

# CAMBRIDGESHIRE BIRD CLUB Bulletin No. 442



*Opinions expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of the Club.*

## Welcome to the September / October 2015 Edition

### RECENT BIRD REPORTS

**September – October Weather:** the first ten days of September were dominated by high pressure in the Atlantic bringing northerly winds which doubtless encouraged migrants to leave. By mid-month wet and windy weather had arrived, typical of the autumn equinox, with mostly south-westerly or westerly winds. Finally an anticyclone brought fine sunny weather with cooler nights. October was a mixed bag firstly with a northerly airstream, cool and often overcast, followed by a southerly airstream with some autumn warmth and more sunshine; rainfall was low overall.

### *September – October Headlines*

**VELVET SCOTER\*** **Oct:** Grafham Water 3 female/immatures from 26<sup>th</sup> to the end of the month.

**GANNET** **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes a juvenile flyover on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Paxton Pits a flyover on 13<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes a juvenile on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**PURPLE HERON\*** **Sept:** Grafham Water a flyover on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**SPOONBILL** **Oct:** Paxton Pits a juvenile on 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>.

**ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD\*** **Oct:** Ouse Washes a juvenile on 15<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen on 17<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen and Burwell Fen on 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, Six Mile Bottom on 21<sup>st</sup>, Grafham Water on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**GREY PHALAROPE\*** **Sept:** Burwell Fen on 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>; *50 records up to 2013.*

**LESSER SPOTTED WOODPECKER** **Oct:** Fowlmere NR one amongst a tit flock on 15<sup>th</sup>. *An increasingly scarce species in Cambs; in 2005 there were 27 records including 3 – 4 breeding records.*

**WOODLARK\*** **Oct:** Grafham Water a flyover on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER\*** **Sept:** Paxton Pits on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Witchford on 4<sup>th</sup>, King's Ripton on 5<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge on 6<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 12<sup>th</sup>; *only 12 records up to 2013.*

**HAWFINCH** **Sept:** Monks Wood a flyover on 23<sup>rd</sup>; *with only 4 records in 2013 and 2 in 2014, this remains a rare bird in Cambridgeshire.*

### **Other records**

The records in this bulletin are unchecked and may be revised at a later date. An asterisk after the name of the species indicates that it is necessary to send a description to the County Recorder before the record will be accepted. Some species are 'reported from' to give an indication of distribution. Some entries (particularly wildfowl) have maxima given when a number of counts have been received. Where no numbers are given the record relates to single birds.

### Wildfowl

**Whooper Swan** **Oct:** Ouse Washes c12 flyovers on 13<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 19 flyovers on 13<sup>th</sup>, 13 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 11 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 7 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Pink-footed Goose** **Sept:** Chatteris c100 over on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** further reports from Chatteris, plus Holme Fen 3 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**White-fronted Goose** **Sept:** Ouse Washes RSPB on 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>.  
**Greylag Goose** **Sept:** Fowlmere NR 276 on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Cam Washes 500 on 2<sup>nd</sup>.  
**Canada Goose** **Sept:** Kingfishers Bridge 253 on 18<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Ouse Washes 300 on 22<sup>nd</sup>.  
**Barnacle Goose** **Sept:** Paxton Pits on 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.  
**Egyptian Goose** **Sept:** Paxton Pits 1 – 7 all month, Fen Drayton Lakes 8 on 6<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 2 on 17<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Ouse Fen 25 on 29<sup>th</sup>; *the county record is 39 (2013)*.  
**Shelduck** **Sept:** Burwell Fen 4 on 5<sup>th</sup>.  
**Wigeon** **Sept:** Burwell Fen 3 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 250 on 20<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 200 on 24<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Ouse Washes 500 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 203 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 140 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton lakes c450 on 27<sup>th</sup>.  
**Gadwall** **Sept:** Burwell Fen c200 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, c150 on 29<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen Mere 33 on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen c220 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 98 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 145 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 145+ on 28<sup>th</sup>.  
**Teal** **Sept:** Burwell Fen 200 on 10<sup>th</sup>, c150 on 29<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 17 on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 300 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 80+ on 8<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 150 on 4<sup>th</sup>.  
**Mallard** **Sept:** Burwell Fen 150 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 61 on 17<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Trumpington Clay Farm 32 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Granta Park 151 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 27 on 15<sup>th</sup>.  
**Pintail** **Sept:** Paxton Pits on 11<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Paxton Pits 37 on 1<sup>st</sup>, single on 25<sup>th</sup>, Elford's Closes (Stretham) 2 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Adams's Crossing Waterbeach on 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.  
**Garganey** **Sept:** Burwell Fen 2 on 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>, 3 on 17<sup>th</sup>, 1 on 18<sup>th</sup>, *the latest date*.  
**Shoveler** **Sept:** Waterbeach North Fen 54 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 120 on 5<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 103 on 4<sup>th</sup>, 327 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Lazy Otter 98 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 45+ on 27<sup>th</sup>.  
**Red-crested Pochard** **Sept:** Paxton Pits 1 – 3 all month. **Oct:** *an apparent arrival on 21<sup>st</sup>*: Fen Drayton Lakes 6, Ferry Meadows CP 5, Paxton Pits 2, Ouse Fen 7 on 31<sup>st</sup>.  
**Pochard** **Sept:** Bradley Fen 41 on 14<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Fen Drayton Lakes 82+ on 27<sup>th</sup>.  
**Tufted Duck** **Oct:** Fen Drayton Lakes 181+ on 27<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water 150 on 29<sup>th</sup>.  
**Common Scoter** **Oct:** Elford's Closes on 11<sup>th</sup>.  
**Goldeneye** **Oct:** Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 9 on 31<sup>st</sup>, Grafham Water 43 on 31<sup>st</sup>.  
**Goosander** **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 6<sup>th</sup>.  
**Ruddy Duck** **Oct:** Wicken Fen on 4<sup>th</sup>.



