

Cambridgeshire Bird Club

E-Bulletin 57 March 2018



Tufted Duck and Goldeneye at Grafham Water: photo by Phil Smith.

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

HEADLINES

RING-NECKED DUCK* Ouse Washes (Chain Corner) the February bird (drake) from February until 30th.

RED-THROATED DIVER* Thorpe Meadows Rowing Lake Peterborough on the 3rd - 5th, then at Ferry Meadows CP from the 6th until at least the 12th, Grafham Water on the 19th - *possibly the same bird*.

WHITE STORK* Ramsey heights a flyover on the 28th - *possibly an escaped bird and not thought to be the same individual as has been seen over the border in Lincs*.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE Grafham Water on the 26th - 27th.

ICELAND GULL Cottenham a 3 C.Y. on the 2nd, Ouse Washes Oxlade a 4 C.Y. on the 24th, Witcham Gravel a small C.Y. and a large 3 C.Y. on the 28th.

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.

Rare Breeding birds

In order to give some protection to rare breeding birds in the county, specific locations will not be given in the bulletins over the next three months for certain vulnerable species. AND please remember to report rare breeding birds to the Recorder who will advise you about the suitability of making the information public (e.g on Cambirds or personal blogs).

Weather: the month began with the Beast from the East followed swiftly by a confluence with Storm Emma and, as a consequence, sub-zero temperatures and snowfall on several days until the 4th when everything went into reverse and a mild spell followed; although water bodies took several more days to unfreeze. Not unexpectedly the harsh conditions took a toll on birds and many people reported unusual visitors to their gardens and in the cities, and sadly, many reports of corpses found. Mild conditions then prevailed until the third weekend when a mini beast reversed the pattern and another snowfall and freeze followed by a reversal once again to milder (and wetter) weather to return. The rainfall/snowfall has led to many water bodies being full to overflowing and some sites being less accessible than normal.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan Great Fen Project 11 on the 16th, Burwell Fen 8 on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 10-12 all month, Redmere 10-12 all month.

Bewick's Swan Ouse Washes 3 on the 17th.

Whooper Swan Maxey GP on the 2nd and 12th, Littleport May Farm 47 on the 2nd and 21 on the 16th, Redmere 54 on the 16th, Ouse Washes 1000+ on the 4th, 320 on the 10th, 400 on the 17th, Upware-Wicken Fen on the 6th, Nene Washes 627 on the 21st, 250 on the 25th, Orton BP 8 on the 24th, Knarr Fen 52 on the 25th.

Pink-footed Goose Fen Drayton Lakes one with Greylags on the 11th, Ouse Fen 3 on the 18th.

White-fronted Goose Ouse Washes 4 on the 4th, Burwell Fen on the 6th and 7th, Needingworth GP 4 on the 10th.

Greylag Goose (*counts of 20 plus*) Burwell Fen maximum 48 on the 25th, Wicken Fen 23 on the 16th and 48 on the 22nd, Cam Washes Upware 25 on the 29th.

Egyptian Goose Maxey GP 2 on the 1st, Kingfishers Bridge on the 19th and 24th, Paxton Pits 2 on the 24th, Burwell Fen on the 25th, Cam Washes on the 29th, Littleport May Farm 2 all month, Redmere 2 all month.

Shelduck Burwell Fen 10 on the 9th and 32 on the 25th, Fen Drayton Lakes a pair on the 3rd, Ferry Meadows CP on the 4th, Littleport May Farm 2 on the 7th, Grafham Water 10 on the 9th, Burwell Fen 12 on the 19th, Kingfishers Bridge on the 19th, Nene Washes 76 on the 21st, Cam Washes Waterbeach 10 and Upware 2 on the 29th.

Mandarin Littleport May Farm a male on the 7th, Fowlmere NR a male on the 16th, Ferry Meadows CP on the 23rd, Little Shelford a pair flying around on the 25th and on previous days, Wimpole Park 7 on the 25th.

Wigeon (*counts 40 plus*) Farcet Fen 120+ on the 1st, Maxey GP 40 on the 1st, Milton CP 45+ on the 2nd, Wicken Fen maximum 1433 on the 5th, Godmanchester GP 345 on the 12th, Cam Washes Waterbeach c150 on the 14th, Burwell Fen 837 on the 19th, Kingfishers Bridge 200 on the 19th, Ouse Washes c150 on the 21st, Nene Washes 9201 on the 21st, Great Fen Project 67 on the 25th, Cam washes Upware 181 on the 29th, Littleport May Farm 30+ all month.

Gadwall Fen Drayton Lakes 4 on the 3rd, Cambourne 18 on the 4th, Wicken Fen 27 on the 5th, Great Fen Project 11 on the 16th, Burwell Fen 27 on the 19th and 51 on the 25th, Kingfishers Bridge 5 on the 19th, Ouse Washes 4 on the 21st, Nene Washes 221 on the 21st.

