanie James, Charlie Kitchin, Vince Lea, David Lee, Owen and Monica Marks, Paul Mason, Donal McCarthy, Matt Mellor, Steve Mumford, Martin O'Leary, Richard Palmer, Neil Parkin, Gill Parrish, Richard Patient, Mark Peck, Sam Perfect, Toby Phelps, James Pipe, Elaine and John Proctor, Doug Radford, Mike Redshaw, Gareth Rees, Chris Rider, Norman Sills, Larissa Simuluk, Simon Stirrup, Brian Stone, Jonathan Taylor, John Thake, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Calum Urquhart, Hugh Venables, David Walsh, Mark Ward, Matt Webb, Ed Weedon, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, John Wells, Kevin Wilson, Michael Wood.

WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for December 2016

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 15 different days in December. The month's ringing total was 319, a further 299 birds were retraps, so the overall November "catch" was 618 birds (ringed birds are shown first, followed by retraps, below).

Kingfisher	1, 0	Fieldfare	4, 0
Great spot Woodpecker	0, 1	Redwing	103, 0
Cetti's Warbler	2, 3	Song Thrush	8, 0
Goldcrest	3, 10	Robin	2, 20
Blue Tit	10, 90	Dunnock	4, 8
Great Tit	6, 54	House Sparrow	30, 9
Bearded Tit	12, 10	Chaffinch	7, 10
Long-tailed Tit	3, 26	Greenfinch	1, 1
Chiffchaff	4, 0	Goldfinch	8, 5
Tree Creeper	0, 3	Lesser Redpoll	2, 0
Wren	9, 13	Bullfinch	8, 5
Blackbird	46, 15	Reed Bunting	46, 16

Old birds retrapped during the month included:

Chaffinch V834220 at 8y 6m,
House Sparrow TH47876 at 7y 11m (a WFG record),
Great Tit X077956 at 7y 6m,
Blue Tit X876406 at 6y 7m,
Long-tailed Tit DDA101 at 5y 9m,
Dunnock Y114372 at 4y 9m,
Robin Y113943 at 4y 7m,
Reed Bunting Y855916 at 3y 3m,
Wren EAN604 at 3y 2m and
Bearded Tit Y857609 at 3y 0m.

John Clark

It was with sadness that we learned of the death of John Clark (on Boxing Day at Peterborough Hospital).

The amalgamation of 'old' Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire in 1972 presented a tricky dilemma for organisations such as the Bird Club. The avifaunal records had, for obvious reasons, always been

separate and published separately. Gradually and with some reluctance the Club began to face reality and publish the records from both sources in its Annual Report although for several years they were kept separate. For most of those years John wrote the whole of the Huntingdonshire section in his capacity as Recorder for Hunts. At the time when I was Editor the joy of working with John was that his copy was presented on time and he helped massively by checking and correcting the printer's proofs, again returning them on time. After I relinquished the Editorship John nobly took it on, not just that, he expanded the production in all its forms including illustrations, tables and references to the past together with snippets of interesting behaviour of species. Today's Annual Reports follow the pattern he set. Unless you have done the job it is quite difficult to understand the volume of work required to put the Report together, a job that John did wonderfully well. He was made a Vice President of the Club to acknowledge his enormous contribution. Our Club has been, and still is, very fortunate that a few individuals are prepared to give their time so freely. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

Next indoor meetings:

St Johns Church Hall

13th January: *The Red List and State of the World's Birds* - Ian Burfield and Tris Allinson (Global Science Team, BirdLife International).

10th February: *Looking for the Goshawk - the Lost Raptor* by Conor Jameson.

10th March: *Annual General Meeting* followed by
Pineapple Peril for Palearctic migrants & African forest species by Ann Scott.