*Velvet Scoter at Grafham Water: photo by Neil Bramwell*

### Gamebirds

**Grey Partridge** **Sept:** reported from Foxton (29), Comberton (19), Haddenham Fen (16), Buckden (13), Trumpington Clay Farm (8). **Oct:** Fowlmere (37), Nine Wells maximum 85 on 26<sup>th</sup>.

### Cormorants, egrets and herons, and grebes

**Cormorant** **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes 82 on 8<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Ferry Meadows 33 on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Shag** **Sept:** Grafham Water a juvenile on 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup>, Paxton Pits an adult on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Bittern** **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Wicken Fen on 27<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Wicken Fen on 9<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, Drysides BP on 13<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Little Egret** **Sept:** highest counts were at Fen Drayton Lakes (27 on 19<sup>th</sup>) and Waterbeach Adams's Crossing (18). **Oct:** reported from Burwell Fen (9), Fen Drayton Lakes (4), and 5 other sites.

**Great White Egret** **Sept:** Wicken Fen on several dates and into October, Ouse Washes RSPB on 14<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge on 17<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes on 27<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 29<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Pondersbridge from 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge on 5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, Godmanchester GP on 9<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water on 12<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on several dates from 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Grebe** **Sept:** Bradley Fen 22 on 9<sup>th</sup>, Cambourne 20 on 17<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 11 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 9 – 10 all month, Whittlesford GP on 26<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Crested Grebe** **Sept:** Drysides BP max 34 on 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Oct:** Drysides BP 17 on 6<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 61 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 29 on 27<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water 40 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

### Raptors

**Red Kite** **Sept:** Paxton Pits on 2 on 18<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen Rhymes Reedbed 5 on 13<sup>th</sup>, Toft on 13<sup>th</sup>, Kentford on 16<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere on 28<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Wicken Fen on 4<sup>th</sup>, Cambourne on 8<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley 6 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Conington 23 on 20<sup>th</sup>, and Stilton max count of 25 on 25<sup>th</sup> at a site where numbers congregate.

**Marsh Harrier** **Sept:** reported from Burwell Fen (2), Fleam Dyke, Haddenham /Aldreth Fens (2), Kingfishers Bridge, Paxton Pits, Waterbeach and Woodwalton Fen. **Oct:** reported from Adams's Crossing Waterbeach, Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Holme Fen, Wicken Fen (2), and Teversham Fen (3).

**Hen Harrier** **Sept:** Woodwalton Fen on 6<sup>th</sup>, *the first of the winter*. **Oct:** Holme Fen on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Farcet Fen a ringtail on 7<sup>th</sup> and a male on 26<sup>th</sup>, Swaffham Prior Fen a ringtail on 16<sup>th</sup>, Pymore Ouse Washes a male on 17<sup>th</sup>, a ringtail on 18<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen a ringtail on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, a female on 20<sup>th</sup>, and a male and a ringtail on 30<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen a male on 18<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley Fen a ringtail on 18<sup>th</sup>, Tubney Fen a female on 18<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Fen 2 males on 29<sup>th</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 2 into roost (with 5 Marsh Harriers) on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Sparrowhawk** **Oct:** Paxton Pits 3 together on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Buzzard** **Sept:** reported from Thorney (8), Grafham Water (7), Cambridge (Birdwood Road) (6), Fen Drayton Lakes (3), Newton (South Cambs) (3), Paxton Pits (6), and 9 other sites. **Oct:** reported from Barton (8), Grafham Water (5), Yaxley Fen (3) and 11 other sites.

**Osprey** **Sept:** Grafham Water on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Wicken Fen on 12<sup>th</sup>, Maxey GP on 20<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Stirtloe GP a juvenile roosting on 6<sup>th</sup>, Maxey area a flyover on 22<sup>nd</sup>, *the latest date*.

### Rails and crane

**Water Rail** **Sept:** reported from 7 sites in all. **Oct:** reported from Burwell Fen (7), Fen Drayton Lakes (2), Fowlmere NR, and Woodwalton Fen (6).

**Coot** **Sept:** Trumpington Clay Farm 37 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Bradley Fen 112 on 6<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen Mere 52 on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Bradley Fen 144 on 20<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 47 on 20<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 316 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Crane** **Sept:** Ouse Washes RSPB 3 on 14<sup>th</sup>, 8 on 24<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen area 6 on 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, Bar Hill 3 flyovers on 26<sup>th</sup>, Nene Washes 6 on 27<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Wicken Fen/Burwell Fen 2 – 4 on several dates, Ouse Washes RSPB reported all month maximum 13 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Cam Washes 3 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Eldernell 2 on 31<sup>st</sup>. *Readers are reminded that the Club is trying to identify pairs with young; for this purpose descriptions are very useful (concentrate on the bustles) and best of all a photograph. The young are now developing adult head patterning so may be harder to identify. See website for sketches of the four known families:* <http://www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk/research.html>.

