

Cambridgeshire Bird Club



E-Bulletin 55 January 2018

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



Iceland Gull at Cambridge Research Park: photo by Jon Heath.

HEADLINES

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER* Grafham Water on the 12th, presumably the same over-wintering individual from December.

SLAVONIAN GREBE* Fen Drayton Lakes on the 13th - 14th.

ICELAND GULL Cottenham Long Drove on the 5th, then 2 at Waterbeach on the 6th, Milton/Waterbeach a single on several subsequent dates, Ouse Washes on the 14th,

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD* two individuals: a female centred in the north near and around Thorney the other, a male centred around the Holme-Woodwalton area.

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 first few days were a mixture of cold and not so cold with rain on and off such that some sites became excessively flooded and that pattern continued to the middle of the month, a gale over-night on the 17th/18th caused local damage followed a few days later by a moderate snowfall. In the final third, rain, another gale and a few days of relatively higher temperatures were followed by a return to cooler weather. Overall a mixture but wet.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan Great Fen Project 7 on the 28th, Littleport May Farm 15-20 all month, Redmere Farm 10-12 all month.

Bewick's Swan Grafham Water 2-3 from the 10th for most of the month, Littleport May Farm 4 on the 4th, 32 on the 26th and 12 on the 27th, Redmere Farm 52 on the 7th, 7 on the 23rd and 16 on the 29th, Holme Fen 4 flying over on the 12th, Nene Washes 28 on the 14th, 216 on the 22nd, 110+ on the 31st, Prior's Fen 4 on the 25th.

Whooper Swan Great Fen Project on the 2nd, Littleport May Farm from 71 on the 7th to 251 on the 27th, Redmere Farm 84 on the 7th, 43 on the 23rd and 212 on the 29th, Paxton Pits 9 adults on the 7th, Ouse Washes 'several hundred' on the 14th, Nene Washes 1588 on the 22nd, Prior's Fen c560 on the 25th.

Greylag Goose Kingfishers Bridge 350-400 on the 4th and 11th, Cam Washes Upware 178 on the 4th, (these counts were within minutes of each other and thus could not refer to the same birds - indicating a population in the area of something between 500 and 550 individuals), Trumpington Clay Farm 46 on the 30th, Burwell Fen c100 on the 30th, Whittlesford GP 60+ on the 30th, Fowlmere NR 165 on the 31st.

Canada Goose Cam Washes Upware 185 on the 4th, Kingfishers Bridge c241 on the 11th, Trumpington Clay Farm 36 on the 30th.

Egyptian Goose Kingfishers Bridge 3 on the 4th, 2 on the 11th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 6th, Burwell Fen 2 on the 25th, Cam Washes 2 on the 28th, Redmere Farm 2 on the 29th, Littleport: May Farm 2 all month.

Shelduck Burwell Fen 12 -15 reported on several dates maximum 27 on the 30th, Littleport May Farm 2 on the 8th and 25th, Paxton Pits on the 13th, Kingfishers Bridge on the 11th, Nene Washes 13 on the 14th, Grafham Water on the 16th, Redmere Farm 2 on the 23rd, Cam Washes 2 on the 28th, Great Fen Project 2 on the 28th.

Mandarin Wimpole Park maximum 22 (17 of which were males) on the 15th.

Wigeon (*counts 50 plus*) Cam Washes Upware c130 on the 4th, Tubney Fen 70 on the 16th, Kingfishers Bridge 72 on the 18th, St. Ives GP 103 on the 21st, Nene Washes 15880 on the 22nd, Prior's Fen 280 on the 25th, Wicken Fen maximum 225 on the 25th, Burwell Fen maximum 525 on the 28th, Redmere Farm 119 on the 29th.

Gadwall Wimpole Park maximum 4 on the 1st, Kingfishers Bridge 15 on the 18th, Wicken Fen 38 on the 18th, St Ives GP 11 on the 21st.

Teal (*counts 20 plus*) Cam Washes Upware c50 on the 4th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 89 on the 4th, Fowlmere NR present in small numbers maximum 41 on the 20th, Cambridge Research Park c50 on the 19th, Woodwalton Fen 151 on the 19th, Nene Washes 4154 on the 22nd, Redmere Farm 21 on the 23rd, Wicken Fen maximum 116 on the 25th, Littleport May Farm maximum 227 on the 25th.