Paxton Pits Nature Reserve 2017

Paxton Pits Nature Reserve is an extensive complex of former and active gravel pits close to the A1, northwest of St Neots. Scrub and woodland surround the more mature pits, with large numbers of warblers in spring and summer and one of the highest population of Nightingales in Cambridgeshire (peaking at 28 singing males but more often around twenty). More than 60 breeding species, including Turtle Dove (declining) Kingfishers, Grey Herons, Little Grebes and one of the largest inland Cormorant colonies in the UK (c. 100 nests). The shingle islands on two of the lakes make Paxton Pits one of the most important sites in the Ouse Valley for breeding Lapwing, Redshank, Ringed Plover and Common Tern (with Oystercatcher breeding occasionally).

Spring and autumn can be good for passage migrants, with Avocet, Black-tailed Godwits and

Garganey in recent years. In winter, the pits play host to large numbers of ducks, especially Pochard and Tufted Duck. Smew, Black-necked Grebe and Goosander are annual. Bitterns turn up most winters and sometimes in summer. Rarities in 2015-16 included Richard's Pipit, Great White Egret, Ring-necked Duck, Great Reed Warbler and Yellow Browed Warbler.

Access from car park at north end of Little Paxton village (signposted from Great North Road). Grid ref: TL 195 629. The visitor Centre opens almost every day except Dec 25th. Trails and footpaths provide access to much of the area (see board in car park). Three hides and viewing screens give views of the lakes.

Access to working areas is strictly forbidden. For more information about the reserve, events and recent sightings, visit www.paxton-pits.org.uk. Information on the Reserve and events are available from the Visitor Centre. Trip Advisor Award for Excellence in 2015, 16, 17.

Birdwatching on the "New Workings". The pits to the north of the Reserve continue almost to Buckden. Those closest to the A1 (A1 Pits and Sailing Lake) are used for water sports and can be visited by existing footpaths. The other pits (Washout, Island, Diddington and Pumphouse Pits) currently fall within the working quarry and are strictly private. However, there is limited viewing from public footpaths around Diddington DO NOT TRESPASS. Park at the public Car Park in Diddington Village. A footpath runs north around the northern edge of the two Pumphouse Pits. Going south from the Car Park there is a path that leads past the current extraction area and conveyors giving views of Diddington Pit before heading through a small wood and back to Little Paxton. There is no short circular walk from Diddington at present.

Most of the New Workings will fall into the Reserve eventually and there will be new footpaths and hides when this happens. Please keep to the paths or you will be challenged by staff from the quarry or the Diddington Estate. Please be polite and comply with their requests as the future development of the site for birding and wildlife conservation can only happen through mutual cooperation and respect.

Jim Stevenson, Senior Ranger, Paxton Pits Nature Reserve.

Nathistcam

The Cambridge Natural History Society (CNHS) has begun a project to look at the flora and fauna of Cambridge City, including, of course, the birds. The project has two main objectives:

- To create a snapshot of the flora and fauna of Cambridge City and its immediate environs.

- To increase public awareness of the diversity of plants, animals, birds and fungi in the City.

Recording will run to December 2019. Records from the decade 2010-2019 are the main focus, but earlier records will provide historical background. The area covered is bordered by the A14 in the north, the M11 in the west, Trumpington in the South and Cherry Hinton in the east. A map of the 64 x 1Km squares covered in the project is on the CNHS web site (www.nathistcam.com).

At our Christmas Bird Club meeting I introduced the project to the Club and suggested we become involved in a specific topic as well as record the bird life of the City during the project period. The specific topic I proposed is a survey of wintering Blackcaps - I have put this on the CNHS website blog.

The objective is to record the number and distribution of wintering Blackcaps in the project area.

Why Blackcaps:

- This study is inspired by Roger Isted's work. Roger found, using coloured rings, 12 different Blackcaps used his Harston garden in winter 2012/13 and 13 different Blackcaps used his garden in winter 2013/2014 - all were different individuals from the winter 2012/2013.
- The British Trust for Ornithology in their Garden Birdwatch project says the availability of garden bird food and milder winters has helped Blackcaps evolve a new migration route and new behaviour. Blackcaps breeding in S. Germany and Austria now migrate NW to Britain instead of SW to Spain.
- Rebecca Buisson in her Cambridge garden bird survey has already collected some records for this winter 2016/17.
- Blackcaps readily come to garden feeders.
- Blackcaps can be identified by birders and non-birders!
- This topic would tie-in with a CNHS Mistletoe survey - Blackcaps have become our most efficient distributors of mistletoe seeds (apparently better than Mistle Thrushes!)

The information on wintering Blackcaps requested is: Date seen; where seen (Street name); male or female; optional - any other observations such as feeding habits - what are they eating (e.g. Apples, Ivy, Mistletoe, Honeysuckle berries etc.); display/aggression. It is also worth looking for any which are colour-ringed and report these to the BTO.

The project will last until to March 2019 covering winter periods: 16/17, 17/18, 18/19

Please send winter Blackcap records to me: bobjarman99@btinternet.com. All records will also sent to Louise Bacon, the Cambridgeshire Bird Club Recorder, and written up as part of the CNHS project.

This is a record of Jonathan Taylor's year which he posted on Cambirds

So there goes another fantastic year in Cambs, not amazing for waterbirds, waders or seabirds but instead a bumper year for passerines. Starting with **Firecrest** at Brampton on Jan 2nd, the pair of **Serins** at Fen Drayton that provided a long awaited county tick for most county listers, **Black Redstart** in James Hanlons back garden! Quickly followed by an easy to see **Dartford Warbler** at Coates, again a county tick for many, my third though! Spring was pretty hard going so it was rewarding to find 2 **Redstarts** at moonshine gap on April 10th, **Wood Warbler** at Bainton on Apr 25th and two **Ring Ouzel** next day, again at Moonshine. Wader passage was brief, concentrated around the 2nd week of May when 20 species present on the Ouse Washes including 2 **Knot**, **Little Stint**, 7 **Grey Plover**, **Turnstone** and a **Stone Curlew**! Quickly followed by two magnificent **White-winged Black Terns** gracing March Farmers on May 14th, followed later the same day by the Paxton **Great Reed Warbler** - the first since 1982. The summer was poor for scarcities, though if you were a **Crane** then the fens is the hip place to be with at least 7 young being added to the rapidly growing population. The autumn will be remembered for the endless easterly influence that resulted in good numbers of **Redstarts**, 3 or 4 **Wrynecks** including my first for Cambs beside the Eldernell car park and double figures for **Yellow-browed Warbler** - maybe the first spring record will ensue? A **Twite** at Coveney byall Fen was a pleasing find - sadly much rarer than Ybwarbler, though this was blown away by the pale (**Isabelline**) **Wheatear** my staff reported in late October, the rest is history. In other years the highlight would have gone to the **Dipper** that continues to grace our less than optimal habitat that will hopefully make it onto the 2017 year list that begins again in a few hours. Good birding all.

-From The Natural Level Issue No. 9 December 2016

(A newsletter for members & staff of the Drainage Boards of the Middle Level IDBs Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership and others with an interest in wildlife in and around waterways)

Kingfishers doing well

Kingfishers are continuing to thrive throughout the waterways of the Middle Level system. Breeding pairs have used at least 14 of the 84 sites created at pumping stations and bridges where 156 holes have been drilled as potential nesting opportunities for them. It is not just Kingfishers that are taking advantage of the opportunities that holes drilled at pumping stations present. Wrens have managed to squeeze their nests into the 60mm diameter tunnels at five sites and a pair of Sand

Martins, birds that usually seek a sandy cliff to dig a nesting tunnel as part of a colony, found one of the drilled holes to their liking and raised a brood in 2016 in Ramsey IDB district.

Cliff Carson.



Kingfisher at Paxton Pits: photo by Phil Smith.

Apologies: in last month's article on the Ouse Washes I forgot to mention the authors. It was written by Mike Burdekin and Jonathan Taylor.

A Happy New Year to you all. The next E-bulletin should be in your inbox on February 10th, by which time Chaffinches should be in song and the occasional Blackbird - a preview of what is to come. Any contribution to reach me please by the 4th of February.

Thanks to all the contributors in 2016 and particular thanks to my proof readers: Louise Bacon, Chris Brown and Vince Lea who have made some very valuable comments and suggestions which greatly improve the end product.

Peter B.