## Waders

**Avocet** **Sept:** Paxton Pits on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Oystercatcher** **Sept:** Sutton 2 on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Golden Plover** **Sept:** Burwell Fen 100+ flyovers on 5<sup>th</sup>, 150 on 29<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington 200 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 500 on 29<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** largest counts at Burwell Fen 910 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere 250 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Shelford Bottom c250 on 13<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington c400 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 550 on 17<sup>th</sup>, and Ouse Fen c2200 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Lapwing** **Sept:** counts over 500 at Kingfishers Bridge 900 on 5<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 600 on 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 700 on 19<sup>th</sup>, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 500 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere 500 on 9<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 910 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Croyden 500 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 800 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Ouse Fen c1600 on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Ringed Plover** **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on 1<sup>st</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 5<sup>th</sup> and 4 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge on 12<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 2 on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Fen Drayton Lakes 3 on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Ringed Plover** **Sept:** Burwell Fen reported weekly maximum 11 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Fidwell Fen 10 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Paxton Pits on several dates max 2 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 6<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm on 24<sup>th</sup>, near Upware on a flooded field 8 on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Adams's Crossing Waterbeach 3 on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-tailed Godwit** **Sept:** Burwell Fen 14 on 6<sup>th</sup> and 12 on 22<sup>nd</sup>. **Oct:** Cam Washes 4 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 7 on 19<sup>th</sup>, 9 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** **Oct:** Burwell Fen 4 flyovers on 8<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Turnstone** **Sept:** Paxton Pits on 7<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on 12<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Paxton Pits on several dates.

**Ruff** **Sept:** Burwell Fen throughout, max 36+ on 25<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 15 on 5<sup>th</sup>, Fidwell Fen 52 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 70 on 24<sup>th</sup>, Waterbeach North Fen 26 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Haddenham/Aldreth Fen c20 on 20<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 30 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Adams's Crossing Waterbeach 4 on 11<sup>th</sup>, Cam Washes 7 on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Dunlin** **Sept:** Burwell Fen present each week max 9 on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Fidwell Fen 15 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits maximum 7 on 23<sup>rd</sup>. **Oct:** Paxton Pits 2 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Burwell Fen 8 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 7 on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Stint** **Sept:** Ouse Washes on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Paxton Pits 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>.



*Grey Phalarope at Burwell Fen: photo by Neil Bramwell*

**Common Sandpiper** **Sept:** reported from Fen Drayton Lakes maximum 6 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 12<sup>th</sup>, and Paxton Pits maximum 6 on 24<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Foul Anchor 2 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Curlew Sandpiper** **Sept:** Burwell Fen on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Green Sandpiper** **Sept:** reported from Fen Drayton Lakes, Fidwell Fen (12), Great Fen Rhymes Reedbed (3), Kingfishers Bridge (6), Paxton Pits (2), Burwell Fen (5+). **Oct:** Waterbeach North Fen on 1<sup>st</sup>, Burwell Fen 2 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 25<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 3 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Spotted Redshank** **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Ouse Washes 20<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Greenshank** **Sept:** Burwell Fen 8 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits singles up to 14<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen on 13<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes RSPB on 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>, Lazy Otter on 17<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Paxton Pits on 1<sup>st</sup>, Foul Anchor on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Wood Sandpiper** **Sept:** Burwell Fen present throughout maximum 7 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Lazy Otter on 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Redshank** **Sept:** Paxton Pits on 5<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on 8<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water 5 on 14<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Peterborough 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water 2 on 29<sup>th</sup>, Waterbeach North Fen 2 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Jack Snipe** **Oct:** Fowlmere NR on 1<sup>st</sup>, Burwell Fen on 1<sup>st</sup>, Stretham on 18<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Woodcock** **Oct:** Kings Dyke NR on 15<sup>th</sup> and 2 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Tetworth 2 exhausted birds on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Snipe** **Sept:** Burwell Fen max 30+ on 6<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 9 on 12<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 7 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes RSPB 10 on 14<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 40+ on 8<sup>th</sup>, 200+ on 30<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 3 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Skuas terns and gulls

**Arctic Skua\*** **Oct:** Cambourne a flyover on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Tern** **Sept:** Grafham Water on 1<sup>st</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>. **Oct:** Grafham Water on 1<sup>st</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, *the latest date of the year*.

**Sandwich Tern** **Sept:** Grafham Water up to 5 on 26 – 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Tern** **Sept:** St Neots 100 on 4<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP 6 on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Arctic Tern** **Sept:** Grafham Water on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Black-headed Gull** **Sept:** Bradley Fen 200 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, Peterborough (Millennium Bridge) 500 on 24<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 3000 on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 100+ on 26<sup>th</sup>, Swaffham Bulbeck c250 in a freshly sown field on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Little Gull** **Sept:** Burwell Fen on 12<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Greater Black-backed Gull** **Oct:** Tanholt GP 10 on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Gull** **Sept:** Burwell Fen on 29<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Foxton 5 on 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** **Sept:** Paxton Pits 400 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Foxton 386 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Burwell Fen 44 on 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Oct:** Foxton 367 on 13<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere 120+ in a single field on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Herring Gull** **Sept:** Burwell Fen 50 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Trumpington Clay Farm 2 on 17<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Soham 33 on 5<sup>th</sup>, Tanholt GP 50 on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellow-legged Gull** **Sept:** Paxton Pits maximum 52 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Burwell Fen on 12<sup>th</sup>, Upware flooded field on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Paxton Pits 30 on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Caspian Gull** **Sept:** Paxton Pits a single bird on several dates. **Oct:** Paxton Pits on 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Doves, owls and kingfisher

**Stock Dove** **Sept:** Darlow's Farm 32 on 11<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Holme Fen 40 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Woodpigeon** **Oct:** Fowlmere/Newton 1000+ in a stubble field on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Collared Dove** **Oct:** Farcet Fen 93 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Soham 36 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Turtle Dove** **Sept:** Cambourne on 17<sup>th</sup>, Maxey Pits 2 juveniles on 19<sup>th</sup>, *the latest date*.

