



Cambridgeshire Bird Club

E-Bulletin 2 August 2013

HEADLINES

BLUE-WINGED TEAL Ouse Washes (an eclipse plumage male 3rd – 28th)

GREAT WHITE EGRET Wicken Fen/Cam Washes and Fen Drayton Lakes(long stayers all month).

WRYNECK Murrow (in a private garden on 26th).

RED-BACKED SHRIKE Paxton Pits (a juvenile on 27th).



Photo by Jamie Wells

TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL Fowlmere NR (flying north 7th) part of an invasion see *British Birds*.

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. These records are unconfirmed, that is they have not been scrutinised by the County Recorder. For more detailed information about the more common species refer to the July-August bulletin.

Summary

Feral geese numbers continue to be high in autumn with increasing numbers and reports of Barnacle and Egyptian. Numbers of most wildfowl increased during the month.

The second earliest Hen Harrier record seen from the guided busway, further continual passage by most of the more common waders with Green and Common Sandpiper recorded on almost every day of the month.

Sequences of migration include parties of Sandwich Terns on 24th-26th and small parties of Yellow Wagtails all presumably on their way south. Unusual records include Tree Pipit on the Cam Washes.

Wildfowl

Mute Swan *Counts over 100* Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 197 on 17th).

Greylag Goose *Counts over 100* Cambridge Research Park (180 on 25th), Cam Washes (255 on 31st).

Canada Goose *Counts over 100* Godmanchester GP (198 on 7th), Isleham Washes (245 on 29th).

Barnacle Goose Whittlesford GP (11 on 4th), Cam Washes (6th), Paxton Pits (2 on 20th), Granta Science Park (10 on 22nd), Sutton North Fen (19 on 25th).

Egyptian Goose Fen Drayton Lakes (16 on 8th), Paxton Pits (maximum 7 on 15th), Earith GP (39 on 25th), Berry Fen (8 on 24th).

Mandarin *reported from* Wimpole Park (2-3), Hauxton GP (9 on 9th), Woodwalton Fen/Ramsey Heights (female on 26th), Paxton Pits (a female-type on 27th).

Wigeon Fen Drayton Lakes (large count of 164 on 31st).

Gadwall Fen Drayton Lakes (387 on 17th).

Teal Ouse Washes (c150 on 7th, 300 on 22nd and 1000 on 31st).

Garganey Burwell Fen (juvenile on 2nd), Ouse Washes (maximum 30 on 26th), Cam Washes (maximum 5 on 31st), Fen Drayton Lakes (14th, a female on 28th and 2 on 29th), Paxton Pits (24th – 26th).

Shoveler *counts of 100* Ouse Washes (100 on 22nd), Cam Washes (110 on 31st).

Pochard *counts over 100* Fen Drayton Lakes (138 on 17th).

Red-crested Pochard Grafham Water (11th – 26th).

Tufted Duck *counts over 100* Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 496 on 17th), Godmanchester GP (242 on 25th).

Ruddy Duck Kingfisher's Bridge (juvenile on 16th and 30th).

Gamebirds

Grey Partridge Little Wilbraham (30 on 20th), Haddenham/Aldreth Fen.

Quail Abbotsley (2 still calling at Crane Hill 1st), Tetworth estate near the Roman Road (3rd-6th).

Cormorant and shag

Cormorant *high counts* Ouse Fen (48 on 9th), Fen Drayton Lakes (76 on 14th).

Egrets and herons

Bittern Ouse Fen (4th), Ouse Washes (14th and 18th).

Little Egret Burwell Fen (maximum 30+ on 2nd), Paxton Pits (maximum 5 on 13th), Cam Washes (5 on 2nd), Grafham Water (daytime maximum 41 on 19th, 41 roosting on 20th), Kingfisher's Bridge (20 on 23rd), Milton CP (29th).

Grebes

Little Grebe *highest counts* Burwell Fen (29 on Aug 4th), Colne Fen (43 on 26th), Ouse Fen (43+ on 29th).

Great crested Grebe *highest counts* Grafham Water (maximum 41 on 12th), Fen Drayton Lakes (20 on 10th).