Mallard (*counts 20+*) Kingfishers Bridge 34 on the 4th and maximum 72 on the 11th, Woodwalton Fen 46 on the 19th, Nene Washes 1611 on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm 500+ all month maximum 747 on the 29th, Redmere Farm 200+ all month.

Pintail Fen Drayton Lakes 5 on the 13th, Nene Washes 672 on the 22nd, Godmanchester GP a drake on the 29th.

Shoveler Wimpole Park maximum 2 on the 1st, Cam Washes Upware 24 on the 4th, Kingfishers Bridge 11 on the 4th, Woodwalton Fen 3 on the 19th, St. Ives GP 9 on the 21st, Nene Washes 258 on the 22nd, Wicken Fen maximum 40 on the 25th.

Red-crested Pochard Grafham Water a pair on the 1st, a female on the 11th, Paxton Pits a pair on the 6th.

Pochard Grafham Water 11 on the 2nd, Ouse Washes 430+ on the 14th, Wimpole Park on the 15th, Wicken Fen 2 on the 18th, Cambridge Research Park 24 on the 19th, St. Ives GP 8 on the 21st, Redmere Farm 4 on the 23rd, Burwell Fen 2 females on the 30th, Whittlesford GP 34 on the 30th.

Tufted Duck (*counts 20 or over*) Grafham Water 700+ on the 2nd, Great Fen Project 22 on the 2nd, Littleport May Farm 43 on the 16th, St.Ives GP 129 on the 21st, Redmere Farm 54 on the 23rd, Whittlesford GP 28 on the 30th.

Scaup Grafham Water 2 from the 25th, 3 on the 31st, Godmanchester GP an adult female on the 29th.

Goldeneye Grafham Water 30+ on the 2nd, 80 on the 27th, c60 on the 31st, Fen Drayton Lakes 18 (12 males 6 females) on the 6th, St Ives GP 6 on the 21st.

Smew Fen Drayton Lakes 2 'redheads' on the 1st, 3 on the 3rd, one on the 7th, Ouse Fen/Needingworth GP 3 on the 13th and a 'redhead' on the 19th, St Ives GP 5 on the 21st, 9 on the 23rd, 5 on the 25th, 3 on the 26th and 27th.

Goosander Maxey GP on the 1st, 7 on the 10th, Grafham Water 7 on the 2nd, 4 on the 27th, 11 on the 31st, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 13th.

Gamebirds

Red-legged Partridge Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Redmere Farm 20+ all month.

Grey Partridge Burwell Fen 23 on the 8th, Castor 9 on the 26th, Landbeach on the 28th, Great Fen Project on the 30th, Littleport May Farm up to 70 all month.

Pheasant Littleport: May Farm 100+ all month, Redmere Farm 50+ all month.

Cormorants

Cormorant *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (11), Littleport May Farm (8), Nene Washes (roost of 43), Redmere Farm (4), Whittlesford GP (6), Wicken Fen and Wimpole Park.

Egrets and herons

Bittern *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Nene Washes and Wicken Fen.

Little Egret *reported from:* Burwell Fen (5), Earith(4), Fordham, Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (26), Nene Washes (14), Redmere Farm (2), Waterbeach and Wicken Fen (8).

Great White Egret Godmanchester on the 1st, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 3rd, Nene Washes (Eldernell) on 14th, Bar Hill on the 15th, Redmere Farm on the 13th, Littleport May Farm on the 16th and 25th - 27th, Fowlmere NR on the 28th.

Grey Heron Littleport May Farm 8+ all month maximum 16.

Grebes

Little Grebe *reported from:* Earith (4), Fowlmere NR, Littleport May Farm (10), Redmere Farm (4+), Trumpington Clay Farm (4), Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen (2).

Great Crested Grebe *reported from:* Earith (3), Grafham Water (115+), Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm 2-4 all month and Redmere Farm.

Raptors

Red Kite Great Fen Project 11 on the 2nd, Redmere Farm on the 17th, Fowlmere NR on the 29th, Littleport May Farm 2-3 all month.

Marsh Harrier *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Chippenham Fen (2), Earith (2), Fen Drayton Lakes, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (12), Needingworth GP, Nene Washes (4), Portholme Meadow, Redmere Farm (10) and Wicken Fen (9).

