

Cambridgeshire Bird Club

E-Bulletin 56 February 2018



Teal and Great Crested Grebes on Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith.

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

HEADLINES

AMERICAN WIGEON* Nene Washes (March Farmers) a drake on the 11th - 18th.

RING-NECKED DUCK* Ouse Washes (Chain Corner) a drake on the 18th-24th.

ICELAND GULL Grafham Water an immature on the 4th, 2 C.Y. on the 14th, Cottenham Long Drove/Cambridge Research Park a 2 C.Y. on several dates, Nene Washes (March Farmers) a 2.c.y. on the 11th came in to roost, Ouse Washes a 3 C.Y. on the 18th.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD* Thorney on the 10th, Nene Washes on the 17th.

GOSHAWK* Temple Farm Redmere on the 25th.

WILLOW TIT* Temple Farm Redmere 2 on the 27th.

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 week or so was a continuation of the winter's pattern, days of cool, cold, wet and dull, a short spell of (relatively) milder weather in the middle of the month gave way to a very cold spell to end. Overall another rather dull and wet month with a real sting in its tail.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan Littleport May Farm 10-20 all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 10-12 all month.

Bewick's Swan Littleport May Farm 12 on the 2nd, Nene Washes (March Farmers) 150 on the 11th, 9 on the 17th, 111 on the 19th, c140 on the 23rd, Earith on the 23rd, (see below for a status summary).

Whooper Swan Littleport May Farm 50-70 all month maximum 147 on the 2nd, Kingfishers Bridge 7 on the 4th, Ferry Meadows CP 9 flying over on the 4th, Wicken Fen 12 (going to roost at Burwell Fen) on the 7th, one on the 8th, Ouse Washes several counts maximum (Fortrey Hall) c1000 on the 18th, Nene Washes c240 on the 17th, 80 on the 23rd, Littleport Redmere Farm maximum 83 on the 25th.

Winter swans began to come here annually in the late 1940s, until then they had been occasional and never in great numbers. Even then, for example fifty years ago in 1968, the maximum number of Whoopers was 19.

This began to change in the 1970s and by the mid-1980s Bewick's came in thousands, Whoopers still only in hundreds. In February 1997 for example the count of Bewick's on both washes combined was 1881 and of Whoopers just 85.

By 2008, just ten years ago, Bewick's numbers were still much the same at 1749 yet Whoopers had gone up markedly to 2219.

So, while Whooper numbers have stayed at levels of ten years ago Bewick's have declined. Is this a population decline or do they go elsewhere?

Bean Goose Colne Fen one (tundra) with Whitefronts on the 18th, Nene Washes 5 on the 25th.

Pink-footed Goose Nene Washes on the 25th.

White-fronted Goose Fen Drayton Lakes 26 *rossicus* on the 3rd - 4th, Colne Fen GP 4 on the 18th, Ouse Washes (Fortrey Hall) 22 on the 18th, 4 on the 24th, Cam Washes and Swaffham Prior Fen on the 25th.

Greylag Goose Kingfishers Bridge maximum 393 on the 11th, Wicken Fen maximum 77 on the 7th, Holme Fen 175 on the 18th, Ouse Washes (Earith-Sutton) 170 on the 23rd.

Canada Goose (*counts of 20+*) Kingfishers Bridge maximum 180 on the 15th, Holme Fen 26 on the 18th.

Barnacle Goose Sutton North Fen 23 on the 18th.

Egyptian Goose Kingfishers Bridge maximum 8 on the 11th, Littleport Redmere Farm 2 on the 19th, Littleport May Farm 2 all month,

Shelduck Paxton Pits 2 on the 4th, Kingfishers Bridge on the 11th and 2 on the 15th, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 12th, Wicken Fen maximum 2 on the 18th, Littleport Redmere Farm 2 on the 19th, Littleport May Farm 2 on the 21st, Burwell Fen maximum 13 on the 24th, Nene Washes on the 24th, Ferry Meadows CP (hard weather movement) one on the 28th.

Mandarin Wimpole Park reported by several observers - at least 7, Eye Knott Hole on the 17th, Littleport May Farm a male on the 22nd.