**Barn Owl** **Oct:** reported from Holme Fen, Wicken Fen, and Fowlmere (3).

**Little Owl** **Oct:** reported from Waterbeach, Holme Fen and Tick Fen.

**Tawny Owl** **Sept:** reported from Ely, Great Shelford, Sutton, Woodwalton Fen and Wicken Fen.

**Oct:** reported from Hemingford Grey and Fowlmere NR.

**Long-eared Owl** **Sept:** Woodwalton Fen 2 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Short-eared Owl** **Sept:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 6<sup>th</sup>, Pidley/Woodhurst 2 on 17<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Holme Fen 2 on 18<sup>th</sup>, 5 on 25<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 31<sup>st</sup>, Paxton Pits on 20<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 2 – 4 on several dates from 20<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley on 25<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen 7 on 31<sup>st</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 29<sup>th</sup>, Eldernell 2 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Swift Sept:** latest dates were Ferry Meadows CP 2 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Chesterton (Cambridge) 6 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Stanground 2 on 9<sup>th</sup> and Huntingdon 2 on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Kingfisher Sept:** reported from Burwell Fen (2), Cambridge Research Park (3), Chippenham Fen, Kings Dyke NR, Lazy Otter, Paxton Pits (3) and Wicken Fen (2) and River Cam (4). **Oct:** reported from Burwell Fen, Chippenham Fen, Ouse Washes, Foul Anchor, Paxton Pits (3) and Wicken Fen (2).

#### Falcons and parrots

**Kestrel Sept:** Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 5 on 11<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Holme Fen 5 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Merlin Sept:** Farcet Fen on 4<sup>th</sup>, Castor on 5<sup>th</sup>, Haddenham/Aldreth Fens on 23<sup>rd</sup>. **Oct:** Toft on 17<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen on 18<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley Fen on 18<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>, Castor on 28<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen 2 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Hobby Sept:** reported from over 20 sites, maximum 3 at Fen Drayton Lakes on 10<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** latest dates Paxton Pits on 4<sup>th</sup>, Hemmingford Grey on 9<sup>th</sup>, Ramsey (2) and Woodwalton Fen on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Peregrine Sept:** reported from Ouse Fen, Paxton Pits, Foxton and Wyton. **Oct:** Burwell Fen on 11<sup>th</sup>, Tydd St Giles on 13<sup>th</sup>, Cambridge Catholic Church spire on 14<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley Fen a female on 18<sup>th</sup>, Melbourn on 24<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits an immature on 25<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes RSPB on 25<sup>th</sup>, Peterborough Power Station on 25<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Fen an immature on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Ring-necked Parakeet\* Oct:** Pymore/Ouse Washes 4 on 17<sup>th</sup>.

#### Woodpeckers, shrikes, corvids

**Wryneck Sept:** Kings Dyke NR on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Oct:** Fowlmere NR on 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Grey Shrike\* Oct:** Ouse Washes RSPB on 7<sup>th</sup>, *the first record of the winter.*

**Magpie Sept:** Hinxton 16 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Kings Dyke NR 16 on 19<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Orton Goldhay 21 on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Jackdaw/Rook Sept:** Chippenham/Snailwell c500 feeding in recently turned fields and grassland. **Oct:** Castor 650 Rooks on 28<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR over 2000 Jackdaws to roost all month.

**Raven Sept:** Fen Drayton village 3 flyovers on 7<sup>th</sup>, Abbotsley 2 on 13<sup>th</sup>, Spaldwick 2 flyovers on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Elton a flyover on 5<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP a flyover on 11<sup>th</sup>, Morborne Hill 2 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

#### Crests and tits

**Firecrest Sept:** Woodston on 11<sup>th</sup>, Pampisford Hall on 20<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Fen Drayton Lakes on 7<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen one ringed on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Coal Tit Sept:** Monks Wood Richard Broughton reports 68 caught and ringed in Sept. Wicken Fen one caught and ringed on 22<sup>nd</sup> – *a rare bird at this site, and an example of a fairly widespread dispersal with several observers reporting individuals in gardens where they are unusual, in fenland particularly.* **Oct:** further signs of dispersal Wicken Fen 3 caught and ringed 1<sup>st</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Marsh Tit Sept:** Richard Broughton reports a total of 60 caught and ringed at Monks Wood in Sept, Grafham Water 6 on 9<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen in a mixed tit flock on 18<sup>th</sup> (possibly a Willow Tit), Castor on 28<sup>th</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 4+ on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Bearded Tit Sept:** reported from Fen Drayton Lakes (8), Kingfishers Bridge, Ouse Fen (4+) and Wicken Fen. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 9 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 20 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 6 on 9<sup>th</sup>, Brampton Wood 6 on 9<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 20 on 1<sup>st</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 3+ on 25<sup>th</sup>, and Lt Wilbraham Fen 2 on 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### Hirundines and warblers

**Sand Martin Sept:** Lazy Otter 300 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Burwell Fen 50+ on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Swallow Sept:** Fowlmere c400 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Mepal 200 on 19<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** late dates: Houghton Meadows 8 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Horningsea 5 on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR 2 on 23<sup>rd</sup>, Wicken Fen on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Swallow/House Martin Sept:** Granta Park 300 in a mixed flock gathering on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**House Martin Sept:** Haddenham the last young fledged and were gone the same day on 27<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Fen Drayton Lakes 16 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Farcet Fen 8 on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Cetti's Warbler Sept:** reported from Paxton Pits (2) and Fen Drayton Lakes. **Oct:** reported from Burwell Fen, Farcet Fen, Paxton Pits, Wicken Fen (5) and Woodwalton Fen (3). *Be aware that Cetti's are quite good at moving around, giving the impression of numbers greater than the true figure.*