Teal (*counts 10 plus*) Farcet Fen 25+ on the 1st, Maxey GP 24 on the 1st, Cottenham 10 on the 3rd, Fen Drayton Lakes c20 on the 3rd, Littleport May Farm maximum 185 on the 7th, Burwell Fen maximum 32 on the 9th, Grafham Water 40 on the 9th, 20+ on the 20th, Cam Washes Waterbeach c20 on the 14th, Redmere 27 on the 16th, Wicken Fen maximum 42 on the 19th, Fowlmere NR maximum 14 on the 21st, Kingfishers Bridge 36 on the 19th, Nene Washes 1193 on the 21st, Ouse Washes 40 on the 21st, Cam Washes Upware 29 on the 29th.

Mallard (*counts 20+*) Farcet Fen 160+ on the 1st, Wicken Fen maximum 37 on the 5th, Great Fen Project 38 on the 16th, Kingfishers Bridge 50 on the 19th, Ouse Washes 30 on the 21st, Littleport May Farm 500+ all month, Redmere 200+ all month.

Pintail Farcet Fen 8 on the 1st, Ferry Meadows CP on the 1st, Maxey GP 2 males on the 2nd, Milton CP 2 males on the 2nd, Fen Drayton Lakes a male on the 3rd, Paxton Pits 2 males on the 4th, Ouse Washes 200 on the 4th, and 10th, 100+ on the 29th, Wicken Fen 16 on the 5th, and 14 on the 19th, 2

pairs on the 24th, Grafham Water a male on the 9th, a pair on the 17th, Paxton Pits 4 on the 17th, 7 on the 18th, a pair on the 24th, one on the 25th, Nene Washes 398 on the 21st.

Garganey Kingfishers Bridge a pair on the 17th - first of the year, Woodwalton Fen a pair on the 28th,

Shoveler (*counts 10 plus*) Cambridge Research Park c30 on the 3rd, Fen Drayton Lakes 30 on the 3rd, Wicken Fen maximum 34 on the 5th, Grafham Water 40+ on the 9th, Great Fen Project 35 on the 16th, Nene Washes 639 on the 21st, St Ives GP 16 on the 24th, Burwell Fen maximum 107 on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 2 pairs from 26th - 31st.

Red-crested Pochard Holme Fen a pair on the 2nd, Paxton Pits a pair on the 20th, 7 from the 24th - 31st.

Pochard Cambridge Research Park 6 on the 3rd, Ferry Meadows CP 12 on the 2nd, 8 on the 3rd, Redmere 9 on the 16th, Wicken Fen 20 on the 17th, Burwell Fen maximum 15 on the 19th, Kingfishers Bridge 6 on the 19th, Ouse Washes c120 on the 21st, 30 on the 29th, Grafham Water 15 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm 6-8 all month.

Tufted Duck (*counts of 20+*) Cambridge Research Park 30 on the 3rd, Ferry Meadows CP 111 on the 3rd, Redmere 47 on the 16th, Grafham Water 139 on the 18th, Burwell Fen 36 on the 19th, Kingfishers Bridge 23 on the 19th, Ouse Washes c110 on the 21st, Littleport May Farm 20+ all month.

Scaup Milton CP female still present until 24th, Grafham Water 3 females from 9th to 19th, one on the 25th and 29th, St Ives GP a drake on the 18th, Cambridge Research Park a female on the 24th - thought to be the Milton CP bird, Fen Drayton Lakes 5 on the 31st.

Common Scoter an influx on the 25th as follows: Beebys BP 4, CEGB Reservoir Peterborough, Ely BF 3, Fen Drayton Lakes 3, Grafham Water 20, then Fen Drayton Lakes 14 (8 males and 6 females) on the 31st.

Goldeneye Fen Drayton Lakes 10 on the 3rd, Buckden 4 on the 3rd, Bainton Fisheries 10 on the 8th, Grafham Water c85 on the 9th, 154 on the 19th, Ouse Washes 2 on the 10th, Needingworth 3 on the 20th, St Ives GP 3 on the 22nd.

Smew Needingworth GP a male and 4 females on the 4th, 3 males and 3 females on the 18th, 5 on the 20th, 3 on the 22nd, Bainton Fisheries a redhead on the 8th, St Ives GP a redhead on the 18th and a pair on the 19th, a single on the 24th, Ouse Washes a redhead on the 29th.

Red-breasted Merganser Burwell Lode on the 4th.

Goosander Maxey Cut 2 on the 2nd, Buckden on the 3rd, 6 on the 17th, and one on the 31st, Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on the 4th and one on the 17th, Little Shelford 2 males displaying and a single female on the 5th, Grafham Water 9 on the 9th, Etton GP 17 on the 12th.