Hen Harrier Wicken Fen a maximum of 3 males and a ringtail reported during the month, Littleport May Farm a female on the 14th - 26th and 30th, Nene Washes a ringtail on the 25th.

Buzzard *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Earith (4), Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project (4), Littleport May Farm (10+), Monk's Wood (3), Nene Washes (2), Redmere Farm (10+), Soham (3), Prior's Fen (2), Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen (4).

Rails and crane

Water Rail *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Littleport May Farm (10+), Needingworth GP, Redmere Farm (3) and Wicken Fen.

Coot Wimpole Park 12 on the 1st, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 72 on the 11th, Wicken Fen 47 on the 18th.

Moorhen Trumpington Clay Farm 14 on the 30th, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Common Crane Ouse Washes/Nene Washes groups of between 3 and 20 seen on a number of occasions during the month at one or other fenland sites for example 2 on Burwell Fen on the 30th.

Waders

Oystercatcher Fen Drayton Lakes on the 7th this bird was pursued by a peregrine but escaped by submerging in the water, Godmanchester GP on the 29th.

Golden Plover (*counts of 100 and more*) Earith 'a few hundred' on the 12th, Ouse Washes 500+ on the 14th, Nene Washes 5000 on several dates, Trumpington A10/A11 junction fields c450-500 from 20th - end of the month.

Lapwing (*counts 100 and over*) Cam Washes Upware 400+ on the 4th, Kingfishers Bridge c100 on the 4th, 260 on the 11th, Earith c3000 on the 12th, Nene Washes 8000 on the 14th, Tubney Fen 400 on the 16th, Redmere Farm 344 on the 23rd, Littleport May Farm 284 on the 25th, Burwell Fen c1000 on the 30th.

Black tailed Godwit Portholme Meadow 66 on the 1st, Earith on the 12th, Fen Drayton Lakes 32 on the 13th, Nene Washes 1371 on the 13th, 2400 on the 22nd.

Ruff Nene Washes 107 on the 14th, 168 on the 22nd, Needingworth GP on the 19th, Cam Washes 6 on the 28th.

Dunlin Earith 5 on the 12th, Nene Washes 36 on the 14th, 141 on the 22nd.

Green Sandpiper *reported from:* Cambridge Science Park, Cam Washes, Earith, Nene Washes (2) and Paxton Pits.

Redshank *reported from:* Grafham Water (10), Littleport May Farm (2), Needingworth GP (2), and Nene Washes (110).



Redshank at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith.

Jack Snipe Maxey GP 2 on the 1st, Paxton Pits on the 20th.

Woodcock Nene Washes on the 1st, Eversden Wood on the 1st, Soham 2 on the 6th, Ouse Washes on the 7th, Wicken Fen on the 7th, Fowlmere NR 2 on the 19th, one on the 31st, Redmere Farm on the 27th, Littleport May Farm up to 20 all month,

Snipe *reported from:* Barton, Fen Drayton Lakes (3), Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (100+), Redmere Farm (5) and Wicken Fen (3).

Gulls

Kittiwake Grafham Water an immature on the 31st.

Black-headed Gull (*counts of 100 and over*) Ely c350 in a shallow flood on the 25th, Wicken Fen c250 on the 25th, Burwell Fen c100 on the 7th, Littleport May Farm 200+ all month, Redmere Farm 100+ all month.

Mediterranean Gull Ouse Washes on the 14th.

Common Gull Fowlmere NR 50 flying over on the 14th, Littleport May Farm 7 on the 13th, 4 on the 25th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Redmere Farm 7 on the 7th and 34 on the 23rd, Littleport May Farm 24 on the 12th and 111 on the 25th.

Herring Gull Redmere Farm 2 on the 7th and 24 on the 23rd, Littleport May Farm 3 on the 13th, 42 on the 25th, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 18th, Great Fen Project on the 28th, Fowlmere NR 2 on the 31st.

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

Caspian Gull *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes and Milton/Cambridge Research Park.

Great Black-backed Gull Redmere Farm 2 on the 7th, Littleport May Farm 2 on the 12th and 3 on the 25th, Fowlmere NR a flyover on the 28th.