Black-necked Grebe Cam Washes (juvenile 6th – 25th), Cambridge Research Park (11th).

Raptors

Red Kite Wicken Fen (6th), Orwell (23rd), Hamerton Zoo Park (25th).

Marsh Harrier *reported from* Burwell Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes, Grafham Water, Little Wilbraham Fen, Ouse Fen (maximum 7), Ouse Washes (maximum 3), Wicken Fen (maximum 4).

Hen Harrier Oakington (a male seen from the guided busway 5th), Tubney Fen (a 'ringtail' 10th), Mepal ('ringtail' on 11th).

Osprey Nene Washes (4th - 8th), Grafham Water (10th, 16th and 25th), Cambridge (over Cheney Way/Fen Road on 27th), Ouse Washes (26th - 28th), Milton CP (29th), Cam Washes (over 31st).



Photo by Geoff Harries

Hobby *reported from* Barton, Burwell Fen (maximum 5 on 10th), Cambourne, Cam Washes (maximum 2 on 31st), Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Grafham Water, Hardwick Wood (3 on 17th), Hilton, Landbeach, Ouse Fen (maximum 4 on 9th), Ouse Washes (maximum 3 on 11th and 12th), Paxton Pits (maximum 3 on 19th), Wicken Fen (maximum 5 on 10th).

Peregrine Burwell Fen, Cambridge (St George's Church spire), Ouse Washes, Peterborough Power Station, St Neots, Wicken Fen.

Crane, rails and crakes

Common Crane Ouse Washes (maximum 3 on 10th and 17th), Tubney Fen (3 in recently harvested fields 24th).

Water Rail Burwell Fen, Cambridge Research Park, Chippenham Fen, Ely BF, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Kingfisher's Bridge, Ouse Fen, Paxton Pits, Wicken Fen (Baker's Fen).

Coot *high counts* Ouse Fen (185 on 4th), Cam Washes (210 on 6th), Godmanchester GP (maximum 206 on 25th), Earith GP (174 on 25th), Sutton North Fen (125 on 25th), Colne Fen GP (220 on 26th), Kingfisher's Bridge (245 on 30th).

Waders

Avocet Barleycraft GP (3rd), Ouse Washes (maximum 4 on 14th).

Little Ringed Plover Burwell Fen (2 juveniles 2nd and 9th), Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 4 on 17th and 28th), Tubney Fen (10th), Isleham Washes (11th), Ouse Washes (maximum 5 on 14th).

Ringed Plover Wicken Fen (2 on 9th), Great Shelford (11th), Burwell Fen (maximum 3 on 13th), Trumpington (Clay Farm 13th), Cambridge (over Nuttings Road on 20th), Ouse Washes (maximum 11 on 23rd), Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 2 on 25th), Sutton North Fen (25th and 26th).

Golden Plover Nene Washes (3 over on 8th), Ouse Washes (maximum 80 on 22nd), Sutton North Fen (26 on 25th).

Grey Plover Paxton Pits (25th),

Lapwing *high counts* Ouse Washes (100 on 21st), Sutton North Fen (270 on 25th), Colne Fen GP (255 on 26th), Ouse Fen (1300 on 29th), Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 700 on 31st).

Little Stint Ouse Washes (3rd, 28th and 2 on 29th).

Dunlin Ouse Washes (maximum 13 on 4th), Wicken Fen (2 on 6th), Burwell Fen (13th), Paxton Pits (3 on 20th), Sutton North Fen (2-3 on 26th–31st).

Ruff Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 2 on 24th), Ouse Washes (64 on 9th, 120+ on 21st 86 on 24th, 57 on 25th, c80 on 27th and 135 on 31st), Paxton Pits (maximum 3 on 19th), Grafham Water (17th and 5 on 24th).

Snipe Wicken Fen (9 on 6th), Burwell Fen (maximum 23 on 9th), Isleham Washes (maximum 8 on 15th), Maxey Pits (maximum 20+ on 17th), Paxton Pits (5+ on 20th), Ouse Washes (maximum 46 on 23rd), Berry Fen (24th), Fowlmere NR (2 on 24th), Earith Washes (26th).