Gamebirds

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

Grey Partridge Fowlmere 2 on the 26th, Littleport May Farm 70 all month.

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

Cormorants

Cormorant *reported from:* Burwell Fen (6), Great Fen Project (2), Kingfishers Bridge (12), Littleport May Farm (8), Redmere (4), Stretham, Wicken Fen (3), Wimpole Park (5) and Woodwalton Fen (3).

Shag Cambridge Research Park from the 9th until the 25th.

Egrets and herons

Bittern *reported from:* Orton BP, Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen.

Little Egret *reported from:* Burwell Fen (8), Cherry Hinton Brook, Willingham, Fowlmere NR, Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge, Littleport May Farm (6), Little Shelford (15), Paxton Pits and Wicken Fen (14).

Great White Egret Ouse Washes on the 10th and 24th, Ouse Fen on the 18th, Kingfishers Bridge on the 24th.

Grey Heron (*counts 5 plus*) Wicken Fen maximum 9 on the 19th, Littleport May Farm 8 all month.

Grebes

Little Grebe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (6), Grafham Water (3), Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (11), Littleport May Farm (10+), Ouse Washes (25), Redmere (4), Hobson's Park (formerly called Trumpington Clay Farm) (3), Wicken Fen (8) and Woodwalton Fen.



Little Grebe at Fowlmere NR : photo by Steve Cooper

Great Crested Grebe *reported from:* Burwell Fen (5), Cambridge Research Park (3), Grafham Water (20+), Kingfishers Bridge (8), Littleport May Farm (2), Ouse Washes (4), Redmere (4) and Wicken Fen (3).

Raptors

Red Kite *reported from:* Cam Washes (2), Great Fen Project (4), Littleport May Farm (2), Paxton Pits (3), Werrington, Whittlesford, Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen (2).

Marsh Harrier *reported from:* Burwell Fen (4), Cam Washes (2), Great Fen Project, Kingfishers Bridge (4), Littleport May Farm (6), Nene Washes (2), Redmere (12), Wicken Fen (7) and Woodwalton Fen (4).

Hen Harrier Cottenham a male on the 3rd, Upware-Wicken Fen a female on the 6th, Wicken Fen on the 12th, Littleport May Farm a male on the 15th - 17th, then 2 males 16th - 18th, and a single male 27th - 31st, Bottisham a male on the 22nd, Cam Washes a male on the 29th.

Buzzard *reported from:* Burwell Fen (2), Cam Washes (5), Earith, Fowlmere (9), Grafham Water (3), Great Fen Project (5), Kingfishers Bridge (2), Littleport May Farm (10), Maxey GP, Ouse Washes (2), Pampisford, Redmere (10+), Stretham, Swaffham Bulbeck, Swaffham Prior, Upware (2), Wicken Fen (4) and Woodwalton Fen.

Osprey Grafham Water on the 19th - first of the year the same or another on the 23rd.

Rails and crane

Water Rail *reported from:* Cambridge Stourbridge Common, Cambridge Coe Fen (2), Cambourne, Cherry Hinton Brook (2), Ferry Meadows CP (5), Fen Drayton Lakes, Holywell Ponds, Littleport May Farm (4), Milton CP (2), Redmere (4), Hobson's Park, Wicken Fen (2) and Woodwalton Fen (10+).

Moorhen Trumpington Clay Farm 18 on the 16th, Wimpole Park 14 on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 30+ all month.

Coot Wicken Fen maximum 49 on the 16th, Burwell Fen maximum 173 on the 25th.

Common Crane Great Fen Project 2 on the 3rd, Nene Washes up to 21 on several dates, Wicken Fen 2 on the 10th and 22nd.

Waders

Avocet Isleham Washes 16 on the 9th, 57 on the 19th, Godmanchester GP on the 12th, Cam Washes Waterbeach 2 on the 14th, Grafham Water 2-4 from the 18th until the 30th, Littleport May Farm 2 on the 27th.

Oystercatcher Maxey GP on the 1st, Buckden on the 3rd, Paxton Pits on the 4th, 2 on the 18th, Grafham Water on the 9th and 18th, Isleham Washes 3 on the 9th, Littleport May Farm 2 from the 9th, Ouse Washes 3 on the 10th, 11 on the 17th, Burwell Fen 2 on the 12th, Ferry Meadows on the 12th, Maxey GP 2 on the 12th, Cam Washes Waterbeach 2 on the 14th, 4 on the 29th, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on the 19th, Needingworth GP 2 on the 20th, Nene Washes 14 on the 21st, GEGB Reservoir Peterborough 2 on the 25th, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on the 31st.