Doves, owls and Kingfisher

Stock Dove Earith 50 on the 12th, Landbeach 10 on the 21st, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Redmere Farm 20+ all month.

Woodpigeon Littleport May Farm 1000 all month, Redmere Farm 1000 all month.

Collared Dove Burwell Priory Farm c60 on the 18th, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month, Redmere Farm 20+ all month.

Barn Owl *reported from:* A14/M11 junction, Fowlmere NR, Godmanchester GP, Haslingfield, Littleport May Farm (8), Nene Washes, Redmere Farm (4), and Wicken Fen (4).

Little Owl *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Landbeach, Littleport May Farm and New Shardlow's Farm.

Tawny Owl *reported from:* Littleport May Farm (2).

Short-eared Owl *reported from:* Cam Washes Upware, Littleport May Farm (2), Nene Washes (7+),

Kingfisher *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (6), Redmere Farm (2), Wicken Fen and Wimpole Park.

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel Great Fen Project 8 on the 2nd, Littleport May Farm 15-20 all month.

Merlin Fowlmere NR on the 20th, Royston SW on the 28th, Great Fen Project on the 30th.

Peregrine Nene Washes on the 1st and 14th, Littleport May Farm a male on the 3rd and a female on the 25th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 6th and 7th, Redmere Farm a female on the 7th, Needingworth GP on the 19th, Cambridge on the 20th, Fowlmere NR a female flying over on the 30th.

Ring-necked Parakeet* Fowlmere NR on the 7th, Ouse Washes on the 14th. One (or more) reported from the Sawston area in November/December.

Corvids

Magpie Littleport May Farm 30+ all month.

Jackdaw Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Rook Cam Washes Upware c50 on the 6th, Littleport May Farm 500+ all month, Redmere Farm 100+ all month.

Carrion Crow Great Fen Project 51 on the 30th, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month, Redmere Farm 40+ all month.

Raven Eversden Wood on the 1st, Wimpole Park on the 2nd, a pair on the 14th, Littleport May Farm on the 3rd, Fowlmere NR on the 20th.

Crests, tits and larks

Firecrest Wimpole Park on the 14th.

Marsh Tit *reported from:* only Knapwell Wood.

S Skylark Great Fen Project 36 on the 22nd and 28th.

Warblers

Cetti's Warbler *reported from:* Fen Drayton Lakes (3), Fowlmere NR (2), Littleport May Farm (4), Prior's Fen, Redmere Farm (2) and Wicken Fen.

Chiffchaff Stirtloe SW 5 on the 7th, 2 on the 8th, Redmere Farm on the 13th, Barford Pocket Park on the 19th, Royston SW 3 on the 28th, Littleport May Farm 5-6 all month.

Siberian Chiffchaff Stirtloe SW from the 1st - 8th.

Blackcap Ramsey on the 14th, Great Shelford a male on the 19th - 20th, Waterbeach a male on the 26th, Orwell a male on the 27th, Cottenham a male and a female on the 27th, Littleport May Farm 2-4 all month.

A male in the Editor's garden was seen to be shovelling down sunflower seeds on the 19th. Strange I thought, for a bird that is essentially an insectivore/frugivore....BUT I have since discovered others have seen the same feeding phenomenon. Presumably this is how the wintering population have adapted to survive in the cold climate.

Nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Nuthatch *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP and Madingley Wood.

Starling (*counts over 100*) Fowlmere NR roost of 150 on the 1st, Needingworth GP 3000 into roost on the 1st, Kingfishers Bridge 215 on the 18th, Littleport May Farm up to 3000 all month, Redmere Farm 200+ all month.

Blackbird Littleport May Farm 50+ all month and 50+ at Redmere Farm.

Fieldfare (*counts of 100+*) Wimpole Park c300 on the 14th, Fowlmere NR 200 flying over on the 14th, Tubney Fen 125 mostly Fieldfares but Redwing as well, Kingfishers Bridge 140 on the 18th, Castor 170 on the 26th, Littleport May Farm 150+ most of the month maximum 300 on the 17th, Redmere Farm 150+ all month.

Redwing (*counts of 50+*) Wimpole Park c500 on the 14th.

Mistle Thrush Littleport May Farm 6-8 singing all month, Redmere Farm 2-4 all month.