Wigeon (*counts 50 plus*) Kingfishers Bridge maximum 153 on the 11th, Holme Fen 72 on the 18th, Wicken Fen maximum c50 on the 18th, Nene Washes 11414 on the 19th, Burwell Fen c260 on the 24th, CEGB Reservoir Peterborough 100 on the 24th.

Gadwall Wicken Fen maximum 43 on the 7th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 26 on the 8th, Holme Fen 96 on the 18th, Nene Washes 157 on the 19th.

Teal (*counts 20 plus*) Woodwalton Fen 120 on the 6th, Wicken Fen maximum 58 on the 7th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 109 on the 15th, Burwell Fen maximum 67 on the 15th, Littleport May Farm maximum 263 on the 15th, Holme Fen 48 on the 17th, Littleport Redmere Farm 21 on the 19th, Fowlmere NR 40 on the 25th.

Mallard Wicken Fen maximum 48 on the 7th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 58 on the 8th, Holme Fen 62 on the 18th, Burwell Fen maximum 33 on the 24th, Littleport May Farm 500+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 200+ all month.

Pintail Paxton Pits 5 on the 4th, Nene Washes (March Farmers) c1000 on the 11th, 1047 on the 19th, Wicken Fen 3 on the 11th, one on the 17th, and 18th and 3 on the 22nd, Fowlmere NR 2 on the 23rd.

Shoveler Fen Drayton Lakes 50 on the 12th, Needingworth GP 6 on the 12th, Burwell Fen maximum 25 on the 15th, Kingfishers Bridge maximum 26 on the 15th, Wicken Fen maximum 65 on the 18th, Nene Washes 281 on the 19th.

Pochard Littleport Redmere Farm 12 on the 2nd, Ouse Washes 220 on the 11th, 65 on the 24th, Kingfishers Bridge 3 on the 11th, Needingworth GP 3 on the 12th, Littleport May Farm 6-8 all month.

Tufted Duck (*counts 20 or over*) Littleport Redmere Farm maximum 43 on the 2nd, Ouse Washes 200+ on the 11th, 70 on the 24th, Kingfishers Bridge 21 on the 11th, Holme Fen 83 on the 17th, Littleport May Farm 20+ all month.

Scaup St. Ives GP an adult drake on the 3rd and 4th, Grafham Water a drake on the 4th, a pair on the 14th, Milton CP a female on the 21st until the end of the month, Ouse Washes a drake on the 21st and 25th.



Scaup female at Milton CP: photo by Jonathan Heath.

Goldeneye Holme Fen 3 on the 6th, Grafham Water 61 on the 4th, 209 on the 25th, Ouse Washes 2 on the 11th, Needingworth GP 3 on the 12th, Bainton GP 6 on the 19th.

Smew St. Ives GP 3 redheads on the 3rd, 2 on the 11th, a drake and a female on the 25th, Needingworth GP 12 on the 4th, 2 redheads on the 12th, 4 on the 25th, Colne Fen GP a redhead on the 18th, Bainton GP a redhead on the 19th.

Goosander Grafham Water 6 on the 4th, 8 on the 8th, 14 on the 14th, Burwell Fen on the 5th, Little Shelford 2 on the river on the 25th.

Gamebirds

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

Grey Partridge Littleport May Farm up to 70 all month.

Pheasant Kingfishers Bridge 28 on the 4th, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 50+ all month.

Cormorants

Cormorant *reported from:* Burwell Fen (6), Great Fen Project (2), Holme Fen (22), Kingfishers Bridge (19), Littleport May Farm (8), Littleport Redmere Farm (4), Trumpington Clay Farm and Wimpole Park (4).

Egrets and herons

Bittern *reported from:* Nene Washes and Woodwalton Fen.

Little Egret *reported from:* Burwell Fen, Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, Great Fen Project (4), Holme Fen, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (6), Nene Washes (37 in a roost), Ouse Washes (Earith-Sutton)(3), Littleport Redmere Farm (2) and Wicken Fen (6).



Little Egret at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith.