Shelduck and Oystercatcher - estuary birds?

These two classic estuarine species are relatively recent colonists to Cambridgeshire. Shelducks began to visit Cambs regularly around the early post-war years. There is some evidence that they were to be found inland in the nineteenth century but were persecuted for taking up residence in rabbit holes when rabbits were an important economic commodity (as in the Brecks) and they were also shot for sport. With greater protection they returned inland and in Cambs after sporadic breeding in the 1930s and 40s regular breeding began in the late 1960s mainly on the washes.

Oystercatchers began to move inland along the rivers of Scotland about the middle of the 19th century and gradually the habit spread south through England. In Cambridgeshire individuals appeared more regularly in the 1960s and breeding was first confirmed in 1971. So the colonisation is relatively recent and centred mainly on gravel pits.

Golden Plover Ouse Washes 140 on the 10th, Maxey GP 60 on the 12th, Great Shelford 60 flying south on the 15th, Redmere 29 on the 16th, Paxton Pits 36 on the 18th, Ferry Meadows CP 9 on the 25th, Cam Washes 10 on the 29th, Littleport May Farm max 157 on the 16th.

Grey Plover Ouse Washes a flyover on the 2nd.

Lapwing Upware-Wicken Fen 120 on the 6th, Littleport May Farm maximum 400 on the 11th, Redmere maximum 226 on the 16th, Burwell Fen maximum c90 on the 25th.

Little Ringed Plover Grafham Water on the 18th - *first of the year*.

Ringed Plover Ouse Washes on the 10th, Paxton Pits on the 18th, Littleport May Farm on the 27th.

Curlew Nene Washes 2 on the 7th, 3 on the 19th, Etton and Maxey GP a flyover reported from both on the 5th almost certainly the same individual, Ouse Washes 2 on the 17th and 2 flyovers on the 18th.

Black tailed Godwit Fen Drayton Lakes on the 3rd, Buckden 3 on the 3rd, Ouse Washes 2300 on the 4th, 700 on the 10th, 70 on the 17th, 'thousands' on the 29th, Nene Washes 700 on the 7th.



Black-tailed Godwit at Sutton Gault (Ouse Washes): photo by Brendan Doe

Bar-tailed Godwit Nene Washes on the 19th - first of the year.

Knot Paxton Pits on the 18th.

Ruff Waterbeach Fen on the 2nd, Ouse Washes 10 on the 10th, 11 on the 17th, 50 on the 29th, Nene Washes 39 on the 19th, 119 on the 21st.

Dunlin seen in unusual places in the hard weather: Chesterton Cambridge, Maxey GP 5, (and 2nd) Milton CP 2+, and on the River Cam on the 1st, Barton, and Milton CP on the 2nd, CEGB Reservoir Peterborough (2) and Fen Drayton Lakes on the 3rd.

After the thaw: Paxton Pits 4 on the 4th, Isleham Washes on the 9th, Ouse Washes 15 on the 10th, 5 on the 17th, 20 on the 29th, Paxton Pits 3 on the 17th, Nene Washes 146 on the 21st, Ferry Meadows CP Vis Mig one on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 2 on the 27th, Grafham Water on the 30th.

Common Sandpiper Grafham Water on the 9th.

Green Sandpiper *reported from*: Cam Washes, Fen Drayton Lakes, Grafham Water, Littleport May Farm (3), Maxey GP (2), Paxton Pits (3), and Waterbeach Fen.

Spotted Redshank Kingfishers Bridge one reported on the 17th.

Greenshank Littleport May Farm 2 on the 7th.

Redshank *reported from:* Burwell Fen (4), Cam Washes (4), Ferry Meadows CP, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Grafham Water (5), Littleport May Farm (4), Maxey GP, Nene Washes (114), Ouse Washes (30), Paxton Pits and Redmere.

Jack Snipe Cambridge Coe Fen on the 2nd, Waterbeach Fen on the 2nd, Isleham Washes on the 9th, Paxton Pits on the 31st.

Woodcock Waterbeach Fen on the 1st, Cambridge Coe Fen on the 2nd, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on the 3rd, one on the 8th, St. Ives on the 3rd, Barton on the 7th, Littleport May Farm 4 on the 11th, 2 on the 16th, Great Abington on the 13th, Chesterton on the 14th, Redmere on the 16th, Wicken Fen on the 16th and 24th, Orton on the 25th, Paxton Pits on the 25th and 31st, Milton CP on the 25th, Woodwalton Fen 3 on the 28th.

Snipe the most noticeable presence during the hard weather, reports included gardens and around Cambridge with 'snipe everywhere'.