Not regularly featured here but suggestions of a decline so perhaps all records will appear from now on.

Starts and chats

Stonechat *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Fen Drayton Lakes, Great Fen Project (2), Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (2), Nene Washes (2), Ouse Washes (2), Paxton Pits (2), Redmere Farm and Wicken Fen (3).

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

House Sparrow Kingfishers Bridge 39 on the 18th, Foxton 30-40 in an observer's garden on the 30th, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Redmere Farm 30+ all month.



Male House Sparrow in a private garden: photo by Phil Smith

Tree Sparrow Foxton 7 in an observer's garden, Littleport: May Farm 28+ all month, Redmere Farm 30+ all month.

From a number of different observers the recommended food source to entice Tree Sparrows to feeders seems to be red millet

Grey Wagtail *reported from:* Cambridge, Cherry Hinton, Littleport May Farm, Paxton Pits (2), Royston SW (2) and Stirtloe SW (3).

Pied Wagtail Stirtloe SW 100 on the 2nd, 80+ on the 7th, 30+ on the 8th, Royston SW 80 on the 28th, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month.

Meadow Pipit Stirtloe SW 22 on the 2nd, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Water Pipit Mare Fen 3 on the 6th, Earith 3 on the 12th, Royston SW on the 28th.

Finches and buntings

Chaffinch Great Fen Project 30 on the 2nd, Lark Rise Farm 40+ on the 14th, Littleport May Farm 300+ all month, Redmere Farm 100+ all month.

Brambling *reported from:* Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, Great Fen Project, Hare Park, Lark Rise Farm (10+), Littleport May Farm (22-56) and Shepreth.

Greenfinch Cambridge Science Park a roost of 60-70 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm 20+ most of the month but over 400 from the 25th.

Goldfinch Great Fen Project 40 on the 2nd, Burwell Fen 36 on the 28th, Fowlmere NR 35 on the 30th, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Redmere Farm 50+ all month.

Siskin *reported from:* Fowlmere NR (20), Great Abington, Great Fen Project (20) and Stirtloe SW (42).

Linnet Manea c1200 in a bird-seed mix crop on the 14th, Great Fen Project 175 on the 22nd, Fowlmere NR a roost of 32 on the 28th, Littleport May Farm 500 all month then 900 on the 9th, Redmere Farm 200+ all month.

Lesser Redpoll *reported from:* Cam Washes, Great Abington (5), Great Fen Project (70), Littleport May Farm (7), Stirtloe SW and Wicken Fen.

Mealy Redpoll Great Abington on the 24th.

Hawfinch Wimpole Park several records of up to 5 - maximum 14.

Yellowhammer Lark Rise Farm 10+ on the 14th, Tubney Fen 35 on the 16th, Littleport May Farm 12+ all month.

Corn Bunting Earith 19 on the 12th, Littleport May Farm 82 on the 14th and 101 on the 25th.

Reed Bunting Fowlmere NR c500 into roost on the 1st, 300+ on the 28th, Great Fen Project 82 on the 30th, Littleport May Farm 200+ all month, Redmere Farm 50+ all month.

Exotica

Black Swan Fen Drayton Lakes on the 6th.

Ross's Goose Cam Washes Upware on the 6th (not reported for some time but still with us).

Hybrids

Greylag/Barnacle Cam Washes Upware on the 6th.

Contributors:

Colin Addington, Richard Allison, Louise Bacon, David Barr, Peter Beckenham, Greg Belcher, Peter Bircham, Paul Bolton, Ian Burfield, Nigel Butcher, Howard Butler, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Martin Davis, Nina Dimitrova, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, David Ellis, Mike Everett, Tristan Fenton, Don Gardener, Ian Gordon, Richard Gregory, Ben Greig, Richard Grimmatt, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Vicki Harley, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Michael Holdsworth, Pete Holt, John Hoppett, Bob Humphries, Terry Jones, Charlie Kitchin, Marcus Kohler, Nick Laughton, Stella Laughton, Vince Lea, Bruce Martin, Tony Martin, Andy Massey, Dave McCarthy, Duncan McNiven, Matt Mellor, Steve Mumford, Martin O'Leary, Richard Patient, Jenny and Pam Peacock, Mark Peck, Gary Rawlings, Petru Rednic, Chris Rider, Sacha Riley-Smith, John Roote, Norman Sills, Bill Simmonds, Henry Stanier, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Keith Tinworth, Erica Towner, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, John Wells, Sue Wells, Kevin Wilson, David Withrington, Patrick Woods, Hugh Wright and Christoph Zöckler.