Woodcock *reported from* Chippenham Fen, Wicken Fen.

Black tailed Godwit Burwell Fen (9th), Tubney Fen (10th), Wicken Fen (9th-10th), Paxton Pits (maximum 7 on 13th), Ouse Washes RSPB (maximum 20 on 13th), Fen Drayton Lakes (17th).

Bar-tailed Godwit Ouse Fen (17 On 5th), Fen Drayton Lakes (1-2 on 9th-10th).

Whimbrel *most but not all flyovers* Ferry Meadows (1st), Paxton Pits (7 on 5th single on 11th), Ouse Washes (10th and 11th), Isleham Washes (3 on 11th), Melbourn (22nd), Fowlmere NR (24th), Grafham Water (4 on 24th).

Curlew Toft (flyover 6th), Ouse Fen (2 on 9th), Cambridge (Nuttings Road flyover 14th and 22nd), Ouse Washes RSPB (20th and 2 on 22nd), Manea (3 on 23rd), Fen Drayton Lakes (24th), Paxton Pits (26th).

Common Sandpiper Burwell Fen (maximum 3+ on 25th), Ouse Fen (2 on several dates), Paxton Pits (maximum 4 on 2nd), Maxey Pits (maximum 3 on 4th), Ferry Meadows CP (5th and 25th), Cottenham Long Drove (10th), Barlecraft GP (maximum 2 on 11th), Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 4 on 20th), Grafham Water (8th, 12th and 26th), Isleham Washes (3 on 11th and 18th), Great Abington (14th), Tanholt GP (16th), Stapleford Dernford Quarry (18th and 25th), Godmanchester GP (2 on 24th), Sutton North Fen (maximum 3 on 26th), Histon (26th), Colne Pits (29th), Babraham Farms reservoir (2 on 31st).

Green Sandpiper *over 100 records counts 5 and over* Burwell Fen (maximum 18+ on 6th), Ouse Fen (maximum 5 on 2nd), Berry Fen (9 on 24th), Fen Drayton Lakes (maximum 6 on 5th), Grafham Water (maximum 7 on 5th), Maxey Pits (maximum 13 on 7th), Ouse Washes RSPB (maximum 10 on 11th), Isleham Washes (6 on 11th), Paxton Pits (maximum 7 on 24th), Somersham GP (7 on 31st).

Spotted Redshank Ouse Washes (1–2 all month), Ferry Meadows (31st).

Greenshank *over 60 records counts 3 and over* Paxton Pits (maximum 12 on 24th), Burwell Fen (maximum 6+ on 26th), Cam Washes (6th and 25th), Fen Drayton Lakes (8th and 18th), Ouse Washes (1-3 all month maximum 5 on 10th), Ouse Fen (3 on 26th).

Wood Sandpiper Burwell Fen (1-2 up until 13th), Ouse Washes (singles throughout the month), Maxey Pits (1-2 throughout the month maximum 3 juveniles on 3rd-4th), Isleham Washes (15th and 18th), Barlecraft GP (1+ on 27th).

Redshank Cam Washes (16th), Ouse Fen (7 on 25th).

Skuas, Gulls and Terns

Black-headed Gull Fen Drayton Lakes (600+ roosting on 31st).

Little Gull Grafham Water (2 on 24th and a single on 28th), Paxton Pits (25th).

Common Gull a single record Ouse Fen (2 on 25th).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *large counts* Tanholt (400 on 1st), Cottenham Long Drove (1500+ on 10th), Melbourn (421 on 11th), Fen Drayton Lakes (450+ on 31st).

Herring Gull *only large count* Tanholt GP (500 on 14th).

Yellow-legged Gull Grafham Water (maximum 5 on 5th), Fowlmere NR (4 on 6th and 2 on 7th), Cottenham Long Drove (11 on 10th), Melbourn (3 on 11th), Paxton Pits (maximum 11 on on 13th and 23rd), Ouse Washes RSPB (3 on 14th), Stapleford Dernford Quarry (1 on 18th), Fen Drayton Lakes (3 on 29th and 5 roosting on 31st).