1st: Chesterton, Ferry Meadows CP 3, Maxey GP 12, Milton CP 3, River Cam 2+,

2nd: Barton 6, Cherry Hinton brook, Milton CP 4, Soham 9, Waterbeach Fen 14,

3rd: Buckden 14, Cambridge Coe Fen 14, Cambridge Research Park, Cottenham 20, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR 7.

After the thaw reported from: Beeby's Pit (5), Cambourne, Cambridge Research Park (12), Ferry Meadows CP (2), Fowlmere NR (7), Great Fen Project (10), Kingfishers Bridge (10), Littleport May Farm (50+), Ouse Washes (c60), Paxton Pits (2), Redmere (4) and Wicken Fen (20).

Gulls

Kittiwake Chesterton a flyover on the 2nd, Fen Drayton Lakes an adult on the 16th, Grafham Water 7 flying over on the 18th, Barleycraft GP an adult on the 25th.

Black-headed Gull (*counts of 50 plus*) Wicken Fen 53 on the 5th then c550 on the 16th, Hobson's Park 65 on the 16th, Burwell Fen 113 on the 19th and 63 on the 25th, Cam Washes Upware 280 on the 29th, Littleport May Farm 200+ all month, Redmere 100+ all month.

Little Gull Little Paxton a flyover on the 4th, 2 adults on the 24th - 31st.

Mediterranean Gull Littleport May Farm an adult on the 15th, Ouse Washes on the 17th and 18th.

Common Gull Redmere 14 on the 15th, Fowlmere (near the reserve) c200 in a field following the plough on the 16th, Littleport May Farm 17 on the 15th.

Lesser Black-backed Gull Six Mile Bottom 47 in ploughed field on the 5th, Littleport May Farm 5 on the 15th, Redmere 21 on the 16th, Great Fen Project 6 on the 25th.

Herring Gull *reported from:* Great Fen Project, Littleport May Farm, Redmere (3), Hobson's Park (2) and Wicken Fen.

Yellow-legged Gull *reported from:* Milton CP and Sutton (Old Cambs).

Caspian Gull *reported from:* Milton CP and Ouse Washes.



Caspian Gull at Milton CP: photo by Jon Heath.

Great Black-backed Gull Littleport May Farm 7 on the 12th, Grafham Water on the 15th and 21st, Redmere 3 on the 16th, Great Fen Project on the 25th.

Doves, owls and Kingfisher

Stock Dove Barton on the 2nd, Great Fen Project 5 on the 16th, Littleport May Farm 50+ all month, Redmere 20+ all month.

Turtle Dove Newton one flew across the road on the 16th.

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

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

Barn Owl *reported from:* Barton, Great Abington, Great Fen Project (5), Isleham Washes, Littleport May Farm (8), Maxey GP, Ouse Washes (2), Redmere (4), Waterbeach Fen, Wicken Fen (2) and Woodwalton Fen (2).

Little Owl *reported from:* Burwell Priory Farm, Ferry Meadows CP, Great Fen Project (2) and Littleport May Farm (4).

Tawny Owl *reported from:* Hare Park (2 calling) and Littleport May Farm (2).

Long-eared Owl reported from an undisclosed site (see photo).



Long-eared Owl at an undisclosed site: photo by George Walthew

Short-eared Owl Great Fen Project 4 on the 6th, Upware-Wicken Fen 2 on the 6th, Fulbourn Fen on the 18th, Wicken Fen 2 on the 12th, Redmere on the 15th.

Kingfisher *reported from:* Cherry Hinton Brook, Fowlmere NR and Littleport May Farm (6).

Falcons and parrots

Kestrel (*counts of 5 plus*) Great Fen Project 5 on the 6th, Grafham Water 5 on the 20th, Cam Washes 5 on the 29th, Littleport May Farm up to 20 all month, Redmere 5+ all month.

Merlin Whittlesford on the 3rd, Upware-Wicken Fen a male on the 6th, Nene Washes on the 7th, Ramsey a female on the 19th.

Peregrine Cambridge on the 1st and 29th, Littleport May Farm a female on the 7th and a male on the 16th, Nene Washes on the 7th, Wicken Fen on the 12th, Ouse Washes on the 29th.

Ring-necked Parakeet* Ouse Washes on the 30th, Great Shelford on the 30th.

Corvids

Magpie Littleport May Farm 30+ all month.

Jackdaw Littleport May Farm 100 all month, Redmere 40+ all month.

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

Carrion Crow Wicken Fen 17 on the 5th, Littleport May Farm 100 all month, Redmere 40+ all month.

Raven Paxton Pits on the 25th, Fowlmere NR a flyover on the 26th, Littleport May Farm on the 27th.

Crests, tits and larks

Firecrest Fowlmere (village) on the 4th.