The 2018 E-bulletin list

Add Sparrowhawk, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Goldcrest, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Treecreeper, Wren, Song Thrush, Robin, Dunnock and Bullfinch brings the starting total to **125** (not including exotics) down 12 compared to January 2017, a slow start.

WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for January 2017

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 6 different days in January. The month's ringing total was 86; a further 162 different birds were retrapped, so the overall total for the month was 248.

Individual species totals (the first figure new birds, the second retraps) were:

Woodpigeon	1, 0	Robin	2, 10
Great Spot Woodpecker	0, 1	Dunnock	2, 4
Goldcrest	2, 3	Treecreeper	0, 1
Blue Tit	13, 56	House Sparrow	4, 6
Great Tit	5, 43	Chaffinch	4, 1
Jay	0, 1	Goldfinch	3, 0
Cetti's Warbler	1, 3	Lesser Redpoll	22, 3
Long-tailed Tit	1, 9	Bullfinch	1, 2
Chiffchaff	0, 2	Yellowhammer	4, 0
Wren	6, 7	Reed Bunting	12, 4
Blackbird	3, 6		

Old birds retrapped during the month were: Jay at 7y 9m, Great Spotted woodpecker at 6y 2m (a Wicken record), Reed Bunting at 4y 11m, Blue Tit and Long-tailed Tit both at 3y 4m.

Next indoor meetings:

March 9th at St John's Church Hall Hills Road. Annual General Meeting followed by..

- **Birds in the ancient world: winged words by Jeremy Mynott**

Birds pervaded the ancient world. They impressed their physical presence on the daily experience and imaginations of ordinary people in town and country alike, and figure prominently in their literature and art. They also provided a fertile source of symbols and stories in their myths and folklore and were central to the ancient rituals of augury and divination. Jeremy Mynott's new book, *Birds in the Ancient World: winged words*, brings together all this rich and fascinating material in translation for the modern reader, using birds as a prism through which to explore both the similarities and the often surprising differences between ancient conceptions of the natural world and our own.

Jeremy is the author of *Birdscapes: Birds in Our Imagination and Experience* (2009), a book exploring the variety of human responses to birds, described by reviewers as 'the finest book ever written about why we watch birds' (Guardian) and 'a wonderful rumination on birds and birders through space and time for anyone interested in our relationship with nature' (THES). More recently, he published *Knowing your Place*, an account of the wildlife in a tiny Suffolk coastal hamlet. He has broadcast on radio and television, is a regular reviewer for the TLS and wildlife magazines, a founder member of 'New Networks for Nature', and is the former Chief Executive of Cambridge University Press.

. CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB

The 2018 Annual General Meeting will be held at St. John's Church Hall, Hills Road, Cambridge at 7.45 pm on Friday 9 March 2018

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2017 AGM
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Annual Report of Council for 2017
5. Financial Statements

The Financial Statements are available in advance of the meeting on the Club website, or on application to treasurer@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk

6. Election of President and Vice-Presidents

Council's nominations are:

President: Robin Cox.

Vice-Presidents: James Cadbury, Graham Easy, Colin Kirtland, Rita Lingard, Bruce Martin

7. Election of Council

Council's nominations are:

Chairman: Vince Lea; Secretary: Michael Holdsworth; Treasurer: Roger Swain; County Recorder: Louise Bacon; Annual Report Editor: Vince Lea; Bulletin Editors: Peter Bircham and Chris Brown; Meetings Secretary: Vicki Harley; Website Officer: Chris Quy; Membership Secretary: Clive Sinclair; Research Officer: Robert Brown; other Council members: Mike Foley, Rob Pople.

8. Election of Auditor

Council proposes the re-election of Kevin Harris as Auditor.

9. Photograph of the Year award

10. Any other business

Members wishing to raise matters under AOB should notify chairman@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk at least two days before the meeting.

Michael Holdsworth

Further details can be found on the Club's website.