Caspian Gull Paxton Pits (1-2 all month), Tanholt (19th and 20th), Dogsthorpe Tip (30th), Fen Drayton Lakes (31st).

Great Black-backed Gull *single record* Fen Drayton Lakes (3 roosting on 31st).

Black Tern Grafham Water (2 on 5th, single 8th and 11 on 24th), Ferry Meadows (Gunwade Lake on 24th), Fen Drayton Lakes (24th and 2 on 25th), Cam Washes (25th).

Sandwich Tern Paxton Pits (10 on 24th), Diddington Pit (10 over on 24th), Grafham Water (over on 26th),

Common Tern *large count* Grafham Water (100+ on 5th and 93+ on 8th).

Arctic Tern Woodwalton Fen (6th), Grafham Water (17th- 30th maximum 6 on 24th), Fen Drayton Lakes (24th, and a juvenile on 28th).

Near passerines and passerines

Stock Dove *counts of 20 or more* Stapleford Dernford Quarry (30 on 18th), Sutton North Fen (38 on 25th).

Turtle Dove *reported from* Bury, Cambridge Research Park, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR, Maxey Pits, Ouse Fen, Over, Paxton Pits, Stretham, Wilbraham Common.

Cuckoo Burwell Fen (9th and 10th), Wicken Fen (14th), Cam Washes (16th), Fen Drayton Lakes (18th), Coton (23rd), Aldreth (25th), Cambridge Research Park (25th), Cottenham Long Drove (28th), Ouse Washes RSPB (29th).

Barn Owl *reported from* Fowlmere NR, Ouse Fen, Tetworth Low Farm, Swavesey.

Little Owl *reported from* Burwell Fen, Castor Mill, Christchurch, Tubney Fen.

Tawny Owl *reported from* Crane Hill, Fenton, Fen Drayton Lakes, Ouse Washes Welches Dam.

Swift *single record* Burwell Fen (30+ on 4th).

Kingfisher *reported from* Burwell Fen, Cambridge Maid's Causeway, Cambridge Research Park, Cam Washes, Berry Fen, Fen Drayton Lakes, Fowlmere NR (maximum 3 on 21st), Maxey Pits (maximum 2 on 18th), Milton CP (2 on 29th), Ouse Washes, Paxton Pits, Toft.

Jackdaw *high counts* Tanholt GP (150 on 14th), Wansford (155 on 16th).



Photo by Garth Peacock.

Raven Fowlmere NR (20th and 25th), Gamlingay (2 on 23rd), Tetworth Estate (2 on 26th), Paxton Pits (2 over calling 28th).

Bearded Tit *reported from* Kingfisher's Bridge, Ouse Fen, Wicken Fen.

Cetti's Warbler *reported from* Eye Green, Fen Drayton Lakes, Orton BP, Wicken Fen.

Grasshopper Warbler *reported from* Wicken Fen.

Nuthatch *reported from* Crane Hill, Tetworth Estate, Wimpole Park.

Mistle Thrush Wimpole (19 on 13th).

Spotted Flycatcher *reported from* Brampton, Cambridge Lovell Road, Crane Hill, Fowlmere NR, Great Abington, Haddenham, Harston, Hauxton, Waterbeach, Wimpole (16 on railings 13th), Yelling.

Pied Flycatcher Yelling (29th).

Nightingale Paxton Pits (17th).

Redstart Fen Drayton Lakes (14th), Fowlmere NR (24th, a female-type on 29th).

Whinchat Ouse Washes (2 on 21st and 28th), Burwell Fen (2 on 25th – 26th), Devil's Dyke (2 on 26th), Paxton Pits (a juvenile on 27th and 2 on 31st), Castor Mill (29th).

Wheatear Mepal (10th), Paxton Pits (11th), Barton (13th), Fen Drayton Lakes (14th), Ouse Washes (18th), Foxton (27th– 28th), Haddenham/Aldreth Fens (31st).