Marsh Tit *reported from:* Chippenham Fen, Southey Wood (2 pairs) and Woodwalton Fen,

Skylark Barton 100 on the 2nd, Great Fen Project 33 on the 16th, 58 on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 100+ all month.

Hirundines and warblers

Sand Martin Ouse Washes 5 on the 17th - 18th - *first of the year*, then Fen Drayton Lakes on the 18th, Nene Washes 3 on the 25th, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on the 26th, 12+ on the 28th, Fowlmere NR 7 on the 26th,

Swallow Wicken Fen on the 31st - *first of the year*.

Cetti's Warbler *reported from*: Cambridge Research Park, Ferry Meadows CP, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Fowlmere NR (2), Godmanchester GP, Littleport May Farm (4), Nene Washes (2), Paxton Pits, Redmere (2), Sutton, Wicken Fen and Woodwalton Fen (3).

Chiffchaff Foxton (10th), Sutton (10th), Ferry Meadows CP (12th), Godmanchester GP (12th), Dry Drayton (14th), Maxey GP/Etton (16th), Wicken Fen (16th), thereafter a widespread arrival.

Blackcap *reported from*: First half of the month: Cambridge (Lovell Rd), Cottenham, Dry Drayton, Haslingfield (male), Soham (female), Orwell (2 males), after the 15th: Ramsey (3) and Littleport May Farm.

Nuthatch, starling and thrushes

Nuthatch *reported from*: Wimpole Park and Southey Wood.

Starling (*counts of 100 plus*) Wicken Fen 220 on the 5th and c300 on the 16th, Cam Washes Waterbeach c180 on the 14th, Great Fen Project 101 on the 16th and 165 on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 1000 all month, Redmere 200+ all month.

Ring Ouzel Earith a male on the 25th, Woodwalton Fen on the 25th, - *first of the year*

Blackbird Littleport May Farm 50 all month, Redmere 50+ all month.

Fieldfare (*counts of 30 plus*) Waterbeach 30-50 on the 2nd, St. Ives 70-80 on the 2nd, Cam Washes Waterbeach 300 on the 14th, Fen Drayton Lakes 190 on the 16th, 90 on the 28th, Great Fen Project 27 on the 16th, 115 on the 25th, St. Ives GP 90 on the 24th, Woodwalton Fen 50 on the 28th, Southey Wood 32 flying over on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 100-500 all month - maximum 1000 on the 10th, Ouse Washes 40 on the 29th.

Song Thrush Buckden 40+ on the 3rd.



Fieldfare at Rampton : photo by Brendan Doe.

Redwing (*counts of 30 plus*) Fowlmere NR 30+ on the 3rd, Cam Washes Waterbeach c200 on the 14th, Great Shelford 30+ on the 14th, c30 flying NE on the 26th, Fen Drayton Lakes 45 on the 16th, Great Fen Project 60 on the 25th, Ferry Meadows CP 68 flying NE on the 25th.

Mistle Thrush *reported from:* Great Shelford, Haddenham, Hemingford Grey, Littleport May Farm (8), Melbourn, Redmere (4) and Southey Wood (4).

Starts and chats

Black Redstart Waterbeach a female on 14th, Earith on the 25th.

Stonechat *reported from:* Cambourne (2 pairs), Great Fen Project (pair), Littleport May Farm, Redmere and Wicken Fen (pair).

Wheatear Maxey GP on the 12th - *first of the year*, Godmanchester NR on the 13th,

Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

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

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

Grey Wagtail *reported from:* Buckden, Cambridge, Cherry Hinton Brook and Peterborough (2).

Pied Wagtail Littleport May Farm 50 all month, Redmere 20+ all month.

'White' Wagtail Grafham Water on the 23rd.

Meadow Pipit Great Fen Project 24 on the 25th, Ferry Meadows CP Vis Mig 12 on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 100 all month.

Rock Pipit Paxton Pits flying over on the 25th and one on the 31st, Grafham Water 2 on the 29th.

Water Pipit Buckden on the 2nd, Ouse Washes 2-4 reported all month - maximum 11+ on the 4th.

Finches and buntings

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

Brambling *reported from:* Barton Lark Rise Farm, Barton (4), Folksworth, Grafham Water (10), Littleport May Farm (17) and Southey Wood.

Greenfinch Littleport May Farm 50 all month.

Goldfinch Great Fen Project 23 on the 16th, Littleport May Farm 50 all month, Redmere 50+ all month.

Siskin *reported from:* Barton, Ferry Meadows CP, Grafham Water (4), Holme Fen (50+), Milton CP (20+), Soham (2), Southey Wood (20+) and Wicken Fen.

Linnet Great Fen Project 26 on the 16th, 291 on the 25th, Littleport May Farm 200 all month, Redmere 200+ all month.