Great White Egret Littleport May Farm 1st - 26th, Littleport Redmere Farm on the 2nd, Nene Washes on the 18th and at Eastrea a flyover on the 18th; in both cases (May Farm/Redmere and Nene/Eastrea) these were likely to be the same individuals so just two birds involved.

Grey Heron Littleport May Farm 8+ all month.

Grebes

Little Grebe *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR (4), Holme Fen (13), Kingfishers Bridge (5), Littleport May Farm (10+), Littleport Redmere Farm (4) and Trumpington Clay Farm.

Great Crested Grebe *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP, Grafham Water (5), Kingfishers Bridge (4), Littleport May Farm (2) and Littleport Redmere Farm (2).

Raptors

Red Kite *reported from:* Chittering, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water (4), Great Fen Project (15), Great Shelford, Hemingford Grey, Littleport May Farm (3), Paxton Pits (2), Royston SW, Soham, Stirtloe SW (2), Weston Colville (2) and Wicken Fen.

Marsh Harrier *reported from:* Cam Washes (2), Dogthorpe Star Pit (2 into roost), Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project (10), Kingfishers Bridge (3), Littleport May Farm (12), Nene Washes (March Farmers) (5), Ouse Washes, Littleport Redmere Farm (12), Wicken Fen (5) and Wryde Wind Farm.

Hen Harrier Wicken Fen maximum 3 males and 2 ringtails in the roost, Burwell Fen a male on the 11th, Littleport May Farm a female 1st - 23rd.

Buzzard *reported from:* Great Fen Project (13), Haddenham/Aldreth Fens (5), Haslingfield (2), Hemingford Grey (3), Holme Fen (2), Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (10), Pampisford, Littleport Redmere Farm (10), Royston SW (2), Six Mile Bottom, Weston Colville (12), Wicken Fen (3) and Wryde Wind Farm (10).

Rails and crane

Water Rail *reported from:* Bainton GP, Kingfishers Bridge, Linton, Littleport May Farm 10+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm (2), Trumpington Clay Farm (2) and Wicken Fen (3).

Moorhen (*counts of 10 plus*) Kingfishers Bridge 15 on the 4th, Wimpole Park 22 on the 18th, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Coot Kingfishers Bridge maximum 102 on the 15th, Holme Fen 37 on the 18th, Wicken Fen maximum 56 on the 18th, Burwell Fen maximum 116 on the 24th.

Common Crane Wicken Fen 2 on 1st - 2nd and one on the 18th, Manea 8 on the 1st, Eldernell 12 on the 3rd, Woodwalton Fen 2 flying over on 6th, 7th and 23rd, Ouse Washes 2 on the 11th, Nene Washes 7-19 on several dates, highest count: 24 on the 17th.

Waders

Oystercatcher Paxton Pits on the 4th, Colne Fen GP on the 18th, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 11th, Ouse Washes (Earith-Sutton) on the 23rd, Cam Washes on the 25th.

Ringed Plover Ouse Washes (Chain Corner) on the 20th - first of the year, Ouse Washes (Earith-Sutton) 3 on the 23rd.

Golden Plover (*counts of 100 and more*) nr Ely BF 1000+ on the 1st, Nene Washes (March Farmers) 3000+ on the 11th, 8177 on the 19th, Littleport May Farm maximum 284 on the 15th, Fowlmere 100 on the 23rd.

Lapwing (*counts 100 and over*) Kingfishers Bridge 185 on the 4th, and 364 on the 11th, Littleport May Farm maximum 505 on the 15th, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 1000 on the 18th, Nene Washes maximum 12719 on the 19th, Littleport Redmere Farm maximum 1000 on the 27th, Ferry Meadows CP (hard weather movement) 633 on the 28th.

Curlew Nene Washes on the 24th.

Black tailed Godwit Nene Washes 1000-2000 on several dates maximum 3124 on the 19th, Ouse Washes 1500 on the 24th.

Ruff Kingfishers Bridge 14 on the 4th, Wicken Fen 8 on the 10th, Ouse Washes (Chain Corner) 8 on the 18th, 20 on the 24th, Nene Washes 114 on the 19th, Ferry Meadows CP (hard weather movement) one on the 28th.

Dunlin Ouse Washes (Chain Corner) 14 on the 18th, (Earith-Sutton) 35 on the 23rd, Nene Washes 104 on the 19th.

Green Sandpiper *reported from:* Cam Washes (2), Colne Fen GP, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens (3), Kingfishers Bridge (2), Ouse Washes (Earith-Sutton), Stretham and Wryde Wind Farm.

Redshank *reported from:* Bainton GP, Grafham Water (10), Littleport May Farm (2), Nene Washes (13), Ouse Washes (Earith-Sutton) (25), Stretham (2) and Wryde Wind Farm.

Jack Snipe Maxey GP 2 on the 1st, Paxton Pits on the 20th, Nene Washes on the 17th.

Woodcock Wicken Fen on the 3rd and the 8th, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 4th, one on the 11th, Kneesworth on the 5th, Colne Fen GP on the 18th, Wennington and Holland Woods 9 on the 18th, Bourn Brook on the 21st, Fowlmere NR on the 23rd, Barton on the 28th, Orton on the 28th, Littleport May Farm c20 all month, Littleport Redmere Farm up to 2 all month.

Snipe reported from: Ferry Meadows CP (hard weather movement) 23 on the 28th, Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project (2), Kingfishers Bridge (2), Kneesworth (22), Littleport May Farm (100+), Paxton Pits, Littleport Redmere Farm (5), Trumpington Clay Farm and Wicken Fen (7).



Snipe in a Barrington garden: photo by Diana Leech.

Gulls

Black-headed Gull Kingfishers Bridge maximum 223 on the 4th, Wicken Fen c1400 on the 7th and c1000 on the 18th, Ely c150 in a shallow flooded field on the 20th, CEGB Reservoir Peterborough 4500 on the 24th, Littleport May Farm 200 all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 100+ all month.

Mediterranean Gull Grafham Water a 2 c.y. on the 14th, Wimpole Park an adult on the 18th, Melbourn an adult with common gulls following the plough.

Common Gull Littleport Redmere Farm 14 on the 2nd and 9 on the 19th, Kingfishers Bridge 8 on the 11th, Littleport May Farm 8 on the 2nd, 5 on the 20th and 7 on the 25th, one at Milton CP on the 28th was carrying a Norwegian ring.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Littleport Redmere Farm 131 on the 2nd, 73 on the 19th and 47 on the 27th, Wicken Fen 15 on the 18th, Burwell Fen 6 on the 24th, Littleport May Farm 86 on the 2nd, 75 on the 15th and 142 on the 23rd.

Herring Gull Littleport Redmere Farm 43 on the 2nd, Kingfishers Bridge on 11th, Wicken Fen 3 on the 18th, Burwell Fen 12 on the 24th, Littleport May Farm 47 on the 2nd and 97 on the 23rd.

Yellow-legged Gull *reported from:* Grafham Water (3).

Caspian Gull *reported from:* Grafham Water, Cottenham Long Drove and Milton CP (2).

A 3 c.y. bird at Milton carried a darvic ring - this bird had been ringed as a pullus at Jerzioro Wytyckie POLAND in summer 2016, seen at Beddington SF later that year and on the Netherlands coast in May 2017.

Great Black-backed Gull Littleport Redmere Farm 3 on the 2nd, Kingfishers Bridge 9 on the 4th and 6 on the 11th, Littleport May Farm 2 on the 2nd and 5 on the 23rd.

Doves, owls and Kingfisher

Stock Dove Great Fen Project up to 1000+ on several dates, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 20+ all month.

Woodpigeon Kingfishers Bridge 516 on the 4th, Weston Colville 'thousands' feeding on rape on the 6th, near Pampisford c1000 on oilseed rape on the 15th, Littleport May Farm 1000 all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 1000 all month.

Collared Dove Littleport May Farm 100 all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 20+ all month.

Barn Owl *reported from:* Bainton GP, Burwell Fen (2), Eldernell (4), Fowlmere NR (2), Great Fen Project (3), Kingfishers Bridge (2), King's Delph, Littleport May Farm (8), Littleport Redmere Farm (4) and Wicken Fen (2).

Little Owl *reported from:* Littleport May Farm (4) and Wimpole Park.

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

Short-eared Owl *reported from:* Eldernell (6), Great Fen Project (2) and Littleport May Farm (2).

Kingfisher *reported from:* Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (6), Littleport Redmere Farm (2), Wimpole Park and Woodwalton Fen.

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel (*counts of 10 plus*) Great Fen Project (10), Littleport May Farm up to 20 all month.

Merlin Fowlmere NR on the 5th, Great Fen Project on the 6th, 7th, 14th, and 24th, Wicken Fen on the 7th, 11th and 17th, Kingfishers Bridge a female on the 11th, Barton on the 21st.

Peregrine Fen Drayton Lakes on the 4th, Great Fen Project on the 6th, 7th, 14th and 24th, Wicken Fen on the 7th, 11th and 21st, Ouse Washes a female on the 11th, Littleport May Farm a female on the 15th and 22nd, Sutton North Fen on the 18th, Cambridge on the 21st, Nene Washes on the 23rd, Ferry Meadows CP hard weather movement one on the 28th.

Corvids

Magpie Kingfishers Bridge 10 on the 4th, Littleport May Farm 30+ all month.

Jackdaw/Rook Wicken Fen mixed roost of 1000+ on the 12th, Great Fen Project mixed corvid flock of 1000 on 23rd,

Jackdaw Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Rook Littleport May Farm 500+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 100+ all month.

Carrion Crow Kingfishers Bridge 35 on the 11th, Great Fen Project 14 on the 17th, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 40+ all month.

Raven (*most, but not all, reports are of birds flying over*) Wimpole Park several reports of 2 flying over and around, Fen Drayton Lakes on the 4th, Weston Colville on the 6th, Histon 2 on the 9th, Six Mile Bottom on the 18th.

Crests, tits and larks

Firecrest Wicken Fen on JANUARY 5th - *inadvertently missed out last month.*

Marsh Tit *reported from:* Holme Fen.

Bearded Tit *reported from:* Wicken Fen (2).

Skylark Great Fen 23 on the 18th, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Warblers

Cetti's Warbler *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP, Fowlmere NR, Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (4), Nene Washes (5), Overcote Lane SW, Littleport Redmere Farm and Wicken Fen.



Cetti's Warbler at Wicken Fen: photo by Garth Peacock

Chiffchaff Royston SW on the 5th, Needingworth GP 2 on the 12th, Wicken Fen on the 12th, Earith on the 23rd and 24th, Overcote Lane SW 5 on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 5-6 all month. One ringed at Wicken Fen on July 15th 2017 as a young bird was caught by a ringer in Seville, Spain in October.

Siberian Chiffchaff Stirtloe SW still present from the 1st until at least the 16th, Ely SW on the 2nd, Royston SW on the 5th.

Blackcap *reported from:* Haddenham (male), Haslingfield (male) and Littleport May Farm 2-4 all month.

Nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Nuthatch *reported from:* Chippenham Fen (2), Madingley Hall (2), and Wimpole Park,

Starling (*counts over 100*) Kingfishers Bridge 298 on the 4th, 450 on the 8th, 491 on the 11th and 256 on the 15th, Wicken Fen c150 on the 7th, Ouse Washes (Earith-Sutton) 300 on the 24th, Littleport May Farm up to 3000 all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 200+ all month.

Blackbird (*counts over 20*) Kingfishers Bridge 21 on the 4th, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 50+ all month.

Fieldfare (*counts over 50*) Kingfishers Bridge 207 on the 4th, 585 on the 11th and 105 on the 15th, Wicken Fen 51 on the 7th, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 100+ on the 18th, Ouse Washes (Earith-Sutton) 100+ with Redwings on the 24th, Ferry Meadows CP hard weather movement 471 on the 28th, Littleport May Farm 150 all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 150+ all month.

Song Thrush Kingfishers Bridge 12 on the 4th.

Redwing Kingfishers Bridge 30 on the 4th, 42 on the 11th,

Mistle Thrush *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP, Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (6-8), Littleport Redmere Farm (4) and Wimpole Park.