**Chiffchaff** **Oct:** *late dates or overwintering birds:* Wicken Fen 6 caught and ringed on 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 on 30<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen 4 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Foul Anchor on 17<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water and Paxton Pits 2 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Willow Warbler** **Sept:** Wicken Fen 4 on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Cambourne on 16<sup>th</sup>; *in 2013 the latest date was September 30<sup>th</sup> and in 2014 October 5<sup>th</sup>.*

**Blackcap** **Sept:** Wicken Fen 51 caught and ringed on 3<sup>rd</sup>, reports from several other sites. **Oct:** *late dates or winter migrants:* Wicken Fen caught regularly until 14<sup>th</sup> (4) then latest on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Garden Warbler** **Sept:** late date Chippenham Fen one caught and ringed on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Whitethroat** **Sept:** late dates Wicken Fen on 6<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 19<sup>th</sup>, Kings Dyke on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** late date Burwell Fen on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Whitethroat** **Sept:** late dates Paxton Pits on 19<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on 27<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Farcet Fen on 7<sup>th</sup>; and Barton on 9<sup>th</sup>; *latest date in 2013 was Sept 30<sup>th</sup>.*

**Sedge Warbler** **Sept:** Wicken Fen on 15<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** late date Farcet Fen on 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Reed Warbler** **Sept:** *The autumn passage of Reed Warblers through the county this year is shown by ringing:* Wicken Fen on August 19<sup>th</sup> to Icklesham Sussex on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, Marston Lincolnshire on August 12<sup>th</sup> to Wicken Fen on August 29<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge on August 20<sup>th</sup> to Litlington Sussex on August 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Oct:** late dates Burwell Fen on 8<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge one caught and ringed on 12<sup>th</sup>.

### Starling, thrushes and flycatchers

**Starling** **Oct:** Nine Wells c250 in ploughed field on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere c300 in a ploughed field on 15<sup>th</sup>, Tubney Fen roost 6000 – 8000 on 20<sup>th</sup>, c12000 on 28<sup>th</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes 4000 – 5000 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Fieldfare** **Oct:** Hemingford Grey c12 flyovers on 13<sup>th</sup> *were the first of the year, arrivals widely reported elsewhere from 15<sup>th</sup>*; Castor 400 on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Redwing** **Sept:** Six Mile Bottom 2 on 28<sup>th</sup>, *the first of the winter.* **Oct:** Castor Mill 3 on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Great Shelford 17 flyovers on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Lode 2 flyovers on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Cambourne 14 on 8<sup>th</sup>, *large arrival on 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> including Farcet Fen 230, Cambridge 670, Fen Drayton Lakes 200+; thereafter widespread.*

**Mistle Thrush** **Sept:** Gamlingay 16 on 1<sup>st</sup>. **Oct:** Adams's Crossing 13 on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Spotted Flycatcher** **Sept:** Caxton 3+ on 1<sup>st</sup>, Fen Drayton Lakes on 9<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, Caldecote (Cams) on 13<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 2 on 19<sup>th</sup> and one on 20<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** *the latest date,* Girton and Caxton 3+ on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Nightingale** **Sept:** Paxton Pits on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Pied Flycatcher** **Sept:** *a pronounced passage on 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>* : Cambridge (Huntingdon Road), Peterborough Broadway Cemetery 2, Caxton, Girton, then Granta Park, Paxton Pits and Roswell Pits on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Holme Fen on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Pampisford Hall on 20<sup>th</sup>.

### Starts and chats

**Black Redstart** **Oct:** Ouse Washes RSPB on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Redstart** **Sept:** Witcham on 1<sup>st</sup>, Cambridge (Madingley Rd) a male on 1<sup>st</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 1<sup>st</sup>, Granta Park on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 4<sup>th</sup> and a female on 18<sup>th</sup>, Castor on 5<sup>th</sup>, Over on 6<sup>th</sup>, Castor Hanglands on 13<sup>th</sup>, Witcham on 13<sup>th</sup>, Waterbeach Fen on 20<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Cam Washes on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Whinchat** **Sept:** Reports from 12 sites in first half of the month, then Cambourne CP 3 on 17<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 19<sup>th</sup>, Maxey Pits on 19<sup>th</sup>, Burwell on 19<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen Rhymes Reedbed 2 on 24<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Nene Washes 2 on 9<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Fen on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Stonechat** **Sept:** Paxton Pits 2 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere NR on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Great Fen Rhymes Reedbed 2 on 24<sup>th</sup>, Toft on 25<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 4 on 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, Kingfishers Bridge 2 on 12<sup>th</sup>, Cambourne on 16<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 3 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen 2 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Yaxley Fen 2 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 4 on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Wheatear** **Sept:** Ouse Fen on 4<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits on 19<sup>th</sup>, Haddenham/Aldreth Fen on 20<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 22<sup>nd</sup>, Nene Washes on 27<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Peterborough on 4<sup>th</sup>, Ferry Meadows CP on 8<sup>th</sup>, Foxton on 14<sup>th</sup>.