Yellow Wagtail *gatherings 10 or more* Burwell Fen (10 on 6th), Ouse Washes RSPB (16 on 6th), Tubney Fen (11 on 6th), Fowlmere (22 on 13th), Cam Washes (30 on 16th), Paxton Pits (9 on 15th, 15+ flying over on 18th, 30 on 19th and 16 on 20th), Grafham Water (15+ on 17th), Diddington Pit (30+ on 19th and 40+ on 22nd), Berry Fen (11 on 24th), Burwell Fen (c60 on 26th), Ouse Fen (16 on 26th).

Tree Pipit Cam Washes (25th).

Crossbill Huntingdon (2 on 1st), Brampton Wood (3rd), Hemingford Grey (5th), Great Shelford (3 on 15th).

Contributors:

Colin Addington, Louise Bacon, Richard Bashford, Ann Beeby, Peter Bircham, Will Bowell, Dave Bradley, Chris Brown, Mike Burdekin, Ian Burfield, James Cadbury, Tim Caldicott, Mike Clydsdale, David Collins, Andy Cotton, Pete Cook, Ade Cooper, Steve Cooper, Robin Cox, Martin Davis, Ian Dawson, Tim Dee, Brendan Doe, Mark Eaton, Mike Foley, Don Gardener, Dave Gandy, Ed Gill, Stuart and Jill Elsom, Mike Everett, David Fisher, Ian Gordon, Paul Harrington, Mark Hawkes, John Hoppit, David McCarthy, David Heath, Jonathan Heath, Malcolm Holley, Carl Howard, Sarah Howlett, Josh Jones, Simon Jillings, Richard Johnson, Charlie Kitchin, Vince Lea, John Lindsell, Tony Lowe, Dave Odell, Monica and Owen Marks, Paul Mason, David McCarthy, Duncan McNiven, Matt Mellor, Richard Palmer, John Parslow, Gavin Paterson, Doug Radford, John Richardson, John Saunders, Brian Stone, Paul Taylor, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Andrew Tongue, Hugh Venables, John Walsh, Mark Ward, Mathew Webb, Chris Went, Iain Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, Mike Wood, Mike Wilson, Christophe Zockler. Apologies for any names omitted.

Burwell Fen –a new wetland area

It is not every day (or year) that we get the opportunity to watch the development of a new wetland from scratch, so the last ten months at Burwell Fen have been interesting, not least for birders.

Burwell Fen lies between Burwell and Reach Lodes, immediately south of the main Wicken Fen area. Part of the area is developing as seasonal wetland, whilst part remains drier rough grazing. In the 1930s the land was wetland with reed beds and pools, drawn and described by Eric Ennion in his book 'Adventurers Fen' (1942). But during the 2nd World War, along with adjacent fens, it was requisitioned by the Government, drained and converted to agriculture. After the War, land to the north of Burwell Lode (now shown as Adventurers Fen on OS 1:25,000 maps) passed back to the National Trust and was returned to wildlife habitat, but the 169

hectares (ha) of Burwell Fen Farm was cultivated through to the late 1990s. In 2001 it was acquired by the National Trust as part of the Trust's Wicken Vision. A further 51 ha of adjacent land has since been added.

The Wicken Vision aims to create, over the next century, a mosaic of habitats and accessible countryside stretching from Wicken towards Cambridge. The Vision recognises that not all areas can or should be returned to wetland, and so it proved with Burwell Fen. The excavation of an Internal Drainage Board (IDB) main drain through the centre of the area had altered the drainage pattern irreversibly, but studies showed that 80ha between the IDB drain and Reach Lode could be re-wetted if the drain itself and the banks of Reach Lode bank could be protected.

The solution was to construct a clay 'bund' tied into to the underlying clay subsoil, so that a waterproof barrier was created. The bund was re-covered with peat and has vegetated so that it is now barely visible. The scheme was funded by EU, Countryside Stewardship and Wren (landfill tax credit) money, and carried out by a local contractor in 2011.