Lesser Redpoll *reported from:* Barton, Great Fen Project (11), Great Shelford (7), Holme Fen, Wicken Fen (5), Southey Wood and, exceptionally, Upware-Wicken Fen 73 on the 6th, Cambridge Trumpington Road 38 on the 24th.

Common (Mealy) Redpoll Upware-Wicken Fen on the 6th.

Hawfinch Wimpole Park at least three reported all month.

Yellowhammer Grafham Water 7 on the 20th, Littleport May Farm maximum 11 on the 27th.

Corn Bunting Aldreth 20+ on the 22nd, Littleport May Farm 70-90 all month - maximum 127 on the 27th.

Reed Bunting Littleport May Farm 100 all month, Redmere 50+ all month.

Exotica

Ross's Goose Wicken Fen, seen with Greylags as per usual.

The E-bulletin list: new birds in March were: Garganey, Common Scoter, Red-breasted Merganser, Shag, Black-necked Grebe, Osprey, Avocet, Grey Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot, Spotted Redshank, Greenshank, Common Sandpiper, Little Gull, Sand Martin, Swallow, Ring Ouzel, Wheatear. The 2018 list is now **153** species compared with 160 in March 2017.

Contributors:

Colin Addington, Richard Allison, Louise Bacon, Chris Barker, Paul Bennett, Peter Beckenham, Guy Belcher, Peter Bircham, Sam Boden, David Bradley, Philip Bubb, Ian Burfield, Eleanor Burke, Nigel Butcher, Howard Butler, Josh Carter, David Chandler, Saimon Clark, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Roger Cresswell, Hilary Cromack, Ian Dale, Bob Davies, Carol Davis, Martin Davis, Ian Dawson, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, Mike Everett, Andy Frost, Paul Gallagher, Don Gardener, Simon Gillings, Ian Gordon, Ben Green, Richard Grimmett, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Ron Harrold, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, James Hitchcock, Finn Holding, Michael Holdsworth, David Hollin, David Hopkins, Neil Howard, Sarah Howlett, Mark Jackson, Josh Jones, Colin Kirtland, Charlie Kitchin, Mike and Ann Knowles, Nick and Stella Laughton, Brian Lawrence, Vince Lea, Diana Leech, Stephen Lowe, Robert Mansfield, Owen and Monica Marks, Bruce Martin, Donal McCarthy, Chris Monk, Steve Mumford, Chris Park, Neil Parkin, Richard Patient, Pam Peacock, Mark Peck, Duncan Poyser, Doug Radford, Tim Rea, Petru Rednic, Chris Rider, Phil Smith, Simon Stirrup, Andy Symes, Jonathan Taylor, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Calum Urquart, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, John and Sue Wells, Matt Wilson, Kevin Wilson, Kevan Wolstencroft, Pete Wood, Hugh Wright and Christoph Zöckler.

Night time migration

Simon Gillings kindly agreed for his table of night time recordings over Chesterton (Cambridge) to be included in the E-bulletin. Both interesting and impressive.

For anyone thinking of starting nocturnal audio recording he has started a website with Nick Moran covering some of the basics. It's still in development but hopefully will start to answer some of the questions people have. Take a look at <https://nocmig.wordpress.com/>

Species	Number of nights	Total call notes	Minimum individuals
Wigeon	8	441	51
Teal	5	77	8
Mallard	6	26	9
Shoveler	1	20	2
Common Scoter	1	3	1
Little Grebe	4	10	4
Bittern	1	2	1
Grey Heron	1	3	1
Water Rail	5	10	6
Moorhen	9	88	16
Coot	8	74	8
Oystercatcher	4	10	5
Golden Plover	10	22	16
Lapwing	1	4	1
Snipe	1	2	1
Curlew	2	62	3
Redshank	3	11	5
Black-headed Gull	6	58	10
Common Gull	1	1	1
Barn Owl	1	1	1
Tawny Owl	5	23	11
Skylark	2	3	2
Blackbird	9	34	26
Fieldfare	3	6	6
Song Thrush	7	30	20
Redwing	17	652	408
Unknown bird	15	54	46

Next indoor meetings:

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.

Outdoor Meetings

Contact/booking via Louise Bacon, cbcrecorder@gmail.com

8th June: Chippenham Fen (booking will be essential)

13th July: To be arranged

10th August: To be arranged

News and Comment

RSPB Fowlmere

It seems that the RSPB will introduce a parking charge at Fowlmere. If you are not an RSPB member then you will need to pay £2. How this will be enforced is not clear!