### Sparrows, wagtails and pipits

**Tree Sparrow** **Oct:** Burwell Fen 2 on 8<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen 2 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Adams's Crossing Waterbeach on 11<sup>th</sup>, Woodhurst on 11<sup>th</sup>, Oxloode on 13<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes RSPB 2 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen 19 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 10+ at nearby Tower Farm on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Yellow Wagtail** **Sept:** Ouse Fen 20+ on 9<sup>th</sup>, Toft 14 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 40 on 11<sup>th</sup>, 20 on 27<sup>th</sup>, Ouse Washes 35 on 4<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** late dates Grafham Water on 4<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen on 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Grey Wagtail** **Sept:** Fidwell Fen 4 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 2 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Toft on 30<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Barton on 1<sup>st</sup>, Houghton Meadows 3+ on 8<sup>th</sup>, River Cam Baits Bite 3 on 18<sup>th</sup>, and other scattered reports.

**Pied Wagtail** **Sept:** Hinxton 55 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 67 on 17<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Farcet Fen 26 on 7<sup>th</sup>, Nine Wells c50 on 14<sup>th</sup>, Great Fen 200 to roost on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Meadow Pipit** **Sept:** *first signs of migration* Paxton Pits 12 flyovers on 14<sup>th</sup>, then Cambridge 90 on 18<sup>th</sup>, Haddenham/Aldreth Fen 50 – 75 on 20<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Burwell Fen 200 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 125 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Rock Pipit** **Oct:** Grafham Water on 4<sup>th</sup>, Foul Anchor 17<sup>th</sup>, Pondersbridge 19<sup>th</sup>, Paxton Pits 2 on 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Water Pipit** **Oct:** Paxton Pits on 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>.

### Finches and buntings

**Chaffinch** **Oct:** Fowlmere 140 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Six Mile Bottom 100+ on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Brambling** **Sept:** Wicken Fen on 26<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Cambridge on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, Wicken Fen one caught and ringed on 14<sup>th</sup>, Horningsea on 15<sup>th</sup>, Fowlmere 3 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Six Mile Bottom on 16<sup>th</sup>, 4 on 26<sup>th</sup>, Stanground on 27<sup>th</sup>, Grafham Water on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Greenfinch** **Sept:** Ferry Meadows CP c100 on 4<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 30 – 35 on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Goldfinch** **Sept:** Houghton 30+ on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Burwell Fen c300 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Monks Wood 150+ on 23<sup>rd</sup>. **Oct:** Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 250 on 16<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 550 on 17 – 18<sup>th</sup>, Moonshine Gap 100 on 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Siskin** **Sept:** *an exceptional influx of which these records are the tip of the iceberg:* Fen Drayton Village 5 over on 2<sup>nd</sup>, Wicken Fen 2 ringed on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Holme Fen 7 over on 3<sup>rd</sup>, Paxton Pits groups of 5 and 6 over on 5<sup>th</sup>, Burwell Fen 8 over on 6<sup>th</sup>, Houghton Meadows 25 on 6<sup>th</sup>, Barton 16 on 8<sup>th</sup>; then during the week 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Chatteris 50, Thorney Toll 130, and Ouse Washes Welches Dam 35+, Houghton Mill 20+ on 12<sup>th</sup>; *after this most observers simply reported Siskins and gave no numbers. An indication of the scale of this influx is that in Norfolk (Thetford) a bird ringer caught 369 on 16<sup>th</sup>!* **Oct:** *the exceptional influx continued e.g.* Southey Wood 200+ on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Linnet** **Sept:** Abbotsley 150 on 4<sup>th</sup>. **Oct:** Haddenham/Aldreth Fens 2 flocks of 300 – 350 on 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Lesser Redpoll** **Sept:** Paxton Pits c10 flyovers on 19<sup>th</sup>, also mentioned by a number of observers without giving numbers. **Oct:** widely reported, Holme Fen 50+ on 31<sup>st</sup>, Woodwalton Fen 100 on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Crossbill** **Sept:** Monks Wood 2 flyovers on 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellowhammer** **Oct:** Comberton 48 on 10<sup>th</sup>, Farcet Fen 11 on 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Reed Bunting** **Oct:** Burwell Fen 100+ on 10<sup>th</sup>, Holme Fen 110 on 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Corn Bunting** **Oct:** Woodwalton Fen roost of 50+ on 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Exotica

**Black Swan** **Sept:** Paxton Pits (also in Oct) and another at Ouse Fen.

**Cape Shelduck** **Sept:** the bird seen at Fowlmere NR seemed to be wandering around wetland sites in South Cambs and the same or another appeared at Paxton Pits on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Contributors:** Colin Addington, Richard Allison, Jake Allsop, Dave Anderson, Louise Bacon, Geoff Barlow, Richard Bashford, Ian Barton, Guy Belcher, Peter Bircham, Mark Brandon, Richard Broughton, Chris Brown, Mike Burdekin, Will Burdett, Ian Burfield, Malcolm Busby, Howard Butler, James Cadbury, Michael Cadney, Cliff Carson, David Collins, Pete Cook, Ade Cooper, Ali Cooper, Steve Cooper, Martin Davis, Ian Dickerson, Brendan Doe, Steve Dudley, Ian Ellis, Stuart Elsom, Mike Everett, Mike Foley, David Fotherby, Ben Fraser, Paul Gallagher, Andrew Gardener, Don Gardener, Simon Gillings, Dennis Hall, James Hanlon, Andy Hannaford, Paul Harrington, Mark Hawkes, David Heath, Jon Heath, Michael Holdsworth, Peter Holt, David Hopkins, Sarah Howlett, Bob Jarman, Richard Johnson, Charlie Kitchin, Marcus Kohler, Vince Lea, John Le Gassick, Tony Lowe, Bob Mansfield, Bruce Martin, Paul Mason, Duncan McNiven, Andy Merryweather, Tim Morley, Martin O'Leary, Daniel Osborne, Dave Palmer, Richard Palmer, Rob Partridge, Richard Patient, Mark Peck, Rob Pople, Duncan Poyser, Paul Pulham, Doug Radford, Norman Ratcliffe, Graeme Reed, Gareth Rees, Duncan Ritchie, Tony Roberts, John Saunders, Chaz Shaw, Clive Sinclair, Bob Smith, Brian Stone, Jonathan Taylor,



Kevin Taylor, Paul Taylor, Bob Titman, Richard Thomas, Chris Thorne and the Wicken Fen Group, Andrew Tongue, Calum Urquhart, Hugh Venables, Mark Ward, Iain Webb, Matt Webb, Mike Weedon, Jamie Wells, Kevin Wilson, Kevan Wolstencroft, Hugh Wright, John Wright and Christoph Zöckler.