Club Research in 2017 -18

Last year we launched two research projects. The first started in spring and was a survey of Sand Martins. The second lasted just a single day and targeted Raptors. Results for Sand Martins were a little thin but the response for Raptors was excellent - perhaps our membership is red in beak and claw! Initial findings are set out below but I will carry out further analyses and will report again.

Raptor Survey 16th September 2017

The southern part of the county was well covered, northern and Fenland areas less so. The weather on the day was not the best. It was windy, chilly and there were some heavy showers. This effected Raptor behaviour and several observers reported that they would have expected to see more on a better day. The species seen were perhaps predictable but were none the less pleasing.

The Common Buzzard was the species most often recorded. This might be something to do with its behaviour. It is easy to see as it soars and it is often fairly vocal. Several observations could well have related to family groups. The results give hard evidence of the spread of Buzzards in the last couple of decades, something that seems to be increasingly controversial.

The same applies to the Red Kite. There were fewer observations in the south than I would have expected. In my part of the county - the North West - it is the most frequently seen bird of prey, with the Buzzard second. Again, behaviour may have something to do with this. Buzzards seem to be willing to soar even in poor weather conditions.

I was surprised and delighted that Kestrels were recorded by several observers throughout the county. Some Hobbies were still present and it was pleasing that a good number of Sparrowhawks were seen. One (extremely lucky - I'm envious) observer saw a Peregrine which interacted briefly with a family of five Buzzards. It goes to show that you don't have to spend air miles going to Patagonia or wherever: fascinating birds are just a short cycle or walk away.

The heartening aspect of the day was that it demonstrated that we have a healthy range of Raptors in the county, a welcome contrast with the situation 50 years ago. Yet there are threats apparent. I am frequently told that there are "too many" Kites; that their reintroduction is "interfering with nature". We need to keep the situation monitored and with this in mind..... read on!

Sand Martins

I had far fewer responses for the Sand Martin Survey. That said the Nene Park Trust has given me access to some impressive ringing work. I hope to be able to link this with surveys elsewhere and produce some meaningful results.

Part of the problem is that colonies of Sand Martins are naturally ephemeral. Many of the sites they choose are on unstable land. It has also been said that parasites build up in the nest to such an extent that after a few years the site becomes untenable. My own experience reflected the short term aspects of the colonies. The site at Town Bridge Peterborough has now been abandoned, probably because it is next to a major redevelopment. A report was received that there was a colony of 40 birds in the quarry east of the Bedford Purlieu forest. I visited in late July and saw some superb Silverwashed and Dark Green Fritillaries but no Martins. I also failed to find the colony at Kings Dyke I saw plenty of birds feeding but could not find the nests - very frustrating!

Projects for 2018

Yes, here comes the call for **volunteers**.

Let's start with the Raptor survey. This was a success in 2017 and I would like to thank all those who took part. What also gave me a nice warm glow was that so many observers seemed to enjoy the experience. And so we should. After centuries of decline we can now see these spectacular birds on our doorsteps.

I would like to repeat the survey on a regular twice yearly basis starting on Saturday 24th March 2018. The method should be as per last year namely pick a promising location; select an hour of the day; record all the Raptors you see, noting if possible

- The location including a grid reference.
- The number and species of Raptors seen.
- The gender and age if possible.
- The birds' behaviour.
- Weather conditions
- The time of your selected hour.

There's one caveat to this. It is possible you might see a nest, or breeding behaviour at this time of year and if you do please keep the details confidential and send them to the County Recorder.

Sand Martins

I would like to repeat the 2017 survey. I hope the Nene Park Trust will share their ringing results and I am hoping for a few more reports from elsewhere in the county. So if you spot a Sand Martin colony could you report using the Raptor check list above plus

- The date.
- The number of nests.
- The nature of the ground the colony was in - "active sand quarry" or such.

In addition, if any of you have any additional information for last year, 2017, could you forward it to me? It may be a link to another source. I'm particularly interested in the colonies at Sutton North Fen, Kingfishers Bridge and the elusive Kings Dyke.

Grey Wagtails

New for 2018!

This is an ambitious project that seeks to make use of the number and skills of the observers we have in CBC. First the methodology before I move on to the raison d'être.

There are two aspects to the methodology. The first relates to the breeding season. The Wagtails need steep banks to nest in. They also favour fast moving water, ideally fringed by deciduous trees. In Cambridgeshire, this in the main, restricts them to locks and weirs. So, do you have a lock or a weir near you that you could survey over the breeding season? Ideally, it would be helpful if you could visit the site every three weeks or so but more or less frequent visits would still be

valuable. It's a matter of trying to get a picture of where the birds are breeding in 2018. The check list is

- The location with a grid reference.
- The type of habitat
- The date and time of your visit.
- The weather conditions.
- The number of birds present.
- If possible the age and gender of the birds.
- Their behaviour.
- Any evidence of breeding or attempted breeding.

Wagtails have a long breeding season, lasting from late March to the end of August so this phase of the survey covers the period from 17/3/18 to 1/9/18. Are you up for this? I know it sounds a lot but, come on, it will just add a bit of zest to a nice walk by the river.

If it does appeal to you could you let me know which locks or weirs you would like to survey and could you do this by 10/3/18? I have some volunteers for the Nene so far (and a press gang out for a couple of others) but nobody at present for the south. The chalk streams in this area might also be of interest.

The second aspect of the survey is more casual. Grey Wagtails appear to be both long and short range migrants. They seem to leave the breeding sites in autumn and disperse. But none of the authorities seem entirely clear on this. The range of habitats mentioned as "suitable" is vague. I for one saw a juvenile Wagtail apparently happily living for several weeks alongside a minor road with very little water at all. Hence, it would be interesting to see where they are in Cambridgeshire outside the breeding season. So, if you see a Grey Wagtail between 2/9/18 and 31/3/19 could you report it?

Why are Grey Wagtails of specific interest? It's to do with their range and distribution which has fluctuated and is enigmatic. John Clare wrote of "little trotty wagtail" (perhaps not his best line) but he would not have been seeing Greys. Until the middle of the 19th century they were mainly confined to upland areas with fast flowing streams. About then they began to expand their range north and west in Europe and to the east in Britain. The first confirmed breeding in Cambridgeshire was in 1935 and in Huntingdonshire in 1955. I never used to see them along the Nene in the 1960s. This changed in the 1990s and I suspected they were breeding in several areas. Since then, they seem to have retreated but this is all subjective and hence the need for a survey.

The contact address is Research@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk

AND.....Continuing Spotted Flycatchers (Michael Holdsworth)

We will continue this project for its third season in 2018. Cambridgeshire (with Devon) has been piloting ground-breaking geolocator research with the BTO and this will also continue, subject to funding.

Quite simply, we need EVERY record of SpotFlys in the county, from arrival in mid-May to departure. There are more details on the Club's Research web-pages

Reports of Wiffwaffs wanted (Tony Fulford)

I am extremely grateful for members helping me locate Wiffwaffs in the county last year. These allowed a rigorously designed playback study that yielded very clear-cut results: 30% of normal WILWAs but 100% of Wiffwaffs respond to Chiffchaff song; Chiffchaffs rarely respond to WILWA song but always recognise the Chiffchaff elements of Wiffwaff song.

I plan to follow this up with further studies this year. I am once again putting out the call for reports of mixed-singing Willow Warblers, especially those that include Chiffchaff notes in their song. Last year, with the help of members' reports, I found and recorded the songs of 15 mixed singing males in the county, mostly in the Cambridge area. These were sufficient to carry out a very informative playback study. This year I plan further studies designed to home in further on the reasons why some members of this species do this.

So please listen out for any off-sounding Willow Warbler or overly fast Chiffchaff song - it may turn out to be a mixed singer. I would again be extremely grateful to receive reports of such birds heard this spring: please send details of where and when as soon as you can to tonyfulford@gmail.com (or tel 0774 666 5195).

Free to a good home....

Bob Humphrey is disposing of his old Cambridge Bird Club annual reports, these are for 1963, 1967 and every year 1972 to 2014. They are free to anyone who would like any or all of these. Contact Bob on 01223 863454.

2017 Records.....

And finally, please send in any records for 2017 as soon as possible - the official final date was January 31st but there is just about time for late entries. If you want your records to be incorporated into the Annual Report, now is the final chance.

Next issue March 10th, all contributions to reach me by the 4th please.

PMMB.