Stonechat

Stonechat *reported from:* Bainton GP, Burwell Fen, Ferry Meadows CP (3), Great Fen Project (4), Kingfishers Bridge (5), Littleport May Farm (pair), Nene Washes (2), Ouse Washes (Earith-Sutton) (3) and Wicken Fen (pair).

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

House Sparrow Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 30+ all month.

Tree Sparrow Littleport May Farm 30+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 30+ all month.

Grey Wagtail *reported from:* Cherry Hinton, Ferry Meadows CP, Overcote Lane SW, Royston SW (3) and Stirtloe SW.

Pied Wagtail Royston SW 80+ on the 5th and 10th, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 20+ all month.

Meadow Pipit Littleport May Farm 100+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 20+ all month.

Water Pipit Kingfishers Bridge on the 4th, Stretham 4 on the 4th, 5 on the 18th, Chain Corner on the 4th and 18th, Royston SW on the 5th and 10th, Ouse Washes 4 on the 21st, 5 on the 25th.

Finches and buntings

Chaffinch Littleport May Farm 300+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 100+ all month.



Chaffinch at Fowlmere NR : photo by Bob Steed.

Brambling *reported from:* Barrington, Cottenham, Grafham Water, Hare Park, Lark Rise Farm, Littleport May Farm maximum 52 and Wimpole Park.

Greenfinch Littleport May Farm 250+ all month.

Goldfinch Kingfishers Bridge 36 on the 4th, 27 on the 11th, Great Fen Project 100+ on the 14th, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 50+ all month.

Siskin Wicken Fen on the 1st, Great Fen Project, 20 on the 7th, Chippenham Fen a vocal group of 90+ passed through the treetops on the 14th, Haddenham 2 on the 23rd, Fowlmere NR present most of the month maximum 12 on the 23rd,

Linnet Great Fen Project several hundred reported all month maximum 1000+ on the 14th, Stonea 200 on the 8th, Littleport May Farm up to 500 all month maximum 1000+ on the 2nd, Littleport Redmere Farm 200+ all month.

Lesser Redpoll *reported from:* Ferry Meadows CP (7), Great Fen Project (70) and Wicken Fen (22).

Common (Mealy) Redpoll Great Shelford 3 males on the 23rd and a single male on the 25th.

Hawfinch Wimpole Park present all month up to 16 reported, Madingley Hall 8 on the 10th, 4-5 on the 22nd.

Yellowhammer Burwell Fen 75 on the 7th, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 12+ on the 18th, Littleport May Farm 2-4 all month.

Corn Bunting Ouse Washes (Eaith-Sutton) 30 on the 24th, Fowlmere NR 13 on the 28th, Littleport May Farm 70-112 all month.

Reed Bunting Fowlmere NR a roost of 420 on the 9th, Littleport May Farm 200+ all month, Littleport Redmere Farm 50+ all month.

Exotica

Harris Hawk Barton long stay individual.

The 2018 E-bulletin list

Add the Firecrest from January brings the starting total to **126** down 11 compared to January 2017. This month's new species are: Bean Goose, Pink-footed Goose, White-fronted Goose, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Goshawk, Ringed Plover, Willow Tit and Common Redpoll making a total of **135** compared with 141 in 2017.

Contributors:

Colin Addington, Jill and Jeremy Aldred, Louise Bacon, Ian Barton, Andy Bayes, Peter Bircham, Alan Brimmell, Richard Broughton, Philip Bubbs, Howard Butler, Josh Carter, Pete Cook, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Paul Craske, Martin Davis, Tim Dee, Ian Dickerson, Sheila Dickerson, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, David Ellis, Mike Everett, Don Gardener, Simon Gillings, Ian Gordon, Mike Crosby, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Dean Harlow, Ron Harold, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Michael Holdsworth, John Hoppett, Mark Jackson, Richard Johnson, Charlie Kitchin, Ann Knowles, Mike Knowles, Nick Laughton, Stella Laughton, Vince Lea, Diana Leech, Jeremy Lindsell, Owen and Monica Marks, Bruce Martin, Matt Mellor, Steve Mumford, Martin O'Leary, Richard Patient, Paul Pateman, Pam Peacock,, Norman Ratcliffe, Petru Rednic, Graeme Reed, Gareth Rees, Kathleen

Rosewarne, Bill Simmonds, Phil Smith, Henry Stanier, Kevin Taylor, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, Kevin Wilson, Patrick Woods, Hugh Wright Barbara York and Christoph Zöckler.