#### Paul Mason sent this overview of the breeding season in Haddenham:

3 pairs Common Buzzards bred, 1 pair Hobbies bred with only 1 young, 2 pairs Kingfishers (one pair at least twice); estimated 4 pairs Sparrowhawks, 5 pairs Kestrels (one with 3 young) and one pair Marsh Harriers attempted; 3 pairs Little Grebe minimum, 2 pairs Tufted Duck, 1 pair Gadwall; at least 1 pair Turtle Doves but maybe 3 possible. Hard to find Song Thrush or Mistle Thrush this year. Swallows well down, House Martins 9 probable maybe more as some started late, Swifts not an actual count but probably 8+.

*Paul Mason*

### **From the Editor**

The request (Bulletin No. 441) for feedback on the current format of the Recent Reports section produced very little response; the Editor therefore assumes that silence equals a general level of approval, and will continue the current production process and level of detail, until other evidence emerges, or fatigue sets in!

Meanwhile, as with Paul Mason's note above, 'patch' reports from other areas would be very welcome for future inclusion in this Bulletin.

### **Cambridgeshire Bird Report deadline**

In order to improve the efficiency and timeliness of production of the annual report, the production team are setting a new deadline for the submission of records. Would club members please note that all records for 2015 should be submitted to the County Recorder **by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016**. It may not be possible to include records received after this date.

### **Royston Crows**

Following James Parry's most interesting talk on Emma Turner (9<sup>th</sup> October) I was prompted to get out and read again my old copy of Bird Watching on Scolt Head, a fascinating account of the birds of Scolt Head in the 1920s. Much of the book is devoted to the nesting terns but, to me, the most remarkable section was her description of the sheer numbers of Hooded Crows which passed over Scolt in the Autumn compared with today. I quote:

"By far the most impressive sight throughout October 1925 was the passing of the Hooded Crows...the steady purposeful flight of the grey crows, day after day and week after week, filled one with awe and wonder. It seemed as if no power on earth could stop them, neither did adverse winds dismay them.

"During the last three weeks of October hooded crows passed over Scolt Head Island in incredible numbers. Every day they waked me at dawn....Perhaps only a few crows would be moving, but sometimes they passed the hut in one continuous stream until you might have thought that the world contained no other bird but the hooded crow. They travelled in parties of from seven to twenty, with short intervals between the parties. As dawn broke you saw the long line of them. They first appeared in sight over the woods four miles eastwards. They were never in a hurry. Slowly and steadily, with long rhythmic beating of the wings they travelled from east to west, keeping almost entirely to the line of the sandhills and so passing directly over the hut in which I lived....Hundreds of thousands must have passed me in those three weeks, for although on most days the greater movement was between dawn and 10 a.m. yet sometimes migration continued

from dawn to dusk. Apparently the great influx of 1925 was above the average, for the fishermen said they had never seen such numbers. Whence they came and whither were they going?"

Clearly at that time hooded crows were common birds in the autumn and winter; today they are exceptional and one is lucky to see one even in Norfolk where they were regular, if not common, when I was a boy. So why are they so rare now? Presumably they originated from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe where, to the casual visitor, they are still quite common. Has there really been a great decline in their numbers and, if so, where and why or have they altered their migratory habits? There is no clue in Emma Turner's book but it, nevertheless, describes many dramatic changes in the birdlife of Scolt which are difficult to comprehend in the relatively short span of much less than 100 years.

Footnote: the name Royston Crow originated in the 18th/19th century when they were very common among the flocks of sheep which populated the downs in the region of Royston. The name is still perpetuated in the name of the local newspaper and two hooded crows feature in the Royston Coat of Arms.

*Robin Cox*

### **Christmas Quiz - Nominal Alternatives**

This year's fiendish and brain-churning Christmas Quiz has been devised by the learned academic and scientist Professor Eno Zallott. First identify the birds, all of which are on the British list, from the specific names below, then find the alternative names and take the appropriate letters\* from those, which should then be rearranged to form the name of another species. All names except the initial seven are in English. Good luck!

1. *parasiticus* 2. *borealis* 3. *longicauda* 4. *fuscicollis* 5. *grisegena* 6. *longicaudus* 7. *subminuta*

\*Second and seventh letters from 1, first letter from 2, fourth letter from 3, fifth and eighth letters from 4, third letter from 5, second and sixth letters from 6, second, fifth and sixth letters from 7.

### **Ethno-ornithology**

Air pollution, the speckling of Great Tit eggs, folk names for birds, and the role of grandparents in teaching about birds, were just three topics covered by Andy Gosler at the club's evening meeting on evening meeting on 11th September. These are all aspects of 'Ethno-ornithology' which sits within the broader compass of ethno-biology – the study of human reactions with nature. Not surprisingly, the branches of this subject head off in all directions, and Andy Gosler's talk was wide-ranging, intriguing and sometimes challenging. He opened with the apparently simple question 'why are we fascinated by birds?' We all have favourite species, based on behaviour, plumage, or maybe childhood memory. The last of these is a very common trigger, a particular species linked to a memory of a place or event. (This is certainly true in my case – the hard winter of 1963 when almost everything froze even in South London, but a single snipe huddled beside the last flowing water in an abandoned watercress bed, made a formative experience for an 11 year old).

We have become quite familiar with the pervasive influence of human activity on birdlife, and this was Andy's next topic. He drew on his work monitoring Great Tit next boxes at Wytham Woods in Oxfordshire, where he noticed that the amount of dark speckling on Great Tit eggs increased in areas of the wood with less calcareous soils. Tests showed that the speckling is found where the eggs are thinner and that this pigmentation also makes the shells stronger; the birds are compensating for a local calcium deficiency. Andy noted that the amount of speckling increased

over 20 years, particularly in areas with calcareous soils; over the same period calcium levels in these soils were shown to have fallen, most probably due to acidification caused to industrial pollution. So there was an unexpected human impact on egg colouration.

The degree to which our forefathers associated with nature can be demonstrated by the study of folk names for birds. Andy gave over a large part of his talk to this area, and I can barely do justice to it here. Leading expert Michael Desfayes in 'A Thesaurus of Bird Names' (1998) identified over 100,000 folk names for birds in over 40 Indo-European languages; some demonstrate a detailed knowledge of bird behaviour, such as 'bottle bird' for Long-tailed Tit, referring to its nest. Generally the salience of a species (how often it pops into view or is heard) correlated with the number of local names recorded – 164 for the Wren compared to 2 for the Garden Warbler! Internationally, a decline in cultural diversity, exemplified by the disappearance of minority languages, is mirrored by the decline in biological diversity; might there common causes?

More broadly, Andy referred to what is known as "shifting baseline syndrome"; our growing disconnect with nature leads to inter-generational changes in our perception of the state of the environment. Each of us thinks back to what we knew as children (the baseline) but if each generation knows or experiences less, the baseline changes for the worse. The inference is that as a society if we are less connected with nature than previous generations, how can we make the right decisions regarding nature conservation?

And in terms of current knowledge, Andy painted a rather alarming picture. A survey of Oxford biology undergraduates revealed that only 42% could successfully identify five UK bird species (with a worse figure for butterflies). Those who had learnt their natural history from teachers were no better than the average, whilst those who learnt from a parent and or grandparent were 10-20% better than the median. The best performers were those students who were either self-taught or guided by a grandparent. (On later reflection it seemed to me that today's better optics and photography, better reference works and the power of the internet, should all support a better level of knowledge than that of previous generations. Perhaps today's situation is one of a deeper knowledge, shared by fewer people).

Linking these thought-provoking but apparently disparate ideas into a comprehensive theory of man / bird interactions seems rather difficult. But fortunately Andy Gosler and his colleagues have established an Ethno-ornithology World Archive which they see as "a space for knowledge of birds and people". You can enquire further at [www.ewa-archive.net](http://www.ewa-archive.net)

*Chris Brown*

## **Indoor meetings**

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December, St John's Hall, Cambridge 7.30 for 8pm  
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.

**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2016, St John's Hall, Cambridge 7.30 for 8pm  
Wildlife of Speyside by Duncan MacDonald**

Speyside encompasses the Cairngorms National Park, Abernethy Forest, and the Moray Firth, and boasts an impressive diversity of wildlife including Golden Eagle, Capercaillie, Crested Tit, Scottish Crossbill, Red Squirrel and Pine Marten. Duncan MacDonald, a birder and naturalist for over 35 years, will discuss what makes the area so special and how to get the best from wildlife watching there. Duncan works as a countryside ranger for Highland Council and leads tours for Speyside Wildlife.

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016, St John's Hall, Cambridge 7.30 for 8pm**

**Birds' interactions with the landscape: BTO research at global and local scales** by **Andy Clements**

Monitoring UK's birds relies on the observations of thousands of volunteer birders and the BTO's analysis and interpretation of that data. In addition, the BTO's research on the distribution, abundance and migration of birds enables us to tell captivating stories that deepen the public's understanding of wildlife and conservation. Andy Clements is the BTO Director.

### **New Members**

We welcome Guy Morton from Houghton, Ian Titchener from Ely, Alex Andrews of Fulbourn, Robert McEwen of Linton and David Lee of Linton.

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**Other Council Members:** Ali Cooper, Mike Foley

**The Cambridgeshire Bird Club** exists to promote the conservation of birds and their habitats in the county, identify areas of conservation value, and advance the education of the public in the study of birds. [www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk](http://www.cambridgebirdclub.org.uk)

The editors would welcome contributions to the E-Bulletin and print edition, on topics such as identification problems, behaviour, summaries of club talks, and book reviews. Contact us at [cbcbulletin@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk](mailto:cbcbulletin@cambridgebirdclub.org.uk), and use this address to let us know if you would like to receive your bulletin in e-mail format rather than paper.

### **Bird Records, sightings and news**

If you have seen a scarce or local bird, please submit the news to the '[What's about](#)' page on the Club website via [Pete and Paul](#) who maintain an up-to-date selection of recent highlights. You can also report interesting sightings on the [Cambirds](#) email group (not run by the Club, but we access the records). Any major rarities can be phoned in to Birdline East Anglia on 07941 333970.

Full lists of your records should continue to be submitted monthly to **Louise Bacon** the County Recorder, preferably using the [spreadsheet](#) available on the Records section of the website, **by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month.**

# ***GOOD BIRDING!***