Hen Harriers

We are very fortunate to have winter Hen Harriers in the county with traditional roosting sites. The numbers vary from year to year and are rarely high but nevertheless there are usually at least one or two grey males which are splendid birds. Members will be aware of the conflict between these birds and the grouse shooting fraternity. The latest issue of *British Birds* reports the loss of contact with a satellite-tagged young bird. Data shows the loss of tag activity on February 5th over a driven grouse moor. Conservationists are also challenging the plan to remove eggs from nests to raise young artificially see <http://bit.ly/2Fv2of3>. Both Mark Avery and the RSPB are challenging this Defra decision.

Feeders and infection

Again, I suspect most members will be aware of the recent study showing the spread of various avian diseases (in greenfinches, chaffinches and great tits) resulting from unclean feeders. Advice is not only to clean and disinfect feeders regularly but also to move them. The ground beneath can be equally easily contaminated.

Cambridgeshire Bird Atlas

The last copies have been sold and the Atlas will soon be added to the website for general access.

Peregrines

The 2014 BTO Census has established that Peregrines are doing very well in lowland sites (including some in Cambridgeshire) especially in urban areas but not so well in rural traditional places.

Winter feeding at RSPB Hope Farm

Below is a link to a report from RSPB's Hope Farm Knapwell and their success with winter feeding.

https://www.birdguides.com/articles/record-winter-flocks-at-rspb-hope-farm/?utm_source=newsletter

Paul Mason

Close to publication the Club has learned of the death of Paul Mason. He may not be known to all the current members but he was a very important advocate for Golden Orioles in the 1980s and 90s. As a result of his urging I visited the site now known as Cambridge Research Park and, somewhat to my surprise found a pair nesting in the poplars. For a few years Golden Orioles seemed to be colonising almost every poplar wood in Cambridgeshire, spreading out from their hotspot at Lakenheath Fen. But then, as if to spite Paul's efforts, they declined. The reason remains a little puzzling but if you want to know more about Golden Orioles then read the Poyser monograph that Paul wrote with Jake Alsop. Paul was also the man behind the Haddenham Conservation Society. An example of what a group of caring people can do within a village. He was a regular contributor to Cambirds and as he became less mobile and his health declined he would post his thoughts on many of the more controversial topics. Although I never knew him well I found him to be a thoroughly kind man devoted to his causes.

Help required with various projects.....

Farmland Surveys

The Redlist Revival Project needs volunteers to survey farmland. The survey is identical to the BTO's Breeding Bird Survey. If you are interested or require further information please contact Vince Lea at vincelea@btinternet.com

Sand Martins

Records required:

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

Grey Wagtails

If you have a lock or a weir near you and 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. Please record:

- 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.

Grey Wagtails appear to be both long and short-range migrants. They seem to leave the breeding sites in autumn and disperse. 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 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 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).

Name change

Always slightly irritating when a place you have known by a certain name is suddenly re-named, but just to emphasise *Trumpington Clay Farm* the site near Addenbrookes - a Country Park - is now called *Hobson's Park* relating to the brook and of course the eponymous Thomas Hobson, former mayor of Cambridge who was famous for giving riders a horse on the basis of 'take it or leave it' which became known as 'Hobson's choice'.

WICKEN FEN (BIRD RINGING) GROUP

Brief news for March 2018

There were netting sessions at the Fen on 7 days in March. The month's ringing total was 82; a further 123 different birds were retrapped, so the overall total for the month was 205. Individual species totals (the first figure new birds, the second retraps) were:

Sparrowhawk	1, 0	Song Thrush	2, 0
Great spot Woodpecker	1, 2	Redwing	5, 0
Green Woodpecker	0, 1	Robin	2, 6
Jay	0, 2	Dunnock	0, 7
Cetti's Warbler	0, 1	House Sparrow	2, 1
Blue Tit	8, 25	Chaffinch	5, 0

Great Tit	6, 42	Goldfinch	9, 1
Long-tailed Tit	9, 10	Siskin	1, 0
Chiffchaff	4, 3	Bullfinch	0, 1
Treecreeper	0, 3	Lesser Redpoll	8, 10
Wren	2, 3	Reed Bunting	12, 4
Blackbird	5, 1		

Old birds retrapped during the month were: Dunnock 6y 11m; Great Tit 4 y 7m, Blue Tit 4y 6m, Long-tailed 4y 5m, Reed Bunting 3y 11m and Great spotted Woodpecker 3y 3m.

Free to a good home

I have just had my spotting scope replaced by Opticron, they were unable to repair the one I sent back (no parts) so they replaced it with the new version. The problem is the case does not fit so they sent a new case as well. So now I am left with a case that is no use to me and it's in good condition. I don't want anything for it but would like it to go to someone who could use it. Any one wanting it to make a donation to the club.

The scope it fits is the Opticron is 60wp angled, the model just before the current one.

Steve Millar. stevebmillar13@gmail.com

Next issue will be published on May 10th. Any contributions (always welcome) should be with me by the 4th please.