Next indoor meetings:

**9th March: Annual General Meeting followed by
Birds in the ancient world: winged words by Jeremy Mynott **TONIGHT****

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.

Cottenham Village College

13th April: *How our individual decisions collectively affect urban birds* by Mark Fellowes

Today, we have become a truly urban society, with around 90% of British people living in towns and cities. Biodiversity, and our societies' connection with nature, is threatened by urbanisation, and our gardens provide a vital link between people and wildlife. In this talk, he will share his group's most recent research on how the decisions made by every garden owner affects the birds that share their gardens. We try to help birds by providing food and nest boxes, while at the same time we introduce their predators. What are the consequences of these decisions? Can we learn lessons that will help garden birds? From blue tits to red kites, grey squirrels to domestic cats, each story provides insights into the unexpected consequences of our individual decisions.

Mark Fellowes is Professor of Ecology at the University of Reading. While here he will focus on birds, his research encompasses groups as diverse as leopards, fungal pathogens, grass-free lawns,

aphids, and (after birds) the most interesting species on Earth, parasitoids. Mark's work has been widely featured in the print and broadcast media, including appearances on Autumnwatch and Countryfile Diaries. For more information visit his research group's webpages (www.reading.ac.uk/people-and-wildlife) or find him on twitter (@BaobabJ)

11th May: *Social learning in great tits and blue tits : how birds use information about defended prey* by Liisa Hämäläinen



Birds can gather information about their food from two sources: through personal experience and by observing the foraging behaviour of others (social information). Many insects have evolved chemical defences against predators and my research focuses on how birds use social information when learning to avoid these chemically-defended prey. I use great tits and blue tits as my model predators and conduct learning experiments both in the wild, and with birds in captivity. In my talk, I will present the results from these studies, describing how great tits and blue tits use social information in their food choice, and how this can influence the evolution of prey defences.

Liisa Hämäläinen is a third year PhD student at the Department of

Zoology, University of Cambridge. She is working in the behavioural ecology group and is supervised by Dr Rose Thorogood.

Editor required....

After five years Chris Brown is retiring as Editor of the bi-monthly 'paper' version of the Club's bulletin. Therefore the Club is looking for a volunteer to take over this role. As you know the Club relies on the goodwill of certain members to function and Chris has been a stalwart producing many issues. If you would like more information about what is involved then contact Chris via the bulletin editor email address. And if you feel able to offer to take over this role then please contact the Chairman (Vince).

(see Club Contacts below).

Club Research in 2018

Projects for 2018

Raptor Survey

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

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?

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 SpotFlies 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).

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WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for February 2018

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 7 different days in February. The month's ringing total was 85; a further 121 different birds were retrapped, so the overall total for the month was 206.

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

Great Spot Woodpecker	0, 1	Robin	4, 6
Jay	0, 1	Dunnock	1, 3
Goldcrest	0, 1	House Sparrow	3, 3
Blue Tit	9, 29	Chaffinch	4, 1
Great Tit	20, 36	Goldfinch	11, 2
Long-tailed Tit	0, 15	Bullfinch	2, 0
Tree Creeper	0, 1	Lesser Redpoll	16, 16
Wren	2, 1	Reed Bunting	6, 1
Blackbird	7, 2		
Song Thrush	0, 2		

Old birds (3 years plus) retrapped during the month were:

Great Tit 6y 6m; Long-tailed Tit 6y 4m; Robin 4y 7m; Long-tailed Tit 4y 5m;
Long-tailed Tit 4y 4m; Song Thrush 4y 0m and Lesser Redpoll 3y 11m.

For those interested the pdf below is a report of conservation activities in the Fens Middle Level.



The Natural Level 2018-02 issue 10 v6.2.pdf

Next issue of the E-bulletin will be on April 10th, all (any) contributions to reach me by April 4th please.

A Happy Easter and hopefully some better weather although the Met Office always reports that snow is more common at Easter than Christmas!