Water is fed onto the site from the Reach Lode by means of a valve, but the abstraction licence only allows this between November and March, and limits abstraction to 100,000 cubic metres each year. Following this year's wet spring, water levels remained high into June and July, but then fell steadily so that by mid August only the original agricultural ditches and held water. Tempting though it might be to wish for more water at this time, agricultural demands mean that this is not possible at present.

Management of the site follows the Trust's overall approach in the Wicken area, based on the semi-natural development of vegetation patterns under the influence of grazing animals at low stocking rates. Breeding cattle and non-breeding Konik ponies will be introduced later this year. The Trust believes that this less prescriptive approach to management provides a more diverse suite of habitats. The area can be expected to develop further, but not necessarily to produce the same conditions for birds each year.

To visit Burwell Fen, park at the NT Wicken car park (a 3km walk) or at one of the small car parks off Priory Drove Burwell (TL 564691) or at the end of Split Drove, Swaffham Prior (TL 555677 - but beware the very bumpy approach road to this one. The Lodes Way cycle route skirts the east side of Burwell Fen.

Chris Brown.

Next indoor meetings



Friday 11th October, Cottenham Village College

Birds of Ecuador; a Journey from the Andes to the Amazon by Jo Thomas

From Hoatzins (known locally as Stinky Turkeys) in the Amazon, brightly coloured Tanagers and loud Tapaculos of the western Andean forested slopes to the mighty Andean Condor of the high paramo grasslands, enjoy hearing all about Ecuador's fascinating wildlife.

Jo has been interested in birds and wildlife since her early teens. This led to a career working for the RSPB and Wildlife Trust for over 17 years, which included positions which included Information Warden at Titchwell, Warden at Loch of Kinnordy and Warden at Grafham Water Nature Reserve. Jo now runs Wild About Travel. She has travelled extensively across India over the last 20 years and more recently Ecuador, Panama, Spain and Sri Lanka have been added to her travel portfolio. Her passion is sharing her enthusiasm for wildlife with others.



Friday 8th November, St Johns Hall, Cambridge

Where do Seabirds go when they head out to sea? Insights from New Technology by Mark Bolton

The UK holds internationally important numbers of breeding seabirds – up to 80% of the world population of some species. Yet numbers have declined dramatically in recent decades, linked, in some cases, to poor food supply. Compounding the problems that seabirds face in finding food, the drive to develop offshore renewable energy supplies represents a further potential threat to foraging seabirds. Against this backdrop, there is a need to ensure that exploitation of marine resources proceeds in a way that minimises impacts on the marine environment, and that priority seabird foraging areas are protected. Although scientists have been studying seabirds at the breeding colonies for several decades, we know comparatively little about seabird behaviour at sea, which has made it difficult to predict where conflicts are likely to arise, or which areas merit special protection. However the revolution in tracking technology of the last few years has provided the game-changer that allows us to begin to unravel the mysteries of where seabirds go when they head over the horizon. Since 2009 the RSPB has tracked over 1000 seabirds of five species from 18 colonies in UK, with some

startling results. In this talk Dr Mark Bolton, Principal Conservation Scientist will describe some of the remarkable habits of seabirds, and he will explain how RSPB is using this information to build our understanding of why seabirds forage where they do, so that key foraging areas at sea can be protected. In the 25 years since Mark Bolton was an undergraduate at Cambridge, he has worked on seabirds in many of the most far-flung islands in the Atlantic, from the Falklands to Shetland, by way of St Helena, Ascension, Cape Verde and the Azores, discovering a new species or two on the way. He now leads the RSPB's UK marine research programme and is always on the lookout for some new gizmo or gadget that will help us to understand better the remarkable lives of seabirds.



Friday 13th December, St Johns Hall, Cambridge

Christmas Social

Come and enjoy mince pies and mulled wine in good company while listening to inspiring short talks by club members.

Please contact [Vicki Harley](#) if you would like to give a short presentation.

Editor's note

I am still finding my way into this project! Hopefully some of the changes suggested by members of Council and of my own will please readers. Suggestions for articles etc please send to

cbulletin@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk